

# Event Summary:

# EDI Action Network

*Meeting #2: October 27, 2021*

## Introduction

The [Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion \(EDI\) Action Network](#) is a space for connection, shared learning, and development for students, staff, and faculty working to advance EDI initiatives at UBC. UBC's EDI Action Network is organized and supported by the Equity & Inclusion Office, in partial fulfillment of action 2K of the [Inclusion Action Plan](#), which calls for the creation of an "Equity Leads Network" to support EDI champions in UBC's units and departments.

The second gathering of the EDI Action Network was held October 26th, 2021 online via Zoom. This report provides a summary of the event and participant feedback, to support continuity and transparency as the network continues to evolve.

## Event Summary

### Attendance

The invitation for the event was sent to all those who had registered for the first event, or who had signed up to join the EDI Action Network listserv. The invitation also indicated that participants were encouraged to forward it to other colleagues who fit the network criteria. The final invitation list contained approximately 127 faculty, staff, and a small number of students. 70 individuals registered for the event and approximately 50 attended.

### Opening Plenary

Sara-Jane Finlay, Associate Vice-President for Equity & Inclusion, opened the event with a land acknowledgement and reiterated the EDI Network goals:

- Strengthen existing equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) work with practical tools, frameworks, and ideas;
- Build connections and decrease silos among those of us doing this work; and
- Amplify the impact of units' EDI initiatives by expanding their reach across UBC.

Sara-Jane then provided two updates on institutional EDI initiatives:

- The campaign for all faculty and staff to complete the Employment Equity Survey (Note: While the forthcoming 2021 Employment Equity Report will reflect data captured as of November 1, faculty and staff can continue to respond to the survey at any time to be included in next year's data pull.)
- The Equity Enhancement Fund application cycle (deadline of November 29, 2021).

Lucy Buchanan-Parker, Strategist for Institutional Initiatives in the Equity & Inclusion Office, reviewed the agenda for the event and announced network updates including:

- A summary report of the first event which is [available online](#).
- A Microsoft Teams space that has been created for the network by popular request.
- The next gathering of the network will be in late spring, 2022.

Lucy introduced community expectations for the event and then led the group in three rounds of a “speed meet and greet” where participants met in groups of three, for five minutes each, with a prompting question to discuss in each round.

## Case Studies and Lessons Learned from Unit and Departmental Changes

Lucy announced the panelists presenting their case studies:

- Nancy Sin from the Department of Psychology presented on their Diversity Mentors Program
- Amanda Unruh from Health Promotion and Education presented about their work engaging students in EDI conversations
- Bernard Laval from the Department of Civil Engineering presented on their faculty retreat approach
- Kathy Ma and Letitia Henville from Arts Co-op presented on their multi-year project to assess and make changes to their programming and services from an EDI lens

Following the short presentations, Sara-Jane moderated a panel discussion. Panelists shared lessons learned from their initiatives, the key factors that helped make their initiative successful, the role of leadership in advancing their initiatives, and perspectives on how to sustain the changes they had made.

The panel discussion was followed by a short break. Afterwards, participants convened in small groups in breakout rooms facilitated by EIO staff. Participants shared initial reflections and insights on the case studies, and discussed how they might apply these insights in their own work.

## Creating Space for EDI Conversations

For the final part of the meeting, Lucy reviewed key considerations for connecting this network via Microsoft Teams.

The Teams space was created in response to overwhelming demand from participants in the EDI Action Network for mechanisms to connect with one another, ask and answer questions, and share resources and experiences.

Network members highlighted a desire to focus on topics including:

- **Considerations and approaches to planning unit-level efforts that advance EDI:** how to include a broad range of voices in your process, strategies for addressing resistance, making change sustainable
- **Unit-level strategies and initiatives that advance EDI at UBC:** changes to hiring processes, student programming, training and education initiatives
- **Engaging with UBC's EDI ecosystem:** Inclusion Action Plan, Activating Inclusion Toolkit, and other related plans, task forces, and initiatives
- **Sharing** EDI-related events and learning opportunities

Lucy explained that this network is focused on unit and departmental actions that collectively promote greater equity, diversity, and inclusion at UBC, it is not intended for supporting participants' personal journeys of learning and unlearning in relation to EDI.

Then, she presented the *participation and moderation guidelines* for the Microsoft Teams space. Although the EDI Action Network is a space for 'champions' who share a deep belief in the importance of EDI, this does not eliminate the possibility that participants might do or say something that causes harm. We all hold multiple identities with differing amounts of privilege and marginalization which make it possible for harmful dynamics that exist in society to work their way into our interactions.

However, these are important and necessary conversations. EIO staff have proposed draft guidelines for dealing with conflict or disagreements in a way that prioritizes people who hold marginalized identities. The guidelines are posted in their own channel in the Teams space, and we hope that participants will discuss how to improve the guidelines and apply them as the space develops.

Lucy closed the conversation emphasizing that use of the Teams channel may change and evolve over time – and suggested continuing the conversation about these guidelines on Teams itself. Participants in the event will receive a link to join the Teams space after the event, and the full EDI Action Network will be sent the link to join soon after.

## Feedback and Reflections

The event feedback survey was completed by about a third of attendees. The feedback was broadly positive and similar to the feedback on the first event: 93% of participants said that they

would like to participate in future meetings of the EDI Action Network, and 88% said that they learned about a valuable tool or resource related to advancing EDI.

Participants particularly valued the ideas presented in the case study session and panel discussion, as well as connecting with others working on similar themes, and the facilitators' modeling of creating an inclusive online experience.

75% of participants indicated a preference for the spring 2022 gathering of the EDI Action Network to take place online rather than in-person, while 25% indicated the opposite.

We hope to continue the conversation about how to strengthen the network in the EDI Action Networks Teams space.