

WHITE PAPER PRODUCED BY CASA.ACEA

NAME OF ISSUE: Toward Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Architecture Education in Canada

ISSUE DESCRIPTION: The Canadian Architecture Student Association (CASA) circulated a bilingual survey on diversity, equity and inclusion in July 2022. The survey's objective was to collect student's opinions and experiences related to the aforementioned topics within their architectural education journey.

CONTEXT: In order to properly address these sensitive topics as well as receive significant data, the survey questions were revised by various contributors. CASA members and Canadian diversity and education groups came together to develop these questions. The following summaries have been produced by CASA representatives to engage these concepts among students, institutions as well as provincial/national organizations and policy makers.

RELEVANCE: As addressing diversity, equity and inclusion within all contexts becomes more and more apparent, it is up to us to generate urgency through transformation in architectural curriculum, accreditation processes and architecture policy. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion is an important part in unsettling the disciplinary conventions of institutions and future architectural discourse.

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Note about this paper: CASA.ACEA members have not been professionally trained in E.D.I leadership. This paper is intended to outline student concerns, feelings and experiences without disrespecting any particular views or opinions. It is not a comprehensive listing of sources, but rather a starting point from which one can begin their research according to their information needs.

CASA-ACÉA is a national organization with members representing each of the 12 accredited architecture programs across Canada. Although there are some general trends in acknowledging the traditional territories of Indigenous peoples, there is no single wording that applies to all territories. Therefore, CASA-ACÉA acknowledges the territories on which each of the accredited architectural schools reside.

University of British Columbia (Vancouver)

We would like to begin by acknowledging that the land on which we gather is the unceded territory of the Coast Salish Peoples, including the territories of the xwməŋkwəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), Stó:lō and Səlílwətaʔ/Selilwutlh (Tseil-Waututh) Nations.

Source: <https://blogs.ubc.ca/campusenvironments/land-acknowledgments/>

University of Calgary (Calgary)

We recognize that the University of Calgary, located in the heart of Southern Alberta, both acknowledges and pays tribute to the traditional territories of the peoples of Treaty 7, which include the Blackfoot Confederacy (comprised of the Siksika, the Piikani, and the Kainai First Nations) as well as the Tsuut'ina First Nation, and the Stoney Nakoda (including Chiniki, Bearspaw, and Wesley First Nations). The university recognizes that the City of Calgary is also home to Region III of the Métis Nation of Alberta.

The University of Calgary is situated on land Northwest of where the Bow River meets the Elbow River, a site traditionally known as Moh'kins'tsis to the Blackfoot, Wîchîspa to the Stoney Nakoda, and Guts'ists'i to the Tsuut'ina. On this land and in this place we strive to learn together, walk together, and grow together "in a good way."

Source: <https://sapl.ucalgary.ca/about/equity-diversity-inclusion-and-accessibility>

University of Manitoba (Winnipeg)

The University of Manitoba campuses are located on original lands of Anishinaabeg, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota, and Dene peoples, and on the homeland of the Métis Nation.

We respect the Treaties that were made on these territories, we acknowledge the harms and mistakes of the past, and we dedicate ourselves to move forward in partnership with Indigenous communities in a spirit of reconciliation and collaboration.

Source: <https://news.umanitoba.ca/acknowledging-traditional-territories/>

Laurentian University (Sudbury)

We would like to acknowledge the Robinson-Huron Treaty of 1850. We also further recognize that Laurentian University is located on the traditional lands of the Atikameksheng Anishnawbek and that the City of Greater Sudbury, also includes the traditional lands of the Wahnapiatae First Nation. We extend our deepest respect to Indigenous peoples - as a sign of our continued relationship we will support Laurentian University's Truth and Reconciliation Task Force Recommendations. Miigwech.

Source: <https://laurentian.ca/indigenous-programs/land-acknowledgment>

University of Waterloo (Waterloo)

The University of Waterloo acknowledges that much of our work takes place on the traditional territory of the Neutral, Anishinaabeg and Haudenosaunee peoples. Our main campus is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land granted to the Six Nations that includes six miles on each side of the Grand River. Our active work toward reconciliation takes place across our campuses through research, learning, teaching, and community building, and is co-ordinated within the Office of Indigenous Relations.

