

President's Equity Task Force Report
2020



PREAMBLE

Although the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects do not specifically fall within the mandate of the President's Equity Task Force, we are especially aware of the pandemic's negative impact on many communities across Canada. This unprecedented modern crisis has intensified the hardships faced by many while also creating barriers for some seeking help. While we do not yet know the extent to which students, faculty and staff at Ontario Tech have been impacted, early reports from the World Health Organization (WHO) and emerging published research indicate that the pandemic amplifies the structural and social inequities experienced by marginalized populations. The direct and indirect consequences of the crisis for students, staff and faculty must be identified and measured to mitigate their long-term impact on health and educational outcomes and to avoid even greater health and educational disparities. Given that crises such as COVID-19 exacerbate existing social disparities, equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) initiatives must be paramount, along with Indigenization and the Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015).



Land Acknowledgment

Ontario Tech University acknowledges the lands and people of the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation. We are thankful to be welcome on these lands in friendship. The lands we are situated on are covered by the Williams Treaties and are the traditional territory of the Mississaugas, a branch of the greater Anishinaabeg Nation, including Algonquin, Ojibway, Odawa and Pottawatomi. These lands remain home to many Indigenous nations and peoples.

We acknowledge this land out of respect for the Indigenous nations who have cared for Turtle Island, also called North America, from before the arrival of settler peoples until this day. Most importantly, we acknowledge that the history of these lands has been tainted by poor treatment and a lack of friendship with the First Nations who call them home.

This history is something we are all affected by because we are all treaty people in Canada. We all have a shared history to reflect on, and each of us is affected by this history in different ways. Our past defines our present, but if we move forward as friends and allies, then it does not have to define our future ("Land acknowledgement," n.d.)



Table of Contents

- 5** Message from the President and Vice-Chancellor
- 6** Message from the Provost
- 7** Letter from the Task Force Chair
- 8** Introduction
- 8** Mandate
- 9** Outreach and Engagement
- 9** Defining Equity
- 10** EDI Initiatives at Ontario Tech
 - 1) Student Life
 - 2) Caribbean Humanitarian Hurricane Relief Scholarships
 - 3) Research Services
 - 4) Human Resources
 - 5) Faculty Association
 - 6) Board of Governors
- 14** Common EDI Issues and Themes
- 15** Recommendations
 - 1) Board of Governors, President and Vice-Chancellor and Senior Executive Leadership
 - 2) Provost, Vice-President Research and Innovation, Chief Financial Officer, Deans and Administrative Staff
 - 3) Postdoctoral Fellows, Graduate and Undergraduate Students, Research Assistants and Student Life
 - 4) Faculty Researchers, Associate Teaching Professors, Sessional Instructors and Librarians
- 19** Conclusion
- 20** References
- 21** EDI Concepts and Definitions
- 23** Examples of EDI Awards at Canadian Universities

Message from the President and Vice-Chancellor



The conversation around equity, diversity and inclusion is resonating throughout society and that is particularly true for institutions of higher education. Universities are not just about academic achievement; they are also for learning and growth of all kinds. They have always been an epicenter for social change because university is often where we are exposed to different perspectives and viewpoints for the first time. As a result, we question our values and our assumptions about the world we live in, and the world we grew up in. Because of this exposure we adjust and grow.

Our campuses should be microcosms of diversity that reflect the world at large. They must feel safe and welcoming to people of all cultures, genders, races and religions. They must be a place where people from all cultures and experiences can work together to share and create knowledge. Our experiences are enriched by exposure to these differences. Diversity on our campus should be celebrated. It increases creativity as we are exposed to different viewpoints and perspectives. It increases innovation and problem solving and improved productivity. It can create a more engaged and exciting environment, as we learn more about the world around us.

As our institution is focused on 'Technology with a Conscience,' diversity is a key driver of that equation. Without it, technology takes on the inherent biases of the development team. At Ontario Tech, we value our diverse workforce as our researchers help to shift cultural paradigms. They bring their rich array of views about the world to their work and create more inclusive technology, research, and learning environments.

We recognize our role in preparing Canada's future workforce as well. We must recruit students from diverse backgrounds across all our faculties. But we must also work to ensure that all individuals have an appropriate opportunity to display and foster their talents in any field, at any age. Further, we also must ensure that our students have an understanding of how to approach their careers as social scientists, teachers, health-care professionals, engineers and scientists through the lens of equity, diversity and inclusion.

I am grateful for the work of the President's Equity Task Force. Their guidance and advice is helping to ensure we move substantively forward with an agenda focused around concrete measures and actions to ever enhance our equity, diversity and inclusion. Like knowledge, EDI competence is never 'perfected'; it is a muscle that must be continually challenged and used in the pursuit of a more just society.

Sincerely,
Steven Murphy, PhD
President and Vice-Chancellor

Message from the Provost



The President's Equity Task Force Report 2020 represents an important milestone in the brief history of Ontario Tech. By actively inviting all members of our university community to engage in a series of reflective conversations, the Task Force has accomplished its explicit mandate to prepare "a comprehensive inventory of EDI initiatives within the context of the university's mission, and to provide recommendations regarding those initiatives, as appropriate, based on broad consultation." More importantly, however, this Report provides us all with an important prompt to action and a foundation upon which to build and commit to making Ontario Tech a truly inclusive institution of higher education.

I challenge every member of the Ontario Tech community to read this report and to use it as a call to action to help effect change within the academy. This will require commitments at both an individual and institutional level.

Individually we may all contribute by identifying and acknowledging our personal biases and thereafter intentionally challenging ourselves to check and move beyond them. At the institutional level, change will require both a principled approach and inputs from our multiple constituents. As a senior leader within the institution, my interest in EDI is deeply personal and I take my role in this very seriously. I know there are many other members of the Ontario Tech community that feel the same way. Importantly, everyone regardless of their role within the institution can be a change maker.

Recognizing that we all have a role to play in creating an inclusive academy, one that celebrates our diversity and strives for equity and excellence in all that we do, has never been more important. I want to take this opportunity to thank all of the members of the President's Equity Task Force for their time, effort, and dedication to opening up and leading the conversation on EDI issues within our community. Many thanks also to those of you who participated in the multiple focus groups, sessions, and events hosted by the Task Force.

