



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



UBC Trans, Two-Spirit and Gender Diversity Task Force

FINAL REPORT



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Territory acknowledgment

We respectfully recognize that many members of this Task Force are uninvited guests on the lands of the UBC campuses, and we all have a duty to honour the special relationship to the Musqueam Nation and Okanagan Nation as well as other Indigenous nations. Gender-based and transphobic violence is based in the imposition of a colonial gender binary, and as such, gender-based and trans liberation is bound up in efforts towards decolonization.

Authors

This report was written by Dr. Janice Stewart, Dr. Arig al Shaibah, Jesse Gimaldi, Dr. Hannah Kia, and Dr. Hélène Frohard-Dourlent, with an early version drafted by Dr. Kathryn Ferguson. We are deeply grateful for all the Task Force members and other members of the UBC community who provided the input, insights, and experiences that have informed and nourished this report, as well as to TransFocus Consulting for their work on the UBC gender diversity audit.

The full list of the Task Force membership can be found on the [Equity & Inclusion website](#), alongside the Terms of References and meeting minutes.

Note on language

In continuity with the Task Force’s original Terms of Reference, this report uses the phrase “trans, Two-Spirit, and non-binary” to refer to the diverse communities of people whose gender is different from the gender that they were assigned at birth. This phrase attempts to capture a shared experience with, and relationship to, gender, rather than specific identities; people may use many different words to describe their gender identity. We also recognize that Two-Spirit is a cultural concept specific to Indigenous communities and its meaning extends beyond gender (refer to [this page](#) for more information); in this report, discussion of Two-Spirit people focuses on those who share the aforementioned experience of having a gender different from the one they were assigned at birth. Additionally, when other sources cited in this report use other terms, such as “gender-diverse” in the Gender Diversity Audit, we mirror the language from that source.

If some of these words and concepts are new to you, we recommend that you familiarize yourself with terminology by completing the UBC course [Positive Space: Foundations](#), the Trans Care BC course [Intro to gender diversity](#), or reading through Trans Care BC’s [glossary on gender](#).

Priority recommendations from the Task Force

1. Expand and sustain training and education around gender diversity, with a focus on faculty and staff capacity-building.
2. Increase recruitment and retention of trans, Two-Spirit and non-binary faculty and staff.
3. Improve the implementation of gender data standards and centralized systems and principles for the collection of gendered records (e.g., name, honorific, pronoun) and reporting of gender data (e.g., identity marker).
4. Support the mental health and holistic wellness of trans, Two-Spirit, and non-binary students, staff, and faculty.

For more detail on each of these recommendations, go to page 19.

Introduction

Strategic Context

UBC's 2018–2028 strategic plan, [Shaping UBC's Next Century](#), recognises that our university's future success is dependent on how well we, as both an institution and a community, value, engage, and include our rich diversity of constituents. This strategic plan commits to **inclusive excellence** and specifically pledges to “cultivate a diverse community that creates and sustains equitable and inclusive campuses.” To attain and sustain UBC's goal of inclusive excellence, it is imperative that we—collectively and individually—continue to move beyond simple acknowledgements of our demographic diversity and inclusion as a core value of the university. To generate and support a healthy and respectful environment for learning, working, teaching, and research, we must continue to strive, actively and attentively, to do our best to create and recreate an inclusive environment where students, faculty, staff, and alumni feel a genuine sense of belonging, and where each member of the UBC community is given an equitable opportunity to make their best contribution to our academic mission.

UBC's additional commitments to the [Indigenous Strategic Plan](#) and [the Inclusion Action Plan](#) are directly in line with both provincial and national human rights legislation which prohibit discrimination based on grounds such as Indigenous identity, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, race, ancestry, age, colour, and disability. [British Columbia's Bill 27](#) (2016) and [Canada's Bill C-16](#) (2017) added gender identity and gender expression as prohibited grounds for harassment and discrimination. These explicit additions mean it is now lawfully forbidden, both provincially and federally, to discriminate against transgender (trans), Two-Spirit, and non-binary persons. Bill C-16 changed the Criminal Code of Canada to make hate speech and the incitement of hatred against trans, Two-Spirit, and non-binary people illegal. Respect for human rights has come to be equated with the advancement of a civil and just society, while violations of human

rights are paralleled with violence and prejudice. Trans, Two-Spirit, and non-binary people continue to experience significant social and health disparities in Canada, including significant inequities in income, and prominent exposure to violence, stigma, and discrimination.

In early March 2020, the UBC Trans, Two-Spirit and Gender Diversity Task Force was formed as a result of a long-standing call from members of trans, Two-Spirit, and non-binary faculty, staff and students to be included in the strategic planning of the University. The Task Force was informed, in their initial deliberations, by the report of the 2016 Trans, Two-Spirit and Gender Diversity Working Group of the Vice-Presidential Strategic Implementation Committee for Equity and Diversity (VPSICED). They were also motivated, in part, to examine and address UBC decisions to permit transphobic speakers on the Point Grey campus – events which trans, Two-Spirit, and non-binary community members reported experiencing as institutional harm. The Vancouver Pride Society consequently banned UBC from participating in the Vancouver Pride Parade. Currently, UBC is seeking to re-build community relations through dialogue with the Society.

Task Force Overview

With the support of the then President and Executive, the Task Force was constituted to include twenty-one members: seven faculty, four staff, three graduate students, and seven undergraduate students. The Task Force committed itself to five interwoven goals that are ideologically, strategically, and practically aligned with UBC's commitment to inclusive excellence:

- Include the marginalised voices of trans, Two-Spirit, and non-binary community members in the strategic planning of the university;
- Provide strategic direction to UBC's senior leadership and create a sustainable and ongoing architecture by which community feedback,

requests and concerns that pertain to gender identity, gender expression and human rights can be made visible and addressed;

- Provide strategic direction on building an infrastructure to support trans, Two-Spirit, and non-binary related research and scholarship, including fostering connection across faculty and disciplinary boundaries, and creating pathways for students to engage with trans scholarship;
- Detail the primary areas that need attention and improvement such that UBC can address areas of inequality and human rights that impact directly members of trans, Two-Spirit and non-binary communities, including legacies of colonial gender-based violence (legacies that indirectly impact the whole UBC community);
- Develop a set of actionable recommendations for the Provosts, Deputy Vice Chancellor, Vice President, Student and Vice President, Human Resources with the goals to address gaps in systems, policies, procedures, and practices in the area of gender diversity, improve the recruitment and retention of trans, Two-Spirit, and non-binary students, faculty and staff, and create work and learning environments on UBC campuses that allow gender diversity to thrive.

