Event Summary: EDI Action Network

Meeting #3: April 26th, 2022

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 first event of the EDI Action Network was held in May 2021.

The third meeting of the EDI Action Network was held April 26th, 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

Awareness of the network continues to expand through word of mouth and targeted invitations. For the April 2022 event, the invitation was sent directly to over 160 people on the EDI Action Network listserv, with encouragement for recipients to forward the invite to additional colleagues. 84 individuals registered for the event and approximately 56 attended.

Institutional Updates

Margaret Moss, Interim Associate Vice-President for Equity & Inclusion, opened the event with a land acknowledgement and reiterating 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
- Amplify the impact of units' EDI initiatives by expanding their reach across UBC

Margaret then provided updates on several institutional initiatives:

- **Leadership Updates**: UBC launched its search for a new Associate Vice President for Equity and Inclusion in early March.

- **IAP Implementation**: The sponsoring vice-presidents previously identified 12 IAP actions as priorities for implementation in the first 1 – 2 years. Five Action Planning Teams (APTs) have been formed to focus on advancing these actions for students, faculty, staff, institutional decision-making and external contractors.

  The EIO is also in the process of piloting and consultation to develop a system for collecting progress updates on actions that advance the IAP.

- [ARIE Report](#): The report from UBC's Anti-Racism and Inclusive Excellence (ARIE) Task Force launched Friday April 22nd. The report contains 54 recommendations to address systemic racism against Indigenous, Black, and People of Colour (IBPOC) within the UBC community and to promote inclusive excellence across UBC's two campuses.

- **Employment equity data:** We want to extend a heartfelt thanks to everyone who helped to spread the word about the revised employment equity survey and census campaign launched in Workday last fall. Because this is the first time that data was gathered in Workday, it is taking some time to properly process the data and prepare for reporting. Right now, we are expecting this data to become available this summer and will follow to share an update when the 2021 annual employment equity report is available. The [2020 and previous reports](#) are available on the EIO's website.

  In the meantime, we do want to let you know that anyone who hasn't completed the survey can always do so by accessing the [live link](#) on EIO's website.

- **Student demographic data project:** We also have a [Student Demographic Data Project](#) currently underway. The purpose of the project is to develop clear definitions and standards for collecting student data for use with administrative records and institutional surveys. These definitions and standards will become part of the UBC Data Governance Program to be applied by the University consistently and comprehensively. The first phase of the project is slated to wrap up this fall.

  Currently, a Data Discovery process to determine what data are being collected, how, when, from whom and for what purpose, as well as to understand how data is currently managed, stored and accessed at UBC, is underway. We encourage anyone who presently collects data in support of EDI efforts to complete the [discovery survey](#).

Network Updates and Connections

Lucy Buchanan-Parker, Strategist for Institutional Initiatives in the Equity & Inclusion Office, went over the agenda and gave an overview of developments in the EDI Action Network:

- Summary reports for previous EDI Action Network events are available online.
- There is a Microsoft Teams space for the network, for those wanting to connect between events. Some members have started to post questions for the group and make connections to others working on similar initiatives. Lucy can also create specific sub-channels by request if you would like a space to collaborate with others on a particular topic.
- We have been working on a project to write up some of the case study presentations from previous EDI Action Network events, to form the start of a "case study bank" with examples of actions that units and departments have taken to advance EDI. The first six case studies will be going up on the EIO website very soon.
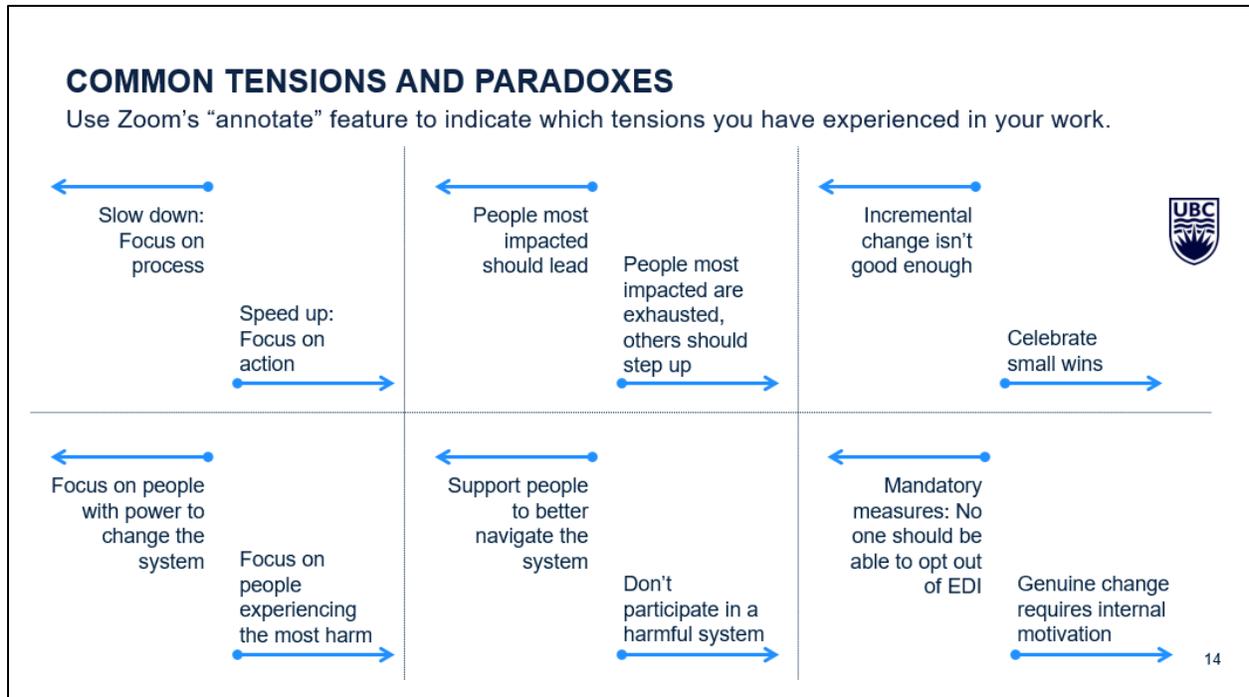- The next gathering of the EDI Action Network will be in fall 2022.

