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Laurier to host summit examining race and racism at Canadian university campuses

WATERLOO – Wilfrid Laurier University’s Diversity and Equity Office and the Office of Aboriginal Initiatives will host the inaugural **e(RACE)r Summit on Race and Racism on Canadian University Campuses** March 21, during the United Nations (UN) Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

The summit will feature prominent speakers including the Chief Commissioner of the Ontario Human Rights Commission, **Renu Mandhane**, and **Alvin Curling**, the first Black-Canadian to hold a cabinet-level position in Ontario and the first Black Speaker of the Ontario Legislature.

The summit will bring together senior administrators and their teams from universities across Ontario and Canada, to discuss race and racism. Participants will explore ways to hear, engage with and address racialized students’ concerns and will work together to develop intentional, sector-wide strategies to stop racism on Canadian university campuses.

“I want the students to know that we hear them,” said **Laura Mae Lindo**, director of Laurier’s Diversity and Equity Office. “We hear the calls for racial justice in the university sector. At the institutional level, our work begins with listening to and hearing the stories that students have shared with administrators. We appreciate the work that they are doing to change the university climate.”

A pre-summit event will be held **March 20** to celebrate Black and Indigenous students’ activism.

The goal of the pre-summit is to encourage and support the development of self-care strategies to help sustain students in their struggles for equity. Facilitators from **The Ignite Institute** – who support grassroots and community activists as they engage in critical, anti-racist practices – will work with students throughout the day.

“The enormous gap in education and quality of life for Indigenous people in Canada is an indicator that there remains a great deal of work for us to do to equalize opportunities for our people in post-secondary institutions,” said **Jean Becker**, senior advisor: Aboriginal Initiatives.

The summit will become an annual event to further longer-term strategies to address racism on university campuses in Canada, based on qualitative and quantitative data across the sector. The response to the summit has been overwhelmingly positive – more than 100 participants representing over six institutions across Ontario are participating.

The summit will be held on **March 21** from **9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.** at the Holiday Inn Kitchener-Waterloo Conference Centre in the Waterloo Ballroom, 30 Fairway Rd. S., Kitchener.

To register, for the e(RACE)r Summit on Race and Racism on Canadian University Campuses: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/eracer-summit-on-race-and-racism-on-canadian-university-campuses-tickets-20820720335>. For students interested in registering for the Pre-Summit event: <http://presummit2016.eventbrite.com>.

For more information, please contact Laura Mae Lindo at llindo@wlu.ca.