It is now incumbent upon all of us to continue the conversation and commit to change.

Sincerely,

Lori A. Livingston, PhD

Provost and Vice-President, Academic

Letter from the Task Force Chair

Dear President Murphy and Provost Livingston,



It is as much an honour as it is a great delight to have been asked in my past role as Associate Dean, Equity to spearhead the university's first equity, diversity and inclusion task force and to write what will be considered a historic report. I am also extremely grateful for the dedication, expertise, generosity and thoughtfulness of all task force members and wish to extend special thanks to Tara Ashley, our administrative support, for her incredible work and contributions throughout this process.

The report consultations interestingly commenced just before four converging pandemics emerged: (1) The coronavirus disease, COVID-19; (2) Police brutality connected to anti-Black racism (ABR), racial inequities, and systemic racism, which sparked a global protest by sports teams, celebrities, academics and Fortune 500 companies; (3) The 'she-session' requiring a 'she-covery,' as coined by economist Armine Yalnizyan (as cited in Dessanti, 2020); and (4) The mental wellness challenges related to our online learning and working environments in changes

brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. Indubitably, the intersectional complexities of these converging issues will only amplify existing institutional, structural, and systemic inequities for groups in Canada that have been historically under-represented, disadvantaged and marginalized.

EDI involves the removal of barriers and the full participation of all members of the academy, regardless of citizenship, race, place of origin, ethnic origin, colour, ancestry, disability, age, creed (religion), sex/pregnancy, family status, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, receipt of public assistance (in housing) and record of offences (in employment), all mentioned in Ontario's Human Rights Code, to which we might add spirituality, class, and income. The EDI taskforce recommendations must also work alongside the Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015).

National racial injustice tragedies, the deaths of Trayvon Martin, Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Tamir Rice, and George Floyd have kept critical race EDI at the forefront of our national appetite and consciousness. Racial differences in everyday experience in universities are not easy to confront because of a long-standing reluctance to talk about race, xenophobia, colonization and slavery. I believe now is the time to ask what it means to be human while advancing multiple EDI pandemic agendas in our university and society.

In closing, I offer two questions for the university to consider: (1) How can we move from tokenism to transformation and the inclusion of diverse cultures? and (2) In an adaptation of the words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (1967), "Where [does Ontario Tech] go from here: chaos or community?"

Sincerely,
Wesley Crichlow, PhD

Introduction

A recent national survey of Canadian universities shows there is a strong commitment to having EDI shape governance, research, teaching, reconciliation and community engagement (Universities Canada, 2019). Ontario Tech's commitment officially started in January 2018, when then-Provost and Acting President Dr. Robert Bailey convened the President's Equity Task Force (PET), which was tasked with conducting widespread consultations with students, staff, and faculty. Chaired by Dr. Wesley Crichlow, Professor in the Faculty of Social Science and Humanities, the current task force includes Tara Ashley, Jamie Bruno, Jennifer Freeman, Akeisha Lari, and Dr. Akira Tokuhiko as members. In addition, we also recognize the valuable contributions from past members Dr. Rajen Akalu, Jocelyn Churchill, Dr. Kimberley Clow, Dr. Allyson Eamer, Dr. Natalie Oman, and Olivia Petrie.

Current Task Force Members



From left: Akeisha Lari, Akira Tokuhiko, Jamie Bruno, Jennifer Freeman, Tara Ashley, Wesley Crichlow.

Mandate

The PET mandate included preparing a comprehensive inventory of existing and suggested EDI initiatives within the context of the university's mission, and making recommendations regarding those initiatives, as appropriate, based on broad consultation. The PET's goal was to mobilize diverse individuals across the university to create and establish equitable and inclusive practices at Ontario Tech within a three-year term. Specifically, the task force aimed to do the following:

- Advise on the development of strategies for implementing the best equity and inclusion policies and practices at Ontario Tech.
- Advise on EDI training and programming.
- Identify ongoing initiatives at the university and coordinate complementary efforts.
- Increase outreach efforts to diverse communities.
- Assist and advise in the analysis of workforce and employment systems to identify and propose solutions for areas of inequality and discrimination.

The PET conducted broad consultation across the university community. This process included faculty, students, administrative staff, and other groups (e.g., the Ontario Tech Student Union, Ontario Tech Student Ambassadors, the Faculty Association, the Women in Science Committee, the Indigenous Education Advisory Circle, and the Healthy Sexuality Committee), as well as external community partners (the full terms of reference can be found on the PET website at <https://ontariotechu.ca/about/office-of-the-president/presidents-equity-taskforce/mandate.php>).

Outreach and Engagement

The PET Chair's first task was to inform all departments and units of the Task Force's mandate by attending meetings with each department and unit. The second form of outreach was the creation of an online EDI consultation process, where faculty, staff and students were asked to tell the task force what equity, diversity and inclusion meant to them. This was followed by an EDI poster campaign, annual Black History Month celebrations, annual International Womens' Day lectures, annual EDI conferences, and annual Trans Day of Remembrance panel discussions, all with the aim of creating spaces for open conversations around EDI on campus. The third phase included focus groups and more in-person, open departmental sessions in the fall and winter terms of 2019–2020. The PET held a total of 36 meetings and focus groups. The final phase was to draft the report.

Thank you to everyone who participated in our outreach and consultation. The PET greatly appreciates your participation and constructive feedback on EDI at Ontario Tech.

For past events, visit ontariotechu.ca/petnewsandevents

Defining Equity

Equity at its most basic level is about fairness, and it is premised upon a sense of justice. It "recognizes historically and currently under-represented and under-served individuals who experience unfair treatment in services, programs and employment" (Humber College, 2019). Equity is not the same as equality. Equality implies sameness. Equity, on the other hand, takes differences into account—to ensure a fair process and range of opportunities, and, ultimately, a fair (or equitable) outcome.

