

The background of the slide is a photograph of a large, diverse crowd of people gathered outdoors. In the mid-ground, there are several white and blue pop-up tents. The background is filled with lush green trees, and a string of pink triangular bunting is visible hanging across the upper left. The overall atmosphere is that of a large-scale campus event or festival.

# Building Inclusive UBC: An Inclusion Action Plan





# Building Inclusive UBC

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In 2018, the University of British Columbia developed a new strategic plan, *Shaping UBC's Next Century: Strategic Plan 2018-2028*. During the planning process, the UBC community converged on three themes: inclusion, collaboration, and innovation. These three themes are cross cutting, spanning the core areas of People and Places, Research Excellence, Transformative Learning, and Local and Global Engagement.

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*Two students sitting on the Pride staircase at UBC Okanagan.*



# Table of Contents

	OUR COMMITMENT	6
	INTRODUCTION	8
	INCLUSION AT UBC	12
<b>GOAL 1.0</b>	<b>RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, &amp; SUCCESS</b>	<b>14</b>
	Actions	16
<b>GOAL 2.0</b>	<b>SYSTEMS CHANGE</b>	<b>18</b>
	Actions	20
<b>GOAL 3.0</b>	<b>CAPACITY BUILDING</b>	<b>22</b>
	Actions	24
<b>GOAL 4.0</b>	<b>LEARNING, RESEARCH, &amp; ENGAGEMENT</b>	<b>26</b>
	Actions	28
<b>GOAL 5.0</b>	<b>ACCOUNTABILITY</b>	<b>30</b>
	Actions	32
	<b>APPENDICES</b>	<b>i</b>
	Appendix 1: Glossary of Terms and Acronyms	ii
	Appendix 2: Inclusion Action Plan Development Process	iv

# Our Commitment

## Our Commitment to Inclusion

Welcome to the Inclusion Action Plan, which operationalizes the theme of inclusion, and supports the themes of innovation and collaboration in *Shaping UBC’s Next Century: 2018–2028 Strategic Plan*. This plan presents an opportunity for UBC to continue to develop its potential as a groundbreaking 21<sup>st</sup> century institution, including its leadership in creating global influence through its equitable, diverse, and inclusive campuses.

The emerging research is unequivocal: diversity enhances innovation, and inclusive spaces are required to ensure that diverse teams are able to collaborate effectively. As the world becomes more connected, and UBC focuses on contributing to global citizenship and finding solutions to complex issues, this plan supports our continuing progress.

The Inclusion Action Plan also supports our commitments to reconciliation, and recognition of our locations on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of Indigenous peoples. This history and relationship with these lands frames our efforts to understand decolonization in the context of all our inclusion efforts.

Equity, diversity, and inclusion are the conditions for attracting and retaining the best and brightest students, staff, and faculty from around the world, and understanding how we best create the environments in which we work, learn, and live. Inclusion is a commitment for us all, and I look forward to following our progress and learning closely as we work together to achieve the goals in this plan.

—  
**Santa J. Ono**  
**President and Vice-Chancellor**

## Working Together to Move Ideas into Action

UBC is committed to inclusion—that commitment is clearly set out in this Inclusion Action Plan, with actions to help us continue to work toward inclusion for students, staff, and faculty on UBC’s campuses. Equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts have been underway at UBC for years, and the data shows we are making steady progress —however, our community members are telling us they want to see more change. This Inclusion Action Plan represents an opportunity to create greater impact through clarifying and aligning our efforts together, and building greater shared responsibility across the institution for honouring our collective commitment to inclusion.

Inclusion is key to supporting positive engagement among our students, staff, and faculty—increasing engagement in work and learning that affect UBC’s quality of scholarship and influence in greater society. We recognize that this work can be difficult, and that leadership needs to come from the ground up, the middle out, and the top down to ensure that we are supporting each other in our learning and creating impact across the institution. We also recognize that the commitment we’re making together requires critically examining progress and lessons learned to ensure that resources we’re investing are based on the best available evidence and contributing to a more inclusive space to work, learn, and live. We look forward to working and learning with you through the next seven years of implementing this plan.

