

# Interim Vice- Director, Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Access (JEDIA) Report

Dr. Taymy Josefa Caso



UNIVERSITY  
OF ALBERTA

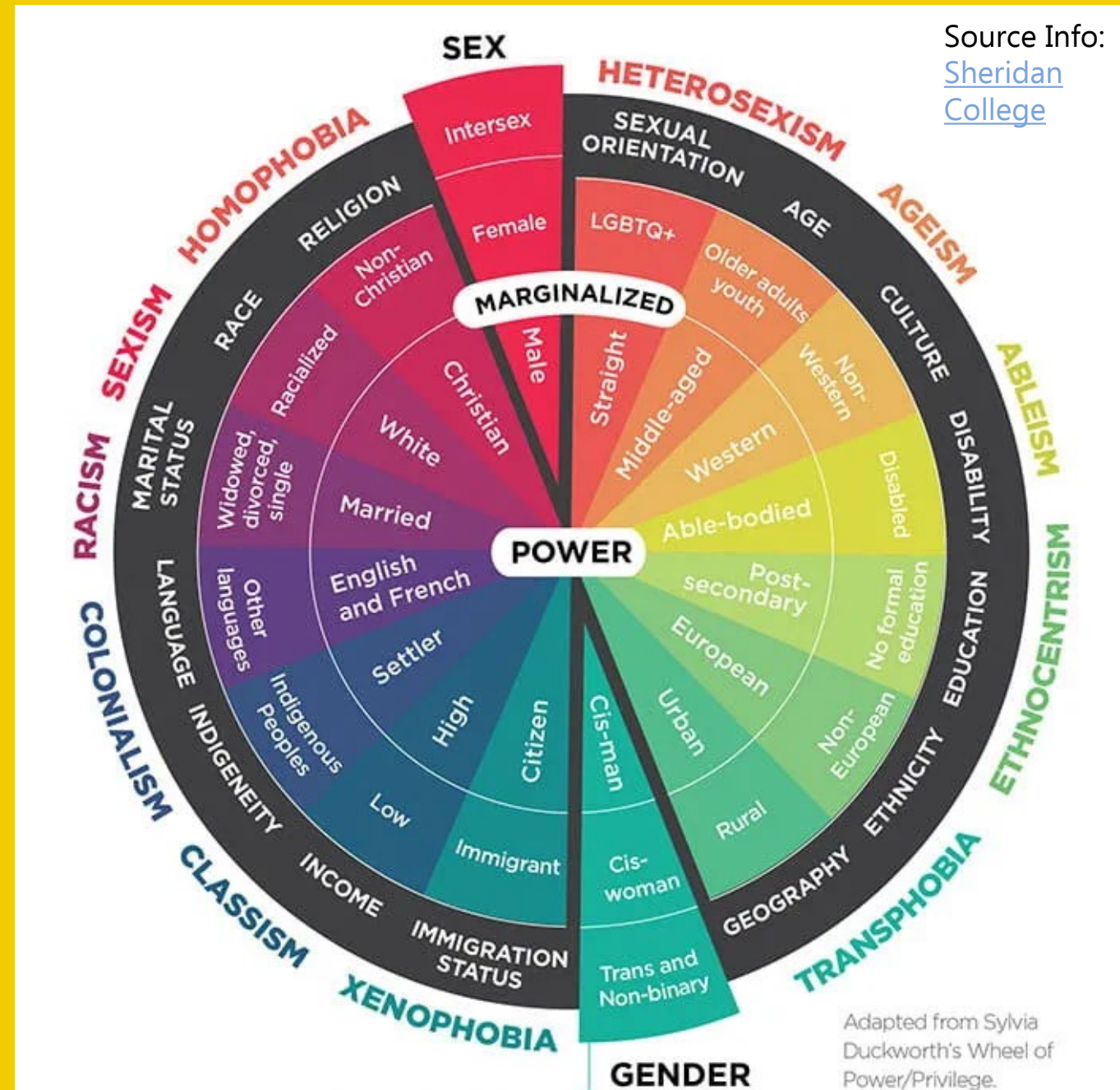
iSMART

# Goals and Objectives

- Build partnerships and rapport with membership to better understand JEDIA needs
- Provide educational resources and supports
- Identify mechanisms and drivers of inequity within the institution and organization structure
- Collaborate with leadership and membership to develop strategic solutions to equity issues
- Identify opportunities to amplify JEDIA objectives across the university
- Lead the Accessibility and Inclusion Working Group