Employment equity, for example, is a strategy designed to remove the barriers of workplace discrimination and to open equitably the competition for employment opportunities to those arbitrarily excluded or disadvantaged. A number of publications, including the *Report of the Commission on Equality in Employment*, the Canadian Human Rights Act and similar provincial and territorial legislation have listed a number of grounds for protection for groups that have historically experienced discrimination on the grounds of ascriptive characteristics or identities. The Commission found major systemic barriers for persons from within the four federally designated groups: women, visible minorities or racial minorities, native peoples and people with disabilities (Abella, 1984). In Ontario, it is illegal to discriminate against people on the basis of 14 grounds: age, ancestry, colour, race, citizenship, ethnic origin, place of origin, creed, disability, family status, marital status (including single status), gender identity and gender expression, receipt of public assistance (in housing only), record of offences (in employment only), sex (including pregnancy and breastfeeding) and sexual orientation (Human Rights Code, 1990).

The removal of systemic barriers calls for intervention. As stated in the *Equality in Employment* report, "[i]t is not that individuals in the designated groups are inherently unable to achieve equality on their own, it is that the obstacles in their way are so formidable and self-perpetuating that they cannot be overcome without intervention. It is both intolerable and insensitive if we simply wait and hope that the barriers will disappear with time. Equality in employment will not happen unless we make it happen" (Abella, 1984, p. 254). The Task Force has recommended measures to promote EDI across the university and has advised on policies relating to EDI. It is hoped that faculty, Faculty Associations, unions, management, staff and students will all join in the promotion of the recommendations.

EDI Initiatives at Ontario Tech

EDI Initiatives in the Office of Student Life

Student Life embraces EDI as one of its primary goals, specifically to “cultivate an inclusive campus community that celebrates our rich diversity.” This goal is realized in a variety of ways:

- The establishment in 2015 of an Equity and Inclusivity Advisor through student ancillary fees, dedicated to promoting a climate of equity, inclusivity and respect among students.
- The development and delivery of RISE (Respecting Individuals and Supporting Equity), a suite of workshops that provide training and education on bystander intervention skills to prevent and respond to discrimination and harassment. Participants receive foundational knowledge on how oppression manifests and what they can do on an individual level to foster a safer and inclusive community at Ontario Tech. Students can earn a RISE certificate by completing two foundational workshops, four additional RISE workshops, and a culminating reflection paper. RISE workshop topics include the following: Let’s Talk Equity, Health Equity, Sexual Violence Prevention, Let’s Talk Sex, Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Feminism, Anti-Racism, Religion and Spirituality, Anti-Ableism, and First Peoples.
- Discussion groups to provide opportunities for students to connect on equity-related issues impacting racialized communities based on lived experiences, and a space for 2SLGBTQI+¹ students and allies to participate in activities and discussions on topics related to their identities. Current discussion groups include the following: Equity Talks, BIPOC Student Centred Space, Black Student Centred Space, Not Another Black Life and Pride Space.
- Equity Advocates, trained student leaders who work together to develop and deliver initiatives, campaigns and events that engage and encourage students to work towards the creation of an inclusive campus community. Education events and programming have included International Womens Day (IWD) #EachforEqual Panel with the Women at Ontario Tech Committee; 16 Days of Activism against gender based violence with Durham College; Deconstructing Islamophobia in Mainstream Media; and Equity Awareness Weeks in both the fall and winter semesters.
- Indigenous student development and support and non-Indigenous community education through Indigenous Education and Cultural Services and guided by the President’s Indigenous Reconciliation Task Force.
- Professional development and training for all Student Life staff to infuse equity practices in student programming and services.

Caribbean Humanitarian Hurricane Relief Scholarships

In 2017, Hurricanes Irma and Maria caused catastrophic damage in the Caribbean islands of Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Dominica, and Saint Kitts and Nevis. Students’ education was interrupted along with the work of faculty, administrators, and staff at the University of the West Indies and other educational facilities. Dr. Crichlow approached then-Provost and Acting President Dr. Robert Bailey, Registrar Dr. Joe Stokes, and Assistant Vice-President Planning and Analysis, Brad MacIsaac about offering full Humanitarian Hurricane Relief Scholarships to students from these regions. They all agreed, and Ontario Tech’s humanitarian response and understanding of how disasters like these can affect school and university attendance inspired its commitment to five full undergraduate scholarships.

¹2SLGBTQI+ - Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Intersex

EDI Initiatives in the Office of Research Services

Ontario Tech University is a STEM-focused institution comprising seven faculties with more than 300 faculty members, supported by more than 800 graduate students from 29 graduate programs and 9,600 undergraduate students. Ontario Tech researchers engage with more than 200 external partners, securing over \$15 million in research funds in 2018-2019. Ontario Tech undertakes multidisciplinary and multi-sectoral research with impact on a wide range of societal challenge areas that include sustainable energy and the environment, computer science and AI, mobility and transportation, criminal justice, and health and wellness.

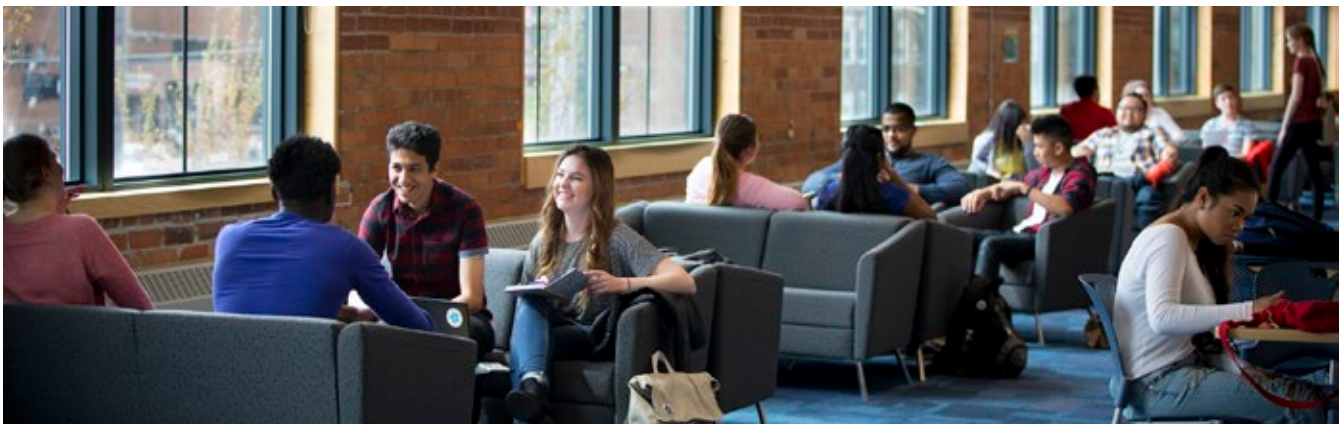
Ontario Tech University champions equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) as core values that drive innovation, excellence and integrity. In 2017, Ontario Tech committed to EDI objectives in its Canada Research Chairs (CRC) EDI Action Plan and we have made significant progress towards the following goals in the last three years:

