



KPU's Fourth Annual Anti-Racism Symposium

Hosted by the Office of Equity and Inclusive Communities

Monday, March 23, 2026

Doors open at 8:30 a.m. – light breakfast served

9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. – program

KPU Surrey Conference Centre, Cedar Building

MC: Andhra Goundrey, Dean, Wilson School of Design

Program Schedule

9:00 Opening – Elder-in-Residence, Lekeyten

9:05 Welcome and Opening Remarks – Dr. Diane Purvey, Acting President

9:10 Opening Remarks and Updates – Dr. Asma Sayed, VP Equity and Inclusive Communities

9:20 Introduction of PS Amna Shah – Zena Mitchell, VP Students

9:23 Remarks by the Parliamentary Secretary for Anti-Racism, Amna Shah

9:35 Announcing the Black Excellence Awards – Zahra Mohamud, OEIC

9:50 Health Break

10:05 Introduction of Keynote Speaker – Dr. Asma Sayed, VP Equity and Inclusive Communities

10:10 Keynote Address – Dr. Eniola Salami (followed by Q&A)

11:20 Lunch and Networking

12:30 Academic Panels – Presentations by KPU Students and Employees

Panel 1: Advancing Anti-Racism at KPU: Projects and Resources [12:30 – 2:00 pm]

1. Untold Stories: Conversations with KPU Students, Alumni and Staff About Inclusion, Belonging and Accessibility in The Workplace and Classroom

- Lindsay Wood
- Usha Gunatilake

2. Translanguaging in Action as an Anti-Racist Practice

- Shaila Shams
- Dr. Alice Macpherson

- Muskandeep Kaur
 - Manvinder Rayat
3. Anti-Racist Pedagogy Tool Kit: Designing for Equitable Learning Environments
- Dr. Nishan Perera
 - Daniel Benzimra
4. Brian Deer Classification, Shifting Colonial Narratives in Library Spaces
- Rachel Chong
 - Cleire Lauron

2:00 – 2:15 Health Break

Panel 2: From Experience to Action: Voices Challenging Racism in Higher Education

Organized by KPU Arts Committee on Faculty and International Student Success with:

- Pedro dos Santos, Educational Studies Instructor
- Dr. Lilach Marom, Assistant Prof., Faculty of Education, SFU
- Jasmeen Kaur, BA Criminology, KPU
- Coral Santana, BA Film Studies, UBC
- Amandeep Singh Dhillon, BA Criminology, KPU

3:30-4:00 Networking

Keynote Address

White Coat, Black Girl: A Personal and Professional Reckoning with Racism in Medicine

Medicine often presents itself as objective and neutral, yet racial inequities remain deeply embedded in its structures, cultures, and everyday practices. Further, speaking about these realities is frequently ignored and dismissed. In this talk, I weave my lived experience of anti-Black racism in clinical and academic work to examine how racism shapes medical training, professional identity, and patient care.

Drawing on personal narrative as a Black woman in medicine alongside evidence and practice-based examples, this talk explores how credibility, belonging, and authority are racialized within medical spaces. The presentation challenges the myth of neutrality in healthcare and reframes anti-racism as essential clinical and ethical work rather than an optional moral stance. Participants will be invited to reflect on their own positionality and will leave with concrete strategies to engage in anti-racist practice at the individual, interpersonal, and institutional levels.

Dr. Eniola Salami is an Assistant Clinical Professor in the Department of Family Medicine at the University of Alberta and the inaugural Black Health Lead for the University of Alberta Undergraduate Medical Program.

She is a family physician working in a full service academic clinical practice in South Edmonton. Dr. Eniola Salami has an MD from the University of Alberta, and a BHSc with a concentration in Health & Society from the University of Calgary.

She is a member of several national and provincial boards, and is a passionate advocate for anti-racist clinical education and Black health.



