

Review of the UBC Equity and Inclusion Office

October 2019



Working to embed equity, diversity and inclusion across the university and to intentionally build more inclusive campus environments. ~ Our Approach, EIO

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I. Introduction to Review

Context and Review Team

In accordance with the UBC practice of holding external reviews of academic and administrative units prior to appointment or reappointment of a senior administrator, in July of 2019, the Provost and Vice-President, Academic (UBC Vancouver) initiated an external review of the Equity and Inclusion Office (EIO).

A Review Team was established, comprising the following members:

- Dr. Arig al Shaibah, Associate Vice-President, Equity and Inclusion, McMaster University;
- Dr. Denise O’Neil Green, Vice-President, Equity and Community Inclusion, Ryerson University; and
- Dr. Oscar Dubón, Vice Chancellor, Equity and Inclusion, UC Berkeley.

Mandate and Scope

The purpose of the Review, articulated in the Terms of Reference provided to the Review Team, was to examine and evaluate the effectiveness of the Equity and Inclusion Office in fulfilling its mandate on UBC’s Vancouver and Okanagan campuses. Without limiting its overall mandate, the Team was invited to consider the following within the scope of the Review:

1. The organizational structure, reporting lines, and operation of the EIO;
2. The mandate of the EIO;
3. The programs and services offered by the EIO;
4. The resources and facilities available to the EIO;
5. The Vice Presidents’ Strategic Implementation Committee on Equity & Diversity (VPSICED) and its capacity to improve the EIO’s ability to respond to campus needs;
6. The partnerships and relationships developed by the EIO; and
7. Any other advice relevant to the purpose of the review of the EIO.

Methodology

The process of the review began in August of 2019 with a campus-wide announcement identifying the reviewers and inviting written comments and advice from the campus community members, which were shared with the Review Team.

Key stakeholders, including senior UBC administrators, members of faculty and staff, graduate and undergraduate students, program and centre directors, and other relevant groups and individuals from the Vancouver and Okanagan campuses, were invited to participate in one of 22 focus groups scheduled over three consecutive days.

The Review Team received a comprehensive set of contextual materials in advance of their visit, including:

- The External Review Terms of Reference;
- The EIO Self-Study, organizational chart, and program information;
- The VPSICED Terms of Reference; and
- Relevant UBC and EIO strategic documents, policies, action plans, and annual reports.

Over the course of three days, from October 9 to 11, the Review Team conducted all the scheduled in-person and video-conference-enabled focus groups from the UBC Vancouver campus. The Team also conducted two separate individual interviews with the Associate Vice-President, Equity and Inclusion (AVPEI) and an exit interview with the Provost and Vice-President, Academic (UBCV).

All focus group sessions followed the same format. After introducing themselves, the Review Team began every session with prefacing remarks clarifying the purpose and scope of the review, inviting individual perspectives and constructive feedback, reassuring participants that individuals who could not or chose not to participate in focus groups were given the opportunity to submit confidential comments, and reinforcing the importance of confidentiality to invite authentic feedback.

The Review Team then invited all participants to introduce themselves and share their experiences of what is working well as well as their perspective on opportunities for improvement in relation to the EIO Review purpose and scope. Following a round of comments from all participants, the Review Team asked clarifying and probing questions as appropriate.

Notwithstanding the great value of identifying and reinforcing the articulated strengths of the EIO, the Review Team considered the feedback with a particular view to identifying and making recommendations on articulated opportunities for improvement. Five salient categories of opportunities emerged:

- A. EIO Organization and Operation
- B. UBC Okanagan Office and Resourcing
- C. EDI Reporting Structure and Accountability
- D. Institutional Capacity-Building
- E. Inclusion Action Plan Leadership and Implementation

A summary of recommendations by theme is provided below, followed by a more detailed section which discusses the context and feedback provided for each theme leading to the recommendations proposed by the Review Team.

II. Summary of Recommendations by Theme

A. EIO Organization and Operation

A1. That the EIO complete the alignment exercise to clarify roles and responsibilities of its staff to leverage existing resources and expertise internal and external to the Office, thereby achieving greater efficiencies and synergies with the network of central and decentralized players advancing EDI.

A2. That the EIO consider additional refinement of the organizational structure to further reduce, where possible, the number of direct reports to the AVP, Equity and Inclusion.

A3. That the EIO continue to build team cohesion and capacity through intentional team visioning, team-building and in-house team learning activities that will reinforce a sense of shared commitment to common goals and support continuous improvement among the increasingly diverse team.

A4. That the EIO further examine the need for human rights consultation and/or advising and explore models to provide such proactive and just-in-time consultation and advising that meet these identified needs.

B. UBC Okanagan Office and Resourcing

B.1 That Okanagan campus administrators, including those at the highest level, strongly articulate their commitment to champion EDI, engage in activities to maintain cultural fluency, and provide commensurate material support to the effort of the EIO to advance inclusive excellence on the UBCO campus.

B2. That the Okanagan campus augment the organizational structure of the EIO by maintaining its commitment to hire a new Strategist and Human Right Advisor, as well as developing and hiring for the following additional full-time positions:

- A Director with direct (solid line) reporting to the AVPEI and dotted line reporting to the Provost and Vice-President Academic, UBC Okanagan; and
- An Administrative Assistant and/or Coordinator with direct reporting to the Okanagan Director.

B3. That the Okanagan campus, in its short-, medium- and long-term planning efforts, consider a dedicated space for the EIO staff team, as well as space(s) for broader campus programming and community-building.