1. Embed the values of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion into our academic and research culture at all levels, starting at the top.
2. Ongoing rigorous self-assessment to keep apprised of our community's composition and needs.
3. Attract and retain diverse talent to the CRC program, and to the university at large.

We have successfully secured the EDI Capacity-Building Grant, endorsed the Dimensions Charter and committed to being a Dimensions affiliate institution. Additionally, we have hired our first-ever Director of Equity, Diversity and Inclusive Engagement, and established a co-ordinated EDI governance structure, including the EDI Steering Committee, to provide strategic guidance, oversight and accountability for the co-ordinated EDI portfolio. Building on this foundation, our next steps are to:

- Implement the campuswide self-ID survey.
- Conduct a robust employment systems review using a third-party expert consultant.
- Continue to expand the training of our faculty and staff on using EDI best-practices.
- Develop, approve and implement a comprehensive, evidence-based university EDI Action Plan and policy.

With this solid foundation of EDI capacity, and with the support of the Tri-Council and the Dimensions Program, we are confident that meaningful, measurable and sustainable progress will be made towards fundamentally changing the research and academic culture to ensure individuals from underrepresented groups participate and benefit equitably across the institution.



EDI Programming in Human Resources

The Human Resources (HR) team is committed to supporting the university's goals and employee well-being by partnering with faculties and departments to provide a broad range of HR programs and services.

Human Resources has run in the past a number of programs related to EDI, including the following:

- **Deep Diversity: Creating a More-Inclusive Workplace**—What if our interactions with those different than us are strongly influenced by things happening below the radar of awareness, hidden even from ourselves? Based on research and neuroscience, this program explores prejudice as an unfortunate but normal part of the human experience due to reasons of both nature and nurture, and looks at what we can each do about that.
- **RISE programming developed by Student Life:**
 - **RISE: Sexual Violence Prevention**—Participants identify ways they can prevent, intervene and respond to sexual violence, and discuss topics such as rape culture, consent and the spectrum of sexual violence.
 - **RISE: Gender Identity**—Participants discuss the oppression of the transgender community focusing and the role that gender stereotypes play in the creation and manifestation of misconceptions about gender.
 - **RISE: Anti-Racism**—In this workshop, participants identify and break down stereotypes that affect racialized communities. They have a brave space to share their thoughts and ideas related to race using videos, case studies and interactive role-play. This workshop also discusses best practices for formulating effective responses to incidents of racist harassment and discrimination.
- **Skill 'n Tell Session Navigating Cultural Diversity on Campus**—During this interactive session, participants are introduced to interculturally related concepts and practices, as well as two different ways to work and navigate in a culturally diverse environment. Participants share experiences while we discuss these topics:
 - The concepts of culture, interculturality, and intercultural competencies.
 - Our ability to respond adequately to intercultural competencies.
 - Different, and sometimes divergent, cultural conceptions.
 - Ethics of interculturality on campus.
- **Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion (CCDI) membership** – which offers events, monthly newsletters and webinars.



EDI and the Faculty Association

Ontario Tech University and the Faculty Association (FA) have committed to a number of initiatives to advance greater equity, diversity and inclusion on campus, particularly as they pertain to faculty working conditions. First and foremost, the FA and university negotiated its first Letter of Understanding (LOU) on Employment Equity in the 2015-2016 negotiating round for tenure and tenure-track faculty members. The LOU was referenced in the Teaching Faculty Collective Agreement in 2017 and in the 2018-2019 round.

Secondly, Ontario Tech and the FA established a joint committee on employment equity to identify, address and correct systemic discrimination. Some measures for which this committee is responsible include creating and implementing a self-identification survey; reviewing and identifying best practices at other institutions; developing equity training for hiring and career review committees; and creating and monitoring an employment equity action plan. An improved equity statement in postings acknowledges all equity-seeking groups (including those based on sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression) and search committees identify candidates from equity-seeking groups. A joint salary anomaly committee has also been created to address and correct salary discrepancies, some of which may be rooted in equity matters.

In addition to these measures, a number of EDI additions have been made to the collective agreement (CA) from 2015 to 2020, including the addition of gender identity and gender expression to the list of prohibited grounds of discrimination and the adoption of non-gendered pronouns. Other measures include benefits for active employees over the age of 71 and recommendations from student course feedback surveys. Finally, a Land Acknowledgement has been added to the CA to recognize it was negotiated on traditional Indigenous territory.

While much work remains, our commitment to these principles of excellence has been firmly planted, and we look forward to the opportunity to continue to grow a campus environment of equity, diversion and inclusion.

EDI and the Board of Governors

The Board of Governors is committed to equity, diversity and inclusivity at the university generally, and in its own processes. Some examples of the Board's EDI initiatives include:

- Board of Governors Recruitment, Appointment and Leadership Policy: “The Governance, Nominations and Human Resources Committee, or its successor Committee, will actively seek to broaden the demographic and cultural diversity of the Board when recruiting eligible candidates to fill any identified gaps.”
- Faced with an unusually large number of external governors with terms ending in August 2018, the Board's Governance, Nominations and Human Resources Committee implemented a successful focused recruitment process conducted over the summer of 2018. The process resulted in the appointment of seven new governors, all of whom possess exceptional qualities and skills. All seven of the governors were diversity candidates.
- As a demonstration of the Board's commitment to Reconciliation, starting in 2018, every Board and committee meeting begins with a land acknowledgment.
- The Board of Governors is prioritizing the development of a formal EDI statement during the 2020-2021 Board year.

