Report Number: BOG-2025-100

To: Board of Governors

From: Jennifer Cosway, Associate Vice President, Human Resources and Equity, and Sadie Goddard-Durant, Director, Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Date of Report: December 1, 2025

Date of Meeting: December 10, 2025

Subject: Harassment and Discrimination Prevention and Response Policy Annual Report

1.   Purpose

This report provides a statistical and narrative account of the implementation and effectiveness of Durham College's Harassment and Discrimination Prevention and Response Policy, specifically:

- The number and type of complaints reported by students, faculty or staff including a general description/ categorization of the complaints (e.g., verbal, physical, property), including the number of complaints that do not proceed to a review.

- As applicable, the associated Code group (e.g., ethnicity, race, religion, sexual orientation) and the sub-category (e.g., anti-Black racism, anti-Indigenous racism, antisemitism and Islamophobia).

- Outcomes of these incidents including response and resolution timelines (e.g., the number of months to resolve a complaint), findings of investigations, disciplinary measures taken and any involvement of law enforcement

- Efforts to proactively assess and address signs of systemic discrimination and create an inclusive environment free from discrimination and hate.

This report will also be submitted to the Ministry of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security.

(Ministry of Colleges and Universities Strengthening Accountability and Student Supports Act 2024, S.O.2024, c.11-Bill 166)

2.   Recommendation

This report is being presented for information only.

3.   Background

On May 16, 2024, Ontario amended the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act (the "Act") with the Strengthening Accountability and Student Supports Act, 2024. This legislation articulated new requirements for Ontario's publicly assisted colleges and universities to have policies and rules that describe how each institution will address and combat racism and hate, including but not limited to anti-Indigenous racism, anti-Black racism, antisemitism and Islamophobia. The Minister's Directives issued on September 9, 2024, provided more specific details on these requirements, namely that each institution must:

1.   Make centralized platforms available for campus communities to access all the necessary information in alignment with the legislative and directive requirements;

2.   Ensure all anti-racism/anti-hate policies and rules apply to students, faculty, staff, management and visitors, including guest speakers;

3.   Ensure development and review of these policies are grounded in a human rights approach in alignment with obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code, including the obligation to both proactively; assess and address signs of systemic discrimination and respond to, investigate and remedy claims of discrimination or harassment that are raised in a timely effective and proportionate manner;

4.   Demonstrate compliance by providing an annual report to its board of governors on the implementation and effectiveness of its anti-racism/anti-hate policies and rules.

Durham College updated the Harassment and Discrimination Prevention and Response Policy (ADMIN 202) in compliance with this initiative in January 2025. In accordance with its regular annual review cycle, the Policy was enhanced based on feedback from the college community and emerging best practices. Key updates include:

1. Use of an equity and inclusion lens to enhance processes;

2. Enhancement of process for receiving and addressing anonymous concerns;

3. Articulation of the relationship between behaviors covered under this policy and freedom of speech;

4. Clarification of the responsibilities of campus community members;

5. Explanation of reporting requirements;

6. Expansion of prevention initiatives.

The efforts of the Human Resources and Equity department to implement the Minister's Directives are reported herein.

4.   Discussion/Options

4.1   The Implementation and Effectiveness of this Policy

The Harassment and Discrimination Prevention and Response Policy was enhanced in January 2025. These enhancements were grounded in an external review of current state to support alignment, consistency and identify gaps/needs; and consultation during Fall 2024 with students, employees and community partners. These revisions reflect current legislative requirements; emerging best practices on racism, and human rights related topics; and evolving understandings of how harassment and discrimination manifest within post-secondary environments in general and at Durham College in particular. Through the work associated with this policy, Durham College continues to advance its commitment to preventing and responding to incidents of harassment and discrimination through a comprehensive and evolving approach. Over the past year, the College expanded its preventative efforts to include a broader range of activities, such as education on systemic and interpersonal forms of discrimination and rights and responsibilities of all campus community members under the Human Right Code; and strengthened mechanisms for responding to complaints, including development of a formal case management process.

4.2   Prevention Activities

The College recognizes that prevention activities are crucial to addressing systemic and interpersonal discrimination, harassment, and hate. Primarily through the work of the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Program Advisor and Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Program Coordinator in the Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (OEDI), the College's prevention activities this year focused on equipping Durham College students and employees with knowledge about the lived experiences of equity-deserving communities, and the knowledge, skills,

and resources needed to uphold human rights and facilitate equity and inclusion, and respond appropriately to human rights violations; and facilitating wellbeing activities for students and employees from equity-deserving groups, especially during days/months of awareness commemorating historical and contemporary oppression.

