



RACIALIZED



INDIGENOUS

FACULTY



ALLIANCE

2024-2025 REPORT

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Co-Chairs

Manjeet Birk (Feminist Institute of Social Transformation)

Omeasoo Wahpasiw (Indigenous Studies)

Alexandra Arraiz Matute (Childhood and Youth Studies)

Malini Guha (Film Studies)

Carolyn Ramzy (Sociology and Anthropology)

Fady Shenouda (Feminist Institute of Social Transformation)

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The Racialized and Indigenous Faculty Association (RIFA) RIFA is an organization based upon member feedback, input, and needs. To foster and support a community network that provides the space for activism, affirmation, and mentorship, as well as create a basis for informal consultation, RIFA hosted three social events. These met with variable success. Based upon the results of each event, we devised a new social strategy for the 2025–2026 academic year.

Outcomes

After safety and academic issues were communicated at RIFA socials and through our community listserv, we took action to determine how best to ensure member safety and support. RIFA held formal and informal consultations to determine what concerns and experiences members had. To communicate this data to the University, we shared our results with Noel Badiou, Associate Vice-President, Equity and Inclusive Communities; Carleton University President Wisdom Tettey, Provost and Vice-President (Academic) L. Pauline Rankin; and Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Anne Bowker, and Associate Dean, Paul Keen.

SOCIAL AND INFORMAL CONSULTATION

RIFA hosted several events to boost community spirit, develop networks, collect input, and support mentorship amongst racialized and Indigenous faculty at Carleton. On October 2nd, 2024, approximately a dozen members gathered to share and learn at CRAFT Beer Market. This was an opportunity to provide warmth close to the anniversary of October 7, 2203, an anniversary with deep personal impact on many RIFA members. On December 10, 2024, we had excellent attendance at Beijing Palace for dinner. On February 13th, we cancelled an evening meal at Sultan Ahmet Turkish restaurant, due to weather conditions. The event was rescheduled for Thursday, February 27th, however, only a handful of members attended, despite a healthy list of accepted invitations. We also hosted a dinner at Chaya Malaysia on May 16th.

These events are excellent opportunities to build alliances, community, networks, and knowledge. For this coming year, RIFA will continue with our mission of informal mentorship and connection. This year we will host two daytime drop ins on campus, an annual Winter Social at Beijing Palace, and a family day near the end of the public school year, in mid-June. These dates include:

- Come and Go Donuts and Coffee, October 1st
- RIFA and IFC CUAG Tour and Dinner, October 2nd
- Winter Social at Beijing Palace, 5 pm
- Come and Go Donuts and Coffee (March 3, 10:30am - 12:30pm location TBD)
- Family Social, (June 13th, time and location TBD)

FORMAL CONSULTATION PROCESS

On December 5th, 2024 the Racialized and Indigenous Faculty Alliance (RIFA) held a member consultation. The purpose of the consultation was to provide a safe and inclusive space for RIFA members to express their equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) grievances and experiences amidst ongoing institutional restructuring, a university budget crisis, and imminent contract negotiations. Throughout the meeting members raised numerous systemic, community, and individual issues. Most pressing amongst these concerns include:

1. That the EDI operations appear performative and are not addressing racialized faculty concerns.
2. That instances of racism are getting worse on campus, especially targeted towards Muslim and Arab communities, as well as those who teach through an intentional settler colonial lens.
3. RIFA members expressed increased rates of direct attacks on campus and fear for their safety.
4. Members also expressed unsustainable working environments that include fewer faculty, higher workloads, including emotional support for racialized and Indigenous students, increased anxiety, mental health issues, and illness.
5. RIFA members are unsure of the role of the EIC, despite often being directed there when experiencing issues related to equity and inclusion on campus. Importantly, many RIFA members expressed feelings of ambivalence, and even feelings of distrust in approaching this office for assistance.

Also present at this event was Yavar Hameed of Hameed Law. Mr. Hameed provided insights into the several ways that RIFA members can address our concerns. These include through the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario, Labour Relations Act grievances, and/or via the Carleton University Academic Staff Association (CUASA).

