

## President's Equity Taskforce

Robert Bailey – Provost & Vice-President, Academic (Interim)

25 November 2017

*“Our university celebrates and is strengthened by its diversity. By listening to voices from multiple perspectives among our students, faculty and staff, we better prepare our graduates for their careers, create knowledge that makes a difference for all of society, and more deeply engage our communities from local to global.”*

Tim McTiernan, PhD, President and Vice-Chancellor

### Introduction

Equity and inclusivity are fundamental values that define our institution. They drive innovation and excellence, enhance quality and integrity, and help us to achieve our potential as a university community. But we recognize that awareness of the value of equity and good intentions for a more equitable university community are not enough. We must examine and address discriminatory practices, policies and attitudes that constrain opportunity, innovation and achievement. President McTiernan asserts that an active Equity Plan will align with the university's mission and vision, and is a necessary step in achieving our strategic goals.

To remedy policies and practices that perpetuate inequity we need to recognize the groups most likely to experience barriers:

- Indigenous persons;
- Persons with a disability;
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, 2-spirit, Non-binary (LGBTQ2+) persons;
- Racialized persons;
- Women.

Full representation and inclusion requires commitment to the idea that the academy benefits when it reflects society with diverse groups, perspectives, ideas and scholarship represented. As an example, Canadian universities have struggled to increase diversity among scholars who hold the prestigious Canada Research Chair (CRC). Despite the CRC program's long-standing goal of achieving equity and diversity targets, many universities have fallen short. To challenge this lack of diversity, Canada's Minister of Science set clear diversity goals for universities, demanding public commitments and plans, and the potential loss of allocated Chairs if the targets are not met. Equity and inclusion planning must be followed with action supported by the senior administration of each university.

## Addressing Equity at UOIT

At UOIT, inequity and discrimination happen in many contexts, with diverse consequences. Stories of discrimination on campus are common, and they emphasize a growing awareness and inspiration that this discrimination must be addressed. The expectation of government, institutional stakeholders, and the public are for plans and actions to identify inequities and discriminatory practices and, more importantly, to remedy them.

Examples of current work at UOIT include:

- A Letter of Understanding between UOIT and its Faculty Association encouraging more deliberate strategies for becoming an equitable and inclusive organization;
- Active bystander training for students and employees;
- Policies and procedures for students and employees to oppose sexual violence;
- A working group to address new equity and diversity requirements of the Canada Research Chair program;
- A team of Student Equity Ambassadors who develop and deliver programming on inclusivity, equity, wellness, and social change;
- A Women in Science Committee to discuss issues facing female researchers at our institution and in their broader disciplinary environments.

These disparate initiatives underscore the need for a more coordinated institutional strategy. Already it is clear that addressing discriminatory practices at the university requires:

- Investigating and naming the issues faced by those discriminated against;
- Acknowledging the impact of discrimination;
- Constructing, with those affected, viable solutions and remedies; and
- Implementing practices that reduce discrimination and inequity.

The way forward also requires consolidating university-wide equity and inclusion efforts that could achieve more if done in a more public and collaborative manner. To this end, the President has tasked Robert Bailey, Provost and VP Academic, to assemble a coordinated group, the President's Equity Taskforce.

## President's Equity Taskforce (PET) Mandate

The mandate of the PET includes preparation of a comprehensive inventory of existing and suggested equity, diversity and inclusion initiatives within the context of the university's mission, and to provide recommendations to those initiatives, as appropriate, based on broad consultation.

The goal of the PET is to mobilize a diverse movement of people across the university to create and establish equitable and inclusive practices at UOIT within a three-year term. Specifically, it will:

- Advise on the development of strategies for implementing the best equity and inclusion policies and practices at UOIT;
- Advise on equity and inclusion training and programming;
- Identify ongoing initiatives at the university and coordinate complementary efforts;
- Increase outreach efforts to diverse communities, and
- Assist and advise in the analysis of workforce and employment systems to identify and propose solutions for areas of inequality and discrimination.

The work of the PET will be done through broad consultation across the university community, including faculty, students, administrative staff, and other groups (e.g. UOIT Student Union, UOIT Faculty Association, Women in Science Committee, Indigenous Education Advisory Circle, Healthy Sexuality Committee), as well as external community partners.

## Membership

The President's Equity Taskforce will consist of nine members and report to the Provost, who will be an *ex officio* member.

Chair - Faculty Member appointed by the Provost  
 AVP Human Resources or delegate  
 AVP Student Life or delegate  
 VP Research, Innovation & International or delegate  
 Dean appointed by the Provost  
 Faculty Members (3) appointed by the Provost  
 Provost (ex-officio)

## Support

The President's Equity Taskforce will be supported by the Office of the Assistant Vice-President Planning & Administration.