Source: <https://uwaterloo.ca/indigenous/engagement-knowledge-building/territorial-acknowledgement#:~:text=The%20University%20of%20Waterloo%20acknowledges,side%20of%20the%20Grand%20River.>

Toronto Metropolitan University (Toronto)

Toronto is in the 'Dish With One Spoon Territory.' The Dish With One Spoon is a treaty between the Anishinaabe, Mississaugas and Haudenosaunee that bound them to share the territory and protect the land. Subsequent Indigenous Nations and peoples, Europeans and all newcomers have been invited into this treaty in the spirit of peace, friendship and respect.

Source: <https://www.torontomu.ca/aec/land-acknowledgment/>

University of Toronto (Toronto)

We wish to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates. For thousands of years, it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous peoples from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land with Indigenous community members.

Source: <https://www.daniels.utoronto.ca/diversity-inclusion/equity-diversity-and-inclusion-daniels-faculty>

Carleton University (Ottawa)

We/I would like to begin by acknowledging that the land on which we gather is the traditional and unceded territory of the Algonquin nation.

Source: <https://carleton.ca/indigenous/policies-procedures/algonquin-territory-acknowledgment/>

McGill University (Montréal)

McGill University is on land which has long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst Indigenous peoples, including the Haudenosaunee and Anishinabeg nations. We acknowledge and thank the diverse Indigenous peoples whose presence marks this territory on which peoples of the world now gather.

Source: <https://www.mcgill.ca/equity/initiatives-education/indigenous-initiatives/land-acknowledgement>

Université de Montréal (Montréal)

The University of Montreal acknowledges the Indigenous nations that, prior and even after the establishment of the French, encountered one another on the territory of the Island of Montreal. It also honours the memory of the Great Peace of 1701, a treaty that fostered peaceful relationships between France, its Indigenous allies and the Haudenosaunee federation. The spirit of fraternity that inspired this famous treaty serves as a model for our own university community.

Source: Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT)

Université Laval (Québec)

In the spirit of friendship and solidarity, Université Laval recognizes the First Peoples of this land. Here, at the meeting place of the Nionwentsio territory of the Huron-Wendat people, the Ndakina territory of the Wabanaki people, the Nitassinan territory of the Innu people and the Wolastokuk territory of the Wolastoqey people, we honour our shared relationships.

Source: Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT)

Dalhousie University (Halifax)

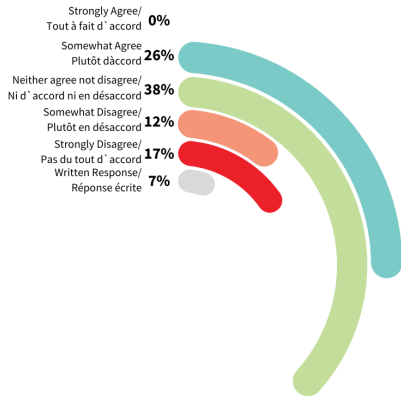
We [I] would like to begin by acknowledging that we are in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People. This territory is covered by the "Treaties of Peace and Friendship" which Mi'kmaq Wəlastəkwiyyik (Maliseet), and Passamaquoddy Peoples first signed with the British Crown in 1726. The treaties did not deal with surrender of lands and resources but in fact recognized Mi'kmaq and Wəlastəkwiyyik (Maliseet) title and established the rules for what was to be an ongoing relationship between nations.

Dalhousie University sits on the Traditional Territory of the Mi'kmaq. We are all Treaty people.

source: Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT)

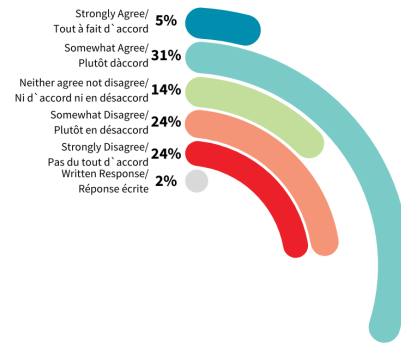
We acknowledge the historical oppression of lands, cultures and the original Peoples of this country and know we have a role to play in the path to decolonization that we share together.