4.3   Information Sharing

4.3.1 Commemorating Days of Awareness

The intentional recognition of days of awareness continues to be a key prevention tool. Recognition initiatives serve to educate, build cultural understanding, and foster a more inclusive campus climate. These efforts are organized into two primary groupings: Cultural and Creed-based Celebrations, and Acknowledgements of Historical and Contemporary Oppression.

4.3.2 Cultural Celebrations

17 culturally significant days were commemorated to honor the diverse identities and traditions of equity-deserving members of our community. These observances included:

- Social media posts: offering well-wishes, promoting awareness about the origin and intention of the celebration, and sharing community-based activities.

- Calendar updates providing context on the origins of each celebration and describing practices that observers may engage in.

- Campus-wide messaging reinforced the importance of cultural recognition and respectful engagement.

4.3.3. Acknowledgements of Historical and Contemporary Oppression

15 days were recognized to acknowledge the lived experiences of hate, violence, and systemic discrimination. These observances were supported by:

- Student communications that provided education on the significance of each day, emphasized collective responsibility to challenge oppression, and offered resources for reporting harassment and discrimination, as well as healing supports for affected communities.

- Employee communications shared through institutional digital portals that included guidance on supporting students and peers, accessing personal support, addressing harassment and discrimination in classrooms and workspaces, and engaging in extended learning.

- Calendar updates that named the specific forms of oppression being acknowledged and provided historical and present-day context.

- Social media posts that raised awareness and issued calls to action for the campus community and its broader networks to actively confront hate and discrimination.

4.3.4 Policy and Resource Awareness

Our commitment to fostering an inclusive and respectful campus environment is grounded in ensuring that all members of our community are aware of their rights, responsibilities, and available supports. Throughout the year, education and resource mobilization to prevent and address discrimination and harassment were prioritized. We provided targeted information sessions and resources to enhance awareness among students and employees:

- Rights and Responsibilities under the College's anti-racism and anti-hate policies and human rights legislation.

- Supports offered by the OEDI, including human rights consultations, steps to make a human rights complaint, inclusion consultations, and programs for equity-deserving communities.

- Community and On-Campus Resources

To mobilize this information, we engaged our campus community through:
- Departmental meetings

- Tabling at student events

- Email updates

- Employee website

- College newsletters

4.4   Campus Culture Initiatives

   4.4.1 Wellness Programs

   During this reporting period, most of our wellbeing initiatives focused on creating spaces for community connection and gathering feedback through consultations about barriers to equity and inclusion at the College to inform the upcoming EDI Action Plan (outlined in detail in the next section).

   In addition, we commemorated International Women's Day with a week of events addressing barriers faced by women-identifying members of our campus community. Highlights included:

   4.4.2   Community Partnerships: Guest speakers addressing women's health needs and supports.

   - Celebrating Diversity: DC's first Women X Fitness event in the campus gym, creating an inclusive space for anyone who identifies as a woman.
   - Self-Care Resources: Free spa services and wellness activities.
   - Amplifying Voices: Showcasing stories of perseverance from local and international activists, including advocacy for educational equity and supports for women in trades.

   4.4.3   Community Collaborations

   - Community of Practice

   This reporting year, we met with community partners to learn about the work they are doing to promote access to higher education for equity-deserving communities and gauge their interest in engaging with Durham College to advance their efforts while contributing to the guidance of ours. As a result of these meetings, we were able to bring new resources to campus, promote college marketing events, and introduce collaborative opportunities across the college. One such initiative was the partnership between the Campus Health Centre and our local community health centre to establish health promotion, testing, and treatment initiatives for Black-identifying students.

   Building on these partnerships, the OEDI team established a Community of Practice with nine community-based organizations dedicated to bridging College and community efforts to address

barriers to access and success in post-secondary education for equity-deserving communities. Our shared purpose is to strengthen access to post-secondary education and improve retention for members of these communities.

This year, we focused on developing a governance model and defining the strategic direction and scope of our work. To guide these efforts, we identified three overarching goals:

1.   Community Empowerment and Early Development: Preparing equity-deserving communities for post-secondary success and essential life skills.

2.   Strategic Partnerships and Collaborative Action: Building strong, action-oriented relationships across sectors to strengthen equity-deserving support systems.