The Task Force leadership team facilitated monthly meetings between March 2020 and October 2021, and work continued beyond that date to inform the writing of this report. In order to develop its recommendations, the Task Force organized meetings with stakeholders across both campuses to deepen its understanding of current state, identify areas needing attention and improvement, and build relationships. The advisor to the President on Women and Gender Diverse Faculty participated in many meetings to consider how this report and information could be included in ALDP planning as well as in other initiatives. The Task Force

also retained a consulting firm, TransFocus Consulting, to conduct an audit of gender diversity at the University; we highlight some of the key findings from this audit further down in this report.

Following the reception of the TransFocus audit report, the final report of the Task Force evolved through extensive further consultation with a wide range of UBC community members. All members on the task force, including faculty, students, and staff, had an opportunity to share their feedback about what aspects of the survey report should be emphasised or expanded. Consultations continued with a larger UBC faculty group made up of individuals teaching in the Faculty of Arts (Social Justice Institute, Sociology, Music, Geography, Critical Indigenous Studies, English, and History), the Faculty of Education, and members of the UBC-O faculty. We requested individual perspectives on how well the university supported the teaching of material related to trans, Two-Spirit and non-binary research and experiences, and if useful resources were readily available for teaching and research. VP Research and Innovation and Human Resources were consulted to ensure that consistent language is both effected and insured by university-wide policies. Other key stakeholders consulted include Athletics, Building Operations, student organizations (i.e., Pride Collective, Ubyyssey), Student Health and Wellbeing, Student Housing, and health insurance providers, with the goal to ensure the final report of the Task Force was accurate and up-to-date in its evaluations of what progress had already been made and what work remains to be done.

These conversations with students, faculty, and staff varied in length from a few sentences to extensive commentaries. All these activities, as well as the in-depth expertise and lived experience of the members of the Task Force, inform this final report.





“A truly gender inclusive environment means that gender diversity is embedded in all areas of life at UBC. This includes our policies, processes, and practices – across student services, health and wellbeing, athletics and recreation, and other academic and administrative settings. The process starts with listening to and centering the voices of folks who have lived experience as Two-Spirit, transgender, and non-binary people.”

– UBC President Santa J. Ono (2016-2022)

Brief overview of current research

Research and data on the economic, health, and social challenges faced by trans, non-binary, and Two-Spirit people in Canada are becoming more robust every year. Much of what we know about the lived experiences of these communities in Canada is based on data from the [2010](#), [2015](#), and [2019](#) Trans PULSE studies, the [2015](#) and [2018](#) Sex Now community based surveys, the 2018 Statistics Canada [Survey of Safety in Public and Private Spaces](#), and the 2019 [Trans Youth Health Survey](#). These data clearly indicate that there are significant socioeconomic and healthcare disparities between cisgender people and their trans, Two-Spirit, and non-binary peers, which has significant implications for overall health and wellbeing.

There is a rigorous and growing body of evidence-based scholarship, a tiny portion of which is cited in this report, that seeks to generate insight—using rigorous qualitative and/or quantitative methods—on what, exactly, are the lived experiences of trans, Two-Spirit, and non-binary people in Canada. This scholarship is both necessary and timely. Younger generations are more diverse in their gender identities than older generations ([Nadal et al., 2012](#); [Nolan et al., 2019](#)) and since 2008, demands for adequate services to meet the needs of trans and non-binary individuals has increased globally ([Cheung et al., 2018](#)). As Cheung and colleagues have noted, these demographic trends are attributable to shifting cultural norms, in some regions of the world, that increasingly enable trans and non-binary people to be visible in their identities.

Inequitable outcomes in physical and mental health for trans, Two-Spirit and non-binary people are becoming widely recognised across numerous fields, but not widely resolved in any field. Trans, Two-Spirit, and non-binary people, including youth, face disadvantage and discrimination at almost every turn:

