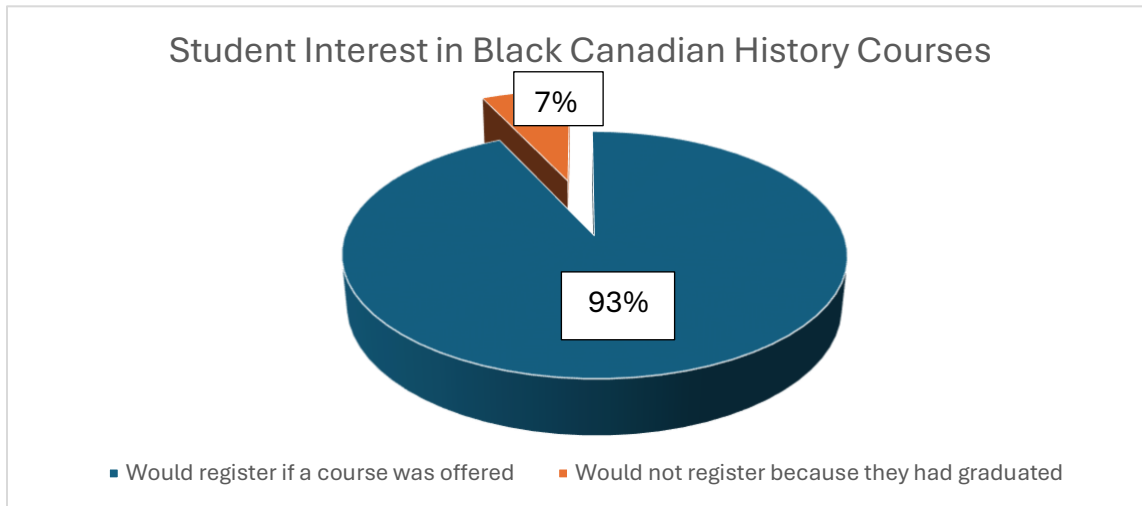


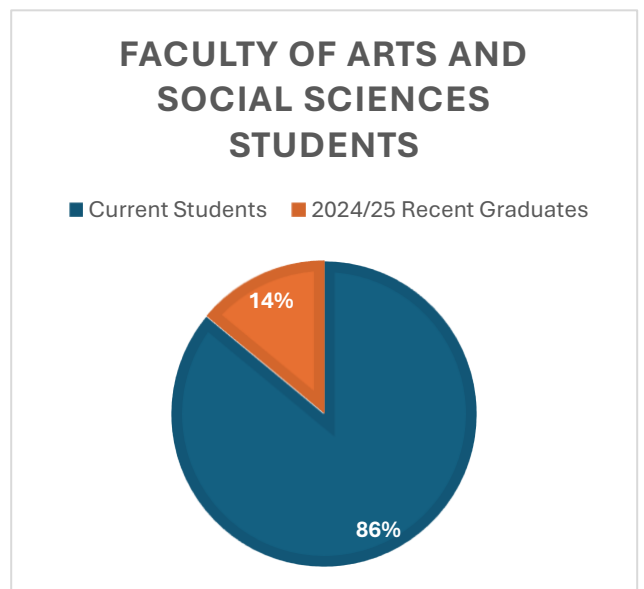
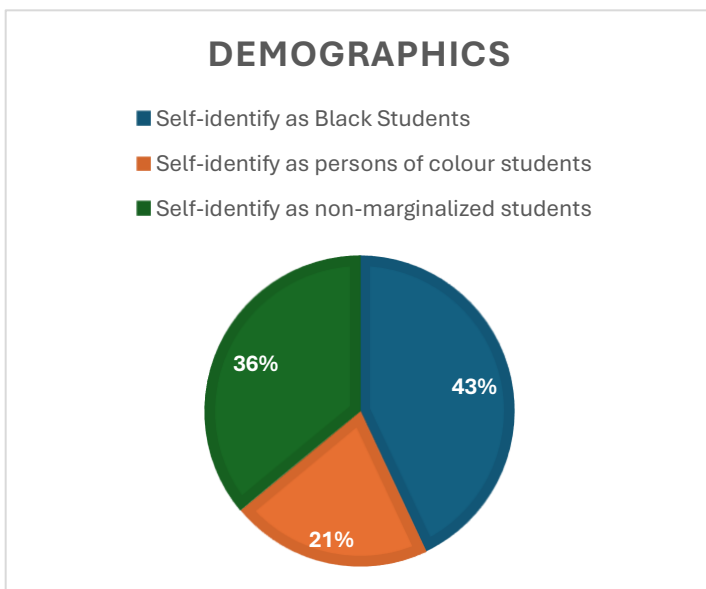
It's Time, Reclaiming Our History: Including Black Canadians in University Curricula

Carleton University students state they want to learn Black Canadian history. So, why isn't Carleton providing it? A recent qualitative study conducted over the summer of 2024, with students from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS), reveals that an overwhelming number of students feel their education is lacking representation from Black Canadians.