3.   Knowledge Exchange and Inclusive Practices: Sharing resources and fostering inclusive environments on and off campus for those facing systemic barriers.

4.4.4. Capacity Building

- Student Program

  During the year in review, the OEDI team focused on enhancing the College's capacity-building program for students. The original program, delivered through in-person workshops and a recorded webinar, engaged only 10 participants. To better understand this outcome, we consulted with various student groups and found that students preferred interactive learning opportunities that did not require attending formal sessions. In response, we redesigned the program in the latter quarter of the year to prioritize accessible, activity-based learning, using art, games, and communal space installations to explore rights and responsibilities under the policy and the Ontario Human Rights Code; key terms; and practical strategies for responding to incidents of harassment and discrimination. We expect to launch the revitalized student capacity building program just days ahead of Human Rights Day to spotlight rights, responsibilities, and key calls to action.

- Mentoring Program for Identity-based Student Groups

  Recognizing that representation and community-building are critical to a safe and respectful campus environment, we designed this mentorship program to empower and build the leadership capacity of identity-based student groups to represent their communities, foster social connections, and create opportunities for activism. During this reporting year, we initiated the mentorship program in collaboration with the Durham College Student Association, which typically supports student groups.

  Aligned with the new academic year and the transition to new student leadership, our efforts focused on:

  o Developing relationships with leaders of existing student organizations.

  o Assessing gaps in representation among equity-deserving groups.

  o Engaging in meaningful dialogue to raise awareness of these gaps.

  o Exploring strategies to make the process of establishing new student groups more accessible and inclusive.

- Employee Program

  During this reporting year, we enhanced the employee training program to focus more on equipping employees with the skills needed to fulfill their responsibilities under the Ontario Human Rights Code within their respective roles, and enhancing their understanding of relevant human rights frameworks and concepts in addition to original content informing them of their rights and responsibilities under the College's policies. Additionally, the program informed employees about the supports and resources available to students, equipping them to promote these proactively to prevent or respond to experiences of harassment and discrimination. We have engaged 110 employees in these sessions thus far by presenting at Faculty and Departmental meetings. Workshops delivered included:
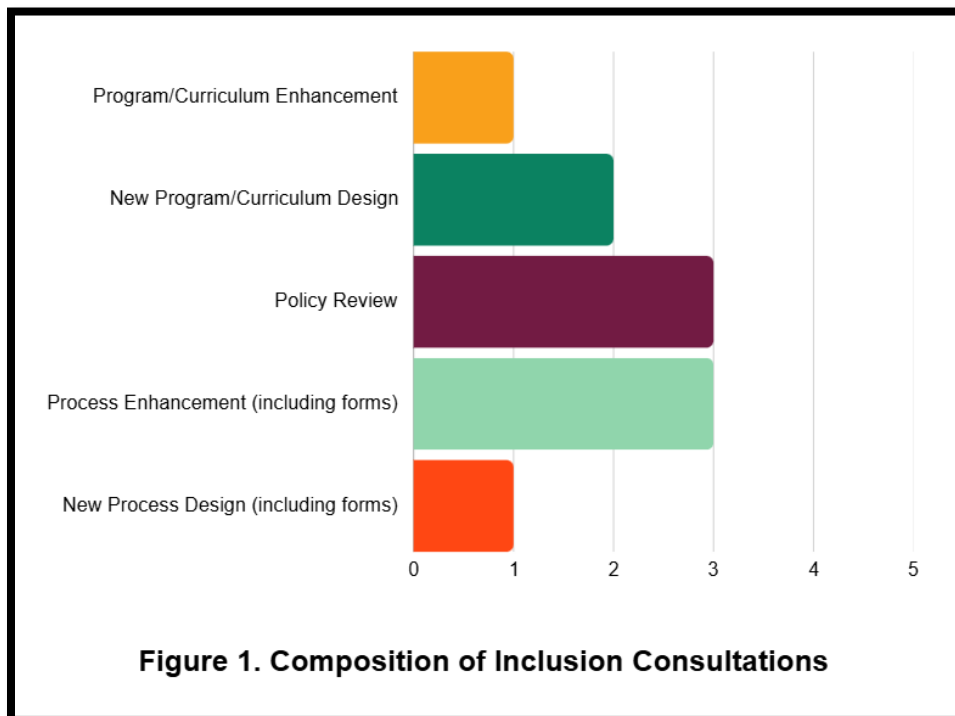
  o Cultivating an Equitable and Inclusive Learning Environment

  o Taking an Inclusive Approach to Delivering Support Services to Students

     ○   Developing Equitable and Inclusive Management Practices at Durham College

Through formal post-session evaluations, employees reported that these training courses helped employees better understand their role in delivering inclusive and equitable services to students and accessing it for themselves.