Common EDI Issues and Themes

Ontario Tech is in the early stages of its EDI initiatives. However, we have already experienced the benefits of ensuring a consultative and collaborative approach to the work. The following views, opinions and ideas have been expressed by Ontario Tech faculty, staff and students. EDI initiatives were engaged throughout our focus groups, blogs, the EDI conference, the Trans Day of Remembrance, Black History Month and International Women's Day conversations. Most participants wanted to know where or who they could turn to for EDI assistance on campus. Echoed by many was the need to ensure that EDI human resources would be appropriately funded and supported by the university administration. Other common themes and issues that were raised included the following:

- Ensuring dedicated and experienced EDI experts.
- Establishing a dedicated EDI office.
- Developing an EDI policy and vision that drives EDI within the institution.
- Developing EDI education, conversations and training guidelines.
- Gathering data on the composition of our workforce, including conducting workplace and student surveys on race, gender, Indigenous Identity, designated groups, disability, etc.
- Providing EDI lunch-time sessions.
- Establishing affinity groups for staff and faculty.
- Developing EDI admissions policies.
- Creating EDI FAQs and exit surveys.
- Advancing the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action and the Indigenization of the university.
- Developing better policies on the EDI process for bereavement, parental leave, maternity leave, disability leave, workplace accommodation, and return-to-work support.
- Creating an EDI award or form of recognition for faculty, staff and students. (See Examples of Canadian Universities with EDI Awards at the end of this report).
- Developing processes to incentivize education and EDI training of students and staff.
- Acknowledging that the composition of the senior leadership and the university's Board of Governors needs to be more reflective of the diversity of the wider population and the demographics of Durham Region and the Greater Toronto Area.
- Conducting more research on barriers faced by students, staff and faculty with disabilities and Indigenous or racialized women and transgender persons.
- Developing better campus and travel co-ordination between the north and downtown campus locations to enhance campus accessibility, course offerings and the university's overall sense of community.
- Addressing concerns about workplace racism, microaggressions, bullying and problems with accessing workplace accommodations.

The issues identified above have informed recommendations for four distinct university groups:

1. Board of Governors, President and Vice-Chancellor and Senior Executive Leadership.
2. Provost, Vice-President Research and Innovation, Chief Financial Officer, Deans and Administrative staff.
3. Postdoctoral Fellows, Graduate and Undergraduate Students, Research Assistants and Student Life.
4. Faculty Researchers, Associate Teaching Professors, Librarians and Sessional Instructors.

Recommendations

1) Board of Governors, President and Vice-Chancellor and Senior Executive Leadership

Statements and communications should always contain and reflect a strong and consistent commitment to EDI. According to a Conference Board of Canada report (Parris et al., 2006), “accountability for diversity among senior ranks sends a strong message to the entire organization.” The report affirms that “[s]uccessful diversity initiatives require clear communication about intent, strong leadership commitment, and concrete strategies and objectives linked to organizational needs and goals.” Equity leadership across the university begins with education, mentorship and training strategies designed to give management the tools and skills to execute their jobs.

Our university community felt that simply appointing an EDI Director would not be enough if the EDI Director is disconnected from decision-making and lacks the necessary independence with resources, staff and senior managerial support to make lasting changes. Many talked about having clear EDI definitions, guidelines, evaluation criteria and measures of success across the university. To achieve this goal, many felt that EDI should be embedded in the annual review and performance evaluation of senior leaders and the Board of Governors.

Many staff, students and faculty expressed the need to raise awareness about EDI, and especially called for guidance on how to support staff, student and faculty EDI development and how to have conversations about EDI across their departments. All members of the Ontario Tech community would benefit from having more EDI conversation sessions, while the university also needs to clarify and better communicate information about EDI.

Recommendations

1. Using external professional expertise and resources, engage in ongoing training for the Board of Governors and senior management and create equity dialogues across the campus with staff, students and faculty. Further training must employ an intersectional approach that understands the complexity of identity.
2. Collect EDI-based data on the Board of Governors and senior management to know if they reflect the wider demographics in Durham Region and the Greater Toronto Area.
3. Develop a university-wide EDI policy and formal statements of commitment to demonstrate how each unit or department will work to achieve the university's EDI goals.
4. Consider developing a consistent EDI job posting statement for all jobs at Ontario Tech.
5. Conduct a university workforce and student demographic survey, with a training and pilot phase for effective survey administration.
6. Develop a university-wide EDI strategic action plan.
7. Consider the creation of an annual EDI Leadership Award for service.
8. Continue posting a Land Acknowledgement statement on the home page of the university's main websites, faculty and staff email signatures, job postings and course syllabi, and including the acknowledgement during student orientation, ambassador events, and student university tours. Encourage use of the Land Acknowledgement at the start of all courses, meetings, conferences, events and presentations.
9. Establish a permanent EDI office.
10. Post updates documenting the continuous improvement in EDI at the university in the form of online content (including text, images, and video) through various social media channels.

2) Provost, Vice-President Research and Innovation, Chief Financial Officer, Deans and Administrative Staff

Ontario Tech is committed to advancing a culture of equity, diversity, inclusion and the values of fair treatment for all its members in the future. Data collection is not without its challenges, because some people may not want to self-identify. However, data collection is needed. A well-thought-out approach to data collection and analysis is needed in which students, faculty, and staff are encouraged to participate, informed of the importance of the survey and informed of how the survey data will be used and protected. The collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data are needed to be able to identify existing strengths and barriers to advancing EDI on campus, and to develop plans, policies and practices to address the barriers and monitor and report on progress.

The university's commitment to EDI should also be reflected in the recruitment, retention, and promotion of faculty and staff. It is also important that faculty and staff have the training and knowledge to advance and promote EDI.

