

Event Summary: EDI Action Network

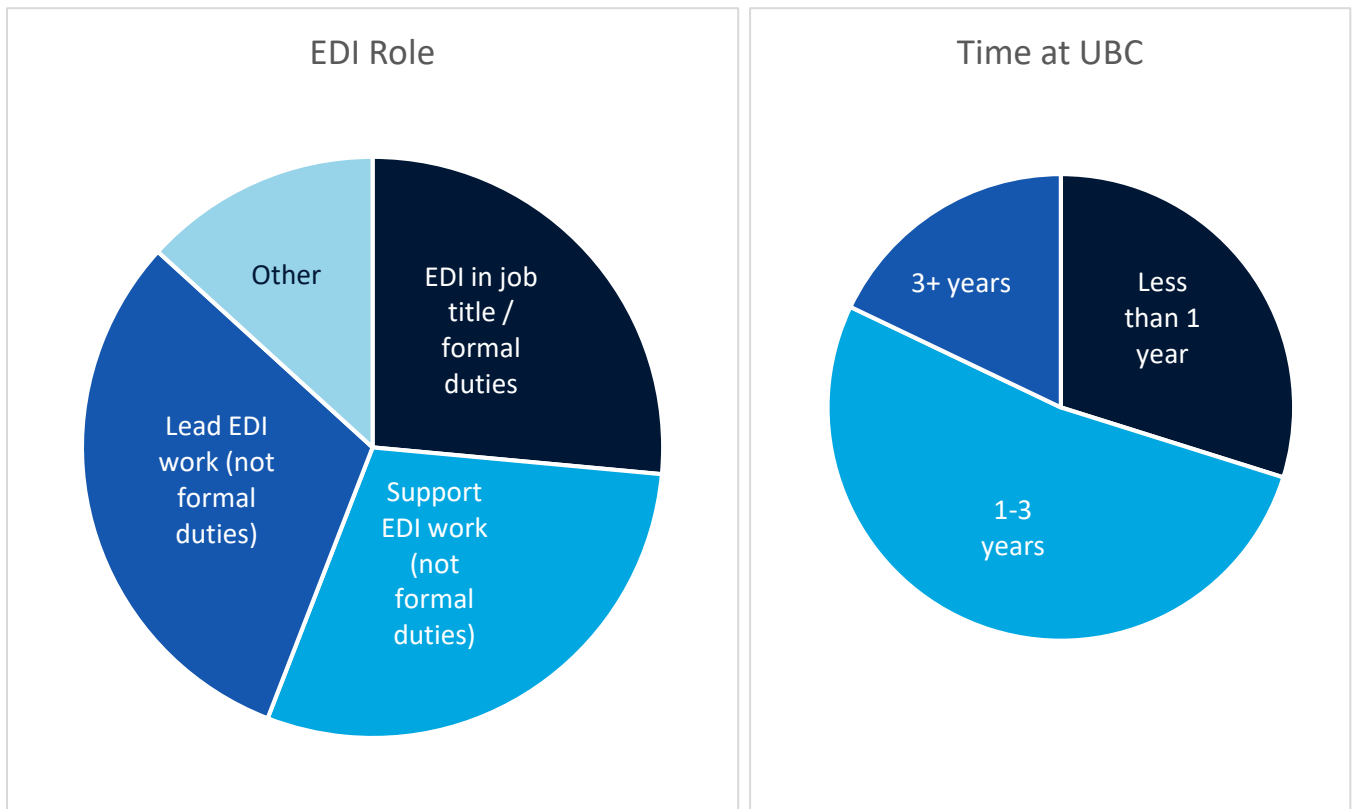
Meeting #4: November 1st, 2022

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 EDI Action Network was formed in May 2021 and meets twice a year, in addition to convening on Microsoft Teams.

The fourth meeting of the EDI Action Network was held November 1st, 2022, 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.

Participant Overview



Awareness of the network continues to expand through word of mouth and targeted invitations. For the November 2022 event, the invitation was sent directly to over 200 people on the EDI Action Network listserv, with encouragement for recipients to forward the invite to additional colleagues. 83 individuals registered for the event and approximately 63 attended.

Event Summary

AVP Updates

Arig al Shaibah, Associate Vice-President for Equity & Inclusion, opened the event with a land acknowledgement and a warm welcome to participants.