4.4.5 Inclusion Consultations

To track support offered to employees to address systemic hate and discrimination and facilitate quality assurance, the OEDI formalized its Inclusion Consultation process. These consultations provide an opportunity for employees to access best practice guidance from the OEDI team and our network of community partners when reviewing current or prospective initiatives, practices, and policies through an equity-informed lens. The goal is to support inclusive decision-making and ensure alignment with human rights principles across all areas of campus life. Figure 1 reflects the composition and number of consultations provided during this reporting period.

Figure 1. Composition of Inclusion Consultations

4.4.6. Consultations with Equity-Deserving Members of our Campus Community

Through the efforts of the OEDI team and an external consultant, the College conducted consultations with equity-deserving communities to understand their lived experiences of hate and racism, and the barriers they faced to equity and inclusion at the College. Collectively, these consultations engaged 415 students and employees and 35 community-partners. The insights have been used to enhance the services and programs offered by the OEDI, and will serve as the foundation of the College's first ever Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan.

4.4.7. Review of Policies through an Equity and Inclusion Lens

With the support of an external consultant, the College conducted an equity review of 19 institutional policies through the lens of key sectoral and legislative frameworks such as the Ontario Human Rights Commission Human Rights-based Approach Framework Guide to Policy and Program Development; and the Strengthening Accountability and Student Supports Act, 2024-Minister's Anti-Hate and Anti-Racism Directives. With the goal of facilitating intervention in areas which would have the greatest impact on equity-deserving students and employees, the review included policies across the areas of institutional climate and culture; the student experience, the employee experience and teaching and learning. The insights will form the foundation of the College's first ever Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan.

4.5   Intervention Activities

Durham College utilizes proactive measures which support dialogue, early intervention and de-escalation in response to concerns of harassment and discrimination brought forward by members of its campus community. Students and employees can access consultations with a Human Rights Advisor about experiences which they believe might constitute a violation of the Code and are provided with next steps involved in resolving their concerns. Complaints about individuals or policies and procedures assessed to be applicable for resolution under the Harassment and Discrimination Prevention and Response policy can be resolved informally or formally. During this reporting period, Durham College enhanced its mechanism for receiving, addressing and reporting on concerns related to discrimination and harassment. This process, in its pilot phase, is intended to facilitate timely, detailed, and legislatively compliant documentation of and response to complaints. This section provides insight into the nature

and outcome of complaints received and processed under this policy during this reporting period.

4.5.1. Summary of Institutional Assessments

After collecting initial details about their experience from a complainant, the Human Rights Advisor provides an institutional assessment of the allegation(s) would, if proven true, constitute a violation of institutional policies. Below is a summary of outcomes of the 34 assessments dispensed during this reporting period; employees accounted for 29% of assessments and students accounted for 71%.

Table 1: Number of Institutional Assessments Issued

Institutional Assessment Outcome:	Number of Complaints per Outcome
If proven to be true, allegations constitute Harassment, Discrimination or Reprisal.	26
The subject matter of the complaint appears to be trivial, frivolous, vexatious, or made in bad faith.	2
The substance of the complaint is already the subject matter of another internal proceeding.	2
The substance of the matter is more appropriately addressed via other College procedures/mechanisms	4

4.5.2. Categorization of Student and Employee Complaints

There are several ways in which harassment and discrimination can manifest within the post-secondary learning and working environment. In accordance with Ministry directives, detailed records were kept of all employee and student complaints received during the reporting period. The composition of these complaints is presented below.

Figure 2 below illustrates the distribution of complaints across major categories, of harassment and discrimination providing insight into the issues most frequently raised by students and employees.