ABSTRACTS

Panel 1: Advancing Anti-Racism at KPU: Projects and Resources

1. Untold Stories: Conversations with KPU Students, Alumni and Staff About Inclusion, Belonging and Accessibility in The Workplace and Classroom

- Lindsay Wood, Applied Communications Instructor, Melville School of Business
- Usha Gunatilake, Student, Faculty of Arts

Learn about a new KPU Open Educational Resource that amplifies the voices of marginalized KPU students and educators and explores themes of inclusion, belonging, accessibility, and allyship in classrooms and workplaces. Through personal narratives, case studies, and reflective activities, this resource invites readers to listen deeply, engage in honest dialogue, and take meaningful action toward equity. It is both a call to change systems and a celebration of student agency, offering hope and insight for anyone committed to creating inclusive learning and working environments

2. Translanguaging in Action as an Anti-Racist Practice

- Shaila Shams, Learning Strategist, (PhD Candidate, ABD), The Learning Centre
- Dr. Alice Macpherson, Learning Strategist, The Learning Centre
- Muskandeep Kaur, Peer Tutor
- Manvinder Rayat, Peer Tutor

The common assumption in post-secondary learning that students should only think in the language of instruction is a complex form of systemic racism and discrimination. Translanguaging is a way to challenge this assumption with positive actions that support individual learning while helping the learner acquire fluency in a new language.

Using the strengths of Peer Tutors in The Learning Centres at KPU with coaching from faculty Learning Strategists, we encourage learners to think deeply about course content through a multiple level approach that embodies “Where Thought Meets Action.”

3. Anti-Racist Pedagogy Tool Kit: Designing for Equitable Learning Environments

- Dr. Nishan Perera, Director, Educational Development, Teaching & Learning Commons
- Daniel Benzmira, Teaching & Learning Strategist, Teaching & Learning Commons

This presentation introduces practical ways to use Tools from the KPU Anti-Racist Pedagogy Tool Kit to support designing equitable and inclusive learning experiences for all students and instructors. How to use the Tool Kit, and with specific focus on one or two Tools, will be explored with actionable strategies and key takeaways that are easy to implement and maintain.

4. Brian Deer Classification, Shifting Colonial Narratives in Library Spaces

- Rachel Chong, KPU Librarian
- Cleire Lauron, KPU Librarian

Traditional library classification systems – the way material is organized - are embedded with racist, colonial ideology. KPU Library has implemented a radical reimagining, implementing Brian Deer Classification (BDC), which prioritizes Indigenous knowledges. The BDC elevates locality and relationality within library spaces, shifting the way we interact with information and the world around us.

Panel 2: From Experience to Action: Voices Challenging Racism in Higher Education

Organized by KPU Arts Committee on Faculty and International Student Success with:

Moderator:

- Pedro dos Santos, Educational Studies Instructor

Panelists:

- Dr. Lilach Marom, Assistant Prof., Faculty of Education, SFU
- Jasmeen Kaur, BA Criminology, KPU
- Coral Santana, BA Film Studies, UBC
- Amandeep Singh Dhillon, BA Criminology, KPU

This panel brings together students from Canadian higher education and a researcher to explore how experiences of racism affect students' motivation, academic performance, and sense of belonging in higher education.

Panelists will share lived experiences alongside research insights to help audiences better understand the academic and emotional impacts of racism. The discussion will also highlight anti-racist supports and practical ways institutions and educators can better support students.

PARTICIPANT BIOGRAPHIES

Benzimra, Daniel: Daniel Benzimra is a life-long learner with broad experience in K–12 and higher education. As a Teaching and Learning Strategist, he collaborates with educators to support student success through evidence-based and student-centered practices. Passionate about inclusive learning, assessments, and intentional design, Daniel is committed to fostering educator growth. Outside work, he enjoys the outdoors, movies, and fishing.

Chong, Rachel: Rachel Chong, MLIS (she/her) is the Indigenous Initiatives and Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Librarian at KPU Library. She is also a citizen of Métis Nation BC via her maternal grandfather. Rachel supports the modified Brian Deer Indigenous Classification system and the development of KPU Library's ʔəχwəχwəyəm Indigenous Collection.

Dhillon, Amandeep Singh: Amandeep Singh Dhillon recently graduated from KPU with a BA in Criminology. His academic interests include social justice, equity, law, and systemic reform. His undergraduate research examined intra-ethnic othering of Punjabi international students in Canada. He has over six years of experience in immigration consulting and is an incoming Juris Doctor candidate at Thompson Rivers University (Class of 2029).

