



## CANADA RESEARCH CHAIRS PROGRAM (CRCP) INSTITUTIONAL EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (EDI) ACTION PLAN AND EDI STIPEND REPORT

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

### **REPORTING ON EDI STIPEND OBJECTIVES**

**EDI Stipend Objective 1**, as presented in MSVU's EDI Stipend Application

*Instructions: Indicate the S.M.A.R.T. (specific, measurable, aligned with the wanted outcome, realistic and timely) objective(s) towards which this funding has been directed:*

**Hiring of an EDI Consultant:** The EDI consultant will work with the Vice-President Academic and Provost's Office and the MSVU Research Services Team to initiate, develop, and actualize our CRCP EDI Action Plan and strategy for implementation. This will include a robust self-assessment of policies, practices and the environment at MSVU with an EDI lens. As we have less than five Chairs, we believe it is socially responsible to be proactive in the development of our EDI Action Plan, promoting EDI internally and externally to the University.

**Indicator(s):** *Describe indicators, as presented in the EDI Stipend application, and how they are calculated.*

Performance indicators include a complete EDI Action Plan, approved by MSVU Senior Leadership and the larger EDI-A Committee. The EDI Action plan will include a roadmap for implementation, to guide MSVU policies and procedures past the term of the EDI Consultant.

While we anticipated the consultant would be hired in June 2020, the consultant did not start until October 5, 2020. The consultant is working on a part-time (20 hours/week) basis until the end of June 2021. She has worked collaboratively with the Vice-President Academic and Provost's Office, the MSVU Research Services Team, and many other university staff, students and faculty to complete an environmental scan, begin an employment systems review, and begin the comparative review(s) needed to create a robust and measurable EDI Action plan informed by equity seeking groups. In collaboration with a variety of EDI stakeholders, the consultant has also begun identifying strategies for implementation which will inform our CRCP EDI Action Plan.

**Progress:** *Describe results observed, including indicator results, outcomes, impacts. Include timelines (start and end dates).*

### **Development and Implementation of an Environmental Scan (October 2020-February 2021)**

The environmental scan consisted of the following tasks:

- Document and Policy Review

- Review of EDI web pages and recent communications
- Identification of current EDIA services, initiatives, and committees
- Engagement with ESG's and general population (interviews [27], survey, Town Halls)
- Project communication plan to all University staff and students (in conjunction with the Communications Department)
- Data Collection and identification of deficits in data collection (with HR, Graduate Studies, Registrar, Research Office, Faculty Relations Office)
- Beginning of a faculty Employment System Review (Human Resources and the Employment Equity Committee)
- Analysis of equity in research practices/processes (stakeholders, Research Office, consultant)

**Document and Policy Review:** The following documents and policies have been analyzed as part of the institutional scan:

- Current Strategic Plan/documents Current Policies and Procedures related to EDI
- EDIA related committees' notes/minutes and Terms of Reference (TOR)
- Review of the *Diversity Climate Surveys*. A document that reviewed survey questions across time to visualize changes/gaps was created
- Past institutional policies, procedures, and strategic documents (e.g., strategic plan, processes for identifying hiring targets).
- Existing institutional policies, procedures, and strategic documents not directly related to EDIA but that when read through an EDIA lens are seen to impact EDI outcomes

**Identification of current EDIA Services, Initiatives, and Standing and Ad hoc Committees at MSVU:** We have identified communities within and external to the institution that are doing work related to EDI. A complete list has been compiled and visual representation of their place in the MSVU structure has been created.

**Faculty Employment System Review:** As part of the Mount's Employment System Review, the following tasks have been completed or are in process:

- The identification of current, specific policy related to equity in hiring (Complete: Employment Equity Policy, Collective Agreement).
- The recruitment, hiring and retention processes for CRC's have been identified.
- The recruitment, hiring and retention processes for other Faculty has been identified.
- The identification of who is responsible for each stage of hiring is complete.
- Identification of target setting processes is complete.
- Analyze retention rates of faculty from EDG/ESG compared to others (to be reviewed in the next year).
- Analyse who collects the data on EDS/ESG in each of the above and where this data goes and if it is used at all (in process).

**Reporting:** An interim report outlining the environmental scan was written and shared with senior leadership and the Dimensions working group in December 2020. A final report of the work will be completed mid-June 2021. A Town Hall that shares the findings from the environmental scan and will solicit feedback was presented in May 2021 for both students and for staff.

**Identification of Next Steps (March 2021-June 2021):**

1. Identify working and communication relationship with new EDIA Advisor.
2. Create an EDIA organizational structure that clarifies responsibility/reporting/communication lines between all services, initiatives, and standing and ad hoc committees. It is assumed that the new President's EDIA Committee will clarify these structures.
3. Analyze current self-reporting strategies. Work with EDIA Advisor and other relevant departments to improve efficacy and uptake of self-identification mechanisms.
4. Define processes to analyze retention rates of faculty from EDG/ESG compared to others.
5. Identify measurable performance indicators and timelines needed to complete the EDI Action Plan,
6. Obtain approval of EDI Action Plan by MSVU Senior Leadership and the larger EDIA Committee.
7. Create a plan for sharing results and how we will respond to recommendations.
8. Development of an action plan including indicators of progress and an evaluation/assessment framework.