B4. That the Okanagan campus engage a concerted, visible campaign that places EDI front and center and that invites engagement of campus neighbors, thereby helping to promote a more positive campus and local-area climate in order to invite greater inclusion, respect and a stronger sense of belonging for all.

C. EIO Reporting Structure and Accountability

C1. That the reporting structure be altered to designate a clear and consistent executive lead and champion for institutional equity and inclusion. It is recommended that the AVPEI report to both Provosts to streamline the work, provide greater consistency of executive leadership and build greater accountability in the organization, while ensuring that both campuses will continue to be the focus of the work.

C2. That a dotted line reporting relationship be created from the AVPEI to the President. The President, with the AVPEI as a resource, can facilitate EDI goals as a priority for all executive leaders.

C3. That the executive leadership team continue to develop inclusive leadership competencies and grow their understanding of equity and inclusion work to enable culture change within their respective constituency-focused portfolios. While embedding the work within these executive portfolios has been the goal, it continues to be siloed within various portfolios due to differing levels of competency and understanding.

C4. That the creation of a Vice-President, Equity and Inclusion be revisited in the future; although the AVPEI may operate as a *de facto* VP, at this time there does not seem to be a significant call for this position to be changed to a VP post.

D. Institutional Capacity-Building

D1. That the EIO complete its internal organizational and external strategic alignment reviews in a manner where each will inform the other.

D.2 That the EIO continue to support the development of expertise among its growing and increasingly diverse staff members with distinct organizational roles and responsibilities which call for a position-specific knowledge base and skill-set, while exploring intentional opportunities to broadly strengthen awareness, knowledge and skills in EDI-related topics as a staff team.

D3. That a shared funding model be considered for the embedded program in order to deepen and sustain the integration of EDI within unit strategic goals and priorities. For example, the program could be structured as a diminishing three-year grant from the centre for the salary and benefits of an embedded position (100% in the first year, 75% in the second year, 50% in the third year). Among the criteria for allocation of strategic capacity-building resources from the Student Diversity Initiative – and assignment of embedded personnel – may be the need for units to submit a plan outlining how they will integrate and sustain EDI goals and priorities for the first three years and beyond.

D4. That the network of central and decentralized EDI partners establish a forum or mechanism to achieve clarity on their respective roles and responsibilities and to identify synergies to optimize human and material resources in the face of time and funding pressures.

E. Inclusion Action Plan (IAP) Leadership and Implementation

E1. That a communication plan be developed and implemented for the IAP's rollout for both campuses, which clearly articulates the executive leads on the plan, their implementation timelines, and the EIO's role in plan development, consultation and accountability.

E2. That the remainder of the IAP consultation and implementation process ensures high levels of visibility and transparency as well as engagement of critical voices which may be missing to date, reflecting an approach that builds on the lessons learned through and success of the Indigenous Action Plan consultation process.

E3. That the IAP expectations for outcomes and resources (financial and human) required to achieve these outcomes be aligned, with consideration given to complementing and leveraging centrally allocated funds to implement the IAP with a requirement for a level of matching funds or other resources from partners, thereby building capacity, buy-in and accountability to the IAP.

E4. That academic leaders be engaged in this process such that, as they develop their strategic plans, they enhance integration of equity, diversity and inclusion and alignment with the EIO and the IAP.

III. Discussion of Themes

A. EIO Organization and Operation

Context

In 1994, UBC established a single Equity and Inclusion Office (EIO) serving faculty and staff by merging previously dispersed functions related to employment equity, multicultural liaison, sexual harassment, and women and gender relations. In 2005, with the creation of a second campus in the Okanagan, the EIO assumed institution-wide responsibility for faculty and staff equity and inclusion matters.

In 2015, the EIO took on diversity programming for students, with the aim of supporting a consistent and seamless approach to equity, diversity and inclusion work relevant to the entire campus community. To that point, the expanding mandate had been guided by priorities identified in a number of strategic documents, including *Place & Promise* (2009), *Implementing Inclusion* (2013), and *Intercultural Understanding* (2015).

In the last five years, the EIO has been leading several major institution-wide strategic priorities, including: the *Employment Equity Plan*, the *Inclusion Action Plan*, the *Canada Research Chair EDI Action Plan*, *Differences that Matter: A Conflict Engagement Initiative*, and the *Student Diversity Initiative*. With the introduction of these new ongoing responsibilities, the EIO staff team has grown from six members to twenty-seven under the oversight of the Associate Vice-President (AVP), Equity and Inclusion.

The AVP, Equity and Inclusion describes the EIO as having four broad areas of focus: human rights; planning and evaluation; education; and systems change. The current mission and mandate of the EIO are captured in its statement entitled *Our Approach*:

The EIO works in partnership with units across UBC campuses to embed equity, diversity, and inclusion into the structure, policies and processes of the university. Through dialogue, facilitation, intervention, and celebration, we centre the experiences of those who have been historically, systemically, or persistently marginalized. Conscious of relations of power and privilege, we work across intersections of identities and experiences to intentionally build a more inclusive campus. (2019, p. 4, EIO External Review Self-Study)

The Vice-Presidential Strategic Implementation Committee on Equity and Diversity (VPSICED) was established in 2016. It is a reimagined version of a previous joint Presidential and Provostial Advisory Committee. VPSICED draws on members from both Vancouver and Okanagan campuses and uses a working group model to surface and advance recommendations to the four Vice-Presidents to whom the Associate Vice-President reports. The recommendations taken up by the Vice-Presidents' portfolios, in turn, influence the initiatives and priorities of the EIO.