Recommendations

11. Assess the current EDI climate at Ontario Tech to inform future EDI initiatives.
12. Encourage all divisions, units, and offices to follow up when the university EDI office develops practices and policies on how to implement EDI.
13. Consider examining policies across the university to create a standardized EDI policy and language through an institutional or environmental scan.
14. Re-assess every two years to track progress in improving the university's EDI climate.
15. Incorporate anticolonial and antiracist curricula for mandatory education on the problems and solutions connected to anti-Black racism, racism and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.
16. Conduct a workplace environmental scan employing an intersectional lens.
17. Establish a university-wide EDI advisory board including students, staff and faculty to keep the conversations going, review progress, and assess outcomes, including the establishment of a timeline for review.
18. Establish a university-wide mentorship program for faculty and staff to assist in growing, retaining and enhancing EDI across the university.



3) Postdoctoral Fellows, Graduate and Undergraduate Students, Research Assistants and Student Life

Postdoctoral fellows and graduate and undergraduate students should be provided with EDI training and scholarly opportunities in their disciplines of study and research. Further, the university should continue to support the engagement of students in the development and delivery of EDI awareness and education in order to address obstacles and barriers to inclusion and access and promote the success of all groups mentioned in the Ontario Human Rights Code. At Ontario Tech, postdoctoral fellows, graduate and undergraduate students, research assistants, and Student Life are central to the development and fostering of an EDI environment.

Recommendations

19. Start collecting data on undergraduate, graduate and postdoctoral students.
20. Increase the diversity of student advisors and counsellors as well as training for competencies in working with 2SLGBTQI+ students.
21. Consider cultural sensitivity and literacy as part of student advising, mental health training, and respect for the diverse beliefs and attitudes of our racialized and religious student populations.
22. Consider enhancing and expanding partnerships with community organizations that reflect and support the diversity of students (e.g., 2SLGBTQI+ organizations, organizations that offer services in multiple languages, etc.).
23. In collaboration with the Faculty of Social Science and Humanities, build capacity for collecting disaggregated data to better know about our past alumni and current students.
24. Remove the requirement for proof of verification of illness forms in favour of self-declared sick notes.



4) Faculty Researchers, Associate Teaching Professors, Sessional Instructors and Librarians

Faculty Researchers, Associate Teaching Professors, Sessional Instructors, Librarians and community service areas should be encouraged and supported to advance and integrate EDI research and teaching in their work. The Office of Research Services has developed an action plan on how to embed EDI throughout the Canada Research Chairs (CRC) program. Research Ethics Board requirements for research with human subjects mandate that EDI considerations be taken into account in research design and execution. According to Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC), the evidence is clear: equity, diversity and inclusion strengthen the scientific and engineering communities and the quality, social relevance and impact of research. Increasing diversity and gender equity in the research enterprise are key priorities for NSERC and for the Government of Canada (Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, 2020). These priorities aided in the acquisition of Dimensions funding for the hiring of an EDI Director. The Dimensions charter principles outline the importance of EDI to research and innovation (Canada, 2019). Ontario Tech can use this opportunity to continue its great work and its commitment to future CRCs.

Ontario Tech has a strong reputation for its culture of professional and academic excellence. The university's Strategic Mandate Agreement continues to prepare students for tomorrow's workplace; drive innovation in the province through research and scholarly work; and connect with local, national, and international communities to ensure diversity, equity and inclusion. To achieve these goals, Ontario Tech continues to evolve its learning and research strategies to provide its graduates, faculty and staff with the skills required for an evolving technology-intensive workplace. Ontario Tech provides intellectual space to reflect on the social, cultural, ethical, environmental and other implications of the knowledge economy (2017-20 Strategic Mandate Agreement).

Ontario Tech also recognizes EDI as instrumental in innovation, scholarship, research, learning and the work environment for faculty, staff and students. These are essential elements in fostering a welcoming and inclusive working environment. EDI further underpins excellence, and we all share responsibility for creating an equitable, diverse and inclusive community at Ontario Tech.

