



2023 UPEI Inspiring Young Alumni Award

Danté Bazard (BA '16)

When Danté Bazard was appointed as the first Black commissioner of the PEI Human Rights Commission in 2020, it made headlines here and in his native Bahamas. The headlines and the ledes that followed are full of mentions that he was “the first,” “the youngest” “the only.” But if you read a little deeper, you quickly understand why he was such a natural choice for the “historic” appointment.

MLA Gord McNeilly, who was chair of the committee responsible for the appointments, was quoted as saying, “Danté is so brilliant and he's going places. And P.E.I. needs Danté to be a greater province.” Brenda Picard, Executive Director of the Commission, was quick to point to Danté’s extensive experience with anti-oppression training, community engagement, and policy advising.

His qualifications included several examples of community leadership such as co-founding BIPOC USHR which stands for Black, Indigenous and People of Colour United for Strength, Home, Relationship, and working with the Black Cultural Society of PEI and the Atlantic Student Development Alliance. When he was a third-year psychology student at UPEI, he formed the University’s first Caribbean Society.

After graduating from UPEI with a BA in psychology in 2016, Danté moved to the University of Leicester where he completed a Master of Science in Clinical Criminology and was the recipient of a humanitarian and merit award. He returned to PEI in 2018 and worked as a research project lead to conduct discourse analysis of police response to sexual violence and then as an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in Research Advisor.

In September 2021, at the recommendation of several Black-led groups including the Black Cultural Society and BIPOC USHR, the province created a new anti-racism policy adviser within the executive council. Once again, Danté was the first to fill a newly created role.

Danté currently works as the manager of anti-racism initiatives, reporting directly to the Deputy Clerk of the Executive Office Council. In his role, he manages engagement across government departments, ensuring a coordinated, consistent, and informed approach to addressing systemic racism, and he oversees the implementation of the Anti-Racism Action Plan.

It’s an important role with lots of responsibility, but Danté’s colleagues have faith in his ability to do the job well. When some of his colleagues, including the Premier, have been asked, they have described him as “tireless,” “steadfast,” “hopeful,” “forward thinking,” “a leader,” and “a trailblazer.”

When Danté was hired in his first role with the provincial government, Stephanie Arnold, chair of the anti-racism roundtable, said of him: “He carries a light within him that spreads and warms with ease...It is easy to see that he wants everyone to have the opportunity to be themselves, just as they are in whatever pursuits they choose to take on, without fear of discrimination or reprisal.”

There is a consistent theme that emerges about Danté and his work. He is driven by passion and lived experience to impart long overdue change in a province that he loves, so that others may thrive here also - but he approaches everything with a warm brand of leadership, optimism, and brilliance.

In recognition of his leadership and significant community contributions, the UPEI Alumni Association is proud to present Danté Bazard, BA 2016, with a 2023 Inspiring Young Alumni Award.