



THE CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL ACADEMIC LIBRARIANS
L'ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DES BIBLIOTHÉCAIRES EN ENSEIGNEMENT SUPÉRIEUR

CAPAL Supports Academic Librarians and the Profession

CAPAL-ACBES stands in solidarity with Black communities in Canada, the United States, and those around the world who continue to experience the effects of violent, racist systems, and a culture supported and maintained by police and military brutality. George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, David McAtee, and Regis Korchinski-Paquet are the most recent casualties of a society built on the principles of whiteness, through slavery and conquest.

Canada was created through and is actively entrenched in systemic racism. We have many examples, past and present, of violence and legalized discrimination against Black, racialized, and Indigenous peoples, including but not limited to the enslavement of Black and Indigenous peoples, historical segregation, the Indian Act, the Chinese Head Tax, Japanese internment camps, the Residential School system, and the ongoing [MMIWG2S](#) genocide. The systems that exist today in what-is-now-known as Canada were established with the arrival of the very first European settlers and perpetuated on lands stolen from Indigenous peoples. We are born of violence.

We call on our political leaders to explore alternatives to excessive policing of Canadian Black communities: “Each year, police budgets generally increase. But rather than increased safety, all we see is increased militarization and criminalization” (Hudson, 2020). This latest spree of violence against Black and racialized people, including the murder of Chantal Moore this week, is yet more evidence that police are untrained and uninterested in deescalation and ill-equipped to provide service to communities wishing to divest themselves of the trappings of white supremacy.

We must acknowledge the place of libraries and knowledge institutions in a system that supports, maintains, and reinforces anti-Black racism. Libraries are “paralyzed by whiteness” (Galvan, 2015), through microaggressions; hiring practices; White-coded assumptions of “professionalism”; false White Savior narratives; and our unwillingness to address the aforementioned. Vocational awe that invests itself in myths of librarianship as inherently anti-oppressive blinds us to the fact that “each value on which librarianship prides itself is inequitably distributed amongst society” (Ettarh, 2018). Librarianship claims to hold diversity at its core yet lacks diversity in its membership and, therefore, its actions and activities.

As an association we will:

- Examine our processes, training, and priorities for explicit and implicit biases that maintain structural support for racist practices;
- Actively seek increased participation from our underrepresented members, as suggested in the Ontario Library Association and other library associations’ statements;
- Review our memberships in other associations (CFLA-FCAB, Federation of Humanities and Social Sciences, IFLA) to evaluate their alignment with anti-racist work; and
- Commit to organizing future conferences exploring anti-racist and anti-oppressive themes.

We encourage our membership to do the following:

- Take concrete actions to displace inherent racism in our institutions and practices when opportunities arise;
- To listen unequivocally to our colleagues from affected and oppressed communities;
- Donate to and support bail funds and organizations that counter colonialism and anti-Black racism;
- Embrace and promote critical reflection through critical pedagogy at our places of work;
- Examine collections, catalogues, materials, instruction, and reference services to ensure we do not promote false neutrality;
- Advocate for active diversity in recruitment, retention, and promotion; and,
- Work with our institutions and libraries to disrupt inherent structural racism in our hiring practices, retention efforts, and student outreach activities.

We will do better.

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