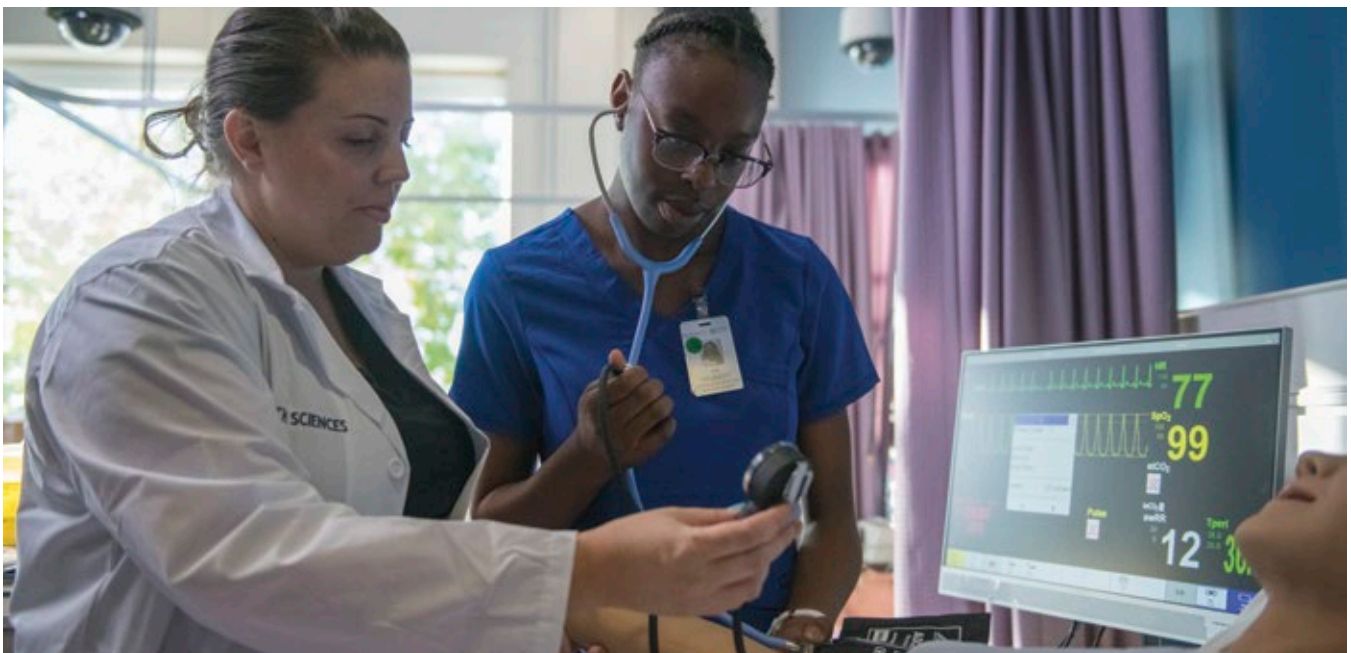
Recommendations

25. Continue to build on the EDI work of the Office of Research Services on CRCs.
26. Review the university's recruitment policy and procedures to ensure they reflect current and best practices on EDI training, job posting EDI statements, and EDI candidate evaluation criteria.
27. Gradually build EDI into STEM programming across the university.
28. Introduce and expand training related to bias, transphobia, homophobia, anti-Asian racism, anti-Indigenous racism, anti-Black racism, anti-Arab racism, anti-Semitism, racism, sexism, and equity, diversity and inclusion for those involved in managing Ontario Tech's CRC program.
29. Ensure there is equitable recruitment, selection, and training for hiring committees and review procedures related to the recruitment and selection of CRCs, staff, and faculty. The goal is to ensure that fair, objective, and inclusive recruitment and selection processes, mindful of current legislation, are followed, with a view to finding the best-qualified candidates.
30. Promote EDI in scholarship, teaching and service.
31. Collect data on adjunct and sessional faculty members.
32. Consider the creation of an annual Equity, Diversity and Inclusion teaching, service and research award for faculty.

Conclusion

This report has been shaped by Task Force members' expertise and guidance, as well as feedback gathered from Ontario Tech's outreach and engagement activities, oral and written submissions, and the Task Force's review of these materials. The university aspires to uphold employment practices and procedures in the Ontario Human Rights Code and will not, under any circumstances, permit employment practices and procedures in contravention of it. Ontario Tech's (2004) Harassment and Discrimination Policy recognizes the dignity and worth of every member of the university community and provides for equal rights and opportunities, free of discrimination and harassment. Further, the Policy supports the understanding that academic excellence can only be achieved when all members of the community are free to work, teach, and learn in an environment that does not exclude or discriminate against them. Accordingly, the Policy establishes that harassment and discrimination are never acceptable and will not be tolerated (Ontario Tech, 2004). We are all obligated to remove social barriers and active hindrances to meet the PET and EDI expectations for all university constituents and administrative units.

A commitment to EDI at Ontario Tech will be a hallmark of professional and academic excellence and the fulfillment of the university's mission. We must focus our attention on eradicating systemic and structural discrimination, including barriers to access, and on promoting equity across the workforce and student academic structures, processes, programs, and environments. Everyone can advance this agenda; it is our goal to be inclusive, and Ontario Tech can lead on EDI climate change.



References

- Abella, R. S. (1984). *Report of the Royal Commission on Equality in Employment*. Supply and Services Canada.
- Canada. (2019). *Dimensions: Equity, diversity and inclusion Canada*. https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/NSERC-CRSNG/EDI-EDI/Dimensions-Charter_Dimensions-Charte_eng.asp
- Dessanti, C. (2020). *The she-covey project: Confronting the gendered economic impacts of COVID-19 in Ontario*. Ontario Chamber of Commerce. https://occ.ca/wp-content/uploads/OCC-shecovery-final.pdf?utm_campaign=coschedule&utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=OntarioCofC
- Human Rights Code, R.S.O., c H-19 (1990). Ontario Human Rights Commission. <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/ontario-human-rights-code>
- Humber College. (2019). *Equity, diversity & inclusion definitions*. <https://humber.ca/staff/announcement/humbers-equity-diversity-inclusion-definitions>
- King, M. L. (1967). *Where do we go from here: Chaos or community?* Harper & Row.
- Land acknowledgement*. (n.d.). Ontario Tech University. <https://studentlife.ontariotechu.ca/services/community/indigenous/land-acknowledgement/index.php>
- Lorde, A. (1984). *Sister outsider*. Berkeley.
- Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada. (2020). *NSERC 2020: A Strategic plan*. https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/NSERC-CRSNG/NSERC2020-CRSNG2020/index_eng.asp
- Ontario Tech University. (2004). *Harassment and discrimination policy*. <https://usgc.ontariotechu.ca/policy/policy-library/policies/legal,-compliance-and-governance/harassment-and-discrimination-policy.php>
- Parris, S., Cowan, A. P., & Huggett, N. (2006). *Report on diversity: Priorities, practices, and performance in Canadian organizations*. Conference Board of Canada.
- Raymond, J. G. (1979). *The Transsexual empire: The making of the she-male*. Beacon Press.
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to action*. http://www.trc.ca/assets/pdf/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf
- 2-Spirited people of the 1st Nations*. (n.d.). 2-Spirits. <http://2spirits.com/PDFolder/History.pdf>
- 2017-20 Strategic mandate agreement: University of Ontario Institute of Technology (UOIT)*. Government of Ontario. <https://www.ontario.ca/page/2017-20-strategic-mandate-agreement-university-ontario-institute-technology-uoit#section-7>
- Universities Canada. (2019). *Equity, diversity and inclusion at Canadian universities: Report on the 2019 national survey*. <https://www.univcan.ca/media-room/publications/equity-diversity-and-inclusion-at-canadian-universities-report-on-the-2019-survey/>

EDI Concepts and Definitions

Accommodations - Accommodations on human rights-related grounds are measures implemented to assist individuals in claiming and reclaiming their human dignity at the university. Accommodations are a fundamental and integral part of the right to equitable treatment in order to attain the same level of performance, benefits, or privileges experienced by others. Individuals are entitled to accommodations in employment and in the provision of services under the Ontario Human Rights Code, and for sexual harassment under the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act, up to the point of undue hardship (Ontario Human Rights Commission).