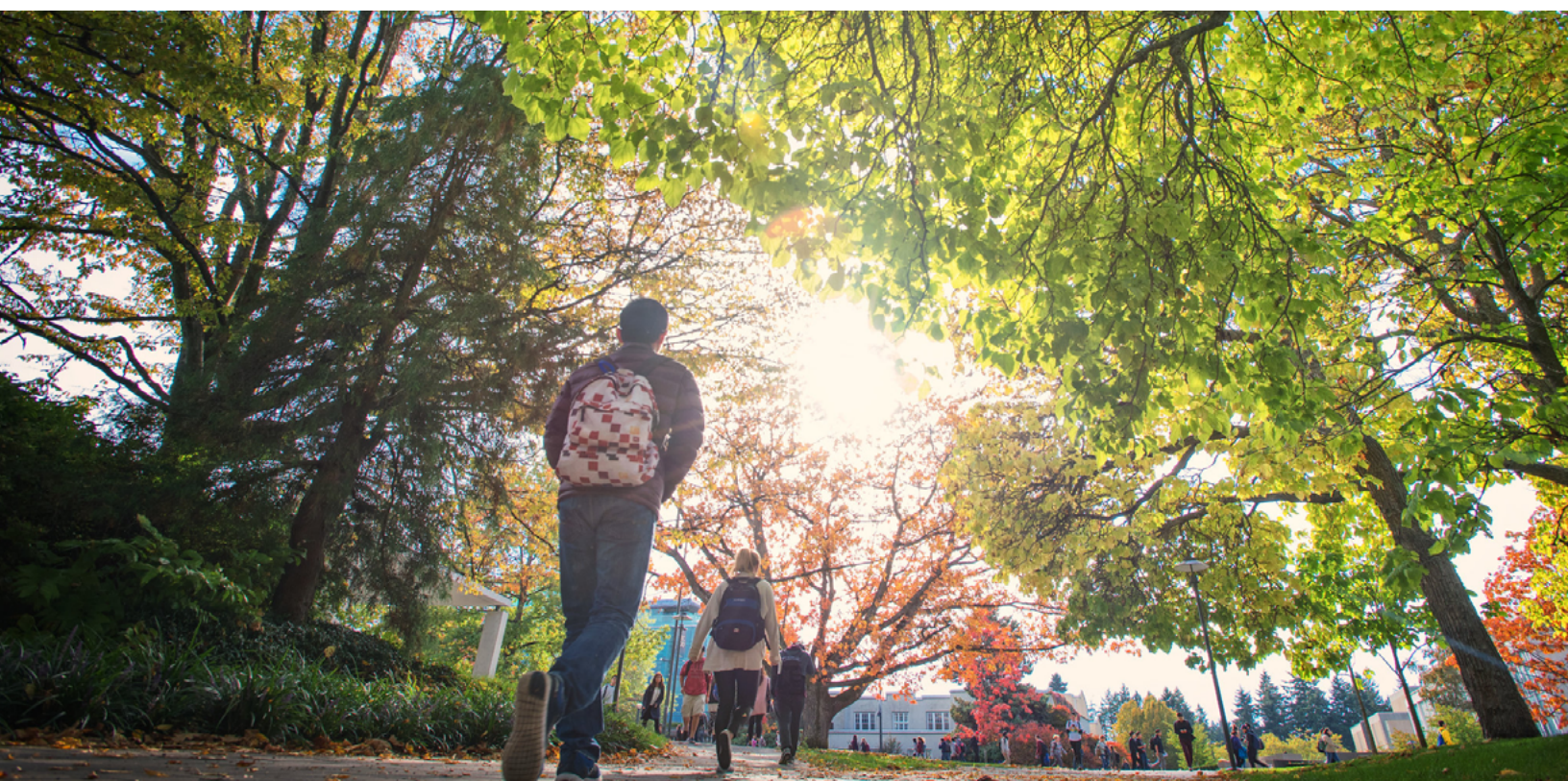
at home and in their communities ([Pullen Sansfaçon et al., 2018](#)), including from their intimate partners ([Dolan and Conroy, 2021](#)); in school systems ([Nash, 2021](#); [MacAuley et al., 2022](#)); in the workplace ([Waite, 2021](#)); in media ([McInroy & Craig, 2015](#); [Bandwidth, n.d.](#)); in prisons and shelters ([Hébert, 2020](#)); in encounters with police ([Lyons et al., 2017](#)); in sports ([Greedy & Lenskyj, 2022](#)); and throughout the health care system, from doctors' offices to emergency rooms ([Bauer et al., 2014](#); [Scheim et al., 2021](#); [Boulé et al., 2020](#); [Rutherford et al., 2021](#)). In Canada specifically, trans people are more likely to have experienced violence since age 15, more likely to experience inappropriate behaviours in public, online, and at work than cisgender people ([Statistics Canada](#)). The national Trans PULSE study also found that nearly 70% of trans and non-binary people participants reported being verbally harassed in the past 5 years and avoiding at least 3 types of public spaces. Data from trans and non-binary youth are equally concerning: 65% of the participants in the national [2019 Trans Youth Health Survey](#) reported being taunted or ridiculed at school, while half of them reported being bullied at school and 23% reported not feeling safe inside their own home. Trans and non-binary communities also experience increased rates of poverty, with intersectional differences in how these material conditions impact people in different social locations ([Kia et al., 2020](#)).

This body of evidence demonstrates that trans, Two-Spirit and non-binary people face multiple increased risk factors to their well-being—and that Indigenous people, Black people and People of Colour (IBPOC) are at an elevated risk for negative mental and physical health outcomes ([James et al., 2016](#), [Valentine & Shipherd, 2018](#)), due in large part of the historical and ongoing impacts of racism and colonization ([Hunt, 2016](#); [Sadika, 2020](#)). For example, trans Canadians are more likely to report their mental health as poor or fair than their cisgender counterparts, more likely

to have seriously contemplated suicide in their lifetimes, and more likely to have used drugs or alcohol to cope with abuse or violence experienced in their lifetime ([Statistics Canada](#)). The high prevalence of mental health problems among trans and non-binary people has been found to correlate with the impact of minority stress ([Tan et al., 2020](#))—stress to which individuals that are part of stigmatised, often minority, social categories are exposed as a result of their social position. While protective factors exist (such as supportive adults in schools or at home for youth, the ability to live in one’s felt gender, access to holistic gender-affirming care and/or culturally relevant services, as well as peer support), they are not present in the lives of many trans, Two-Spirit and non-binary people.

Together, these realities tell a story of structural discrimination – discrimination enabled or reinforced by policies, processes and practices embedded throughout our society and its institution – that can significantly reduce or even destroy opportunities for non-binary, trans, or Two-Spirit person to thrive and succeed.

If UBC is to accomplish its aim of inclusive excellence, the institution must implement processes and practices that assume accountability and that monitor outcomes that relate to the human rights of trans, Two-Spirit, and non-binary community stakeholders.



The UBC Gender Diversity Audit

In alignment with the university's recognition of inclusion as an important pillar of UBC's strategic plan, and guided by the [Inclusion Action Plan](#), the UBC Trans, Two-Spirit, and Gender Diversity Task Force arranged for TransFocus Consulting to undertake interviews, focus groups, and a university-wide survey of faculty, staff, and students to establish an accurate snapshot of how far UBC has progressed in achieving inclusive excellence for trans, Two-Spirit, and non-binary people.