Gunatilake, Usha: Usha Gunatilake is a fourth-year student at KPU pursuing a double major in English and Creative Writing. Her creative works have been published in Pulp Magazine and SprayPaint Magazine, and her essay appears in Alight Journal. Usha is an aspiring author and teacher who loves to spend her time poring over intriguing word combinations accompanied by a cozy cup of tea.

Kaur, Jasmeen: Jasmeen Kaur is a Criminology Honours graduate with Distinction from KPU whose research centers racialized and immigrant communities. Her award-winning thesis examined online hate targeting Indian international students. She is currently involved in research on South Asian women's health and the drug crisis affecting post-secondary students, with a strong commitment to equity and justice.

Kaur, Muskandeep: Muskandeep Kaur is a Science and Mathematics Peer Tutor at The Learning Centers. She is pursuing a Bachelors in Health Sciences with a minor in Biology and Counselling at KPU. Additionally, she spends time as a volunteer research assistant at the molecular and cell biology lab at KPU. Her academic interests span the intersections of health, science, and human wellness, and she is passionate about making complex scientific concepts accessible and approachable for all learners.

Lauron, Cleire: Cleire Lauron, MLIS (she/her) is the Metadata & Discovery Librarian at KPU Library, where she is responsible for providing oversight in the creation, maintenance, and enrichment of metadata representing the library's physical and digital collections. Her most recent project is the implementation of a modified Brian Deer Indigenous Classification System to organize KPU Library's ɣʷəɣʷéyəm Indigenous Collection.

Macpherson, Alice: Dr. Alice Macpherson is a faculty member in The Learning Centres where she works with students and faculty to support learning in personally relevant ways that honour individual diversity and strengths. Her commitment to the gifts that each person brings to the learning community is long standing and deeply held with roots in inclusion, anti-racism, and decolonization within the educational environment.

Marom, Lilach: Lilach Marom is an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University. Her research centres the experiences of racialized, Indigenous, and international students, examining how structural and systemic barriers shape belonging, access, and success in Canadian post-secondary institutions.

Perera, Nishan: Nishan Perera, Director of Educational Development at the Teaching and Learning Commons, leads a team that supports faculty through training, resources, and

consultation. He holds a doctorate in educational technology and learning design, brings extensive experience in teaching and curriculum design, advocates for inclusive learning, and enjoys mountain biking, gardening, and hiking.

Rayat, Manvinder: Manvinder Rayat is an Information Technology Peer Tutor at the Learning Centers. He is pursuing a Bachelors in Technology with a minor in Cooperative Education. He leads the Kwantlen I.T. Club, represents students at the Melville Standing Committee for Education Quality and Chairs the IEEE KPU Student Branch. He is passionate about advancing technical literacy & machine biases that shape our society's progress.

Santana, Coral: Coral Santana (they/she) is a Dominican storyteller, equity consultant & producer based in Vancouver, BC. Their work centers on decolonization, equity, consent, and deconstructing her own history and stories in order to find the truth behind the disguise of white supremacist and patriarchal comfort. Coral most recently served as Equity Consultant for CBC Gem's "Locals Welcome".

Santos, Pedro dos: Pedro dos Santos is an instructor in the Department of Educational Studies, KPU, and a Ph.D. candidate in the Faculty of Education, SFU. He is interested in international student mobility, social semiotics, epistemologies from the South, and teaching and learning in higher education. He is currently the chair of the KPU Arts Committee on Faculty and International Student Success.

Shams, Shaila: Shaila Shams is a learning strategist in the KPU Learning Centres. She is also a PhD candidate in the Languages, Cultures, and Literacies program in the Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University. Her research interests include but are not limited to the study of applied linguistics in relation to globalization, migration, race, and intersectionality of identities.

Wood, Lindsay: Lindsay Wood is a Business Instructor at KPU with over 20 years' experience teaching applied communication, career education, and intercultural learning. A recipient of KPU's 2022 JEDI Award, she works to create learning spaces where students feel seen, heard and supported. Lindsay holds an MA in Leadership and is the author of the OER Untold Stories on inclusion in education and workplaces.

