

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Indigenization (EDI&I) Coalition

2022

Year in Review Report



Faculty of Education
Wilfrid Laurier University



Message from the Chair

On behalf of the Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Indigenization (EDI&I) Coalition, we are honoured to share our first "Year in Review Report" summarizing various events, initiatives, and partnerships that took place throughout 2022. The Coalition was initiated and established in 2020 as a platform to make the Faculty of Education and the larger community more equitable, diverse, and inclusive.

The process has been student-led from finalizing the name of the Coalition and creation of the logo to the scope of the work in terms of focus areas. Members include faculty, staff, Teacher Candidates, alumni, and community members.

The Coalition is a brave space where ideas are shared, exchanged, and developed to challenge systemic inequities and injustices.

We started out small in 2020 but with the growing numbers in our Faculty of Education, we have expanded to include a consistent core with others joining to support and be part of the movement.

Some of the major accomplishments of the EDI&I Coalition:

- We created a [Resource Bank](#) to support educators and others to discuss equity topics in the classroom and within community spaces.
- We advocated for the revision of the lesson plan templates for Teacher Candidates to include a section on EDI&I with guiding questions to help them centre and prioritize EDI&I in their classrooms.
- We hosted our major in-person event in October 2022 where we invited 50 secondary students from equity-deserving groups from Waterloo Region District School Board and Waterloo Catholic District School Board to inspire them to become teachers in the future. This was done to address the lack of diversity in teacher education in Ontario and, on a larger scale, across Canada. We would like to make this an annual event.

Through the EDI&I Coalition, we hope to continue our advocacy and activism about issues impacting the community in 2023 and beyond.

With love, respect, and gratitude,

[Dr. Ardavan Eizadirad](mailto:aeizadirad@wlu.ca) aeizadirad@wlu.ca



Mission Statement

To disrupt, question, advocate, and create change through

- Dialogue
- Collaborations
- Partnerships
- Events
- Resources

To advance the work of equity diversity, inclusion, and indigenization as a collective coalition within the Faculty of Education and in the larger community.



Changes to Experience Profile

As a Coalition, we advocated to make changes to the Experience Profile questions that are part of the admissions process when students apply for entry to the Laurier Bachelor of Education program.

We revised the 2 questions so applicants not only have an opportunity to talk about their volunteer and professional experiences, but also highlight the importance of their identity and lived experiences, and their impact on who they are and the educator they strive to become. This will allow assessors to score applicants' responses more holistically and equitably.

We are continuing to work with faculty, staff, and other university stakeholders to explore other means to improve the admissions process such as collecting more identity-based demographical information.



Community School Initiative (CSI)

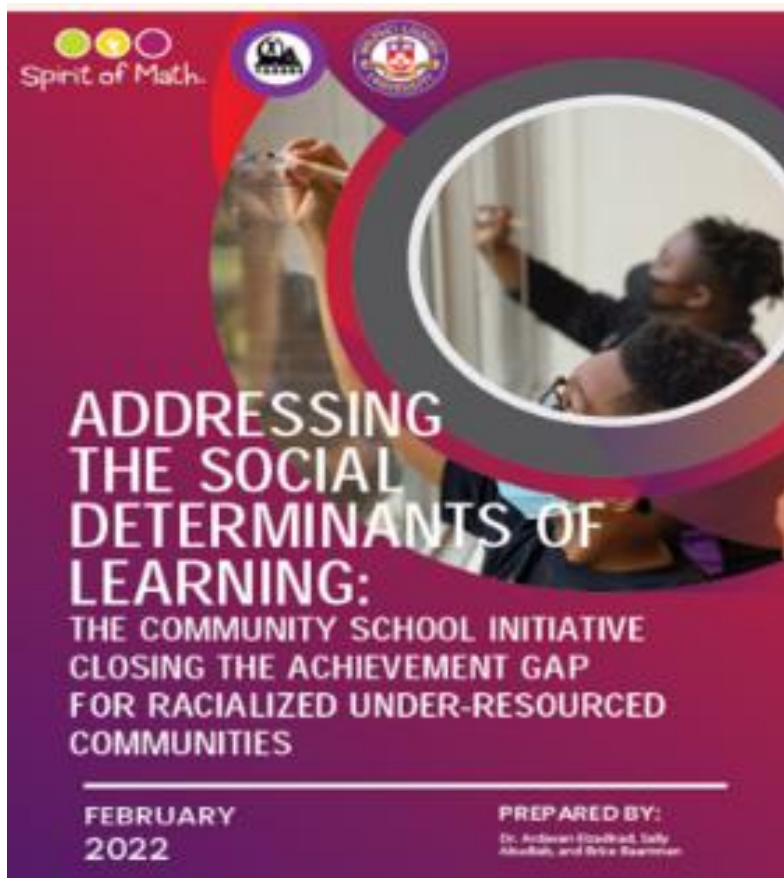
As part of knowledge mobilization, a symposium was held to share the final report with the public in association with Laurier's Faculty of Education.