Arig then provided an overview of the draft [Strategic Equity and Anti-Racism \(StEAR\) Framework](#). This framework will guide the implementation of UBC's various equity and anti-racism plans and recommendations. The StEAR Framework reflects the need for individual and systemic interventions across four nested organizational domains for change – structural, curricular, compositional, and interactional. Arig shared insights and early thinking about how the StEAR Framework will be developed to ground planning, implementation, and evaluation efforts as a roadmap for change.

Attendees then participated in rounds of five-minute “speed meet-and-greets” to get to know some of their colleagues in the meeting.

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:

- Kshamta Hunter presented on UBC Sustainability's IBPOC Consultation Project outcomes and the Sustainability Hub's JEDI committee.
- Amori Mikami presented on the Department of Psychology's approach and the creation of an Associate Head for EDI role in the department.
- Rishma Chooniedass presented on the trajectory of EDI in the Faculty of Health and Social Development, including formalizing EDI roles within the Faculty, understanding gaps in the landscape, and implementation of findings.

Following the panel presentations, Arig facilitated a discussion around lessons learned and keys to success in this work. Themes that emerged from the discussion included:

Relationships between unit-level and university-level

Panelists raised the importance of partnership and communication between unit-level and “central” initiatives to ensure alignment and promote a sense of coordinated

decentralization. There is a desire for better ways to communicate and learn about the many EDI initiatives underway at UBC, to further support this alignment. University-level EDI plans and commitments have also been helpful to get leadership buy-in and build a sense of urgency at the unit/department level.

Messaging that supports broad-based participation in EDI efforts

Panelists highlighted the role of leadership in communicating about the importance of EDI efforts. Shifting messaging from “training” to “dialogue and learning” has been helpful to engage participants who might be skeptical that “training” would be too directive or overly simplified. Panelists also raised the importance of finding opportunities to re-frame EDI efforts to be seen as part of everyday work and professional efficacy, as opposed to “additional” tasks that are added on to “core responsibilities.” Using existing structures, such as faculty retreats, as opportunities to engage all members of a department, has also been effective.

Prioritizing which EDI issues to address

Panelists shared varying approaches to determining which EDI issues their unit or department should focus on. Some units/departments engaged colleagues and/or students in the unit through evidence-gathering activities such as surveys or focus groups. Panelists also discussed the importance of community-building and creating an environment where members of the unit/department feel safe to discuss issues as they arise.

Assessing impact and measuring success

Panelists discussed their approaches to assessing the impact of their EDI initiatives and how they might be able to measure their progress. Having a progress-monitoring working group can ensure that a small group of people are dedicating time to this important aspect of the work. The types of measures to use is dependent on the specifics of the initiative – for example, success might be measured by demographic changes, by changes in the extent to which department / unit members feel valued, or changes in individuals’ understanding and application of EDI competencies. Panelists also noted the importance of paying attention to whose voices are being heard when units are assessing their impacts.

AVP Q&A

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.

When participants reconvened, Arig hosted a question and answer session with network participants. Topics of discussion included tactics for applying an EDI lens to annual review processes such as tenure, merit, and promotion; UBC’s EDI data infrastructure and possibilities for the future; and approaches to incorporating EDI in research and granting programs.

Closing

In closing, Lucy provided a few updates for the EDI Action Network:

- Summaries of previous events are made available on the EDI Action Network webpage.
- The MS Teams space for the EDI Action Network space has grown to over 100 members. Participants were emailed a link to subscribe, or can contact Lucy to be added.
- The EDI Action Network has been gathering two times per year. We anticipate the next gathering to be in Spring 2023.
- Written case studies generated from some of the units and departments who have presented to the EDI Action Network are available in the new [Case Studies Library](#). We hope to grow the library over time with additional case studies.

Feedback and Reflections

The event feedback survey was completed by less than 20% of attendees (12 responses), a marked decrease from previous events, which makes it difficult to draw conclusions about the participant experience. The feedback was broadly positive, although fewer participants than in previous events responded affirmatively to the statements on participant experience. For example:

- 67% connected with someone working on similar issues;
- 75% will apply content from this session to their work/initiatives; and
- 81% would like to participate in future meetings of the network;

Respondents particularly valued the case study presentations and learning about the tactics and approaches of different departments and units. They also appreciated hearing about the StEAR framework. We also heard feedback that participants valued the opportunity to hear from colleagues on both campuses.

In terms of event logistics, most respondents indicated that the timings of the event were “about right,” although participants would have valued more time in small groups / breakout rooms. In terms of preferences for the next EDI Action Network event, half of participants indicated a preference for online, while the other half indicated a preference for in-person.

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