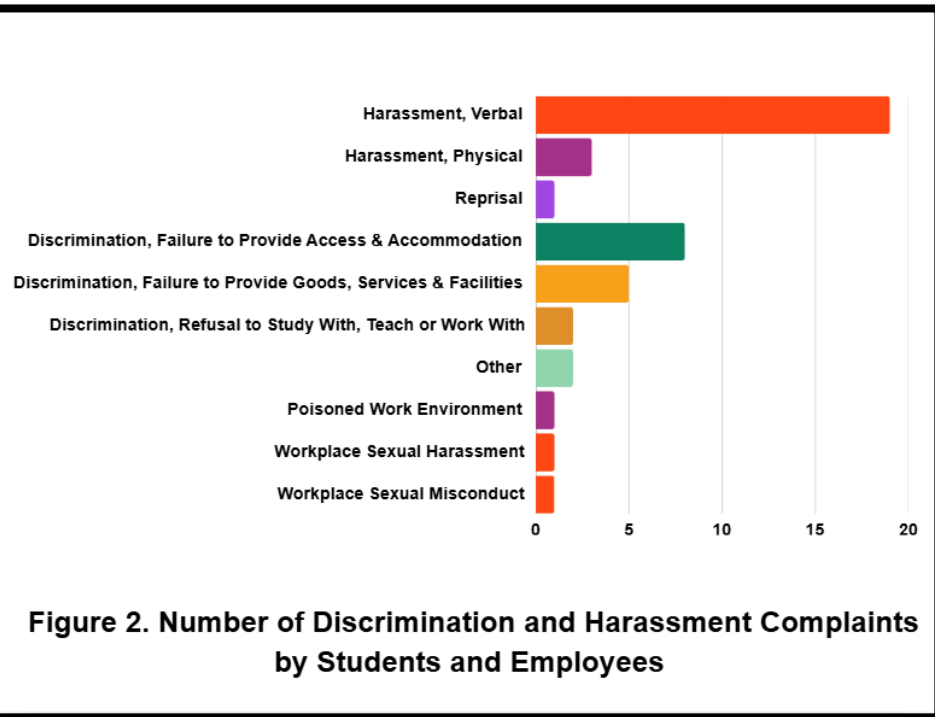**Figure 2. Number of Discrimination and Harassment Complaints by Students and Employees**

Figure 3 captures the number of associated Code Groups which were the basis of complaints by students and employees, highlighting the most common areas of discrimination or harassment.

Figure 3: Number and Type of Code Groups Forming Basis of Complaints
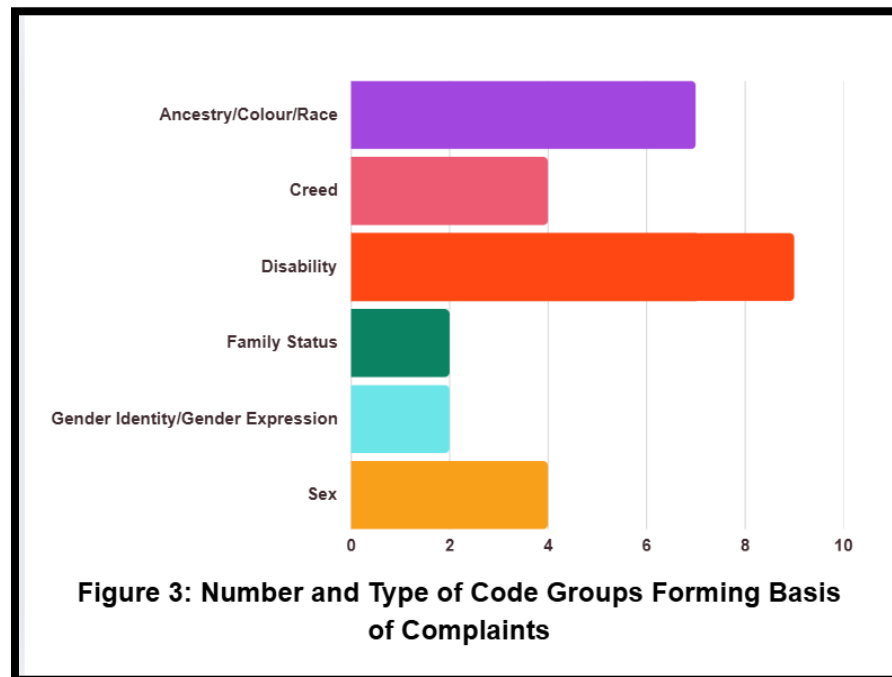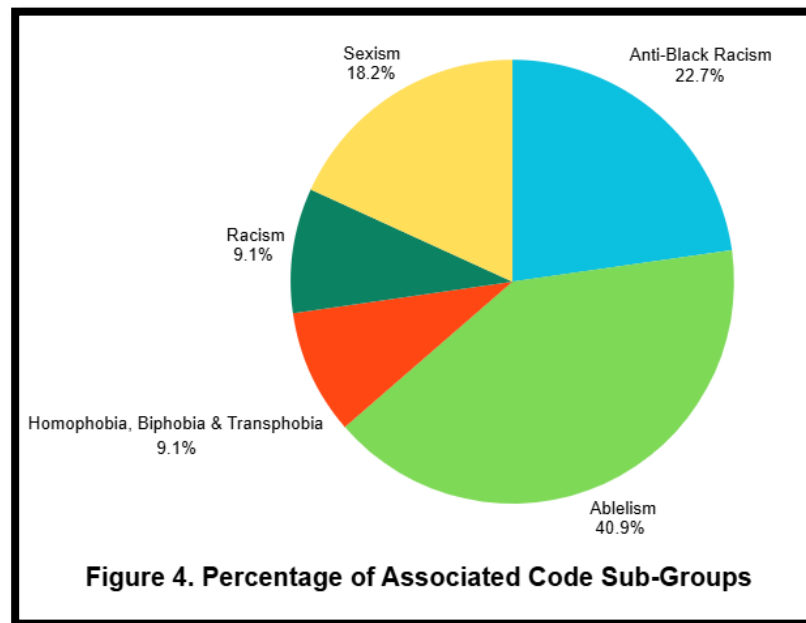
Figure 4 provides a breakdown of student and employee complaints into specific sub-categories; for example, within the category of race, sub-categories include anti-Black racism, anti-Asian racism etc. This depiction offers a more detailed view of the issues cited in complaints.

