



a place of mind
THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

RENEWING OUR COMMITMENT TO EQUITY AND DIVERSITY:

UBC's response to the Task Force Recommendations

INTRODUCTION

The University of British Columbia is committed to providing a respectful environment, where diversity is valued, and where all our community members can achieve their full potential.

The diversity of UBC's community is one of our key strengths. By bringing together individuals with different perspectives, experiences and values, UBC creates a dynamic learning, teaching, research, work and living environment.

In order to support this diversity, UBC has committed significant resources and effort to the development of a respectful environment for all community members, including policies, programs and initiatives that specifically target issues of equity and inclusion.

While much has been done, the student-led chants of this past fall remind us of the need to keep moving forward. For that reason, President Toope convened a Task Force to provide recommendations on approaches to both address the issues of the fall, and to improve UBC's strategic approach to equity and inclusion.¹ The terms of reference of the Task Force can be found in Appendix 1. The report of the Task Force can be found through this link: <http://equity2.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2014/05/Task-Force-on-IGBVAS-Final-Report-March-28-2014.pdf>

The work of the Task Force was complementary to a set of prior processes that had been implemented to refine UBC's approach to addressing equity and diversity. UBC had initiated multiple projects to review, build on our strengths, and develop a more strategic approach to addressing equity and inclusion at UBC. These projects included, among others: a review and restructuring of the Equity and Inclusion Office and a stronger role and reporting structure for the Associate Vice President, Equity and Inclusion; and development of an intercultural strategy to build intercultural competencies across our community.

This document addresses the recommendations of the Task Force within the context of this broader work happening at UBC and represents UBC's action plan moving forward. The plan builds on current initiatives and UBC's strengths, and renews our commitment to a respectful environment, where diversity is valued, and where all our community members can study, work and live in an environment dedicated to equity, excellence and mutual respect.

¹ The Task Force used the term substantive equality in their report, but recognized that UBC's use of equity is "equivalent to the concept of substantive equality built into the Canadian legal system." As such, UBC will continue to use the term equity.

OVERVIEW OF THE ACTION PLAN

The response to the Task Force recommendations, within the broader context of the work happening at UBC, is being put forward as an action plan.

The plan recognizes the need to continue to move forward with clear intention. In all cases, action will start as soon as possible; however, the plan also recognizes that some of the work will take time to do properly, in order to create a comprehensive and coordinated approach, in partnership across campuses and our communities, drawing on the strengths and activities of all to achieve our long-term vision.

While recognizing the importance of this broader approach, the plan identifies priorities for action that align with those identified “for immediate implementation” by the Task Force, as well as two additional actions related to policy review and increased funding for community-led initiatives.

The plan identifies leads for each action, and we will report on our progress in implementation. The AVP, Equity and Inclusion will take leadership in reporting on our progress: at six months, and annually thereafter.

The action plan is a living document, and one that will only succeed with input, buy-in and partnership from across UBC and our broader community. As such, we recognize that the plan will evolve as we further develop components in partnership and consultation, especially through broader planning processes by the AVP, Equity and Inclusion that are identified in this action plan.

However, the direction we are setting is clear, and our commitment is strong. We are confident that this action plan will achieve our vision of a respectful environment, where all individuals can study, work, and live in an environment dedicated to equity, excellence and mutual respect.

Framework of the plan

The plan builds on four pillars, which, taken together, represent a comprehensive approach to achieving our vision for equity at UBC:

- Policy
- Strategic leadership and planning
- Curriculum and education
- Supporting a respectful community

This action plan identifies

- the context of UBC’s current work in each of these areas,
- the approach being taken, and
- key actions and accountabilities in each area.

POLICY

The foundation of a comprehensive approach is a policy regime that appropriately addresses the issues, provides strong guidance that is effectively implemented, and is well communicated and understood by all members of the community.

Current Context

UBC currently has several policies, statements and guidelines that deal with issues of equality, diversity, and equity. These include: UBC Student Code of Conduct, UBC Discrimination and Harassment Policy (Policy #3), UBC Safety Policy (Policy #7), UBC Employment Equity Policy (Policy #2), and UBC Response to at Risk Behaviour Policy (Policy #14). These policies currently undergo periodic review to ensure alignment with strategic direction and effectiveness.