A total of 1,439 respondents, including 212 who identified as trans, Two-Spirit or gender diverse, and 89 as questioning (the largest sample of respondents from these communities to answer a UBC survey). Compared to other surveys conducted at UBC, faculty and staff were slightly overrepresented. The percentage of Indigenous and racialized respondents fell within the representative range of other UBC surveys, while cisgender women were overrepresented and cisgender men were underrepresented. These respondents provided substantive responses about five key areas:

- Climate, safety, and training
- Information systems
- Services and programs
- Athletics and recreation
- University engagement

The findings of the audit described key opportunities for improvements and change for the University. These findings demonstrate that, in all five key areas, UBC has taken, and is taking, some steps toward making UBC a safer and more inclusive community for trans, and Two-spirit, and non-binary people. However, a very strong leitmotif emerged throughout the audit: if UBC is to accomplish its aim of inclusive excellence, the institution must implement processes and practices that assume accountability and that monitor outcomes that relate to the human rights of trans, Two-Spirit, and non-binary community stakeholders.

Achieving this objective of inclusive excellence may, additionally, be contingent on an institutional commitment to rectifying ongoing inequities experienced among trans, Two-Spirit, and non-binary members of the UBC community. We believe UBC is ideally positioned to move forward guided by UBC's [Policy SC7: Discrimination](#) and the university's [Statement on Respectful Environment](#). The institutional frameworks and policies are in place, but there are still institutional processes and practices that constitute barriers and hurdles that disadvantage trans, Two-Spirit, and non-binary people at UBC.

The following sections summarize the main findings from the audit. We also highlight recommendations that were identified as key opportunities for meaningful change by the Task Force.

Climate, safety, and training

Findings

There are trans, Two-Spirit, or non-binary people in all UBC spaces, including physical and virtual spaces. All spaces at UBC should be purposively designed to be inclusive. Yet there is a significant disparity in students' and employees' feelings of belonging and being valued. Only 58% of trans, Two-Spirit, and gender diverse (T2SGD) respondents reported a sense of belonging at UBC, compared to 79% of their cisgender counterparts. Only 54% of T2SGD respondents reported feeling valued at UBC, compared to 71% of their cisgender counterparts. Most T2SGD students and employees (85%) reported experiencing some form of discrimination at UBC; the most common experiences reported included bias and microaggressions (61%), jokes and inappropriate comments (51%) and repeated accidental misgendering (50%). A third of T2SGD people indicate that they report experiences of discrimination, and nearly 75% of T2SGD people report being dissatisfied with how UBC handled their experience.

Both T2SGD employees and students reported high rates misgendering and misnaming by UBC employees, sometimes in ways that compromised their studies or employment, especially when these experiences occurred in public settings. This was further exacerbated in health care and counselling contexts where T2SGD students found themselves having to educate healthcare providers on their needs, navigate inappropriate questions, and negotiate providers refusing particular types of care.

Trans, Two-Spirit and non-binary people should not feel obligated to act as 'cultural competency counsellors' who have to educate and explain questions related to gender identity and gender expression as they move through their day as students, staff or faculty. The audit highlights that disabled Trans, Two-Spirit and non-binary people are especially likely to experience this burden, and to report that they have had to provide free education out of necessity and pressure.

Recommendations

Drawing on the recommendations of the audit as well as the work, collective experience, and shared expertise of the Task Force, we recommend the following in order to support the goal of inclusive spaces:

- Update all policies and guidelines to formalise the expectations for conduct and systems in support of trans, Two-Spirit, and non-binary students and employees.
- A reasonable expectation of a baseline knowledge of, and training on, gender diversity and gender- and trans-inclusive practices should be established for both employees and students at UBC—at every level. The development of this baseline should be undertaken in collaboration with local Two-Spirit/Indigiqueer communities, the Dean's Council, the Faculty Association, Association of Administrative and Professional Staff (AAPS), CUPE locals, Pride UBC, and the Alma Mater Society (AMS) in order to embed the building of these competencies through every stage of the employee life cycle at UBC (job duties, performance management, tenure and merit processes, professional development, etc.).
- The creation of a robust and centralised information hub on gender diversity and intersectionality for UBC employees and students wanting to better understand and support trans, Two-Spirit and non-binary people in our community. The content of this hub should be created and curated primarily, if not exclusively, by trans, Two-Spirit and non-binary people, who should be compensated for this work.

Information systems

Findings

Words have power; both to harm and to heal. This is especially true of names, pronouns, and honorifics (Dr., Mr., Mx., etc.) when it comes to gender diversity.

For some trans, Two-Spirit and non-binary people, there is a difference between their legal and chosen name. In these cases, their legal name is often not reflective of the name they use in everyday life, and it can carry painful histories and lead to misgendering; some people call their legal name a ‘deadname’ to reflect this heavy meaning. Given this context, there are important sensitivities regarding exposure of legal names if different from chosen names—especially in public settings and communications. Yet too often, UBC still prioritises the use of legal first names throughout its systems, and unwanted legal first name exposures have happened, and continue to happen, across UBC: for example, in email communications, on housing lists, and during learning experiences in and outside of the classroom. Given the susceptibility of trans, Two-Spirit, and non-binary people to violence, stigma, and discrimination, these unwanted exposures can ‘out’

those involved and jeopardise their safety. Additionally, there are challenges for students who see their chosen first name in places where they do not want it seen (e.g., communications that go to their familial home) and for Two-Spirit students whose names contain characters not included in English language alphabet.

Pronouns are another key consideration. Although the practice of providing and asking about pronouns in group settings is guided by good intentions, and can contribute to normalizing correct pronoun usage, the audit indicated that it can raise important questions and challenges for T2SGD and questioning employees and students especially when it is done in environments with a large majority of cisgender people. Uneasiness in relation to correct pronoun usage is closely linked to levels of safety and how others will receive and handle the information provided. For example, 28% of trans women and 48% of racialised T2SGD people reported feeling uncomfortable being requested to provide pronouns. Thus, requiring people to indicate their pronouns is not an effective trans-inclusive strategy.