Lucy reviewed the community expectations for the event. The group then moved into three rounds of a "speed meet and greet" where participants met in breakout rooms in groups of three to discuss a prompting question for five minutes, before being rotated to another group with a different question to discuss.

Activating Inclusion Toolkit Updates: Balancing Tensions and Paradoxes in EDI Planning and Action

Lucy then provided updates on three new tools that have just been added to the Activating Inclusion Toolkit:

- Using Evidence to Advance EDI: Making Sense through Participatory Analysis
- EDI through Systems Change
- Balancing Tensions and Paradoxes in EDI Planning and Action

Lucy highlighted the final tool, *Balancing Tensions and Paradoxes*, and provided a brief overview of six common tensions experienced in EDI planning and action:

COMMON TENSIONS AND PARADOXES
Use Zoom's "annotate" feature to indicate which tensions you have experienced in your work.

Slow down: Focus on process ← → Speed up: Focus on action

People most impacted should lead ← → People most impacted are exhausted, others should step up

Incremental change isn't good enough ← → Celebrate small wins

Focus on people with power to change the system ← → Focus on people experiencing the most harm

Support people to better navigate the system ← → Don't participate in a harmful system

Mandatory measures: No one should be able to opt out of EDI ← → Genuine change requires internal motivation

Case Studies and Lessons Learned from Unit and Departmental Change

After a short break, Lucy introduced the panelists presenting case studies and lessons learned from their efforts to advance EDI:

- Alicia Oeser, Sexual Violence Prevention & Response Office, presented on SVPRO's person-centered approach.
- Rehana Nanjijuma, Department of Physical Therapy, presented her work on readying the soil for JEDI (Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion) in the department.
- Donna Langille and Christian Isbister, UBCO Library, presented on their EDI committee's efforts to advance the goals of the Inclusion Action Plan and Indigenous Strategic Plan.
- Annie Ciernia, Department of Biochemistry & Molecular Biology, presented on the BMB action plan and work to build a deeper sense of EDI-focused culture and community

Following the panel presentations, Margaret facilitated a discussion around lessons learned and keys to success in this work.

Following the second break, participants convened in small groups in breakout rooms facilitated by EIO staff, to share initial reflections and insights on the presentations.

Finally, participants rejoined the main plenary room where they shared in the chat how they will apply their insights from the case studies within their units and departments.

Closing

In closing, Lucy highlighted additional ways to connect with others around EDI issues, including ways to connect around shared identities:

- IBPOC Connections
- Black Caucus
- Disability Affinity Group
- IBPOC STEM Network
- EDI Action Network MS Teams

She also called attention to upcoming events and EIO resources:

- Celebrate Learning Week May 9-13, 2022 (CTLT)
- Equity Enhancement Fund (spring intake upcoming)
- EIO Knowledge Hub
- Activating Inclusion Toolkit

Feedback and Reflections

The event feedback survey was completed by about a third of attendees. The feedback was positive, with 100% of respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing that they:

- connected with someone working on similar issues;
- learned about a valuable concept, tool, or resource related to advancing EDI;
- will apply content from this session to their work/initiatives;
- would like to participate in future meetings of the network; and
- would recommend the network to a colleague.

Respondents particularly valued: becoming aware of tools in the Activating Inclusion Toolkit; practical ideas and examples from what other units have been done; and breaking down silos to give and receive guidance when working on EDI initiatives.

In terms of event logistics, most respondents indicated that the timings of the event were "about right." 60% of respondents indicated a current preference for the fall 2022 gathering of the EDI Action Network to take place online.

Respondents also shared their thoughts about how the network could evolve in the future. In particular, a few respondents mentioned the idea of more participant-driven content in the future, for example through an "unconference" or through soliciting participants to host breakout rooms on particular topics.

The EIO will continue to explore possibilities for the network to expand and evolve moving forward.