Approach

Ensure our policy regime provides an effective framework for equity and inclusion, by reviewing our current policies, addressing key issues that have been identified as gaps, and addressing how these are communicated to all our community members.

Actions

1. REVIEW OUR CURRENT POLICIES

LEAD: University Counsel

Priority

A policy regime requires iterative review to ensure that it achieves its intentions as communities evolve. While UBC regularly reviews its policies, the following actions will be taken now in order to ensure our policy regime is sufficient, and address any outstanding issues. Under this action, UBC will:

- Review UBC Discrimination and Harassment Policy
- Review Student Code of Conduct
- Review Employment Equity Policy, including reviewing structures to better support reporting
- Review UBC Safety Policy
- Review UBC Response to at Risk Behaviour Policy
- Review other related policies as per regular cycle to ensure they effectively address issues related to equity, diversity and inclusion.

2. ADDRESS TARGETED POLICY AND GUIDELINE ISSUES

LEAD: University Counsel

Two areas have been identified where UBC's policies, statements and guidelines could be improved. In response, UBC will:

- Ensure that sexual diversity and transgender issues are appropriately addressed in policy reviews
- Develop guidelines to support consistent acknowledgement of Musqueam and Okanagan First Nations, and their respective traditional territories

3. ENSURE POLICIES ARE WELL COMMUNICATED

LEAD: Responsible Executive, by Policy

Priority

Policies work best when they are well communicated and understood by all community members. The third set of actions under the Policy pillar is to ensure that the policy regime is well communicated to all members of the community. This includes:

- Ensuring all policies, statements and expectations regarding equity and inclusion are clearly communicated in all hiring documentation.
- Communicating the importance of the Respectful Environment Statement for all community members, and how it can inform disciplinary action.

Please also see the community building component for more about the communication of policies and community standards for all members of the community.

STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP AND PLANNING

Addressing complex issues such as equity, diversity, and inclusion in a large organization requires a strategic planning approach, with strong leadership that builds connections and responsibility across the organization.

Current Context

Issues of equity, diversity and inclusion are currently addressed through UBC's central strategic plan Valuing Difference and plans at the faculty and unit level. It is also supported through the Intercultural Strategic Plan.

UBC currently has leadership for these issues at different levels of the organization. In the central administration, there is an Associate Vice President, Equity and Inclusion, and all faculties are encouraged to have either an associate dean or a senior staff member who is responsible for the development and implementation of faculty-specific approaches to addressing equity and inclusion.

Early in 2013, work began on restructuring the office of the Associate Vice President, Equity and Inclusion, with the intention of building a stronger central leadership and support system. Recognizing the breadth of the issue, the AVP will report to a committee of Vice-Presidents, who will provide leadership in their respective portfolios.

This process has now been completed, and UBC is currently hiring a new AVP, Equity and Inclusion, who will play a strong leadership and coordination role at UBC.

Part of the mandate of this position will be to review and renew the UBC strategic plan related to equity and inclusion, and better support the faculties and administrative units in addressing issues related to equity and inclusion, through education, assessment and leadership.

Approach

The approach taken to strengthening strategic leadership will be to build on the work that started through the Implementing Inclusion review. This will help to develop a more strategic approach, with central leadership and support, which leverages the strengths of all partners across UBC, and embeds the work into all that we do.

Actions

1. LEADERSHIP FOR EQUITY AND INCLUSION ISSUES

**LEAD: VP, Human Resources (1A)
Provosts (1B)**

Priority

- A) Building on the work done through the Implementing Inclusion review process, UBC will implement the restructured AVP Equity and Inclusion office, to take a leadership role in refining the strategic approach to Equity and Inclusion at UBC, and support faculties and units.

Recognizing the breadth and the importance of equity and inclusion issues, the AVP, Equity and Inclusion will report to a committee of Vice-Presidents who will provide leadership in their respective portfolios.

- B) Ensure all faculties have either an associate dean or senior staff member who is responsible for the development and implementation of faculty-specific approaches to addressing equity and inclusion.

