Building Inclusive UBC: An Inclusion Action Plan
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.

Two students sitting on the Pride staircase at UBC Okanagan.
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 21st 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
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. We look forward to working and learning with you through the next seven years of implementing this plan.

— Sara-Jane Finlay
Associate Vice-President, Equity & Inclusion

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.

— 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

— 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.

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 20th 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 21st 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.
1.0 Goal: Recruitment, Retention, and Success

UBC will actively recruit, support, retain, and advance students, faculty, staff, and leaders from systemically marginalized communities.
1.0 Goal:
Recruitment, Retention, and Success

Actions

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.
2.0 Goal: Systems Change

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

UBC faculty and staff working in front of the Indian Residential School History and Dialogue Centre.
2.0 Goal: Systems Change

Actions

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.

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.

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.

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.

E. Degree Requirements
LEADS: Senates, Provosts
Incorporate equity, diversity, and inclusion skills and competencies into degree requirements.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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

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.
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.

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.

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.

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

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.
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.

B. Inclusive Teaching and Learning  
**LEADS:** Provosts; Senates  
Encourage and support instructors and teaching assistants to implement inclusive course design, teaching practice, and assessments.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.
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.
5.0 Goal: Accountability

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.

B. 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.

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.

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).

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
Appendix 1
Glossary of Terms and Acronyms

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

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.

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UBC community members working in the Readington Reading Room.
Appendix 2

Inclusion Action Plan Development Process

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:

**An IAP Working Group** comprised of equity and inclusion experts, community members with a diverse range of lived experience, influencers, and stakeholders from both UBC Vancouver and UBC Okanagan campuses was convened to consider previous strategic planning for inclusion, and to develop a framework for the IAP. They developed a definition of what inclusion means at UBC and articulated the resulting five goal areas for advancing inclusion at UBC.

**An Actions Development Workshop** in May 2019 led a cohort of over 70 students, staff and faculty at UBC who are champions, implementers, and/or people with lived experience, in a series of facilitated exercises to synthesize and distill action ideas into preliminary draft actions, followed by iterative team review and feedback processes, within the EIO and with UBC leadership, to refine draft actions and identify relevant, preliminary high-level metrics.

**Campus-wide consultations**, guided by an Inclusion Advisory Committee, in the spring of 2019, focused on informing the UBC communities about the IAP and opportunities to get involved. These consultations reached 1,600+ individuals and generated 5,400+ ideas for actions that would contribute to creating a more inclusive UBC.

**Targeted consultations** in the summer and fall (August through September) of 2019 focused on soliciting feedback on the draft actions from over 250 students, staff, and faculty across campuses with lived experience of being historically, persistently, or systemically marginalized, and hosting presentations and consultations with UBC leadership (Vice-Presidents, Deans, senior administrative and academic leaders, and university-wide committees). This feedback was reviewed and integrated into revisions to produce the current version of the plan.

**Meetings with developers of mid-level institutional plans** to develop a shared understanding of approaches and measures and create synergies where possible.

**Presentation to UBC Executive** in October 2019 for endorsement.

**Presentation to the Board of Governors** in December 2019 for information.

**Beginning implementation** and working out the shared measures of progress and mechanisms for communication.

**Publication of the final approved IAP** along with the “What We Heard” reports that clarify how campus consultations informed the IAP.