To explore what actions the University is able to take in support of RIFA members, the RIFA steering committee first met with Noël Badiou, Associate Vice-President, Equity and Inclusive Communities.

EQUITY AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

RIFA Steering Committee Members met with Noël Badiou, Associate Vice-President, Equity and Inclusive Communities on January 30th, 2025.

We asked EIC the following questions:

- Where is EDI at Carleton going?
- What actions will EIC take to address the fact that both faculty and students have lost faith in the EIC office and see it as a site of secondary harm?
- Faculty have been told to stay away from EIC because the office is not in a position to question the university or act as an independent body. How does the EIC maintain independence from the university in addressing concerns on campus?
- Will the EIC support an independent body to address our concerns?
- Will EIC commit to implementing the results of the collective thinking process, particularly to address harm and lack of safety for racialized staff?
- Will the university commission a public investigation to address anti-Palestinian and anti-Arab racism, emotional labour, and psychological harm?

PRESIDENT WISDOM TETTEY AND PROVOST AND VICE-PRESIDENT (ACADEMIC) L. PAULINE RANKIN

In spring of 2024, Provost and Vice-President (Academic) L. Pauline Rankin ensured RIFA's course releases and modest budget for 2024-2025. Dr. Wisdom Tettey, one amongst several architects of the Scarborough Charter on Anti-Black Racism and Black Inclusion in Canada, Higher Education: Principles, Actions, and Accountabilities (2022), joined Carleton as University President in January of 2025. These positive developments from two key University leaders buoyed RIFA for our important discussion with Drs. Tettey and Rankin.

RIFA again presented the results of our December 2024 consultation, and suggested a modest sum to continue our work into 2024-2025, in addition to co-chair course releases. Dr. Tettey acknowledged the fractured relationship between faculty, students, and Campus Security. Drs. Tettey and Rankin addressed several options to mend this relationship that included open dialogue, better training for Campus Safety, and a separate arm of security, potentially staffed by students, to handle faculty and student concerns.

RIFA demonstrated our role to provide agency, compassion, mentorship, and tangible support to racialized and Indigenous faculty, where University offices cannot. We suggested we are the soul of the University, while University administration provides the skeleton. Regardless, Dr. Tettey focused on an Institutional response that better ensures faculty safety and workplace satisfaction. Dr. Tettey urged faculty to engage in structured, Institutional offices to address workplace concerns, and continue to facilitate and invite rigorous debate in classes. He suggested the University should offer greater safety and trust, while RIFA focuses on community and joy. Based on current institutional financial limitations, RIFA was unable to secure funding for the next calendar year.

DEAN OF THE FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES, ANNE BOWKER, AND ASSOCIATE DEAN, PAUL KEEN

Dr Anne Bowker, Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (ODFASS), approached RIFA in winter, 2025, to discuss the role of equity, diversity, and inclusion. Although ODFASS was curious to explore the option of an administrative role in charge of EDI, RIFA suggested that our members (and others) could provide support through a recognized council. RIFA would have at least one seat on the committee or council, in return for at least one course release. In response, we were returned with the affirmative, the “Dean’s Office is eager to move forward with creating an EDIA Advisory Council, organized (at a distance, in a support role) through ODFASS [and] continue conversations about how to meaningfully and adequately compensate future Council members, through course releases and other supports.” Further, RIFA and ODFASS did not consider the Council a replacement for RIFA, but an opportunity to guide and proactively create opportunities in FASS, such as workshops, conferences, and resources, especially around safety and support. RIFA continues to await the development of this Council.

CONCLUSION

RIFA's work for 2024-2025 involved a series of check-ins: with our membership, and with University administration. As we begin 2025-2026, the relationship we have with ODFASS continues to be fruitful and supportive, and we look forward to the work of the potential EDIA Advisory Council. We have made a concerted membership drive, with multiple events, postcards, posters, and stickers. Networks and mentorships continue, and community safety increases as we develop friendships and contacts. With an influx in membership, we will broaden the impact and possibilities of RIFA. We will see you there!