Systems currently provide limited solutions for pronouns. UBC's HR Management System, Workday, allows employees at UBC to provide their pronouns voluntarily, but the list is limited and does not allow for the selection of multiple pronouns. Similarly, UBC's Learning Management System, Canvas, allows students to display their pronouns only from a set list, and these limitations will persist once UBC's new Student Information System goes live.

Recommendations

Drawing on the recommendations of the audit as well as the work, collective experience, and shared expertise of the Task Force, we recommend the following in the area of information systems:

- UBC should implement a rigorous, efficient, coherent and failproof approach to first names across its systems that supports choice and self-determination. It is strongly recommended that legal first names be removed as the default first name used in information systems and correspondence. Instead, students and employees should be given the ability to explicitly choose which first name they want to use and where they want it used.
- The places where choice should be given about which first names are exposed include: Emails, IDs, profiles, business cards, door signs, name tags at events, correspondence to mailing address, correspondence to employers, graduation book, thesis title page, award ceremonies, and names read on stage during graduation.
- Providing pronouns must be voluntary—not required nor expected. Flexibility and visibility are also key principles when it comes to correct pronoun information: people should be able to decide when and how they share their pronouns, and they should be able to easily update that information as needed, depending on the space that they're in. Ideally, pronouns should be collected via an open-ended field that gives people flexibility in how expressing how they want others to respectfully refer to them. The emphasis should be on creating spaces where people feel safe to share their pronouns if they would like to.



- Avoid the collection and use of honorifics wherever possible, and never guess the title to use for someone based on their appearance, name, or gender on record. If the use of titles is necessary in some communications, employees should have choice: not to select a title at all, to select a gender-neutral option such as Mx., and they should be able to update their title on record at any time.

...people should be able to decide when and how they share their pronouns, and they should be able to easily update that information as needed, depending on the space that they're in.

Well-being, student health and housing

Findings

Trans, Two-Spirit, and non-binary students and employees at UBC sometimes require access to healthcare, counselling, and housing; these needs may be directly or indirectly related to people's gender(s), or they may be unrelated to this part of them. In all situations, these needs should be addressed in a way that is affirming of people's experiences and identities. An ethical duty of care obliges the University to ensure that health, counselling, and housing staff are capable of attending to the needs of trans, Two-Spirit, and non-binary students in an informed, sensitive, respectful, and dignified manner.

Unfortunately, many students who participated in the audit reported negative experiences in these areas, including misgendering, misnaming, and incorrect assumptions, especially on the part of care providers. For example, 57% of T2SGD respondents reported feeling obligated to educate their counsellors about their mental health needs, and 30% of T2SGD respondents reported a health care provider telling them they had insufficient knowledge to treat them.

In residences, although 77% of students reported feeling safe and welcome, students also reported having too few all-gender options and no policy that clarifies inclusion of T2SGD people, and some practices that need to change, such as having the gender designation of some washrooms being established by majority voting.

Recommendations

Drawing on the recommendations of the audit as well as the work, collective experience, and shared expertise of the Task Force, we recommend the following in the area of wellbeing, student health, and student housing:

- A much more sophisticated set of competencies, standards, and protocols must be established around healthcare and counselling at UBC. In consultation with Trans Care BC and the First Nations Health Authority, introduce standard procedures regarding trans, Two-Spirit and non-binary patient interactions from waiting room to exam room, with appropriate consultations and referrals.
- Require (or incentivise) health and counselling staff to undergo [Trans Care BC training](#).
- Introduce standard procedures with regard to trans, Two-Spirit and non-binary client interactions from waiting room to meeting room, and appropriate referrals for counsellors.
- Hire or engage a mental health provider (ideally with lived experience as part of trans, Two-Spirit and/or non-binary communities) who has been specifically trained in trans, Two-Spirit, and non-binary intersectional needs and issues with a particular focus on complex care, suicide intervention and prevention, and trauma-informed care.
- Every residence should have shared all-gender housing options for students, and UBC should explore establishing all-gender 2SLGBTQIA+ floors in some residences that students could choose to apply to. Remove gender used in housing assignments, instead, on the application form, inquire about where students want to access shared housing labelled as women's, men's, or all-gender.

- Offering the option of more expensive studio apartments is not a viable solution. The same type of options should be available to all students regardless of gender identity.
- Residence Advisors need to be offered more specific training and support on issues of gender diversity to be better equipped to respectfully support trans, Two-Spirit and non-binary students.
- Beyond specific programs and services, the overall health and wellbeing of trans, Two-Spirit and non-binary people is supported by having easy access to the facilities that best meet their needs, including all-gender washrooms and change rooms. Building on the collaborative project between Equity & Inclusion and Facilities about inclusive washrooms, UBC should update outdated signage to ensure that all-gender washrooms are more numerous and visible across all campuses.



An ethical duty of care obliges the University to ensure that health, counselling, and housing staff are capable of attending to the needs of trans, Two-Spirit, and non-binary students in an informed, sensitive, respectful, and dignified manner.

Teaching & learning

Findings

In order to model the possibilities of academic excellence and achievement for trans, Two-Spirit, and non-binary students, it is not enough to focus on increasing the cultural competencies of well-meaning cisgender faculty members (though these competencies are essential). Rather, UBC must focus its attention on curriculum as well as equity in faculty and staff hiring.

Recommendations

Drawing on the recommendations of the audit as well as the work, collective experience, and shared expertise of the Task Force, we recommend the following in the area of teaching and learning:

- In consultation with the Dean's Council, an intentional outreach should be initiated to recruit and retain trans, Two-Spirit, and non-binary applicants to faculty positions across UBC Faculties, with additional attention to intersectionality (here, the fact that we all hold multiple identities across social categories such as race, disability, place of origin, etc. that jointly shape our lived experiences) and other underrepresented identities.
- In all job postings (for faculty as well as staff positions), welcoming language should be included about intersectional identities. In the hiring process, lived experience should be considered as an asset that can contribute positively to the workplace, student experience, and the achievement of inclusive excellence at UBC. Competencies about gender diversity and trans-inclusive practices should also be considered an important asset.
- All reviews of syllabus materials and curricula should include attention to the inclusion of gender diversity and Trans Studies in relation to disciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledges.