Feedback

The EIO recently engaged a consultant to develop its current range of organizational functions and supporting structure. The AVP, Equity and Inclusion has managed to maintain a high profile across the institution. Currently the AVP, Equity and Inclusion has a team of twenty-seven staff, with seven direct reports: three directors (Human Rights, Conflict Engagement and Facilitation, and Partnerships & Organizational Strategy Directors) and four managers (Administrative, Communications, Institutional Planning & Evaluation, and Projects).

The EIO staff continue to strengthen their sense of cohesion and clarity of roles and responsibilities since quadrupling their complement to meet emerging institutional priorities. The Review Team heard that the establishment of a line of Directors has created a greater sense of direction for the staff team under each of the Directors' portfolios; however, there is some lack of clarity about the lines of communication and decision-making with respect to the line of Managers. The Review Team also heard that with an increasingly diverse staff complement, there are opportunities for improved communication and cross-training to develop awareness, knowledge and skills across portfolios.

Under the leadership of two Directors, and in consultation with the AVP, Equity and Inclusion, the staff team is currently engaged in an "alignment exercise" to further refine and optimize the EIO's functions and structure in order to enhance its capacity to address central and decentralized priorities. There have been some musings about the feasibility of further consolidation of functions, to provide greater team coherence and further reduce the number of direct reports to the AVP, Equity and Inclusion.

The Vancouver and Okanagan staff continue to work on ways to remain connected as a team, given the context of two geographically distant campuses as well as office space constraints on the Vancouver campus. The EIO Vancouver staff members are dispersed between two central office locations, as well as some decentralized offices where embedded staff are located as part of the EIO's strategic capacity-building and systems change imperative.

The EIO is currently undertaking a review of the efficacy of the embedded roles.

In exploring the question of the efficacy of the VPSICED, the Review Team heard that the Committee seemed to be functioning well, that members understood the purpose of the Committee, and that working groups representing various initiatives and constituencies were able to surface issues and make recommendations for consideration by the Vice-Presidents. The question about whether the EIO should consider an additional advisory group to respond to community needs was not raised by community members through this review process. Some individuals wondered whether an advisory body on human rights issues could be of benefit to the EIO.

Recommendations

A1. That the EIO complete the alignment exercise to clarify roles and responsibilities of its staff to leverage existing resources and expertise internal and external to the Office, thereby achieving greater efficiencies and synergies with the network of central and decentralized players advancing EDI.

A2. That the EIO consider additional refinement of the organizational structure to further reduce, where possible, the number of direct reports to the AVP, Equity and Inclusion.

A3. That the EIO continue to build team cohesion and capacity through intentional team visioning, team-building and in-house team learning activities that will reinforce a sense of shared commitment to common goals and support continuous improvement among the increasingly diverse team.

A4. That the EIO further examine the need for human rights consultation and/or advising and explore models to provide such proactive and just-in-time consultation and advising that meet these identified needs.

B. UBC Okanagan Office and Resourcing

Context

The Equity and Inclusion Office (EIO) supports both the Vancouver and Okanagan campuses. UBC Okanagan (UBCO) is the newer campus, consisting of nearly 10,000 students—undergraduate and graduate—about 630 staff members and 630 faculty members, resulting in a total campus population of about 11,260. On the other hand, the Vancouver campus has an aggregated student, staff, and faculty population exceeding 70,000, more than six times the population of the Okanagan campus. These figures provide a relative “people” scale between the two campus.

During the Review Team’s visit to UBC, interviews were conducted with UBCO via teleconference. Stakeholders interviewed included students (both undergraduate and graduate), faculty, staff, and Okanagan-campus leadership. In addition, the Team received written comments from members of the UBCO community.

The EIO at UBCO consists one full-time Equity Facilitator, who reports to the Director, Conflict Engagement and Facilitation. The Director and the AVPEI visit the Okanagan campus and engage the campus community. The Okanagan team also includes support from the EIO’s Engagement Strategist who reports to the Manager for Institutional Planning & Evaluation, the Communications Manager who reports to the AVPEI, and the Administrative Manager who also reports to the AVPEI.

While the Equity Facilitator is the full-time EIO staff member dedicated to the Okanagan campus, the Review Team did not become aware of the effort level (i.e., the percentage of Full-Time Equivalent) committed to the Okanagan campus by each of the other team members.

At the time of this review, the hiring of two additional full-time EIO staff members for the Okanagan campus was planned. According to the organization chart provided to the Review Team at the time of the review, 1.0 FTE would be for a Strategist reporting to the Director of Partnerships & Organizational Strategy, while the other 1.0 FTE would be a Human Rights Advisor, reporting to the Director of Human Rights.

The Okanagan campus has a vibrant community—students, staff and faculty—that is defining its own identity even as it is technically part of a co-located university with the two major campuses, Vancouver and Okanagan, as well as other sites such as UBC Robson Square. UBCO and its immediate surroundings differ significantly from Vancouver. While Vancouver is a coastal metropolis that attracts significant global engagement, the Okanagan campus is located in the interior city of Kelowna, which has a population less than one-tenth the size of the greater Vancouver area. The local economies, demographics, and geography are starkly different, providing an important backdrop to the university experience and informing the unique needs of each campus. Diversity, equity, inclusion and campus climate, in particular, are influenced by these broader factors.