2. RENEW AND IMPLEMENT THE EQUITY STRATEGIC PLAN

LEAD: AVP, Equity and Inclusion

The AVP will be charged with renewing and revising UBC's strategic plan related to equity and inclusion, and leading the implementation of that strategic plan, in consultation and collaboration across UBC.

The AVP will report annually on progress against both this current Action Plan and the Equity Strategic Plan, to ensure continued dialogue and engagement on issues of equity and inclusion, and provide accountability to our community.

3. SUPPORT BROADER STRATEGIC PLANNING ON ISSUES OF EQUITY AND INCLUSION AT UBC

LEAD: AVP, Equity and Inclusion

Planning currently occurs at the faculty and administrative unit level related to issues of equity and inclusion. To better develop a coordinated and comprehensive approach, these approaches need to be supported and aligned to UBC's strategic plan.

Under this action, the AVP, Equity and Inclusion will develop a strategic approach to support faculties and administrative units in refining, developing and implementing their plans, and reporting back to the wider community on progress.

As part of this action, the AVP will also work with central administrative units and faculties on appropriate data gathering and data reporting mechanisms.

4. ENGAGE, STRATEGICALLY AT NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL LEVELS

LEAD: VP, Students

UBC will contribute to the national AUCC Task Force on University (student) Orientation, and work collaboratively with senior student affairs leaders across Canada on issues of equity and inclusion.

CURRICULUM AND EDUCATION

As an institute of higher learning, committed to supporting global citizenship, UBC recognizes the importance of supporting learners to understand and address issues of equity and inclusion.

Context

UBC currently has many courses and programs, both curricular and extracurricular, which explore issues of equity and inclusion, and develop competencies related to understanding and addressing these issues.

Responsibility for curriculum decisions is within the mandate of the UBC Senates. However, there are other supports for the development of new approaches to curriculum and education related to equity and inclusion; these types of initiatives are currently supported through Access and Diversity, the Office of Equity and Inclusion, and funding opportunities such as the Equity Enhancement Fund.

Approach

Support the development of curriculum and education that increases understanding and competency relating to issues of equity, diversity and inclusion, while recognizing the core mandate of the Senates with regard to curriculum.

Actions

1. DEVELOP A CENTRAL RESOURCE CENTRE TO SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGE DEVELOPMENT OF CURRICULUM, COMPETENCIES

LEAD: Provosts

- The Provosts will create opportunities to develop a cross-campus approach to supporting curriculum development and best practice sharing related to equity and inclusion issues.

2. BUILD STUDENT, STAFF AND FACULTY COMPETENCIES AND UNDERSTANDING THROUGH COMMUNITY-ENGAGED ACTIVITIES

LEAD: Provosts

Priority

- Expand Equity Enhancement Fund to better support UBC initiatives to enhance student, faculty and staff competencies and experiences at UBC (addition of \$50k for 2014/15)

3. REQUEST SENATES TO CONSIDER TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS

LEAD: Provosts

The Senates have core responsibility for curriculum design and graduation requirements, and so the administration will:

- Refer the Task Force's recommendations regarding curriculum and graduation requirements to Senates for consideration.

SUPPORTING A RESPECTFUL COMMUNITY

A respectful community requires a shared understanding of clearly articulated community standards regarding equity and inclusion.

Context

Currently, UBC supports the development of a respectful community through orientations, education, communication of policies, dialogue with student organizations and other mechanisms.

However, this is the area that is most closely tied to the student-led chants that prompted the creation of this action plan. The approach and actions here are both to address some of the specific, proximal issues of the fall, but with a stronger, longer-term approach, to ensure that all members of our community have a shared understanding of clear community standards and expectations regarding equity and inclusion.

Approach

Build shared understanding through education, leadership and support, clear expectations and partnerships.

Community building is a process that requires community engagement and partnership. The work in this area, as in others, will be done in close partnerships with student organizations, faculties and administrative units of UBC, and in consultation and collaboration with external partners.

Actions

1. IMPROVE COMMUNICATION OF COMMUNITY STANDARDS

LEAD: AVP, Equity and Inclusion; VP, Communications and Community Partnership

- Improve mechanisms to communicate the Respectful Environment Statement, as a fundamental statement of our community standards, as well as its application as the basis of disciplinary action.