We recognize our duty to fight for Indigenous rights to be restored and commit ourselves to the journey of healing. We thank the more than 630 First Nations, their people, and ancestors who have taken care of these lands that we share.



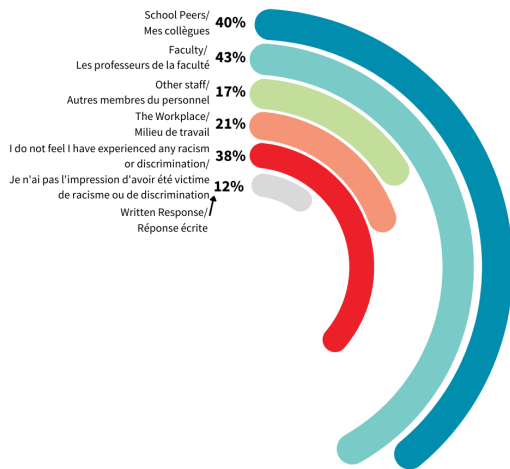
I have seen actionable efforts towards fostering an inclusive and equitable learning environment from the faculty over the past few months? / Au cours des derniers mois, j'ai vu des efforts entrepris par ma faculté pour favoriser un environnement d'apprentissage inclusif et équitable?

42 RESPONSES/ 42 RÉPONSES



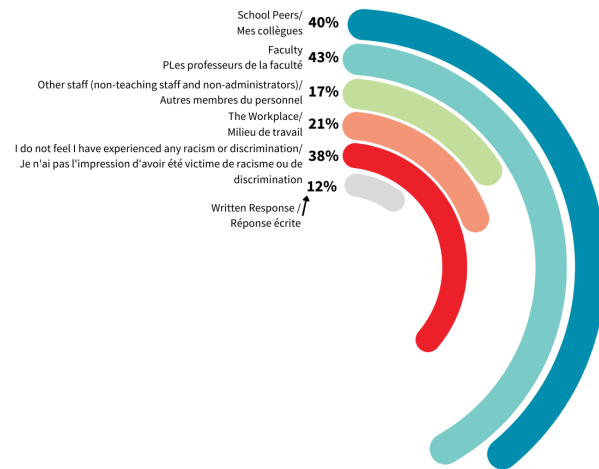
My school has initiatives for community building and mentorship that are inclusive for BIPOC LGBTQIA2S+, and other traditionally minoritized and racialized communities, traditionally marginalized communities. / Mon école a des initiatives pour le renforcement de la communauté et le mentorat qui sont inclusives pour PANDC, LGBTQIA2S+, et d'autres communautés, pratiquement et communautés traditionnellement marginalisées.

42 RESPONSES/ 42 RÉPONSES



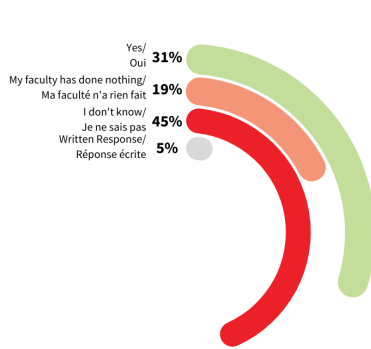
I have experienced racism or discrimination (because of how I identify) while in my architecture studies from: / J'ai été victime de racisme ou de discrimination (en raison de la façon dont je m'identifie) pendant mes études en architecture de la part de:

42 RESPONSES/ 42 RÉPONSES



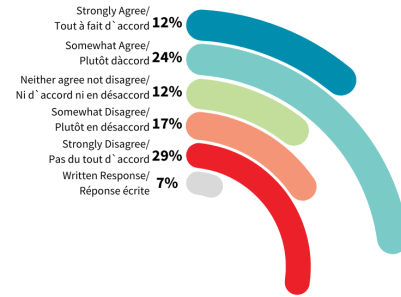
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42 RESPONSES/ 42 RÉPONSES



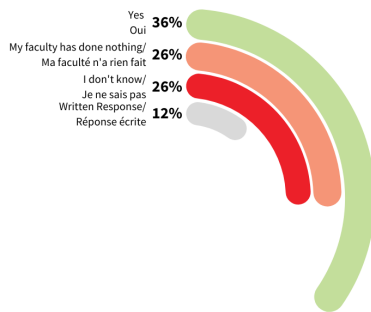
Do you know where to find your institution's equity plans? / Savez vous où trouver les plans d'équité de votre institution?