While both campuses form one university, certain structures must be at some level duplicated in order for UBC to be able to function. For example, UBCO has its own academic senate as does UBCV. As stated on the senate website, “The Okanagan Senate has responsibilities pertaining to UBC Okanagan” while the “Vancouver Senate has responsibilities pertaining to the Vancouver campus and UBC’s operations around British Columbia.” An additional body, the Council of Senates, “is responsible for matters pertaining to the broader UBC system. In certain circumstances, the Council of Senates may act as though it were a senate.” This structure reflects that complexity associated with a multi-campus university.

There are structures that reflect a system that must address and balance campus-specific needs and governance with system-level operation. For example, the Review Team was informed that formal structures for mental health services exist on each campus—with sufficient line management for normal services to be performed quasi-independently—with supervisorial lines reporting ultimately to one leader overseeing all mental health services. The Team expects other structures to reflect the duality described here: the need both to have campus-specific structures that address local, unique needs and to operate as one university in which the whole should be greater than the sum of its parts. This context is critical to understanding how the work of the EIO has evolved at UBCO and how it should proceed in the future.

Feedback

In any organization, there is variation in competency among campus executives with respect to leading change, and UBCO is no exception. The Review Team raises this matter to emphasize that campus climate is always a work in progress and that leaders must be continuously involved and approach the work with humility and a growth mindset.

The senior leadership should lead by example; become fully engaged in the factors that contribute to campus climate; maintain cultural fluency and awareness to address the needs for all campus stakeholders to thrive; and leverage the EIO staff as resources to advance belonging on campus.

To strengthen EDI leadership and service delivery at the UBCO, a greater number and differentiation of roles and responsibilities may be needed, beyond the currently planned infusion of two additional positions. Greater investment in the organizational structure and budget at UBCO may be needed to ensure the EIO can pursue a mission and vision at the Okanagan campus in a robust manner. If EDI is a stated priority for the Okanagan campus and university leadership, then such investment is necessary to enable the greatest possibility for success—a partial investment may fall short of the expectations of campus leaders and more importantly the campus community.

As mentioned, at the time of this review, only one full-time staff member was located at the Okanagan campus, with plans to hire two additional full-time staff members – a Strategist and a Human Rights Advisor. The Review Team heard that the Director of Facilitation & Conflict Engagement, among other UBCV EIO staff, spends a fair amount of time providing services to the UBCO community. The effort that EIO staff members commit to the Okanagan campus should be quantified and recognized, and a clear expectation concerning the share of FTE should be articulated.

The Review Team notes that increasing the full-time staffing at Okanagan will release time from other EIO staff members at the Vancouver campus and hopefully enable more robust inter-campus collaboration and higher-level strategizing. In addition, while increasing the full-time staffing level to five at the Okanagan campus may seem significant in comparison with the staffing level of the Vancouver campus, one should not assume that the staffing level at the Vancouver campus is a suitable benchmark. In order for an organization to be effective, it must have certain structures and resources in place. An office of five or even six full-time staff to serve a campus of over 11,000 should not be concerning from the standpoint of overstaffing.

The Review Team understands that there is no current plan for any new or existing staff professionals on the Okanagan campus to report directly to the AVPEI. Rather, as highlighted above, each one will report to a different EIO Director on the Vancouver campus.

In the Review Team's view, this planned structure is not ideal at best and likely very ineffective. It can fail to enable the EIO—and thereby campus leadership—to develop a holistic, locally informed and continually updated understanding of the EDI landscape on the Okanagan campus. It can also undermine informed priority setting due to the absence of a single leader to whom all staff report and for whom the wellness of the Okanagan campus is their central focus. It can hinder the ability of an EIO to build trust with campus stakeholders and, therefore, establish and nurture lasting, effective relationships that will move the EDI forward. Finally, it can make communications unnecessarily complicated and ineffective.

In addition to growing the full-time staff, other resources are needed, specifically space. We are aware that the challenges of space on the UBCO are significant. The Okanagan campus is relatively new and therefore its infrastructure must continue to grow as its population grows. At the time of this review, multiple members of the campus community expressed the dire situation concerning space. Some shared with us that the lack of space is a significant barrier to building community on the Okanagan campus as there are few places to convene.

The Team is reassured by the Okanagan campus plan, which will alleviate this issue in the long term, and encourages campus leaders to work with both academic and non-academic units to develop short- and medium-term solutions concerning space. Specifically, it is important for the EIO at Okanagan to have some dedicated space, which can become a hub for EDI activities across the campus. There is also symbolic value – a program without space suggests to the organization’s stakeholders that such a program is not a priority. The EIO at Okanagan should have a physical home.

With regard to the financial investment that has been and should continue to be made to support EIO efforts in the Okanagan campus, it is critical that budget decisions not be made in a manner that inadvertently pits resources at the Vancouver campus against those at the Okanagan campus. To avoid a scenario of competing resources, it may be useful to design budget development for EIO-Okanagan separately from that for EIO-Vancouver—at least until the EIO matures further as an organization within UBC. This arrangement may alleviate stakeholder perceptions that EDI at the Okanagan campus are not valued in the manner in which they are in Vancouver.

Throughout the interviews with members of the Okanagan-campus community, it was clear that those who spoke to the Team feel, for the most part, invisible to the decisions being made on the Vancouver campus by UBC leadership. Interviews indicated that communication in general between the two campuses needs to be more effective, plans need to be more explicitly co-created, and decisions need to be more equitable—taking greater account of the Okanagan context. While general in their nature, these perceptions also overlay on the work of the EIO. For example, the level of knowledge and awareness about the Inclusion Action Plan (IAP) was quite varied, in the Team’s opinion, in a concerning way. This situation appears to be an issue of both ineffective communication and limited co-creation.