...lived experience should be considered as an asset that can contribute positively to the workplace, student experience, and the achievement of inclusive excellence at UBC.

Athletics and recreation

Findings

UBC Athletics and Recreation’s vision of “a healthy, active, and connected community where each person is at their personal best and proud of their UBC experience” includes trans, Two-Spirit, and non-binary people. Their current approach focuses on the strategy of “if we built it, they will come” in order to create facilities and programming that is inclusive of all and any gender.

Athletics and Recreation, with guidance from the [Inclusive Recreation Committee](#), has made, and continues to develop, significant and important policy, practice, language, and facility changes for varsity, sport club, intramural sports, exercise classes, and the use of gym and aquatic facilities to make athletics and recreation at UBC more welcoming to trans, Two-Spirit, and non-binary communities. However, the audit found low number of T2SGD respondents who reported participating in athletics and recreation offerings at UBC—despite a strong desire to do so. T2SGD respondents expressed some concerns and hesitation because of binary-only configurations and facing violence in the washroom and change room, as well as concerns over gender-based maximums in competitive intramural sports.

Recommendations

Drawing on the recommendations of the audit as well as the work, collective experience, and shared expertise of the Task Force, we recommend the following in the area of athletics and recreation:

- UBC Athletics and Recreation should conduct an annual survey of all athletics and recreation users to determine what has worked well and what needs to be improved. In addition to this approach, these units should consider if more active outreach and modelling of all-gender inclusive athletics and recreation are needed to help students and employees trust that trans, Two-Spirit and non-binary people can feel truly safe and welcome.
- UBC Athletics and Recreation should continue to develop the competencies of coaches and Recreation staff regarding the unique issues and needs of trans, Two-Spirit and non-binary people and athletes.
- The 2018 U Sports’ [Trans Inclusion Policy](#) is a statement specifically and exclusively relevant to elite varsity athletes. The policy states that, as long as anti-doping regulations are met, there is no need for surgeries or hormones for student athletes to compete on the team that aligns with their gender identity or their sex assigned at birth. To date, the U Sports Trans Inclusion Policy has not been invoked at UBC.
- The U Sports policy does not take into consideration the needs of student athletes who are non-binary. UBC Athletics should consider interim and long-term measures for non-binary athletes at UBC that would allow non-binary athletes to compete on the team of their choice while recognizing that neither team option aligns with their gender identity and that their choice may change over time.



Engagement with trans, Two-Spirit and non-binary communities

Findings

As with other communities that have been historically, systematically and/or persistently marginalized, UBC's relationship with trans, Two-Spirit, and non-binary students and employees is shaped by the way that UBC chooses to communicate its commitments, and the actions that flow from these commitments. UBC's decision-making processes need to be informed by the federal and provincial human rights codes and related UBC policies, but they also need to be attentive to the needs of communities that are directly impacted by institutional decisions (including trans, Two-Spirit, and non-binary people) and evolve as needed in response to the needs of these communities.

Trans, Two-Spirit and non-binary people are often invited to be participants in research, consultations, and surveys—within the university and beyond. On the surface, this is a positive practice that ensures that trans, Two-Spirit and non-binary people's experiences, voices, and opinions are included, considered, and, hopefully, understood and integrated into decision-making. However, this potential and the good intentions behind it can also result in individuals within marginalized groups experiencing psychological and emotional exhaustion incurred by being asked repeatedly to relived painful and/or frustrating experiences, and/or explain personal and confidential aspects of their lives.

Recommendations

Drawing on the recommendations of the audit as well as the work, collective experience, and shared expertise of the Task Force, we recommend the following in the area of engagement:

- Any form of consultation and engagement should be focused on and forefront relationship and community building rather than data collection that has unclear benefits to the individual or their communities, particularly if the communities being consulted experience multiples axes of marginalization or oppression.
- Data collection and engagement opportunities should consider that, in small populations, anonymity may not be guaranteed especially when the unit of analysis is smaller (e.g., a department or a Faculty). While data suppression is common in these instances, this practice means that the perspectives of communities with fewer members are regularly excluded. We recommend attending to this concern by ensuring that any research or consultation involve multiple forms of data collection in addition to a mix of quantitative and qualitative data.
- Once data are collected, survey and research participants are too often dismissed and left out of the larger processes. Participants should be informed of how the information they give will be, or is, used, and be given the opportunity to make use of the data and outcomes to inform and promote their own equality.



Next steps

The Gender Diversity Audit provided a unique opportunity to hear from trans, Two-Spirit and non-binary communities and learn about the experiences at UBC. As with any survey, institutional and otherwise, this audit and the data collected for this report have their limitations, especially given that much of this work had to be conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic. Not everyone whose perspective should be heard could be integrated, and the audit was not sufficient to represent the full array of identity-based variables that intersect with gender.

This work offers a starting point—a wedge that creates an opportunity for more specific considerations and conversations about respectful inclusion at UBC. For example, specificities for Two-Spirit and queer Indigenous people require dedicated attention, and there are limited consultations with Indigenous groups and limited Indigenous insights included in this report. In meetings with the Longhouse, UBC Indigenous faculty and students noted that the survey and audit were ill-framed to meet culturally specific concerns of Indigenous people at UBC. As a result, we recommend UBC prioritizes resources for the creation an Indigenous consultation plan led by Two-Spirit people with the support of the larger UBC community.

Priority recommendations from the Task Force

1. Expand and sustain training and education around gender diversity, with a focus on faculty and staff capacity-building.

Trans, Two-Spirit, and non-binary people of the UBC community face gender-based discrimination in both learning and work environments. This discrimination is experienced more prominently among those affected by multiple, intersecting systems of oppression, including gender, race, disability, sexuality and other key aspects of social location. We recommend building trans competencies into all staff and faculty roles to increase knowledge and skills necessary to reduce and prevent gender-based discrimination in workplaces, day-to-day interactions, curricula, classrooms, and administrative processes. This can be embedded into existing mechanisms for ongoing education and professional development in addition to being integrated into every stage of the employee life cycle at UBC (job duties, performance management, tenure and merit processes, professional development, etc.).