2. IMPROVE LEADERSHIP FOR STUDENT ORIENTATION

LEAD: VP, Students and Faculties

Priority

Student orientation has been identified as a core area for action. This area will require significant consultation and collaboration with student governments. Under this action item, UBC will

- Implement orientation steering committees on both campuses, which will help to coordinate, oversee and set standards for orientations.
- Provide all student leaders with consistent training which addresses issues of equity and inclusion, in partnership with student organizations
- Develop orientation guidelines that include clear expectations on issues of equity and inclusion, which will guide both University orientations and student-led orientations.
- Work with student organizations to ensure that student-led orientations occur after University orientations

3. DEVELOP PRE-ARRIVAL MODULES FOR INCOMING STUDENTS

LEAD: VP, Students, Provosts

These modules will support incoming students to build understanding of UBC's policies and values for a respectful, inclusive and safe environment, and develop incoming student competencies and understanding with regard to issues of equity and inclusion.

- The pre-arrival orientation will be developed in consultation with subject area experts, and leaders from Musqueam and Okanagan First Nations communities.

4. ENSURE EMPHASIS ON EQUITY AND INCLUSION IN EXISTING STAFF AND FACULTY ORIENTATIONS

LEAD: Human Resources, Provosts

All staff and faculty are currently provided with orientations. These orientations will be reviewed to ensure that they are clearly communicating UBC's values and commitment to equity and inclusion, and any gaps in the orientations will be addressed.

5. CONSISTENT SUPPORT FOR STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS WITH THE CLEAR COMMUNICATION OF POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

LEAD: VP, Students

The VPS will play a more active role in supporting student organizations, to ensure the development of appropriate understanding and competencies among student leaders. As part of this support, the VPS will work with the AMS and UBCSUO on developing mechanisms to clearly communicate expectations of student leaders and student organizations with regard to UBC's policies and values.

6. DEVELOP GUIDELINES FOR ALL EVENTS, IN COLLABORATION WITH STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

LEAD: VP, Students

Priority

UBC, in close collaboration with the AMS and UBCSUO, will develop jointly held guidelines for all formal UBC events, with support structures for communication and implementation, and appropriate mechanisms for addressing challenges.

APPENDIX 1: TASK FORCE TERMS OF REFERENCE

Purpose

Drawing upon the task force member's professional expertise as well as the input heard through consulting with members of the UBC community and community-based experts, develop a set of actionable recommendations that will result in transformative and robust change to combat the systemic attitudes and profound lack of understanding related to gender-based violence and the trivialization of Aboriginal culture rendered visible through chants that took place during student-led FROSH events, 2013.

Membership

- Professor Emeritus Christine Boyle, Faculty of Law
- Professor Mary Bryson, Faculty of Education and Director, Institute for Gender, Race, Sexuality and Social Justice, Faculty of Arts
- Professor Blye Frank, Professor and Dean, Faculty of Education
- Professor Daniel Justice, Professor, First Nations Studies Programme, Faculty of Arts
- Professor Rachel Kuske, Professor, Department of Mathematics, Faculty of Science, and Senior Advisor to the Provost on Women Faculty,
- Lori MacIntosh, Post Doctoral Fellow, Institute for Gender, Race, Sexuality, and Social Justice, Faculty of Arts
- Kiran Mahal, Recent Alumni, Current Student Senator, Past AMS Executive Member
- Professor Moura Quayle, Sauder School of Business
- Janice Robinson, Director, Student Housing, SHHS
- Professor Wisdom Tettey, Dean, Faculty of Creative and Critical Studies, UBCO
- Caroline Wong, Student, Faculty of Arts, and President, AMS
- Louise Cowin, Vice President Students

Meeting Frequency

Total of five meeting days. The suggested structure of the Task Force's meeting time is as follows:

0.5 day - Input from Task Force members

1.5 days - Input from UBC community

1 day - Input from Community-based experts

2 days - Sifting, sorting input, developing set of recommended actions

Timeframe

October 2013 - January 2014

Authority

Recommendations to the President