Major projects such as the IAP require a comprehensive, well-planned communications strategy that is developed in advance of (or at least along with) the development of the project itself. Having a stronger full-time presence would address this challenge, at least in part, as it would not only enable a strategy that is informed in the local context but also leverage stronger, more numerous relationships between the EIO and stakeholders from across campus.

An additional local issue that has implications on the university experience on the Okanagan campus is the interaction between members of the campus community with members of communities neighboring the campus. In one interview, experiences of bias and prejudice in surrounding communities were described. This is an area that the EIO can address in collaboration with campus leaders and other allies (both on and off campus). A concerted, visible campaign that places EDI front and center and that invites engagement of campus neighbors can help promote a more positive campus and local-area climate in order to invite greater inclusion and respect and a stronger sense of belonging for all. A more suitably staffed EIO on the Okanagan campus could provide valuable leadership in this area.

Recommendations

B.1 That Okanagan campus administrators, including those at the highest level, strongly articulate their commitment to champion EDI, engage in activities to maintain cultural fluency, and provide commensurate material support to the effort of the EIO to advance inclusive excellence on the UBCO campus.

B2. That the Okanagan campus augment the organizational structure of the EIO by maintaining its commitment to hire a new Strategist and Human Right Advisor, as well as developing and hiring for the following additional full-time positions:

- A Director with direct (solid line) reporting to the AVPEI and dotted line reporting to the Provost and Vice-President Academic, UBC Okanagan; and
- An Administrative Assistant and/or Coordinator with direct reporting to the Okanagan Director.

B3. That the Okanagan campus, in its short-, medium- and long-term planning efforts, consider a dedicated space for the EIO staff team, as well as space(s) for broader campus programming and community-building.

B4. That the Okanagan campus engage a concerted, visible campaign that places EDI front and center and that invites engagement of campus neighbors, thereby helping to promote a more positive campus and local-area climate in order to invite greater inclusion, respect and a stronger sense of belonging for all.

C. EIO Reporting Structure and Accountability

Context

Currently the Associate Vice-President, Equity and Inclusion, reports to four Vice-Presidents, based on recommendations from the Iyer and Nakata's April 2013 report *Implementing Inclusion*.

The four Vice-Presidents include: the Provost and Vice-President, Academic (UBC Vancouver); the Deputy Vice Chancellor (UBC Okanagan campus); the Vice-President, Students; and the Vice-President, Human Resources. The institutional responsibility for equity and inclusion is shared among these people-related or constituency-based portfolios (i.e. students, employees, faculty), with a rotating lead every two or so years at the executive level. The four executives meet with the Associate Vice-President, Equity and Inclusion on a periodic basis to determine strategy, priorities and resource commitments.

While this arrangement was established to facilitate integration, ownership and accountability for equity and diversity initiatives, there has been significant turnover among the executive leads, with the AVPEI reporting to three different Provosts, two different Vice-Presidents, Human Resources (with the campus awaiting the appointment of a new Vice-President, Human Resources) and two different Vice-Presidents, Students since 2015. Only the Deputy Vice Chancellor has been in place prior to Sara-Jane Finlay's appointment.

The *Implementing Inclusion* report outlined a series of advantages and disadvantages to the Associate Vice-President model that was important to properly examine how well the current reporting model is working.

The advantages of the model are that it:

- Embeds equity and diversity into the core responsibility of four senior leaders;
- Allows existing equity and diversity services to continue to be tailored to constituencies with more coordination and communication across campus and between campuses;
- Sends a message to the University that equity and diversity is a shared and important responsibility;
- Ensures that key portfolio leaders are aware of and can respond to the needs and challenges in the university community in a responsive way; and
- Presents fewer barriers to implementing this model in time, money and workplace disruption.

The disadvantages include:

- To date, the Associate Vice-President model has not been adequate in achieving the university's equity and diversity goals;
- The Associate Vice-President, Equity and Inclusion does not have the power or leverage needed to effect change;
- The model is heavily dependent on the ability and commitment of the two Vice-Presidents and the two Provosts to work closely and collaboratively with the Associate Vice President, Equity and Inclusion; and
- There is a risk of uneven distribution of responsibility among the senior leaders.

Feedback

In general, the four equity and inclusion executives act as a collaborative and constructive body of leaders that strongly support the Equity and Inclusion Office. Decisions are usually unanimous but, as expected, disagreements and differences of opinion do occur. It is understood that advancing equity and inclusion is everyone's work and that all own it. No one portfolio has exclusive equity and inclusion territory as the work is done across both campuses. As the relatively new structure is evolving, everyone is still learning and adjusting in the implementation of this model. This cultural change effort is akin to "building a plane while it's being flown."

Although the AVPEI is not officially an executive post, in some aspects the current AVPEI operates as a *de facto* Vice-President. Evidence of this is demonstrated by the high level of visibility with the UBC Board of Governors and annual reporting on the Equity and Inclusion Office. Furthermore, the relationships established between the AVPEI and the executive Vice-Presidents could in some cases be characterized as peer to peer versus subordinate to supervisors because direction is needed by the VPs from the AVPEI. It is expected that the AVPEI would report on what is happening on the ground and frontlines to address what is or is not going well in light of equity and inclusion practices that may need to be corrected or improved upon. Because the AVPEI bridges both the day-to-day operations and strategic advancement of equity and inclusion, there is at times a lack of clarity in terms of who is driving the agenda.