We hosted various discussions with different panelists on building resilient communities by addressing the social determinants of learning. Panels with community members, students and parents within the CSI, school board trustees, Ministry of Education representatives and academics were held throughout the day.



LAURIER/WATERLOO PUBLIC LIBRARY EDTALK

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uNGGTAO0NXs&t=1448s>



FINAL REPORT

<https://www.communityschoolinitiative.com/final-report>

Join the discussion  Symposium

THE COMMUNITY SCHOOL INITIATIVE:

CLOSING THE OPPORTUNITY GAP FOR RACIALIZED & UNDER RESOURCED COMMUNITIES

FEBRUARY 26TH 2022
 45 NORFINCH AVE., NORTH YORK

PRESENTERS:

-  **DR. ARDAVAN EIZADIRAD**
Faculty of Education, Wilfrid Laurier University
-  **DEVON JONES**
Founding Director of YAMACE & TDSB Educator
-  **SALLY ABUDIAB**
Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto
-  **BRICE BAARTMAN**
OISE, University of Toronto

To Register: www.communityschoolinitiative.com/registration

SCHEDULE 10AM - 3:30PM

- 10:15 AM Executive Summary, Findings & Recommendations
- LIVE** 11:15 AM PANEL DISCUSSIONS: Community Perspective
- LIVE** 1:00 PM Students and Parents
- LIVE** 2:00 PM Leadership Panel
Theme: Misgiving Root Causes of Systemic Barriers for Teaching and Learning



*Cost is waived in place

LAURIER      Ontario 

SYMPOSIUM RECORDING

<https://www.communityschoolinitiative.com/blog>



Confronting and Teaching the Intersectionality of Anti-Muslim and Anti-Black Racism

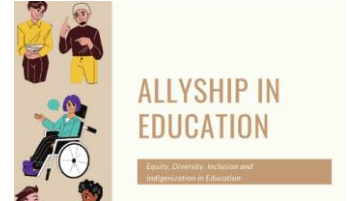
On March 8th, we brought community members together for a virtual workshop tackling the ways anti-Muslim racism cannot be removed from anti-Black racism.

From workshop facilitator Aida Al-Thayabeh, we learned that this intersectionality is commonly disregarded and the two issues are viewed as incompatible with one another. But, these two forms of hate are interconnected and continue to harm those who identify as Muslim and Black in the West.

Educators were also able to learn strategies to dismantle all forms of racism in their classrooms and pedagogies.



Allyship in Education



On April 25th, members of the EDI&I Coalition presented a workshop entitled “EDI&I in Education - Allyship” to the graduating Bachelor of Education class as part of their transition to teaching.

During this seminar, we examined how to become active allies in the classroom as educators. We discussed various case studies where Teacher Candidates were encouraged and guided on how to model social justice issues within their classroom. Together, we discussed how being an ally is not an identity we get to claim. It is an invitation to consistently challenge ourselves to actively show up for others who lack the power and privilege that we hold.

A main idea of allyship is: "What can I do and how can I do it better?". The EDI&I Coalition also provided the graduates with reputable resources that they can use in their classrooms to develop inclusive and equitable learning environments.

Discussions were held around not shying away from accountability, a commitment to challenging social constructs and understanding that this journey is an ongoing, lifelong process.



Screening of “Conviction”

On May 11th, we presented a special virtual screening of the film "Conviction" which challenges viewers to question the status quo of the prison system and how we view incarcerated communities.

