

## **A year of challenging institutionalized racism in journalism schools across Canada**

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My research project over the summer has looked at how journalism students and alumni first called on Carleton's j-school to address institutionalized racism following the collective racial reckoning after the murder of George Floyd the world experienced last summer, the response they received from the journalism program, and what more needs to be done moving forward.

To answer these questions, I used the summer to interview two students and seven alumni who were directly involved in creating the calls to action. We talked about what their experiences had been like in the program, why they called for institutional change, and what they think of the program's response to these calls. We also talked about the role that Carleton University's journalism program — the oldest in the country and one that was created in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War — plays in leading educational, institutional, industry-wide and systemic change in Canada's media ecosystem.

For my project, I interviewed three faculty members as well: Brett Popplewell, who has been working with these students and alumni as a member of the Association of Equity and Inclusion in Journalism (AEIJ); Adrian Harewood, who was the first Black professor to join the program last fall; and Nana aba Duncan, the Carty Chair in Journalism, Diversity and Inclusion Studies who joined Carleton this July. In these interviews, I asked questions about the changes the program had been working on before the calls to action were released by the students and alumni, the changes it has worked on since, and the challenges that come with implementing long-term institutional change. I have been in the process of setting up an interview with Susan Harada, who was the outgoing program head of the School of Journalism last summer, as well as Allan Thompson who is now the program head. I am yet to hear back from them, but am hoping to speak with them before the end of this month.

Over the summer, I also met with my supervisor professor Kanina Holmes every week to create [a website for the project](#) to generate interest, a voicemail system where students and alumni who want to share their experience anonymously can leave a message, brainstorm interview questions, and navigate how to turn these interviews into a podcast. I used some of the funding I received to join a podcasting bootcamp by Courtney Kocak, a journalist and podcaster from the US. My assignments from the course received feedback from both Kocak and professor Holmes. I also invested in equipment and software like Adobe Audition that would help me better record my interviews.

Finally, I created a survey for students and alumni who would like to share their experiences but do not feel comfortable being interviewed. Answered by six students so far, the survey included questions about their experiences being students from racialized or marginalized communities and how it shaped their time in Carleton's journalism program, how the program challenges or changed the way they think about journalism and the role it plays in our societies and communities, and what have been the calls to action and/or institutional change that has been most important to them on a personal level.

I proposed this research with the idea of sharing the personal stories of the people behind the institutional change in the journalism program at Carleton University. I wanted to reflect the diversity of lived experiences of every person involved in the calls to action and the school's response to it. What I have found through my interviews and research is that when the calls to action came out, it seemed for a while that students and the school wanted separate things — that students and alumni were hungry for change, but the school was focused on maintaining the status quo. But my research has shown that is not necessarily the case — that change is almost always non-linear, uneven, and difficult to narrow down. Through the interviews, I have found that middle ground — where both students and faculty want to see a journalism school where everyone is welcome, understood, accepted and represented, but are pushing for that change in different ways. That collaboration is key, that changing the program needs every person in the program to work together.