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CANADA RESEARCH CHAIRS PROGRAM (CRCP) INSTITUTIONAL EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND

INCLUSION (EDI) ACTION PLAN AND EDI STIPEND REPORT

December 2020- December 2021

*Instructions provided by the Tri-Agency Institutional Programs Secretariat are italicized.*

**REPORTING ON EDI STIPEND OBJECTIVES – Not applicable for 2020-21, as the EDI Stipend was not offered by TIPS.**

**ENGAGEMENT WITH UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS**

*Instructions: Outline how the institution has engaged with underrepresented groups: e.g. racialized minorities, Indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, women, LGBTQ2+ individuals, during the implementation of the action plan (during the reporting period), including how they have been involved in identifying and implementing any course corrections/adjustments, if applicable. For example, how was feedback gathered on whether the measures being implemented are resulting in a more inclusive research environment for chairholders of underrepresented groups? How has intersectionality been considered in developing and implementing the plan (if applicable)? Have new gaps been identified? How will members of underrepresented groups continue to be engaged?*

The EDI Consultant encouraged the Dimensions Committee and Research Office to consult widely with Equity-Deserving Groups (EDGs) at MSVU, to not only identify barriers to EDI but also gather feedback on current and proposed measures to dismantle those barriers. These consultations would not have occurred if TIPS had not offered an initial EDI Stipend to institutions – MSVU then sought funding through an internal Strategic Initiatives Fund to continue the work initiated by the Consultant. The EDI Consultant outlined and refined her consultation process with the Dimensions Committee prior to engagement with departments and representatives from EDGs.

Initial engagement began with identifying key stakeholders from Equity Deserving Groups (EDGs) for a first round of interviews. Interviews began October 20th, 2020 and typically were an hour in length. Twenty-nine (29) interviews were completed between the dates of October 2020 to January 2021. Interviewees included; the Special Advisor to the President, Aboriginal Affairs; the Black Student Support Coordinator; The Nancy's Chair (Women’s Chair), the VP Academic who also spoke about the L'Nu Advisory Circle (Indigenous advisory group); the President and Vice-Chancellor; the International Centre Manager; the President of the Faculty Association (MSVUFA); the Equity Action Committee Chair; the Human Resources and Diversity Advisor; the Manager of Academic Relations; the Research Grants Coordinator, the three current CRCs; the Dimensions project lead; the Accessibility Services Manager; the Student Union President; the Dean of Education; the Dean of Arts and Science; the Dean of Professional Studies; the Harassment and Discrimination Officer; the Alexa McDonough Institute Chair; the University Librarian, a Pride Committee representative; and interviews from faculty and staff that identify as representatives of the equity deserving groups.

Although an EDI Action Plan has yet to be developed, engagement with EDGs is critical to MSVU’s success in the development and implementation of an EDI Action Plan. To this end, the EDI Consultant position is critical to continue and expand this engagement. A goal of the EDI Consultant for continuing engagement with EDGs is to support the EDIA Advisor’s Environmental Scan of EDIA committees and resources, Human Resources’ climate survey, including reviewing questions and responses in terms of EDI, and the Dimension Consultant’s Application to Dimensions. Other tasks that remain are:

* Comparative analysis (with respect to EDIA groups) of compensation, release time (course remission), access to grants, research support
* Analysis of strengths and gaps in current data collection methods related to EDIA at MSVU (we will do this collectively as an institution)
* Identify how self-identification data is gathered and protected. Identify whether there are perceived risks to self-identification.

**OTHER EDI INITIATIVES**

**Efforts to Address Systemic Barriers More Broadly within the Institution:**

*Instructions: Briefly outline other EDI initiatives underway at the institution (broader than those tied to the CRCP) that are expected to address systemic barriers and foster an equitable, diverse and inclusive research environment. For example, are there projects underway that underscore the importance of EDI to research excellence? Is there additional training being offered to the faculty at large? Are there initiatives to improve the campus climate? Please provide hyperlinks where possible. Note that collecting this information from institutions is a requirement of the 2019 Addendum to the 2006 Canadian Human Rights Settlement Agreement and provides context for the work the institution is doing in addressing barriers for the CRCP.*

**Education and Outreach to MSVU Community:**

* MSVU is gathering data on the percent of faculty, staff, and administrators who participate in internal EDIA workshops (and what those workshops were).
* MSVU has recently committed to a CCDI (Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion) Membership and access to training and resources for faculty and staff. Human Resources is spearheading this initiative and we expect robust participation from our community.
* The Research Office, in concert with the Office of the Vice-President Academic and Provost, has presented a Black and Indigenous Speaker Series that brings Black and Indigenous scholars to campus (currently virtual) to present a lecture based on their research. This has been well-received in the MSVU community and we have secured funding for another year of speakers in 2022.
* The Senate Committee on Research and Publications, the MSVU peer-review mechanism, is currently exploring how to gather self-ID and demographic data on internal grant awardees and applicants. The Committee is currently in discussion with Human Resources to ensure that privacy is protected, and disclosure is secure.