Study Overview

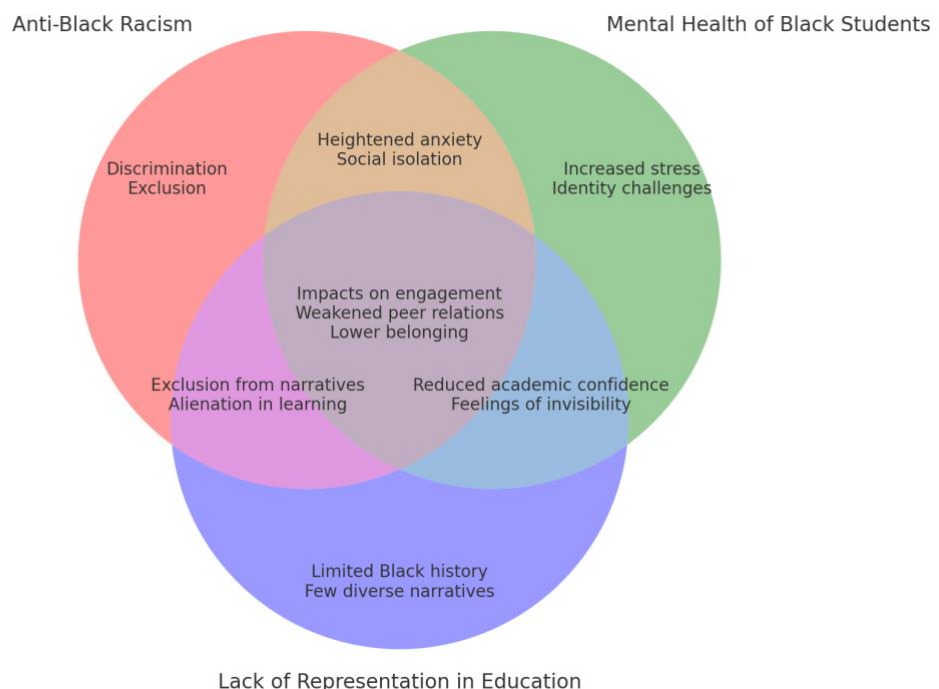
Supervised by Dr. Aaron Ettinger, the research combined data from a pool of fifteen domestic and international students, encompassing a diverse range of backgrounds – including Black students, persons of colour, and non-marginalized students. The inclusion of international students is significant, as their perspectives as visitors to Canada is often underrepresented in existing data.



When asked to describe the ways they felt or did not feel represented in the current curricula, students offered insightful responses:

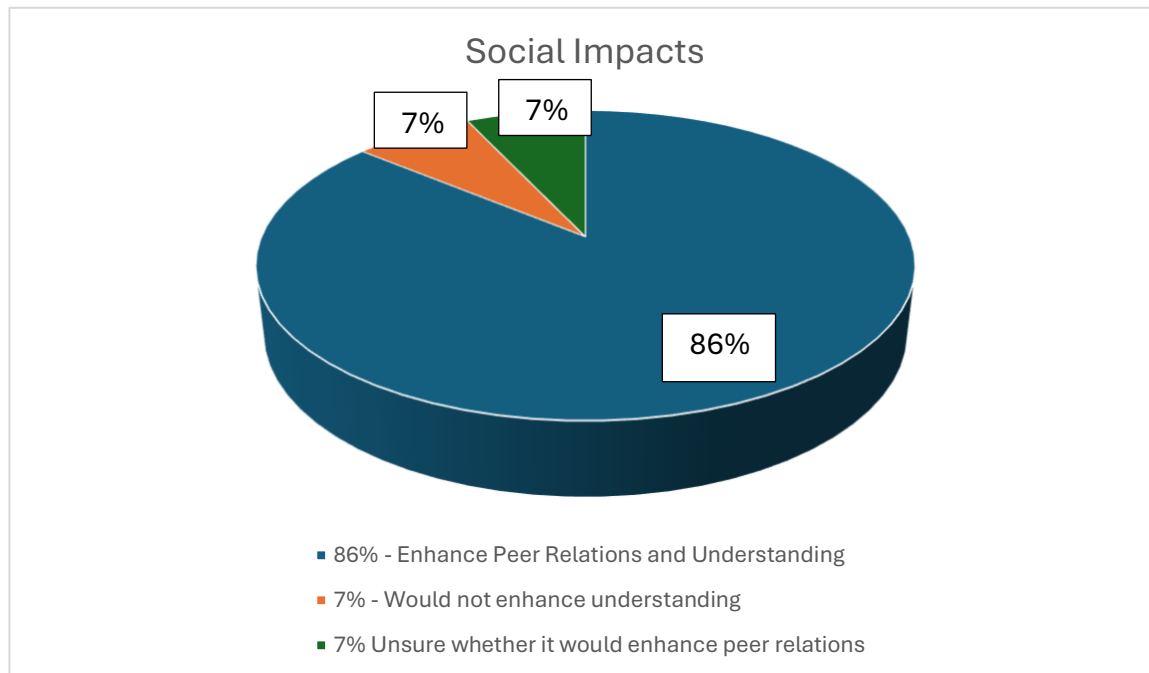
- **Overrepresentation of Eurocentric narratives:** A self-identified, white student acknowledged feeling overrepresented: “I am white, so I feel I am overrepresented in the curricula. We are missing a lot of courses on underrepresented groups.”
- **Lack of Meaningful Engagement:** One student noted disparities across various faculties: “...the courses I’ve taken at Carleton do not engage with Black representation in a meaningful way – [they] touch on historical context, significance, and the past but lack a ‘link’ to how to use that knowledge to affect and influence change now.” Conversely another student indicated, “I am also a business student and feel that there are increasingly greater ways that business courses amplify Black representation...more diverse faculty...clients we engage with, and the wider scope of projects which are community oriented.”
- **Limited Scope of Canadian History:** A student highlighted the narrow focus of history courses: “I’m white and my family immigrated in the mid-1800s, every Canadian history course represents my history. Sadly, it is pretty much the only Canadian history taught outside of Indigenous Studies classes.”

Intersections of Anti-Black Racism, Mental Health, and Lack of Representation in Education



The Venn diagram illustrates the intersections of anti-Black racism, Black students’ mental health, and the lack of representative education. The overlaps highlight how these issues affect various areas of life which compound to affect academic, social, and mental well-being.

These testimonials underscore a persistent concern among students of various backgrounds regarding the lack of inclusive content within their university studies.



Impact on Peer Relations and Sense of Belonging

The absence of courses on Black Canadian history affects more than just academic pursuits – it impacts social dynamics and interactions within the university. A significant 86% of respondents believe that the inclusion of such courses would enhance peer relations and mutual understanding. Additionally, 50% reported that the lack of representation affected their ability to relate to their peers, both online and in person.

Addressing the Gap

The demand for inclusive curricula is clear and calls for actionable steps:

1. Further Curriculum Development:
 - Introduce New Courses: Develop dedicated courses on Black Canadian history and experiences.
2. Faculty Engagement:
 - Diverse Hiring: Recruit faculty members with expertise in Black Canadian studies.
 - Provide training for faculty on inclusive teaching practices.
3. Community Involvement:
 - Collaborate with local Black communities and organizations.
 - Offer opportunities for students to engage with community initiatives.

Impact and Anticipated Benefits

1. Through implementation of the above noted steps students can experience greater academic learning while gaining a more comprehensive understanding of Canadian history.
2. Carleton will directly contribute to improved social unity on campus, fostering greater representation, empathy and mutual understanding among students.
3. An inclusive curriculum equips students with diverse perspectives, essential in preparing them for global citizenship and working in multicultural societies.

Conclusion

These findings underscore the strong demand for the inclusion of Black Canadian history in the curriculum and highlight the need for more comprehensive offerings within the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. Given this demand and its potential benefits, Carleton University should take decisive action. The administration, faculty, and stakeholders must collaborate to revise curricula, allocate necessary resources, and implement policies that ensure the inclusion of Black Canadian history. These steps will collectively foster a more inclusive, representative, and impactful educational experience, attracting future leaders to Carleton.

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