42 RESPONSES / 42 RÉPONSES



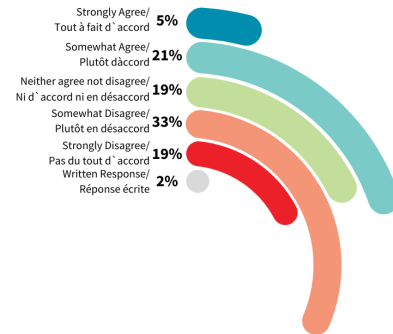
My school is taking an active approach to hiring. My school has integrated the histories, practices, precedents by and for BIPOC, LGBTQIA2S+, and other traditionally minoritized communities, practitioners and communities into the required curriculum. / Mon école adopte une approche active en matière d'embauche. Mon école a intégré les histoires, les pratiques, les précédents par et pour PANDC, LGBTQIA2S+, et d'autres communautés, praticiens et communautés traditionnellement marginalisées dans le programme d'étude.

42 RESPONSES / 42 RÉPONSES



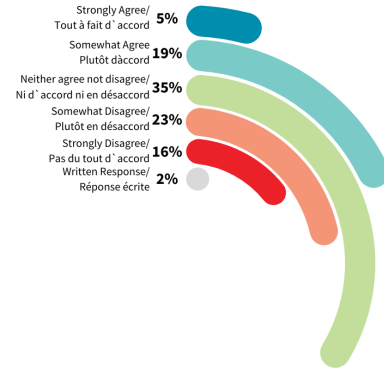
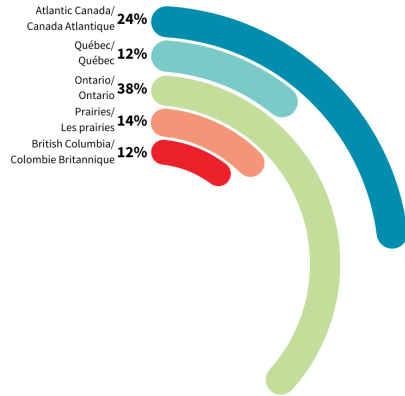
Has your institution created and released an action plan detailing steps forward, goals and policies towards equity? / Votre institution a-t-elle créé et publié un plan d'action détaillant les mesures à entreprendre, les objectifs et les politiques en matière d'équité?

42 RESPONSES / 42 RÉPONSES



My school has integrated the histories, practices, precedents by and for BIPOC/LGBTQIA2S+, and other traditionally minoritized communities, practitioners and communities into the required curriculum. / Mon école a intégré les histoires, les pratiques, les précédents par et pour PANDC, LGBTQIA2S+, et d'autres communautés, praticiens et communautés traditionnellement marginalisées dans le programme d'étude.

42 RESPONSES / 42 RÉPONSES

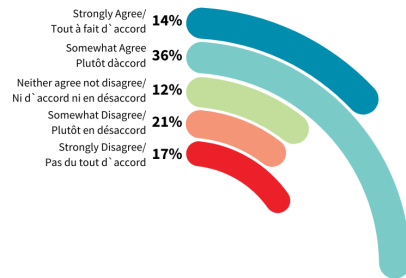
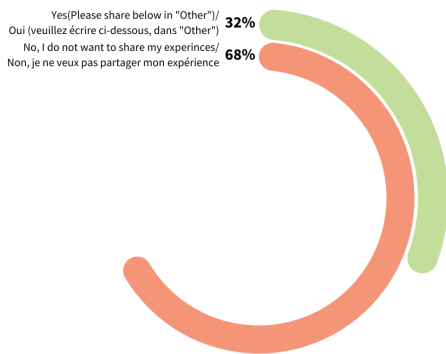


Which architecture school or Canadian region did you attend architecture school in (current and/or Alumni)? / À quelle école d'architecture assistez vous et dans quelle région se trouve-t-elle?