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**Deborah Buszard**

**Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Principal, UBC Okanagan**

**Ainsley Carry**

**Vice-President, Students**

**Barbara Meens-Thistle**

**Vice-President, Human Resources**

**Andrew Szeri**

**Provost and Vice-President, Academic, UBC Vancouver**

## Enhancing Efforts

Equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) are key to achieving the best learning, working, and living environments for everyone who is part of UBC. With this Inclusion Action Plan, UBC can chart a clear course to enable all those who have made and are making efforts toward greater equity, diversity, and inclusion to see where there are opportunities to collaborate, learn from each other, and support greater impact. The groundwork is there in many places across this institution and with this plan we hope to enhance progress on this important work.

Our location on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh and Syilx Okanagan Nations provides us with guidance and growing relationships to ensure that this Inclusion Action Plan supports the implementation of the Indigenous Strategic Plan across UBC. In addition, the Inclusion Action Plan recognizes that it is also developing in the context of UBC’s Sustainability Strategy, Wellbeing Strategy, and Focus on People 2025 Framework. While these are related in important ways, their different perspectives provide opportunities for UBC to make progress in a number of areas that are supportive of the UBC experience and UBC’s impact in the world. With the alignment to the strategic plan; the sponsorship of UBC’s leadership; and the tools, processes, and EDI education and research support from the Equity & Inclusion Office, UBC will continue to increase inclusiveness, with all the institutional and individual benefits that that will bring.

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**Sara-Jane Finlay**

**Associate Vice-President, Equity & Inclusion**

Introduction

The strategic plan defines inclusion as “a commitment to access, success, and representation of historically underserved, marginalized, or excluded populations”. To operationalize the inclusion theme of the strategic plan, UBC has developed an Inclusion Action Plan (IAP).

The purpose of the IAP is to:

- Report on the results of an extensive consultation process to develop goals and actions on building a more inclusive institution;
- Develop a guiding framework that identifies inclusion goals for UBC and collaborative institutional actions needed to advance inclusion at UBC over the next seven to ten years;
- Build on and connect existing equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts across UBC’s campuses under a single high-level framework;
- Develop a ‘menu’ of actions to ensure academic departments and operational units across UBC can incorporate inclusive actions into their unit-level planning.



—  
*UBC community members at the Forestry Science Centre.*

The IAP is grounded in UBC’s location on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the Musqueam and Syilx Okanagan Nations. In exploring inclusion, this plan recognizes Indigenous people and Indigenous concerns as both within and beyond a conversation on inclusion at UBC. For this reason, throughout the plan, some actions express direct linkages between the work of this plan and UBC’s Indigenous Strategic Plan.

The IAP presents an opportunity to support UBC’s commitment to Indigenous engagement, including with the Musqueam and Syilx Okanagan Nations, and with the Indigenous peoples of Canada more broadly. It respects that the institution’s efforts in this area, including delineation of strategic actions to advance this work, are reflected in the Indigenous Strategic Plan.

## Introduction

UBC has made great efforts, and good progress, to increase equity, diversity, and inclusion over the last 20 years; however, academic structures, systems, and processes were designed for a different time and population.

In the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, the university's doors began to open to new groups of students, faculty, and staff, while the systems and structures have not fully adapted to ensure equitable outcomes in education and careers.

### Why Do We Need a Commitment to Inclusion?

We have heard from our community—UBC's student and workplace experience surveys show clear trends of less positive scores for students, staff, and faculty from most equity-seeking groups. UBC's workforce representation is, in many occupational groups, not proportional to the available workforce for those occupations. Bullying, harassment, sexual misconduct, and discrimination issues continue. The progress is there, but it is expected that with the focus provided by this plan, UBC will be better able to build collaborative efforts across its departments and units to create inclusive campuses for all our students, staff, and faculty. UBC, as a world-leading university with influence on society, merits the excellence of a community of diverse and engaged faculty, staff, and students to tackle the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### What the Inclusion Action Plan Achieves