The current model allows the AVPEI to operate within the four Vice-Presidents' portfolios without needing to ask for permission, reducing silos that naturally would occur if the AVPEI was not embedded within the four senior leadership teams. This "authority" enables collaborative relationships and partnerships between the EIO and offices within the respective Vice-Presidents' portfolios to enhance education and training, compliance reporting, strategic committee work and convening of faculty and equity leads. Additionally, this model facilitates the AVPEI having a visible presence at both Vancouver and Okanagan campuses, supporting the sense of a grassroots versus top-down approach and feel to the work.

The suggestion of changing the AVPEI to a Vice-President was met with mixed reactions. Some responded that a Vice-President's role would send a strong signal that UBC prioritizes equity and inclusion, with the caveat that the individual be an academic because there was a perception that an academic would better understand the faculty perspective when advancing equity and inclusion in a university.

On the other hand, it was expressed that moving the position to an executive level would "form a separation" and interfere with the current level of visibility and presence the AVPEI has on the Vancouver campus. "She is very present and visible, she is involved [and] attends the operational committee meetings." Ultimately, the sense was that this change would negatively impact the community building and engagement focus of the work.

Theoretically, the reporting model advanced by Iyer and Nakata makes sense as it aims to embed equity, diversity and inclusion within the constituency-focused portfolios of the four Vice-Presidents with as little disruption as possible. Nonetheless, inconsistency has persisted over the years stifling and hindering greater integration.

First, the most obvious source of inconsistency stems from the high level of turnover among the four VPs from 2015 to present. It is very difficult for a fledgling office with a university-wide mandate to carry out a culture change agenda when the executive leaders and designated champions have short tenures. Turnover of this nature negatively impacts strategic planning, momentum, resources and morale.

Second, inconsistent levels of knowledge, cultural competency and commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion are not beneficial to promoting an inclusion agenda. Naturally this occurs with having four reporting lines to four different executive leaders. This unevenness impacts the level of engagement, cooperation and collaboration executive leaders need to exercise to advance the EIO office.

Third, with the AVPEI reporting to four VPs who rotate acting as lead every two years, the structure lacks a clear, consistent champion to empower the EIO office and advance organizational culture change. On occasion, the structure has been cumbersome. Members of the community, whether faculty, staff, students or administrators, are not clear on who the AVPEI reports to, and some see the reporting arrangement as a means of limiting the AVPEI's ability to take an independent stand on issues that may come in conflict with any of the four executive leads. While the AVPEI has navigated this reporting arrangement, it has not been without real or perceived drawbacks. Some members of the community expressed that the scope is too wide and that the EIO cannot be all things to all people. Because of the specialized nature of equity and inclusion work, it is assumed a large bureaucracy that typically supports Vice-Presidential portfolios isn't needed; however, spreading a unit across four areas without the infrastructure to properly do the work, means the scope of the work needs to be revisited and possibly streamlined.

Recommendations

C1. That the reporting structure be altered to designate a clear and consistent executive lead and champion for institutional equity and inclusion. It is recommended that the AVPEI report to both Provosts to streamline the work, provide greater consistency of executive leadership and build greater accountability in the organization, while ensuring that both campuses will continue to be the focus of the work.

C2. That a dotted line reporting relationship be created from the AVPEI to the President. The President, with the AVPEI as a resource, can facilitate EDI goals as a priority for all executive leaders.

C3. That the executive leadership team continue to develop inclusive leadership competencies and grow their understanding of equity and inclusion work to enable culture change within their respective constituency-focused portfolios. While embedding the work within these executive portfolios has been the goal, it continues to be siloed within various portfolios due to differing levels of competency and understanding.

C4. That the creation of a Vice-President, Equity and Inclusion be revisited in the future; although the AVPEI may operate as a *de facto* VP, at this time there does not seem to be a significant call for this position to be changed to a VP post.

D. Theme: Institutional Capacity-Building

Context

The EIO aims to embed equity, diversity and inclusion “into the structures, policies and processes of the university” in order to facilitate intentional cross-campus capacity-building to advance EDI and inclusive excellence. The evolution and expansion of the EIO in the last 25 years has reflected the intention to create a structure that consolidates central expertise for equity-related matters and that works with and through a growing network of distributed decentralized experts.

To build and sustain capacity to advance EDI and inclusive excellence, UBC has invested in the EIO, growing its staff complement nearly five-fold from six positions (including the AVP) in 2015 to twenty-five positions on the UBCV campus and three at UBCO by 2019. This rapid growth has been enabled by the Student Diversity Initiative (SDI), which was established in 2015 with a commitment of \$2,000,000 in base funding to address institutional barriers in systems and processes, thereby operationalizing inclusive excellence goals. The SDI is a capacity-building initiative in that it leverages intentional cross-campus partnerships through embedded positions. Current partnerships involve: the Faculty of Arts; the Faculty of Science; the Centre for Learning, Teaching & Technology; Enrolment Services; Human Resources; and Student Development & Services.

The Inclusion Action Plan (IAP) reinforces capacity building as one of five high-level goals. Specifically, the IAP prioritizes the enhancement of “institutional and individual capacities and skills to succeed in and advance inclusive environments and work to sustain and continually evolve that capacity as skills and capabilities are increased”.