Education to support the human rights and well-being of trans, Two-Spirit and non-binary people at UBC needs to be designed and implemented in continuous manner, with clear and public accountability expectations, across and specific to the wide range of roles at the University with the intention of shifting the culture at UBC. It should highlight how intersectionality matters for gender diversity, discuss specific vulnerabilities experienced by IBPOC and disabled trans, Two-Spirit and non-binary people, and link to other learning opportunities on anti-racism, ableism, and decolonization. Specific recommendations for this education include the following:

- **CORE CONTENT:** Across all roles, content focused on terms, concepts, unique challenges faced at UBC, pronouns, names, assumptions, gender-inclusive language, and mistake recovery. Common misconceptions about the emerging practice of sharing pronouns should be unpacked.
- **STAFF:** Specific content on respectful interactions with trans, Two-Spirit and non-binary people as well as recurring systems issues, especially for staff involved in student and employee records (e.g., Enrolment Services and Human Resources) as well as communications staff. Particular attention should be paid to names, pronouns and honorifics used in communications, and every effort should be made to address ongoing inconsistencies in how names are displayed and used.
- **FACULTY:** Specific content focused on classroom and curriculum considerations related to gender diversity, including introductions with voluntary pronouns, gender-inclusive language, facilitation of classroom discussions on gender, and exam practices using chosen names.
- **STUDENTS:** Specific content focused on respectful interactions, importance of pronouns, impacts of jokes, comments, and assumptions.

We suggest integrating information to UBC's Faculty and Administrative Directory about whether or not faculty or staff members have taken a Positive Space course and other learning opportunities, such as a badging system. This practice can provide trans, Two-Spirit, and non-binary people with a quick and measurable way to discern who has made efforts to seek out education on their distinct needs.

2. Increase recruitment and retention of trans, Two-Spirit and non-binary faculty and staff.

Trans, Two-Spirit, and non-binary people experience significant barriers in employment. It is recommended that UBC make intentional efforts to recruit and retain faculty members from underrepresented groups, especially trans, Two-Spirit and non-binary IBPOC scholars.

We also recommend that UBC improve career pathways—recruitment through retirement—to increase chances to attract and retain trans, Two-Spirit and non-binary applicants and employees.

In all job postings, add specific language about intersectional identities in the hiring process, including Indigeneity, gender identity and expression, race, and disability. Consider lived experience as an asset and aspect of excellence that can contribute positively to workplaces at UBC.

3. Improve the implementation of gender data standards and centralized systems and principles for the collection of gendered records (e.g., name, honorific, pronoun) and reporting of gender data (e.g., identity marker).

The creation of a rigorous, efficient, coherent and failproof approach to gender data and gendered records across UBC systems that supports choice and self-determination. It is strongly recommended that legal first names be removed as the default first name used in information systems and in email correspondence. Instead, students and employees should be given the ability to choose which first name, pronoun and honorific (Mx, Ms, Dr, etc.) they want to use and where they want them used.



4. Support the mental health and holistic wellness of trans, Two-Spirit, and non-binary students, staff, and faculty.

Trust in UBC as an institution inclusive and respectful of gender diversity tells a story of mixed success. While UBC has made progress and explicit commitments to creating welcoming and respectful work and learning environments for people regardless of their gender, there are still regular and ongoing failures in systems, facilities, administrative processes and teaching and learning practices. As a result, trans, Two-Spirit and non-binary communities rarely feel confident that the University will protect or that will stand by them when needed. For example, trust was significantly eroded by the University's stance in relation to a transphobic speaker being hosted on the Vancouver campus in 2019. We recommend that campus and community safety be assessed and considered *before* accepting event bookings not sponsored, hosted, or endorsed by UBC and that the primacy of the University's commitments to human rights be clarified in the new Academic Freedom policy.

Trans, Two-Spirit, and non-binary people experience high levels of stress and anxiety at UBC. However, mental health services are limited generally and the availability of culturally and medically competent mental healthcare is sparse. We recommend gender diversity representation in health and wellness services that includes lived experience as trans, Two-Spirit, and/or non-binary.

This means education and training, but also adequate resourcing (such as hiring additional staff, funding and time off for professional development, etc.) to support service providers improving their knowledge of gender diversity, and their familiarity with peer-reviewed research evidence to inform their practices.

Finally, in order to support overall health and well-being, we recommend that UBC continues develop all-gender washrooms (single stall and, where appropriate, multi-stall) and change rooms. UBC Facilities should publicly release the "Inclusive Washroom Guidelines" developed from the findings of Inclusive Washroom Consultation so that units across the University can be guided in their inclusion of all-gender washrooms in all new buildings as well as in retrofit projects. Current facilities should be enhanced by updating signage on single-stall washrooms (according to UBC's existing [Interior Signage Guidelines](#)) and improving wayfinding so that people can easily identify and access the washrooms that best work for them.

UBC resources

1. Resources for all trans, Two-Spirit and non-binary people

The Equity and Inclusion Office hosts [an information hub](#) on gender diversity, including information on names, pronouns, washrooms and change rooms, gender markers, graduation, gender-affirming care, and inclusive forms. Trans, Two-Spirit and non-binary students and employees can find information to help them navigate different aspects of UBC and cisgender people can learn more about how to support Trans, Two-Spirit and non-binary students and employees.

UBC offers all-gender washrooms all over its campuses, including multi-stall all-gender washrooms in the Commons (UBC-O) and the Life Building (UBC-V). A [map of accessible and all-gender washrooms](#) is available for the Vancouver Point Grey campus and a list of accessible and all-gender washrooms is available for the [Okanagan](#) campus.