The IAP represents the ideas, suggestions, and expertise of faculty, staff, students, and alumni from across our campuses. It proposes a high-level framework for supporting collective action toward advancing inclusion at UBC over the next seven years. The actions included in this plan reflect promising practices and suggestions gathered through extensive consultations, and are considered to be those actions most relevant to UBC's current context. The actions cover a wide range of areas and in committing to making progress on specific actions, the plan proposes that divisions will pick and choose the ones that are most relevant to them, to their local context, and in areas where there is the potential for change to be tracked and measured. No one individual, unit, or department is expected to complete all of these actions. Building an inclusive campus requires individual and collective responsibility to develop innovative responses.

The timeline of seven years, with an institutional evaluation at midpoint, recognizes and is expected to accommodate the iterative nature of implementation for some of these actions, while still noting annual progress toward the goals. It also recognizes that the groundwork for accomplishing these actions has been happening in different spaces across UBC for years. The IAP presents an opportunity to highlight, coordinate, and amplify many of these efforts that have been, and are currently, underway throughout the institution, e.g., the work in the Integrated Renewal Project to ensure WorkDay and its functions support this IAP, etc. It provides a roadmap for innovating and learning together about how to continue to develop inclusion across UBC.

At UBC, inclusion is a commitment to creating a welcoming community where those who are historically, persistently, or systemically marginalized are treated equitably, feel respected, and belong.

Inclusion is built by individual and institutional responsibility through continuous engagement with diversity to inspire people, ideas, and actions for a better world.

# Inclusion at UBC





# 1.0 Goal: Recruitment, Retention, and Success

—  
*UBC researcher working in a laboratory.*

---

UBC will actively recruit, support, retain, and advance students, faculty, staff, and leaders from systemically marginalized communities.



# Actions

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## A. Recruit for EDI Skills and Competencies

**LEADS: Provosts; Senates; VP, Human Resources**

Continue to enhance active recruitment for equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) skills and competencies, and increase the capability and capacity to collaborate in a diverse environment through all searches and in career progression for leadership, staff, and faculty.

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## B. Equitable Recruitment and Admissions

**LEADS: Provosts; VP, Human Resources; VP, Students**

Revise, renew, and replace recruitment and hiring/admissions processes to actively take into account equity issues in the assessment of merit, through job postings, criteria development, and selection of students, staff, faculty, and leadership at UBC.

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## C. Access through Affordability

**LEADS: Provosts; VP, Human Resources; VP, Students**

Reduce financial barriers to studying and working at UBC, particularly for Indigenous and other marginalized students, and support affordability strategies for transit, housing, and childcare for faculty, staff, and students.

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## D. Inclusive Spaces and Initiatives

**LEADS: Provosts; VP, Human Resources; VP, Students**

Support mentorship, peer support, and affinity/resource groups that enhance spaces and initiatives toward inclusion. Promote extra-curricular programming, professional development opportunities and events that help build inclusive cultures.

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## E. EDI in Scholarship

**LEADS: Provosts; Senates; VP, Human Resources**

Expand and enhance opportunities for scholarship rooted in differences in worldviews that advances equity, diversity, and inclusion.

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## F. EDI in Promotion

**LEADS: Provosts; VP, Human Resources**

Create and embed best practice guidelines for the recognition and valuing of EDI-related work, in collaboration with Provosts, Deans, and collective bargaining units, in scholarship, teaching, educational leadership, and service for faculty.

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## G. Enhance Performance Review Processes and Discussions

**LEADS: VP, Human Resources; Provosts**

Update performance review processes, discussion guides, and merit pay policies for staff and emerging leaders in collaboration with Provosts, Deans, and collective bargaining units, to include criteria for recognizing participation in initiatives and other contributions to advance equity, diversity, and inclusion.


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## H. Implement Recommendations of Systems Reviews

**LEADS: VP, Human Resources; VP, Students; Provosts**

Implement the recommendations of the 2019 Employment Systems Review that assesses disparities in experiences for faculty and staff, and conduct a similar review to examine any disparities in experiences for students, including student staff, teaching assistants, and post-docs.