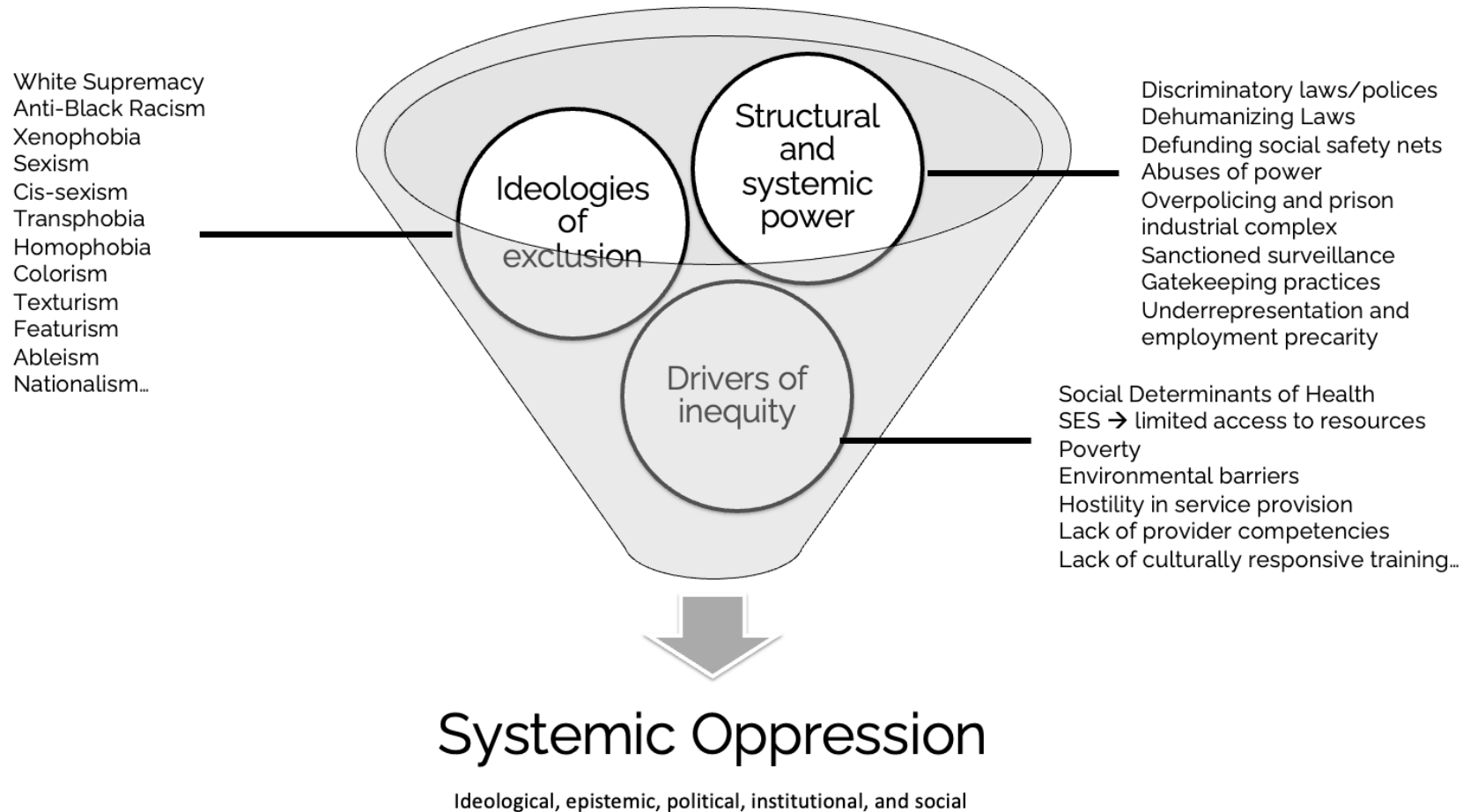
Transforming spaces to honor the cultural diversity and richness of our community

Source Info:  
[Sheridan College](#)