Feedback

There was general agreement that equity and inclusion work is facilitated through a distributed model, and, where appropriate, an embedded model of program and service delivery. It was communicated that the success of such a distributed network is reliant on strong capabilities of individuals and teams within the network, open and intentional lines of communication between distributed units, and coordination of efforts to leverage and maximize resources at the unit and university levels.

Partners were very complimentary and appreciative of the knowledge base and skill set the EIO team brought to advancing institutional and uni-level EDI goals, indicating their satisfaction with the range and quality of programs and services offered through the EIO. These partners described a growing network of central and decentralized experts, with the appropriate capabilities and systems focus to respond to emerging priorities.

While partners were generally satisfied with both formal and informal communication mechanisms, which exist to surface and address both institutional and unit-level EDI issues for attention, many commented about the need to enhance clarity of roles and coordination of responsibilities within the EIO and across central EIO positions and decentralized positions with EDI-related mandates. A strong theme surfaced relating to the importance of finding synergies across the network and optimizing the use of human and financial resources invested in advancing inclusive excellence across the institution.

The EIO is currently undertaking an internal organizational alignment process to align and optimize various roles and responsibilities to enhance proactivity and responsiveness to emerging campus community and organizational EDI-related priorities. Some of the topics to be examined in this alignment project include the optimal number of reports for the AVPEI, the formal and informal functions of the leadership vs. the management teams, and the balance of service focus with versatility within and across EIO staff teams akin to the generalist vs. specialist debate.

With respect to external strategic alignment, while the embedded model was extremely well received by partners who benefited directly from it, many were mindful that the model still only serves a handful of units. The units with embedded staff felt they had unique challenges and opportunities given their different mandates and audiences, and they appreciated the ability to work with the EIO to construct unit-specific approaches and interventions to build capacity. This unit-level nuance and ability to adapt to the context was highlighted as a strength of the embedded program, and it signals the need to consider whether and how future embedded staff are equipped, upon or after hiring, to be effective in the local context to which they are assigned.

Partners who have an embedded role in their units had questions about the continuity of these roles in the face of a proposal that the embedded program consider rotating positions across the institution to enable a greater breadth of impact. Some had contemplated integrating the new roles into their organizational structure and operating budget, while others had not.

Recommendations

D1. That the EIO complete its internal organizational and external strategic alignment reviews in a manner where each will inform the other.

D2. That the EIO continue to support the development of expertise among its growing and increasingly diverse staff members with distinct organizational roles and responsibilities which call for a position-specific knowledge base and skill-set, while exploring intentional opportunities to broadly strengthen awareness, knowledge and skills in EDI-related topics as a staff team.

D3. That a shared funding model be considered for the embedded program in order to deepen and sustain the integration of EDI within unit strategic goals and priorities. For example, the program could be structured as a diminishing three-year grant from the centre for the salary and benefits of an embedded position (100% in the first year, 75% in the second year, 50% in the third year). Among the criteria for allocation of strategic capacity-building resources from the Student Diversity Initiative – and assignment of embedded personnel – may be the need for units to submit a plan outlining how they will integrate and sustain EDI goals and priorities for the first three years and beyond.

D4. That the network of central and decentralized EDI partners establish a forum or mechanism to achieve clarity on their respective roles and responsibilities and to identify synergies to optimize human and material resources in the face of time and funding pressures.

E. Theme: Inclusion Action Plan Leadership and Implementation

Context

Shaping UBC's Next Century, the organization's Strategic Plan from 2018 to 2028, focuses on three themes critical for today's society: Inclusion, Collaboration and Innovation. "By focussing on these themes, we can reinforce and improve on our current achievements in research, teaching and learning, and engagement. We can also support the wellbeing and success of people at UBC. Meaningful progress will require clear leadership and firm action to enable the required changes in culture and practice" (page 18).

With inclusion as a major theme, the plan articulates that "embedding equity and diversity across university systems and structures" (page 19) and the EIO is expected to provide leadership and coordination to further UBC's commitment to Inclusive Excellence. With the EIO named in the plan, it has afforded the office an opportunity to provide strategic guidance and support for UBC as it aims to "redouble... efforts to make sustained progress" (page 21).

The Inclusion Action Plan (IAP) is the mid-level strategic plan being led by the Equity and Inclusion Office to guide UBC's efforts under one framework with key performance indicators such that both administrative and academic units/divisions can ultimately make a collective impact. According to the External Review self-study, the EIO initiated the IAP process in the fall of 2018. Consultations have involved over 1600 people, and plan development is being overseen by the Inclusion Action Plan Advisory Committee.

At the time of our visit, we received a 9-page draft copy of the IAP dated August 9, 2019. The draft plan had introductory notes, five goals with draft actions, designated leads and metrics attributed to each goal. Creation/development of the plan was signed off by the four Vice Presidents.

Feedback

As noted above, the EIO has engaged over 1600 people and generated over 5000 ideas from IAP related consultations. Staff members from other areas have assisted the EIO with consultations as this is a big job of significant magnitude to bring the community along. In spite of these efforts and the groundwork that the EIO has established, there is a sense of planning fatigue and a disconnect between the IAP and the community. Staff and students have participated and many voices have been engaged in conversation; but some voices are not at the table. It was expressed that greater decisiveness is needed to move forward; and further assessment or reassessment of portfolios being able to deliver aspects of the plan was raised. Deans and/or Faculties are in the process of developing their own strategic/action plans without tying them to the EIO, and this process is siloed. This is an example of the varying levels of commitment that exist and the need to do more work towards increasing buy-in from academic and administrative leaders.