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A photograph of three people standing outdoors in front of a building with large stone columns. A man with a beard and a light blue shirt is on the left, looking at a laptop. A woman wearing a blue hijab and a dark jacket is in the center, holding the laptop. Another woman with long dark hair and a red necklace is on the right, looking at the laptop. The background is slightly blurred, showing the stone columns and some greenery.

# 2.0 Goal: Systems Change

—  
*UBC faculty and staff working in front of the  
Indian Residential School History and Dialogue Centre.*

---

UBC will be intentional and proactive in changing systems, structures, policies, practices, and processes to advance equity, diversity, and inclusion.



# Actions

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## A. EDI Decision-Making Principles

**LEADS: All VPs, Board of Governors, Senates**

Develop, consult on, and implement guidelines for decision-making that incorporate equity, diversity, and inclusion principles.

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## B. Indigenous Strategic Plan

**LEADS: President; Provosts; VP, Human Resources; VP, External Relations**

Support understanding and implementation of the Indigenous Strategic Plan across all units.

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## C. Inclusion Action Planning

**LEADS: University Executive, Senates**

Ensure plans that incorporate inclusion actions are developed by and communicated throughout each Executive Portfolio and each Faculty.

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## D. Leadership and Succession Planning

**LEADS: Provosts, All VPs**

Develop and implement criteria for advancing into mid-level and senior leadership that requires that all leaders demonstrate commitment to principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion and reflect the diversity of the UBC community.

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## E. Degree Requirements

**LEADS: Senates, Provosts**

Incorporate equity, diversity, and inclusion skills and competencies into degree requirements.

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## F. Job Descriptions and Performance Reviews

**LEADS: VP, Human Resources; Provosts**

Incorporate equity, diversity, and inclusion skills and competencies into job descriptions and provide training in how to assess these skills and competencies through performance reviews for staff and evaluations for faculty.

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## G. Workplace Accommodations for Disability

**LEADS: VP, Human Resources; VP, Finance & Operations**

Develop and enact an institutional level accommodation policy for faculty and staff with disabilities that is supported by a central accommodation fund.

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## H. Inclusive Infrastructure

**LEADS: Provosts; VP, Human Resources; VP, Students**

Develop infrastructures for supporting and accommodating faculty, staff, and students with respect to religious, spiritual, and cultural observances, and flexible work, housing, and childcare arrangements.

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## I. Accessibility

**LEADS: VP, Finance & Operations; VP, External Relations**

Enhance the accessibility of physical and virtual spaces on UBC campuses for students, staff, and faculty.

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## J. IAP Planning, Implementation & Reporting

**LEADS: Provosts; All VPs**

Provide resources for department, Faculty, and administrative unit level planning, implementation, and reporting on the IAP.

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## K. Equity Leads

**LEADS: Provosts; All VPs**

Appoint a faculty or staff member within each department or unit who is responsible for coordinating the implementation of commitments made in the Executive or Faculty level plans at the local level, supported by an Equity Leads Network facilitated by the Equity & Inclusion Office.



# 3.0 Goal: Capacity Building

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UBC will enhance institutional and individual capacities and skills to succeed in and advance inclusive environments and work to sustain and continually evolve that capacity as skills and capabilities are increased.

—  
*UBC Okanagan students having a discussion.*





—  
*UBC instructor teaching at Orchard Commons.*

3.0 Goal:  
**Capacity Building**

# Actions

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## A. EDI Education and Training Programs

**LEADS: Provosts; VP, Human Resources;  
VP, Students; VP, Research & Innovation**

Resource, develop, implement, and evaluate comprehensive education and training programs on equity, diversity, and inclusion for students, faculty, and staff. Embed this education and training in recruitment processes, onboarding, assessment and performance reviews, and professional development for staff and faculty; and in curricular and co-curricular contexts for students.

