

Black Student Success Navigator



Acadia University has appointed Janique Ellis Panza ('21) as its new Black Student Success Navigator. With a BSc in psychology and sociology, the recent Acadia graduate is dedicated to making spaces on campus more diverse and inclusive.

"Janique will provide the quality leadership needed to develop and grow this role," says Dr. Dale Keefe, Acadia's Provost and Vice-President, Academic. "We are excited to work with her to support efforts across campus related to improving the Black student experience."

Ellis Panza served as a student advocate, mentor, and confidant for many students at Acadia. She co-founded the Acadia International Society, which facilitates bonding experiences for international and domestic students. Ellis Panza also served as the Student Success Programmer at Acadia. In this role, she fostered meaningful conversations to transform the student life experience for all Acadia students.

"I feel great pride in the work I have done at Acadia," Ellis Panza says. "I am grateful and honoured that I have an opportunity to continue to impact the lives of students in a positive way."

The Black Student Success Navigator's primary responsibility is to develop and implement programs and services to support the academic and personal success of students of African descent, including African Nova Scotian and African Canadian students and students of African descent from other countries. She will also work with

the Valley African Nova Scotia Development Association (VANSDA) to support Black students who are clients of the Nova Scotia Works program.

The Navigator position emerged when developing a collaborative Memorandum of Understanding between Acadia and VANSDA in 2019. Since then, the President's Anti-Racism Task Force revised some elements of the role to improve its impact.

"This position is a huge step in the right direction to improving the life experiences of Black students at Acadia," Ellis Panza explained. "I will be a listening ear and constant support for Black students. My job is to connect them to the right resources, advocate for their concerns, build community, and help them with employment navigation."

The role will also help educate all students at Acadia to ensure an inclusive campus environment.

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Black Student Success Navigator

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