42 RESPONSES / 42 RÉPONSES

Since the release of your school's plan have you seen notable action from your faculty in response to anti-racism discussions? / Dupis la publication du plan de votre école, avez-vous vu des mesures notables de la part de votre faculté en réponse aux discussions sur la lutte contre le racisme?

43 RESPONSES/ 42 RÉPONSES



If you answered yes to the previous question, would you like to share your experience? / Si vous avez répondu oui à la question précédente, souhaitez vous partager votre expérience?

40 RESPONSES/ 40 RÉPONSES

I feel my voice and opinions are valued as an individual within my architecture program / Je sens que ma voix et mes opinions sont valorisées au sein de mon programme d'architecture

42 RESPONSES/ 42 RÉPONSES

The summary below is divided in three sections, each with their own theme. Firstly, we address a broad spectrum of concerns and solutions related to diversity, equity and inclusion. Then, we talk about the importance of transparency from architecture faculties regarding progressive plans and finally, we present a few student experiences.

ADDRESSING A BROAD SPECTRUM OF CONCERNS AND SOLUTIONS

Activist movements have been on the rise, campaigning to end systematic racism, for women rights and for inclusivity of underrepresented and traditionally marginalized groups. All these themes are present within architecture education in Canada. Now, more than ever, students are noticing these inequities and talking about them through surveys, social media and social movements.

The term “Intersectionality”, coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989, refers to the intersection of different types of discrimination, which can involve sexuality, age, disability, nationality or religion. The complexity behind the meaning of this term is mirrored in this paper. A broad spectrum of feelings and concerns within architecture education is described.

While 36% of survey participants somewhat agreed that their voice and opinions were valued as an individual in an architecture program, 14% strongly felt that their voice and opinions were valued and 17% strongly disagreed on this statement. Student voice is a key factor in the improvement of the current education system components in terms of equity, diversity and inclusion.

33% of students somewhat disagreed with the integration of the three aforementioned elements into the architecture curriculum at the university they attend. 19% of surveyed participants strongly disagreed. Students want to see their schools modernized from a curriculum standpoint and take up an intersectional and critically based curriculum. A modernized curriculum includes, for example, the social impacts of the Canadian architecture industry while looking at Canadian history in a critical way in terms of global colonialism and racism. A curriculum of this kind recognizes how architecture has been used as a tool for violence in the past and the present and celebrates how architecture can, in turn, be used to eliminate exclusivity. It is important to acknowledge that the process of incorporating equity, diversity and inclusivity into architecture education is not limited to bringing more diverse voices to architectural history, theory and curricula, it goes beyond that. *“I see the problem starting at the point of application. Architecture school application process is extremely exclusive.”* one student says.

Supporting underrepresented young adults can come in several forms. It can range from developing more flexible and inclusive application processes to offering services these groups might not have access to due to personal circumstances. One of our survey participants reveals what may be part of a solution. This architecture student talks about school insurance plans offering healthcare for transgender individuals. *“[...] Extend grants and bursaries to trans students because we are the most likely to have been homeless as youth, [...] we are one of the most marginalized communities in society who face the highest rates of violence and suicide.”*

Covid impacted our lives, but some were more impacted than others. Immunocompromised students are among one of them. It was a difficult time for immunocompromised students when the Schools of Architecture created measures to keep students safe during Covid. There was no clear plan to implement and enforce restrictions throughout the pandemic, leading to the following question: Do the constructed measures account for vulnerable situations? One student says: *“On top of the heavy workload that a majority of students experience, I was constantly faced with the fear of getting sick or becoming more disabled than I already am...”*

There is also a lack of inclusive approaches in architecture programs that cater to the needs of students with disabilities. Architecture curriculum calls for long hours in the studio, model making and site visits. These activities require a lot of movement and we often forget that certain students need further assistance. Some students might feel left out if assistance is not provided. Being aware of visible but also invisible disabilities should be part of a progressive strategy. *“Students with disabilities, especially invisible ones, don’t get nearly enough support.”*- Surveyed student