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## B. Dialogue and Engagement

**LEADS: Provosts; VP, Human Resources;  
VP, Students; VP, External Relations**

Facilitate and provide opportunities for dialogue and conversation around sensitive topics at UBC and beyond. Build conflict engagement skills and practices among all members of UBC's community to equip people for working across differences.

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## C. EDI Leadership Training

**LEADS: Provosts; VP, Human Resources**

Develop EDI curriculum and deliver/leverage training specifically for leadership at all levels to deepen understanding and encourage modelling of inclusive behavior, with a focus on applied skills and performance management in diverse workplaces.

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## D. EDI Curriculum and Program Requirements

**LEADS: Provosts; Senates**

Embed equity and inclusion education into curriculum and program requirements for all students that incorporates intercultural understanding, empathy and mutual respect (see [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action](#) (iii) and [UBC's Indigenous Strategic Plan](#)).





# 4.0 Goal: Learning, Research, and Engagement

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UBC will foster environments of learning, research, and engagement that value building and exchanging multiple and intersectional ways of knowing.

—  
*UBC instructors and students at the Audain Art Centre.*



# Actions

—  
*UBC student  
working at the  
Audain Art  
Centre.*



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## A. EDI Awards, Funding, and Incentives

**LEADS: Provosts; VP, Research & Innovation**

Establish awards, funding, and incentives that recognize outstanding equity, diversity, and inclusion initiatives and contributions in learning, research, and engagement, including community-engaged research and community-led initiatives.

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## B. Inclusive Teaching and Learning

**LEADS: Provosts; Senates**

Encourage and support instructors and teaching assistants to implement inclusive course design, teaching practice, and assessments.

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## C. Funding Applications and Award Nominations

**LEADS: VP, Research & Innovation; Provosts**

Embed equity, diversity, and inclusion principles in the review processes for all funding programs and award nominations including VP Research & Innovation-administered internal funding competitions, internal research awards, institutional nominations for external awards and honours, and funding programs that require adjudication and peer-review. Equitably support researchers to develop funding proposals and award nominations.

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## D. Research Funding

**LEADS: Provosts, VP, Research & Innovation**

Advance the principles and intended outcomes of the equity, diversity, and inclusion initiatives of the Canada Research Chairs Program and the Dimensions Charter, as well as other existing and future government funding programs.

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## E. Equitable Community Relationships

**LEADS: VP, External Relations; VP, Finance & Operations; VP, Research & Innovation; Provosts**

Proactively build and strengthen UBC's relationships and improve institutional systems to appropriately recognize and compensate community members' engagement, and work more effectively with communities and organizations representing those who have been marginalized.

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## F. Student Learning

**LEADS: Senates; VP, Students; Provosts**

Review and improve mechanisms to ensure that student perspectives on the inclusiveness of their learning experiences are integrated into the improvement of teaching.

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## G. Indigenous Strategic Plan Alignment

**LEADS: All VPs; Indigenous Engagement Committee; Provosts**

Work in alignment with the Indigenous Strategic Plan to support learning, research, and engagement at UBC that reflect the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls' Calls for Justice, and are consistent with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.



# 5.0 Goal: Accountability

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UBC will hold itself accountable to its commitment to inclusion through clear and timely processes, thorough evaluation, and transparent reporting to the UBC communities on its progress on this action plan.

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*Staff members from UBC Financial Operations.*



# Actions



—  
*Staff working at the UBC Farm.*

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## A. Mechanisms for Annual Reporting

**LEADS: VP, Human Resources;  
Provosts; VP, Students**

Establish mechanisms for annual reporting on inclusive actions, including plans for future progress.

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## B. WorkDay Institutional Data

**LEADS: VP, Human Resources; VP, Finance & Operations; VP, Students**

Ensure Workday collects institutional data with appropriate privacy safeguards to enable regular systematic analyses of access, engagement, promotion, success, attrition, etc., for students, staff, and faculty.

---

## C. Enhanced Reporting Mechanisms

**LEADS: VP, Human Resources; Board of Governors**

Review and enhance streamlined mechanisms and related policies to better support people who experience harassment, discrimination, retaliation, and bullying to report incidents and policy breaches, and ensure annual reporting on aggregated incidents.