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005: The purpose of the AODA is to develop, implement and enforce accessibility standards to remove barriers for Ontarians with disabilities on or before January 1, 2025 in relation to goods, services, facilities, accommodations, employment and buildings, structures and premises. The AODA came into effect on June 4, 2005.

Anti-Racism - Anti-racism is the active practice of identifying, challenging and changing the values, structures and behaviours that perpetuate systemic racism. It involves challenging and changing systems, organizational structures, policies, practices and attitudes so that power is redistributed and shared equitably (adopted from the Ontario Anti-Racism Directorate and NAC International Perspectives: Women and Global Solidarity).

Disability - There are two common ways of looking at what disability is, according to the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC).

One way is to see a disability as a medical condition that a person has. From this perspective, disability covers a broad range and degree of conditions, some visible and some not visible. A disability may have been present from birth, caused by an accident, or developed over time. There are physical, mental, cognitive and learning disabilities, mental disorders, hearing or vision disabilities, epilepsy, drug and alcohol dependencies, environmental sensitivities and other conditions (OHRC).

A newer way of looking at disability is that it is not something a person has. A person with a medical condition is not necessarily prevented (or disabled) from fully taking part in society. If society is designed to be accessible and include everyone, then people with medical conditions often don't have a problem taking part. From this point of view, disability is a problem that occurs when a person's environment is not designed to suit their abilities (OHRC).

Diversity - Diversity is the presence of a wide range of human qualities and attributes within an individual, group or organization. Diversity includes such factors as age, sex, race, ethnicity, physical and intellectual ability, religion, sexual orientation, educational background and expertise (OHRC).

Equity - Equity is about fairness, impartiality, and even-handedness. It is a distinct process of recognizing differences within groups of individuals and using this understanding to achieve substantive equality in all aspects of a person's life (OHRC). It is about bringing down barriers to participation/competition on an equal footing regardless of race, ethnicity, aboriginal status, gender, religion, sexual orientation, or disability.

Equity-Seeking Groups / Individuals: These are marginalized groups or individuals who are disproportionately excluded from full participation in society. Such groups include but are not limited to Indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, persons who identify as 2SLGBTQI+, racialized minorities and women. Commitments to equity begin with the acknowledgement of inequity within society (adopted from the Canadian Association of University Teachers).

Human Rights - Human rights are rights inherent to all human beings, whatever our nationality, place of residence, sex, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, language or any other status. We are all equally entitled to our human rights without discrimination. These rights are all interrelated, interdependent and indivisible (United Nations Declaration of Human Rights).

Inclusion - Inclusion means appreciating and using our unique differences – strengths, talents, weaknesses and frailties – in a way that shows respect for the individual and ultimately creates a dynamic multidimensional organization (OHRC).

Intersectionality Theory - The idea of intersectionality reminds us that “there is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives” (Lorde, 1984). The term was coined by Black early feminist scholars and Black legal scholar Dr. Kimberley Crenshaw to describe the ways in which identities and social locations (e.g., race, gender, sexual orientation, class, ability, etc.) intersect. Individuals experience systemic privilege and oppression based on how these factors are valued by social institutions and more broadly in society.

Land Acknowledgment - Acknowledging traditional territory is one way to express our respect, gratitude and appreciation for the Indigenous peoples who have inhabited and continue to live on the land we have been welcomed to share. It is recognition of their presence both in the past and in the present. Recognition helps to create a welcome and safe environment for Indigenous students, their families and community members ("Land acknowledgement," n.d.).

Sexual Violence - Sexual violence includes any sexual act or act targeting a person’s sexuality, whether the act is physical or psychological in nature, that is committed, threatened or attempted against a person without the person’s consent, and includes sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, indecent exposure, voyeurism and sexual exploitation ([Ontario Tech University Sexual Assault and Harassment Policy](#)).

Trans* - The asterisk in the word “Trans*” allows for different endings to the word in acknowledgement of a complex and diverse community—e.g., Transwoman, Transman, Transsexual, Transgender, and so on (see Raymond, 1979).

Transgender - This term refers to a person whose biological sex assigned at birth does not match their gender identity.

Transsexual - People who are identified at birth as one sex, but who identify themselves differently. They may seek or undergo one or more medical treatments to align their bodies with their internally felt identity, treatments such as hormone therapy, sex-reassignment surgery or other procedures. While this term is embraced by some people as an identity, it is rejected by others and should be used with caution.

Two-Spirit - According to ancient teachings, “two-spirited’ people were considered gifted among all beings because they carried two spirits: that of male and female. It is told that women engaged in tribal warfare and married other women as there were men who married other men. These individuals were looked upon as a third gender in many cases and in almost all cultures they were honoured and revered” (2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations, n.d.). Today, the term refers to Indigenous people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, trans-gendered, other gendered, or third/fourth gendered individuals that walk carefully between the worlds and between the genders. (<http://www.2spirits.com/PDFolder/History.pdf>)

Examples of Canadian Universities with EDI Awards

Province	University	Award Name	Link
British Columbia	University of British Columbia	Equity Enhancement Fund	equity.ubc.ca/resources/equity-enhancement-fund/past-recipients/ Information is under Resources
Manitoba	University of Winnipeg	Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Research Award	uwinnipeg.ca/research/docs/edi-internal-grant-info.pdf
Newfoundland and Labrador	Memorial University of Newfoundland (MUN)	Impact Award: Awarded to a ratified club, society, or resource centre of the MUN Student Union in recognition of their efforts to take-on a systemic, outcome-focused social change; and to examine the initiatives with critical and divergent thinking.	https://www.munsu35.ca/funding
Ontario	Ryerson University	Alan Shepard Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Student Award	ryerson.ca/equity/initiatives/awards/alan-shepard-student-award/
Quebec	McGill University	Award for Equity and Community Building	mcgill.ca/equity/initiatives-education/equity-awards

Faculty & Staff and Students	Student Teams	Campus	Faculty & Staff	Societies & Clubs
------------------------------	---------------	--------	-----------------	-------------------





For an alternative format of this information, contact marketing@ontariotechu.ca

© University of Ontario Institute of Technology 2020. Ontario Tech and Design, and Tech with a Conscience are Official Marks of Ontario Tech University. D5149