Teachers, mentors, directors, and the rest of faculty are responsible for guiding architecture students through their studies and being aware of student needs. A diverse faculty community is essential to creating mentors for students. Unfortunately, students in the survey strongly believe that their school has not made actionable efforts to foster an inclusive and equitable learning environment during the last months of the 2021-2022 academic year. Various students mention that common western hiring practices do not consider different backgrounds and unconventional experiences. Updating these hiring practices would contribute to creating an inclusive environment within the Schools of Architecture. 29% of surveyed students strongly disagree on their school taking an active approach to diverse hiring. In another statement, 24% strongly disagreed that their school has initiatives for community building and mentorship that are inclusive for BIPOC, LGBTQIA2S+, and other traditionally marginalized and racialized communities.

TRANSPARENCY FROM FACULTY REGARDING PROGRESSIVE PLANS

Students expressed their confusion towards actionable inclusive efforts undertaken by faculty members and leaders. 35% neither agree or disagree on the fact that they have noticed concrete actions from their faculty in response to anti-racism discussions. In fact, 45% of surveyed students do not know where to find their institution’s equity plans. In response, students left written comments on the survey that mention that it is the students who are creating and mobilizing the action plan to their classmates. One student mentions: *“[...] a group of students exposed many wrong doings. The school put out a brief statement and formed a committee for inclusivity [...]. However if this is the only action that is done, all the responsibility is on student and staff/faculty volunteers who are passionate about the subject, while allowing other staff/faculty to sit out of the conversation.”* Another student says: *“if E.D.I initiatives are happening, I would like my school to increase student awareness of these efforts to include more people in those conversations and actions.”* Forums and activist groups are sharing concrete action plans for policy updates, among others, with students. Therefore, architecture schools should generate conversations surrounding inclusivity and incorporate those topics into their curriculum.

STUDENT EXPERIENCES

Issues of unconscious bias in hiring practices and design methodologies must be confronted. Architectural design excellence will be achieved if diversified design solutions are developed, encouraged and celebrated. Indigenous groups have traditional knowledge that have proven to bring unique and effective design solutions to architectural projects. Students communicated that faculty members do not take indigenous people seriously. One student says: *“I would like my school to incorporate indigenous voices as a matter of course and with the value we provide through our work. I do not appreciate the constant signaling of our good virtue and intentions as an institution. An architecture school should have a mission to train the best possible architects, and hire people who can make that goal a reality.”*

Architecture students have shared personal situations where they have experienced discrimination and/or racism. They lack a strong support system within their learning environment, there is no one to turn to which negatively impacts their progress in their studies and sequentially in the field. 40% of surveyed students have experienced racism or discrimination from their peers while in architecture school because of how they identify. Furthermore, 43% said they experienced racism or discrimination from faculty members.

Conversely, there are some students who expressed more positive experiences. Examples like these are also quite helpful in transforming the paradigm of architecture education in Canada. *“In a way the Syllabus program has less socio-cultural barriers because it isn’t a brick and mortar institution and it is/was provided on a national level. It allowed me to study architecture in my milieu, Acadie, providing both opportunity and security. I would never have delved as deeply into my own history and culture, from an architectural standpoint, if I had moved to a bigger center. I wouldn’t have had the support of my community and in turn contributed to my heritage and culture if I had studied elsewhere. [...] I feel that an education that allows one to benefit from an established culture, situation, and support structure, is an important asset in this world.”*

Student, provincial, and federal groups can collect data that break down minority groups in Canada. *“Data is impactful when it is precise. That’s why it’s important and useful. Otherwise, it is useless and only adds noise to a topic that is genuinely important to our built world and profession. Focus on who reads this data, why it’s important, and what change it could inform...”* - Surveyed student. Our hope with this paper is to ignite conversations around diversity, inclusion and equity that will turn into concrete actions supported by all students, faculty, professionals, policy makers and everyone else willing to make a change within Canadian architecture education.