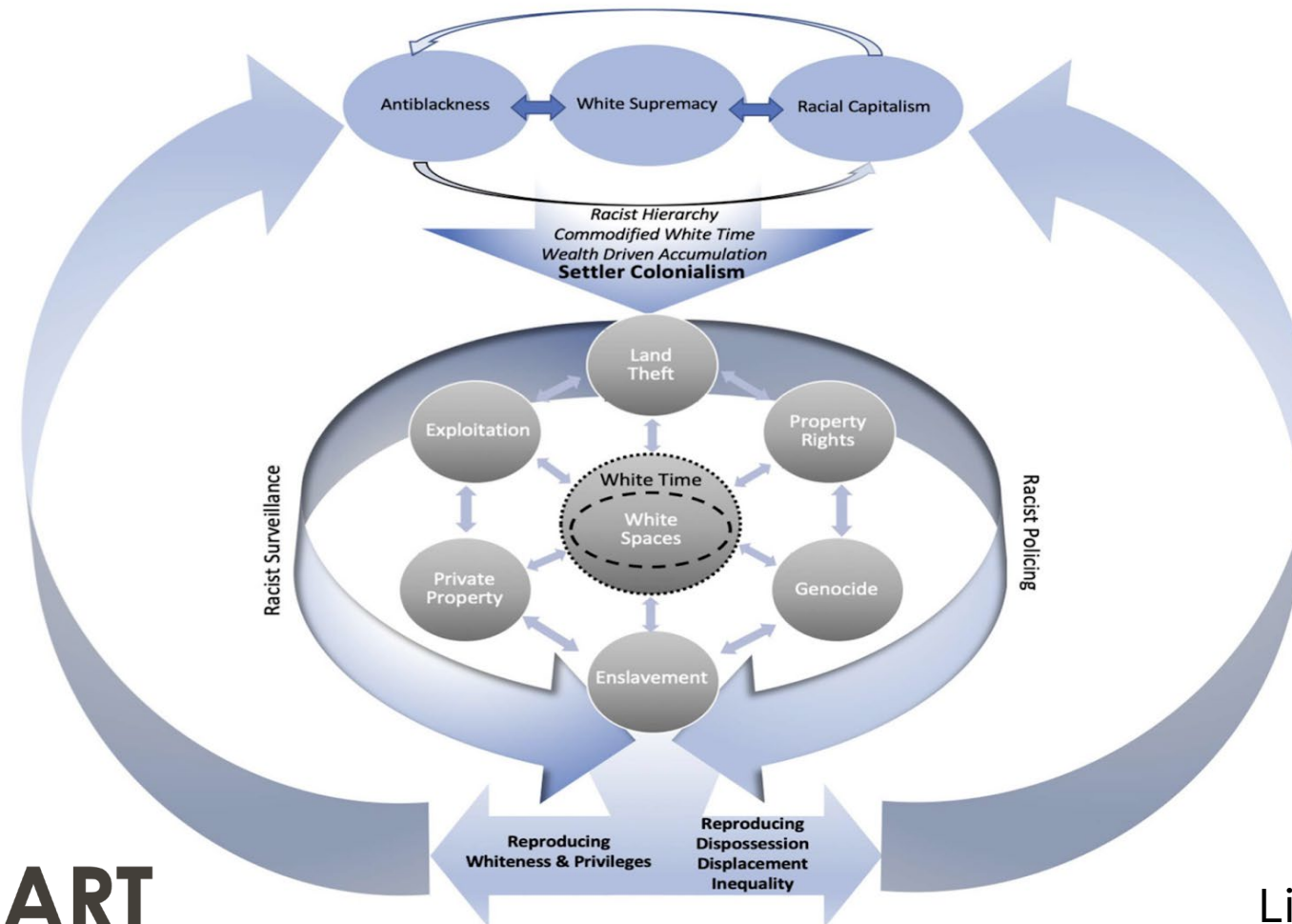
Adapted from Sylvia Duckworth's Wheel of Power/Privilege.