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## D. External Contractors

**LEAD: VP, Finance & Operations**

Create EDI criteria to engage all external contractors to work toward supporting an inclusive environment at UBC, and as a condition for being added to the preferred list of vendors or contractors for UBC.

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## E. External Reviews

**LEADS: Provosts; Deans**

Create terms of reference for the self-study document and directions to reviewers for external department and/or program reviews that includes:

- an examination of the diversity of people within the department and concrete efforts to address any under-representation;
- an analysis of the integration of historically marginalized forms of knowledge into the curriculum;
- a demonstration within the department of the fulfillment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada’s Call to Action, particularly Call 63 (iii).

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## F. Annual Reporting on this Plan

**LEAD: Equity & Inclusion Office**

Report annually to the campus communities on the progress of this plan, including actions planned and undertaken in each division, progress made, and updated information on changes in the metrics for each goal.





# Appendices

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*Inside the Earth Sciences Building at UBC Vancouver.*





—  
UBC community members working  
in the Ridington Reading Room.

**2SLGBTQIA+**

Two Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer (or Questioning), Intersex, Asexual (or sometimes Ally). The placement of Two Spirit (2S) first is to recognize that Indigenous people are the first peoples of this land and their understanding of gender and sexuality precedes colonization. The ‘+’ is for all the new and growing ways we become aware of sexual orientations and gender diversity.

**Diversity**

Differences in the lived experiences and perspectives of people that may include race, ethnicity, colour, ancestry, place of origin, political belief, religion, marital status, family status, physical disability, mental disability, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, age, class, and/or socioeconomic situations.

**Equity**

Recognizing that everyone is not starting from the same place or history, deliberate measures to remove barriers to opportunities may need to be taken to ensure fair processes and outcomes.

Equity refers to achieving parity in policy, process and outcomes for historically and/or currently underrepresented and/or marginalized people and groups while accounting for diversity.

It considers power, access, opportunities, treatment, impacts, and outcomes, in three main areas:

- Representational equity: the proportional participation at all levels of an institution;
- Resource equity: the distribution of resources in order to close equity gaps; and
- Equity-mindedness: the demonstration of an awareness of, and willingness to, address equity issues.

**EIO**

Equity & Inclusion Office: [equity.ubc.ca](http://equity.ubc.ca)

**EDI**

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

**Historically, persistently, or systemically marginalized**

This language was intentionally and carefully chosen during the development of this plan to recognize that:

- UBC and other institutions throughout Canada were created at a time when societal norms privileged and included some groups and disadvantaged and excluded others. In Canada, these disadvantaged groups have been defined as Indigenous people, women, people with disabilities, racialized people, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people.
- This history entrains a legacy of day-to-day barriers that contributed to past, and perpetuate current, inequities which compound over time;
- Our systems, in the form of policies, practices, culture, behaviours, and beliefs continue to maintain these barriers in the ways that they continue to create the institution. It is often not an individual intentional, systematic, effort to discriminate. It is an unconscious, unrecognized practice of doing things as they have always been done (and recreating the historical exclusions).

**IAP**

Inclusion Action Plan

**Inclusion**

Inclusion is an active, intentional, and continuous process to bring marginalized individuals and/or groups into processes, activities, and decision-making to address inequities in power and privilege, and build a respectful and diverse community that ensures welcoming spaces and opportunities to flourish for all.

**Intersectionality**

The interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, disability, sexual orientation, and gender identity as they apply to a given individual or group.

The term was coined by lawyer, civil rights advocate, and critical race theory scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw to describe the “various ways in which race and gender intersect in shaping structural and political aspects of violence against women of color” (1994).

Intersectional identities create overlapping and interdependent systems of marginalization, discrimination or disadvantage.

**LEADS**

UBC leaders who are accountable for ensuring progress on the actions.

The Inclusion Action Plan development process has been underway since the fall of 2018. In summary, the content of the IAP was informed by the following:







THE UNIVERSITY  
OF BRITISH COLUMBIA