Figure 4. Percentage of Associated Code Sub-Groups

4.5.3. Complaint Resolution

To provide transparency on how complaints were addressed, the resolution methods applied during the reporting period were analyzed as well as the length of time taken to resolve complaints.

Table 2 illustrates the proportion of cases resolved through each approach, offering insight into the most common pathways for addressing student and employee complaints.

Table 2: Composition of Complaint Resolutions

Decision/Case Outcome	Number of Cases
Complaint Withdrawn; Independent Decision	4
Complaint Withdrawn, Addressed via Other College Procedures/Mechanisms	3
Informal Resolution; Mutually Agreed on Resolution	2
Anonymous: Information Collected & Reviewed to help Create Inclusive Campus Culture	1
Investigation complete. Allegations not substantiated	5
Investigation complete. Allegations substantiated, or partially substantiated	4

The review and resolution of complaints is an intricate process that can vary significantly in duration depending on the nature and complexity of the case. This work often involves multiple departments, coordination across teams, and several meetings to ensure a thorough and fair outcome. Within this reporting period, there were 26 complaints processed under this policy (35% employees and; 65% students). Table 3 captures the average time (in months) taken to resolve complaints received from students and employees during this reporting period.

Table 3: Length of Time Taken to Resolve Student and Employee Complaints

Case Status	>1	>3	>6	>9	>12	12+
Resolved	9	7	3	0	0	0

4.6   Priorities for 2026- 2027

Upcoming priorities will be focused on supporting the College to realize its Strategic Vision 2030 by leveraging the insights gained in 2025-26 through the wide-reaching consultations done with equity-deserving campus community members as well feedback from program participants, service and policy. Specifically, focus will be on:

- Enhancing capacity building programs offered to students and employees to create learning and working environments free of discrimination, harassment and hate;
- Refining our case management and reporting process;
- Finalizing the institution's first ever Equity, Diversity and Inclusion action plan on; and
- Supporting relevant departments with implementation of the institution's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion action plan.

5.   Financial/Human Resource Implications

The implementation of the Harassment and Discrimination Prevention and Response Policy continues to require dedicated resources to both carry out the work and ensure the team is continuously equipped with skills required to implement emerging best practices and legislative requirements.

6.   Implications for the Joint Campus Master Plan

There are no implications for the joint campus master plan.

7.   Implications for Ontario Tech University

There are no implications for Ontario Tech University.

8.   **Relationship to the Strategic Plan/Business Plan**

Preventing and appropriately responding to harassment and discrimination are concerns that align with Durham College's *Sustainable and People-Centered* goals outlined in the Strategic Vision 2030. This report supports institutional compliance with key legislation related to human rights, and advances the following business plan objectives:

1. Nurturing an organizational culture where students, employees, alumni, and partners feel welcomed, valued, respected, and part of our community (3.1 iii, iv, v).

2. Reviewing and enhancing policies and practices to address inequities, deepen knowledge, and strengthen capacity to better support the needs of students and employees (3.3 i).