CiTR 101.9FM, UBC's on-campus radio station, hosts the "[Intersections](#)" and "[Queer FM](#)" podcasts that offer a public forum for content relevant to women, transgender, intersex, Two-Spirit, genderqueer, gender non-conforming, non-binary, and genderfluid folks and allies.

In 2020, UBC Athletics commissioned the [Assessing Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion at UBC Department of Athletics & Recreation](#) report and has taken significant steps to ensuring that Athletics and Recreation [support](#) "every participant's right to assess and note their own gender in which to participate and/or compete in [their] programs". [UBC Intramurals](#) offers the W2STGN category (Women, Two-Spirit, Trans, Gender Non-Conforming) which welcomes participation by those who self-identify as women, Two-Spirit, trans and gender non-conforming. At UBC-V, the Aquatic Centre offers a universal change room for everyone that includes private change cubicles and private washroom and shower stalls as well as lockers. The Activities and Recreation Centre offers a universal change area room which includes 11 private change cubicles, 5 private washrooms, and 8 individual shower stalls.

2. Resources for trans, Two-Spirit and non-binary students

RESOURCES TO NAVIGATE UBC

At UBC-Vancouver, the [UBC Pride Collective](#) runs regular discussion groups, hosts inclusive social events, maintains active Discord channels, and runs the [Gender Empowerment Store](#). Other 2SLGBTQIA+ student groups on the UBC-V campus include [Queers + Gears](#) and [Queer Coded](#). At UBC-Okanagan, the [Pride Resource Centre](#) provides a space to connect, organizes events and maintains active Discord channels.

Starting in September 2020, trans students have run a [trans peer mentorship program](#) at UBC-V and UBC-O to provide supportive social opportunities and enhance social wellbeing and community care among trans, Two-Spirit, gender-diverse and questioning students.

RESOURCES TO FIND COMMUNITY

Student Services has information on how students can [update their personal information](#) in UBC systems, including their name and gender marker. They also have a page on [career resources for LGBTQ+ students](#).

[The UBC trans & non-binary student guide](#) offers practical, concise, and wide-ranging advice for trans and non-binary students. The advice ranges from where legal names or chosen names will appear on UBC-related documents, through healthcare and residences, to effective communication with professors. The Faculty of Arts also has a page on [Peer Advice for Incoming Trans & Non-binary Arts Students](#).

[Student Housing](#) on both campuses asks students about their gender identity, and discusses housing preferences and options with students. [Counsellors in Residence](#) are available to all students and are aware of the unique challenges faced by trans, Two-Spirit, and non-binary people living in residences at UBC. Culturally competent counsellors can help with those challenges and have relevant information about local resources to refer students appropriately. Some residences, including Vanier and Totem Park, also sometimes run their own Pride Collectives.

RESOURCES TO LEARN ABOUT TRANS STUDIES

Several courses at the university offer students the opportunity to better understand how gender connects to class, race, sexuality, disability, and colonial violence. At the time of writing, the following courses were available:

- **FNIS 456 Indigenous Two-Spirit and Queer Studies:** cultural contexts, scholarship, literature, and artistic expressions of Queer, LGBTI, and Two-Spirited Indigenous people, both as an academic area of study and as lived experience and relationship.
- **CSIS 301 Introduction to Trans* Studies:** how race, citizenship, gender, sexuality, culture and dis/ability are materially and socially constructed together to give meaning to the category trans*.
- **GRSJ 316 Queer and Trans of Colour Theorizing:** the intellectual and political interventions of queer of colour theorizing in the gender and sexual politics of racial and imperial projects, including its engagements with women of colour feminisms, settler colonial and indigenous studies, and immigration and diaspora studies.

3. Resources for trans, Two-Spirit and non-binary staff and faculty

The [Queer Faculty & Staff Collective](#) provides a space for UBC faculty and staff who identify as members of 2SLGBTQIA+ communities to come together, make connections, and build community. Please contact at positive.space@ubc.ca to join the group.

The Trans and Gender-Diverse Faculty Group: This group is open to trans, gender diverse faculty across UBC and seeks to provide a space for mutual support and community building. Names of members are not shared with other group members without explicit permission. Please contact jehannine.austin@ubc.ca to join the group.

4. Resources to help create work and learning environments where gender diversity is allowed to thrive

The [Positive Space: Foundations online course](#) provides low-barrier access for students, staff, and faculty to learn about sex, sexuality, and gender diversity and is part of [Positive Space](#).

The Equity and Inclusion Office hosts [an information hub](#) on gender diversity, including information on names, pronouns, washrooms and change rooms, gender markers, graduation, gender-affirming care, and inclusive forms. Students, staff and faculty who wish to work in solidarity with trans, Two-Spirit and non-binary people can refer to this website to learn more and familiarize themselves with resources available at UBC.

Instructors have access to a number of resources to learn more about how to make their classrooms more inclusive of gender diversity.

- CTLT's Inclusive Teaching website includes the resource [Towards More Trans-Inclusive Classrooms: An Introduction](#).
- The Pride Resource Centre offers [How to Develop a Trans Inclusive Syllabus and Classroom Handout](#) and runs 15 minute workshops about pronoun usage for staff and faculty.
- [Trans Literacies](#), in the Institute for Gender, Race, Sexuality and Social Justice, discusses how educators can develop safer, more trans-inclusive pedagogical practices in their classrooms.

Staff who support students on their career journey can refer to [this guide on career conversations with 2SLGBTQIA+ students](#).

[SOGI UBC](#), located in the Faculty of Education, offers learning opportunities for teacher candidates and works with other faculties and institutions to develop inclusive climates and practices, especially as they relate to sexual orientation and gender identity in K-12 settings.

Program-specific onboarding in select Faculties provides education on 2SLGBTQIA+ communities to students. For example, the Robert H. Lee Graduate School at the Sauder School of Business requires each new graduate student enrolled in the MBA, Master of Management, and Master of Business Analytics programs to complete a learning module as well as in-person workshops during program orientations that introduce concepts of gender diversity and inclusion, to help promote a more inclusive learning environment and set baseline understandings among the cohorts.

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