The film featured the journey of several women in the carceral system in Nova Scotia and shared their ideas for a better system.

After viewing the film, we facilitated a dialogue with guest speakers including the film’s producers and two organizations who work with incarcerated communities - [Walls to Bridges](#) and [Amadeusz](#).

**To learn more about the film and view the trailer,
visit <https://www.convictiondocumentary.com/>**



Orientation Presentation and Pronoun Workshop



On September 12th, the EDI&I Coalition presented a gender pronoun workshop to Year 1 and Year 2 Teacher Candidates and members of the Laurier Bachelor of Education faculty.

We examined definitions for gender, false assumptions regarding sex, and discussed common stereotypes and assumptions about the interconnections of sex, gender, and sexuality. The presentation emphasized that the use of inclusive language use can decrease experiences of depression, social anxiety, suicidal ideation, and other negative mental health factors for Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning (2SLGBTQ+) identities.

We provided attendees with a chart to identify and learn more about the use of various pronouns by different identities. We ended the session with teaching participants how to add their pronouns to their Zoom profile to encourage a more inclusive online space.

Resources for more in depth information on pronouns were also included in the presentation. The seminar was recorded and will be posted to YouTube to reach beyond our Bachelor of Education community.



#Steps4Truth

On September 27th and 30th, we organized the #Steps4Truth mindful walk in recognition of the National Week for Truth and Reconciliation.

During the walk, participants were encouraged to reflect on the discovery of over 6000 unmarked graves of children found at the sites of former residential schools in Canada. Participants wrote messages in chalk along the path of the walk.

Photos from the event were compiled in [this video](#).



Increasing Teacher Diversity

On October 18th, the EDI&I Coalition had the privilege of hosting our first Increasing Teacher Diversity event.

Approximately fifty secondary students from equity-seeking groups in the Waterloo region were brought to campus to engage in meaningful discussions with Teacher Candidates, professors, and various Laurier staff to inspire them to consider teaching as a future career. This was done to mitigate the lack of diversity in the teaching workforce locally, provincially, and nationally. While student populations continue to be rich in diversity, teachers and administrative groups are not.

By interacting with current Teacher Candidates, students were able to ask difficult questions and gain a better understanding of what it means to be a teacher.

To begin the day, four Teacher Candidates from equity-seeking groups were part of a panel where they shared who they are and their experiences in education regarding barriers, allyship, authenticity, and proposed solutions to improve these areas in higher education.

Following our teacher panel, students had the opportunity to visit the Athletics and Recreation centre to engage in three activities which included kickboxing, yoga, and learning about student life. Students were provided with lunch and given the chance to casually interact with fellow students and members of the Coalition.

After lunch, students were given a tour of the university led by Year 1 and Year 2 Teacher Candidates. Stops were made at the Indigenous Student Centre, Faculty of Education, and the Accessible Learning Centre as well as prayer centres on campus and other key locations to learn about the types of services and amenities available to them as future university students.

The day concluded with a Human Library where Teacher Candidates, faculty, representatives from clubs or affinity groups on campus, and knowledge-keepers answered students' questions about education and learning from various intersectional backgrounds. A reporter from CBC News interviewed students, Teacher Candidates, and professors to capture the impact of the day.



Increasing Teacher Diversity cont.



CBC COVERAGE:

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/kitchener-waterloo/waterloo-region-wilfrid-laurier-university-teacher-diversity-1.6621737>





Thank you

We would like to continue to grow the EDI&I Coalition in terms of the number of people involved and its impact and connections in the community. Feel free to reach out to us or attend one of our upcoming events or initiatives in 2023.

Thank you to our event sponsors, allies, and those who endorsed the events and initiatives that we led throughout 2022, whether financially or spiritually. We appreciate your support as we turn our ideas into action.

These groups include:

- **Laurier Faculty of Education Advancement Committee**
- **Laurier Office of the Provost & Vice-President: Academic**
- **Staff and Directors of Waterloo Region District School Board and Waterloo Catholic District School Board**
- **Sun Life Financial Centre for Physically Active Communities**

With love, respect, and gratitude,

[Dr. Ardavan Eizadirad](mailto:aeizadirad@wlu.ca) aeizadirad@wlu.ca