Typically, mid-level plans of this nature are held by the Vice-Presidents. In this case, the IAP is led by four major portfolios. The EIO has led plan development and the consultation process. The IAP plan development was unanticipated, generating a workload that called into question who is driving this timeline. Further, even though the EIO is understood as the lead, where does the EIO fit into the plan's overall implementation and accountability? Because the EIO has expertise, training and leadership in this area, it is well positioned to operationalize the plan, bring about accountability and ensure the IAP is realized. Nonetheless, questions about who will lead this for both campuses persist. Accountability concerns were articulated with respect to: 1) needed university-wide commitments including deans, 2) leadership driving change, 3) determination of impact, advancement and progress, and 4) consideration of UBCO having its own IAP plan with UBCO specific resources (human, space and otherwise).

Whether the IAP has enough resources to support its implementation came up in multiple conversations. Community members are looking at what they currently have and are assessing that the status quo is not sufficient to meet certain expectations or particular goals of the IAP. However, the leadership has designated funds to implement the plan. There is a mismatch of sorts that needs to be clarified.

The IAP was described in a variety of ways; the central theme characterized the plan as ambitious, aspirational and visionary versus being a document that set expectations. As a high level document, the plan is broad with a significant scope that could potentially lead to systemic-level impact. However, there is concern that this is simply another plan that will not have teeth. The plan needs to give people direction and address specifics.

As the plan evolves in its implementation it will add value; nonetheless, there is skepticism that the plan is good in theory but not in practice.

There were questions about how this plan will roll-out and be communicated to the University community on both campuses. In anticipation of the plan rollout, it was expressed that the IAP may even be rolled out faster than what the EIO has the capacity to handle and is being pushed “farther ahead than where” the EIO staff are. It was suggested that lessons can be learned from the Indigenous Strategic Plan regarding three aspects: 1) making clear how the plan consulted; 2) transparency about who was involved in the process; and 3) keeping the consultation process visibly front and centre.

Recommendations

E1. That a communication plan be developed and implemented for the IAP’s rollout for both campuses, which clearly articulates the executive leads on the plan, their implementation timelines, and the EIO’s role in plan development, consultation and accountability.

E2. That the remainder of the IAP consultation and implementation process ensures high levels of visibility and transparency as well as engagement of critical voices which may be missing to date, reflecting an approach that builds on the lessons learned through and success of the Indigenous Action Plan consultation process.

E3. That the IAP expectations for outcomes and resources (financial and human) required to achieve these outcomes be aligned, with consideration given to complementing and leveraging centrally allocated funds to implement the IAP with a requirement for a level of matching funds or other resources from partners, thereby building capacity, buy-in and accountability to the IAP.

E4. That academic leaders be engaged in this process such that, as they develop their strategic plans, they enhance integration of equity, diversity and inclusion and alignment with the EIO and the IAP.

Appendix A: Supporting Documents

The following is a list of supporting documents included in the Appendices of advance materials provided by the Provost's Office to the Review Team:

- External Review Terms of Reference
- Equity & Inclusion Office Self-Study
- Implementing Inclusion
- UBC's Engagement and Commitment to Student Diversity Report on Discussion Phase 1
- Place & Promise
- VPSICED Terms of Reference
- Equity & Inclusion Office Organizational Structure
- Student Diversity Initiative Annual Reports
- Employment Equity Reports, Systems Review, Plan
- Valuing Difference: A Strategy for Advancing Equity & Diversity at UBC
- Inclusion Action Plan (draft)
- AVP's Annual Priorities
- EIO Annual Reports
- Shaping the Next Century
- Canada Research Chair EDI Action Plan
- Conflict Engagement Initiative
- Commitment to Diversity Fund
- Relevant Policies:
 - Employment Equity
 - Discrimination
 - Advertising of Position Vacancies
 - Respectful Environment Statement
- Transforming UBC an Developing a Culture of Equality and Accountability: Confronting Rape Culture and Colonialist Violence
- Renewing our Commitment to Equity & Diversity
- 2016 Report on Renewing our Commitment to Equity and Diversity

Appendix B: Schedule of Interviews

Each individual or group interviewed by the Review Team is listed below:

Wednesday, October 9

- Provost and Vice-Presidents
- First Meeting with the Associate Vice-President, Equity and Inclusion
- UBC (Vancouver) Deans
- Equity and Inclusion Office Team members – first time slot
- Equity and Inclusion Office Team members – second time slot
- Equity and Inclusion Office Team members – third time slot
- Union Representatives
- Administrative & Professional Staff Association, Faculty Association
- First Nations & Indigenous Programs
- Independent Investigations, Sexual Violence & Prevention Office

Thursday, October 10

- Student Diversity Initiative Partners
- Equity and Diversity Services at UBC Okanagan
- UBC Okanagan Administration
- Student Leaders, UBC Okanagan
- Equity Ambassadors, UBC Vancouver
- Student Leaders, UBC Vancouver
- Human Resources, UBC Vancouver
- UBC Wellbeing and Other Services

Friday, October 11

- Faculty and Staff Leaders in Equity & Inclusion
- Members of the Inclusion Action Committee
- Members of the Conflict Engagement Steering Committee
- Faculty & Equity Leads
- Additional Leaders and Administrators
- Second Meeting with the Associate Vice-President, Equity and Inclusion
- Exit Meeting with the Provost and Vice-President, Academic