**Recent EDI Initiatives at MSVU:** In 2021, MSVU has taken concrete and permanent steps to advance, achieve, and maintain EDI initiatives at the university. These include:

* Participation in the creation of a Nova Scotia-wide Post-Secondary Social Equity Curriculum for faculty members, focused on raising awareness of social inequity and systemic barriers, and their impact on students from EDGs in Nova Scotia.
* The striking of the President’s Advisory Committee on EDIA, a “meta-committee” comprised of faculty, senior administrators, students, representatives from labor groups, the HR Equity Officer, and representatives from each EDIA committee or working group at MSVU.
* The creation and installation of a full-time, permanent position and space for an EDIA Advisor, who provides strategic direction and leadership on EDIA across the University as well as external to MSVU. The EDIA Advisor works with the greater Mount community to lead, communicate, and manage change by developing EDIA strategies, programs, training, and education. The EDIA Advisor has begun working with the MSVU community on targeted EDIA initiatives and dialogues with groups.
* The report of the Pandemic Equity Action Committee (PEAC), co-chaired by the Vice-President Academic and the Chair of the Faculty Association Equity Action Committee, to examine MSVU’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic through an equity lens.
* The hiring of a Consultant (Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility in Research (CEDIAR)) to support best practices in EDI in research and develop a CRC Action Plan to address barriers to EDI in research at MSVU, funded by MSVU SIF, in response to the Canada Research Chairs program requirements and our inclusion in the Dimensions Pilot program.
* The successful hiring of a five-person Black scholar tenure-track cohort. These faculty members have created the Black Scholar Initiative to support other Black scholars and students at MSVU.

The above initiatives serve in addition to MSVU’s existing EDIA policies, centres, resources, and leaders, which include, but are not limited to: a formal diversity hire program for tenure-track faculty members; the Black Student Support Centre, led by a full-time Black Student Support Coordinator; the Aboriginal Student Centre, led by the Special Advisor to the President on Aboriginal Affairs; the 2SLGBTQQIA+ and Accessibility Committees; one of five NSERC Chairs for Women in Science and Engineering.

**CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

*Instructions: Other than what has been outlined in the section above, outline any challenges and opportunities or successes regarding the implementation of the EDI action plan, as well as best practices that have been discovered to date. If COVID-19 has had an impact on the implementation of the institution’s action plan, please outline how below. How has or will the institution address these challenges and opportunities?*

**Challenges:** The biggest challenge at MSVU has been identifying and gathering qualitative data related to equity deserving groups**.** Part of our work included identifying what information was needed, where that information is housed if it exists, and processes for accessing the data in a way that protects confidentiality. As with most institutions, MSVU has not historically had processes in place to capture the breadth and depth of information now required by the Tri-Council related to CRC hires and retention (both applicants to chair positions and successful candidates).

One of the goals of the self-assessment was to identify these data acquisition gaps. The EDI consultant, hired through the EDI Stipend from TIPS, has begun a thorough analysis of data collection processes and the action plan will identify processes that need to be put in place to address any shortcomings.

To identify equity targets and gaps with respect to CRC hires and retention we have gathered and analyzed data related to:

* Theinstitution’s processes and strategies for collecting and protecting data on the EDGs.
* Historic record of faculty who identify as being from one of the EDG/ESG: Women, Indigenous peoples, members of visible minorities/racialized groups, and persons with disabilities. Work Force Analyses from 2012-2019 were completed and analyzed against internal targets and compared to national averages. The data shows that while Mount Saint Vincent excels in terms of equity with women (123% of expected targets), there is still work that needs to be done with other targeted groups including: Indigenous Peoples (75% of expected targets); people with disabilities (43.8 % of expected targets); and racially visible people (74.69% of expected targets). There has been a consistent improvement year over year except for those from racialized groups. However, there has recently been a cohort hire of Black scholars in 2020, so the targets for racially visible people will show improvement this coming year. The Mount is beginning to keep data related to 2SLGBTQ+ faculty and staff. As expected, these data indicates that MSVU is above the national average in terms of hiring and retaining women, but slightly below the National Average for Indigenous, disabled and racially visible people (National statistics from *Diversity of Canadian university senior leadership, Equity, Diversity and inclusion at Canadian universities: Report on the 2019 national survey*. <https://www.univcan.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Equity-diversity-and-inclusion-at-Canadian-universities-report-on-the-2019-national-survey-Nov-2019-1.pdf>

The review conducted by the EDI Consultant identified gaps in the ability to easily gather data in several areas. As a consequence, the following are currently in the process of developing practical, confidential, and transparent processes for gathering data:

**CRC-Specific**

* The number/percent of applicants from diverse groups who *apply* for CRC positions.
* Retention rate of chair holders (to completion of term, including in reallocation exercises).
* Comparison of CRC chairholder salary and benefits, financial support, and access to space.

**General**

* An accurate number of faculty who currently identify as being from one of the EDG/ESGs.
* The number of graduate students who are from EDG/ESG (compared to representation in general population).
* The number of students from EDG/ESG receiving internal grants/internships and Research Assistant positions (compared to representation in general population).
* Identifying and analyzing internal selection/award processes in terms of equity.

Another significant challenge for the Mount is the current leadership transition. The institution recently hired for the positions of President (July 2022) and Associate Vice-President Research (September 2021). We are currently hiring for the positions of VP-Administration and have an interim VP-Academic and Provost.

**Opportunities:** One of the greatest opportunities or benefits of the review is gathering all the information related to EDI at MSVU. There are many committees and services doing EDI work but information across services and committees was not always known or shared collectively. It has also provided an opportunity to identify and highlight research related to EDI. The review has identified the need for consistent and sustained funding for EDIA, a framework for the systematic analysis and planning for data collection, and a university-wide communications plan.