**Outline the total expenditures below:**

Total funds of EDI stipend spent on the objective: \$35,000

Institutional commitment (if applicable): \$8,000 (in-kind)

Total funds spent: \$43,000

**EDI Stipend Impact Rating**

*Please rate the extent of the impact the EDI Stipend has had on your institution in meeting this objective as identified in your application, for the reporting period:*

- o Extensive impact (the EDI Stipend had an extensive impact on achieving progress)

**Provide a high-level summary of how the stipend was used:** The objective described above would not have been successful without the EDI Stipend from TIPS. The EDI Consultant has been instrumental in gathering, coordinating, and harmonizing existing programs and policies to inform her robust self-assessment of the EDI environment at MSVU. 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 EDI Stipend to institutions. MSVU strongly encourages TIPS to re-offer this stipend – it has proven to be critical in supporting small institutions in their EDI efforts.

**ADDITIONAL OBJECTIVES****EDI Stipend Objective 2, as presented in MSVU's EDI Stipend Application**

*Indicate the S.M.A.R.T. (specific, measurable, aligned with the wanted outcome, realistic and timely) objective(s) towards which this funding has been directed:*

**Salary for EDI Officer/Liaison:** The EDI Officer/Liaison will assist the EDI Consultant with preliminary activities, preparing reports and gathering existing data on current policies and practices at MSVU. The EDI Liaison will offer "on-the-ground" familiarity to MSVU's internal structure, contacts within departments, HR policies, and MSVU Collective Agreements.

**Indicator(s):** *Describe indicators, as presented in the EDI Stipend application, and how they are calculated.*

Performance indicators will be set by the EDI Consultant and the Associate Vice-President Research. These may include the establishment of timelines and/or deadlines for sub-projects, as well as cohesive communications across and beyond the team. Ultimately, the EDI Liaison will be responsible for collecting and synthesizing feedback for the completed EDI Action Plan.

The EDI Officer/Liaison has assisted the EDI Consultant with preliminary activities, preparing reports and gathering existing data on current policies and practices at MSVU. The EDI Liaison was seconded to the consultant on a part-time basis (15-20 hrs/week) for the duration of the Consultant's term.

**Performance indicators:**

- The EDI Liaison provided "on-the-ground" familiarity to MSVU's internal structure, contacts within departments, HR policies, and MSVU Collective Agreements (Ongoing).
- Creation of a communication plan. The overall goal of the communication plan was to inform University staff and students and invite them to have their voice heard. In January 2021, the Mount circulated an initial internal communication piece describing the project, introducing the consultant and asking people to share their feedback and stories (Complete January 2021).
- Monitoring and compilation of an anonymous feedback /story sharing process (Complete, February 2021).
- Creation a website linked to the Research Office. The page will include information about the EDIA research project, a resources section and a place to share stories about what is happening at the Mount in terms of EDIA initiatives (In process).
- Organization of Engagement Sessions, one each for faculty/staff and students (May 2021).

**Progress:** Describe results observed, including indicator results, outcomes, impacts. Include timelines (start and end dates).

All tasks assigned to the EDI Liaison by the EDI Consultant were completed with quality work on schedule. The EDI Liaison worked with the EDI Consultant to establish goals and measure successes: creation of a monitoring/story sharing mechanism (completed Feb 2021), establishment of an EDI webpage and communications plan (completed Feb 2021/ongoing). The impact of this work has been felt across campus, in that our EDI initiatives are centralized, public, and transparent to the MSVU community. The webpage also provides resources to faculty, staff, and students related to EDI events and trainings offered by MSVU and Tri-Council.

Outline the total expenditures below:

Total funds of EDI stipend spent on the objective: \$15,000

Institutional commitment (if applicable): 0

Total funds spent: \$15,000

### **EDI Stipend Impact Rating**

*Please rate the extent of the impact the EDI Stipend has had on your institution in meeting this objective as identified in your application, for the reporting period:*

- o Extensive impact (the EDI Stipend had an extensive impact on achieving progress)

**Provide a high-level summary of how the stipend was used:** The EDI Liaison assisted the EDI Consultant (hired via EDI Stipend) in making connections to appropriate departments, persons, and stakeholders at MSVU. The EDI Liaison established a monitoring mechanism and communications plan for the Consultant's projects. As the EDI Liaison was seconded from the Research Office, she provided a link between the consultant and the greater University. The EDI Liaison was instrumental in publicizing and gathering consultation on the EDI Consultant's efforts. She organized and facilitated multiple engagement sessions, as well as created the institutional webpage that houses MSVU's EDI work, initiatives, and available resources.

### **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 EDI Stipend to institutions. 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 20<sup>th</sup>, 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

2SLGBTQQIA+ representative; and three interviews from faculty and staff that identify as representatives of the equity deserving groups.

The Mount, through the EDI Consultant, created an open-ended invitation to comment of EDIA research issues at the University through an anonymous survey. There were eight respondents to the survey.

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

- identify and interview representatives from each of the EDG/ESGs for a second round of interviews. 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.
- Review CUSC and NSSE surveys for EDI questions and responses

## **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 2021.

- 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. The MSVU Research Office recently presented a day-long event, “Spring Training for Research.” Sessions included best practices on embedding EDI in grant proposals and creating a diverse, inclusive, and accessible research team and environment for Principal Investigators.

**Recent EDI Initiatives at MSVU:** In 2020, 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 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 formation 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 an action plan to address barriers to EDI in research at MSVU, funded by TIPS, in response to the Canada Research Chairs program requirements and our inclusion in the Dimensions Pilot program.
- The current targeted initiative to hire a cohort of four Black scholars for tenure-track positions to address the lack of diversity among faculty. Applicants from any discipline may apply.

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 2SLGBTQQA+ 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:

- The institution'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 is currently hiring for the positions of President, VP-Academic and Provost, and Associate Vice-President Research. They have also recently hired their first Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Advisor (Mid-March 2021) that directly reports to the President.

**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 a framework for the systematic analysis and planning for data collection.