# Racial Capitalism and Systemic Oppression



# Examining Racial Capitalism from an Anti- Oppressive Pedagogical Lens

**Figure 1**  
*A Racial-Spatial Framework on Systemic Racism*



# Values in Practice

- Operating from a Liberation Psychology and Anti-Oppression lens
- Engaging in Solidarity and Mutual Aid
- Promoting Accountability across all hierarchies
- Confronting institutional practices that elevate white supremacist colonial values
- Celebrating representation and all of its gifts
- Promoting cultures of care and understanding

# Confronting Institutional Leadership on White Supremacy,

## Intolerance, and Police Brutality

### Important Announcement from iSMART Executive Board

Dear Members of iSMART,

As many of you know, on May 11 the university executive leadership authorized police brutality of our students by permitting the Edmonton Police Service (EPS) to raid the pro-Palestine encampment on campus. These incidents of state-sanctioned violence have been deeply disturbing and traumatic to many members of our community. We would like to let you know that iSMART leadership has been very dismayed by the events and have been in contact with the University Leadership to communicate our profound distress and concerns.

Over the past two weeks, the Director of iSMART, Dr. Vivian Mushahwar, has had individual meetings with UAlberta President Dr. Bill Flanagan, Provost & Vice-President, Academic Dr. Verna Yiu, Deputy Provost, Research Dr. Kathryn Todd, and Vice-Provost, EDI, Dr. Carrie Smith. During these meetings, Dr. Mushahwar expressed her utmost misgivings about the University's decision to call in the EPS to violently disperse peaceful protestors who had been engaging in multicultural and multi-religious activities and teach-ins, and requesting that the University declare its investments, divest from companies that provide weapons to Israel, and condemning the genocide committed against the Palestinians in Gaza.

Moreover, iSMART's Vice-Director for Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Access, Dr. Taymy Caso, has been very active in voicing their deepest discontent with violation of freedom of speech, University-sanctioned police brutality and acts of aggression against peaceful protesters, and the University leadership's lack of accountability in the face of atrocious settler colonialism and genocide in Palestine. Dr. Caso serves as a Councillor from the Faculty of Education on the Association of Academic Staff of the University of Alberta (AASUA), and has contributed to the multi-union open letter (see AASUA and NASA below) requesting admission that a wrong has been done against the protesters' freedom of speech and the University's violation of the Canadian Charter of Rights.

Drs. Caso and Mushahwar have also received numerous open letters and statements that we decided to share with you below. Many of you may have already received these letters/statements depending on which Faculty you are from, but it became apparent that some of you were unaware of their existence. We are sharing these for your information and consideration. It is entirely up to you individually to decide how to respond to them. What is critical for iSMART's Executive Committee is to let you know that we hear you, and we are here for you. These are very difficult times to reckon with for many of you, and we want to let you know that you have an open channel of communication to reach out to Drs. Caso ([caso@ualberta.ca](mailto:caso@ualberta.ca)) and Mushahwar ([vivian.mushahwar@ualberta.ca](mailto:vivian.mushahwar@ualberta.ca)). We also encourage you to have open discussions during your group meetings to ensure that everyone's view is expressed, heard, respected, and discussed. Please know that we care, and our doors are open to each and every one of you. Additionally, we encourage you to make use of the mental health supports and resources available for students and staff who are feeling distress. Links to these resources are provided here: <https://www.ualberta.ca/campus-life/health-wellness/mental-health/index.html>.

Please note that one of iSMART's core mandates has been education about Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. The recent events further underscore the importance of this mandate, highlighting the need for ongoing dialogue and education about these critical issues. Unconscious biases are still pervasive in the workplace. Recent events indicate a need for better training and awareness to ensure that such biases are recognized and addressed effectively at all levels.

# Accessibility and Inclusion Working Group

- Help iSMART identify ways it can reduce colonialist styles of decision-making and engagement,
- Provide leadership for alternative ways of building iSMART's inclusive culture;
- Advise and provide training for culturally-sensitive engagement with racialized and equity-seeking communities and conducting research with them that is aligned with values and sensitivities that emanate from a history of exploitation;
- Evaluate iSMART membership and practices for recruiting new members to enhance representation from racialized and equity-seeking communities, disciplines and career stages;
- Evaluate iSMART practices for hiring trainees and support staff, ensuring appropriate adherence to principles of JEDIA, and promoting a diverse and inclusive culture;
- Develop and implement a mechanism that provides supportive space for equitable conflict resolution;
- Provide advice to the EC of iSMART that relates to accessibility and inclusion

Thank You!!!