Informal Session of the Senate on October 22, 2009

To provide the opportunity for the Senate Educational Equity to hear and address questions from Senators concerning the proposed draft of the revised Senate Educational Equity Policy, the Senate Agenda Committee has scheduled an informal session of the Senate during the meeting of October 22, 2009.

Therefore, a motion will be proposed by the Agenda Committee "that the proposed draft Senate Educational Equity Policy be considered in an informal session chaired by Senator Stairs."

The Senate will move into Informal Session under III, Reports of Committees, 5. Educational Equity, (b).

Notice of Motion and Discussion: Revision of Educational Equity Policy

SEEC has been conducting a review and revision of the current educational equity policy since Fall 08. Before our November meeting and submission of the final draft of the policy in a motion for its approval, SEEC proposes to field questions about and engage Senate in a discussion of the policy revision, the changes proposed and the process undertaken. Please find attached the current policy statement and report as well as a proposed draft of the revision.

A. Husain
Chair, SEEC

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY EDUCATIONAL EQUITY POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

Queen's University recognizes that the values of equity and diversity are vital to and in harmony with its educational mission and standards of excellence. It acknowledges that direct, indirect and systemic discrimination exists within our institutional structures, policies and practices and in our community. These take many forms and work to differentially advantage and disadvantage persons across social identities such as race, ethnicity, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, faith and socioeconomic status, among other examples.

Queen's is committed to counteracting discrimination in this institution and developing a climate of educational equity that recognizes and respects the equal dignity and worth of all who seek to participate in the life, work and mission of the University. Such a climate is created and maintained by developing a university-wide commitment to and understanding of educational equity, supported by policies, programs, curricula, practices and traditions that facilitate individuals' and equity-seeking groups' free, safe, and full participation.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES[i]

- Educational equity does not evolve in a vacuum. The external environment from which students, staff and faculty are drawn, the community that they will eventually serve, and the internal environment of the institution should all form part of the critical analysis used in developing a climate of educational equity.
- Administrative and academic procedures affect educational equity. The means of access, admission and retention of a wide diversity of students, methods of recruitment, evaluation, retention and promotion of diverse faculty and staff as well as other procedures should be addressed as part of educational equity.
- A university encourages educational equity when its members consider what, how, by whom and for whom teaching and learning occurs and in what environment.

IMPLEMENTATION

All units and members of the campus community are expected to contribute to the pursuit of educational equity within Queen's. However specific administrative bodies and individual leaders within the University have unique responsibilities and are accountable for specific aspects of educational equity.

Proposed draft for discussion by Senate, October 22, 2009

Under the direction of the Senate:

1. It is the responsibility of the Principal, with the support of the Deans and the Vice-Principals, to articulate and support educational equity principles and values as well as to build educational equity expectations into the criteria considered in formal internal academic review processes, in program assessments and annual reports of administrative units, or other regular system reviews as determined by specific units.

2. It is the responsibility of heads of academic and administrative departments to recognize unit-specific challenges, to identify unit-specific educational equity goals in consultation with their members and, where relevant, students, and to assess their progress comprehensively across all relevant domains. These may include the following five areas, identified in the Henry Report (2004)[ii]:

   i)   Leadership and Institutional Culture
   ii)   Access and Recruitment
   iii) Retention
   iv)   Research and Curriculum
   v)   Broader Learning and Working Environment (Climate)

3. It is the responsibility of individual departments and offices (both academic and administrative) to develop and implement policies and practices to achieve educational equity within their units based on this policy statement and guidance by the Senate Educational Equity Committee, which provides a yearly report to the Senate. Furthermore, heads are responsible for reporting regularly on these measures and assessing progress to their respective supervisors as well as to their unit members and, where relevant, students.

4. It is the responsibility of equity services and other relevant support units (e.g. Human Rights Office, Equity Office, Centre for Teaching and Learning) to coordinate education and training as specified in this policy in consultation with individual units. The Equity Office will continue to be responsible for collecting reports, circulating information, promoting awareness and monitoring progress of unit educational equity initiatives.

5. It is the responsibility[iii] of the Senate Educational Equity Committee, to identify educational equity indicators, recommend appropriate institutional goals, assist senior leadership and various academic and administrative units to inventory, implement and evaluate their practices, and to review and respond to reports on progress submitted to the Equity Office. SEEC is responsible for formulating policies for adoption by Senate.

Proposed draft for discussion by Senate, October 22, 2009

6. The University enjoins the representative bodies for undergraduate, graduate and professional students to assume the responsibility to create equity-seeking policies and to report appropriately on their implementation.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Concerns regarding this policy and its implementation may be brought in writing to the attention of the Senate Educational Equity Committee, which reports to the University Senate. SEEC may request updates on equity and diversity developments, the implementation of educational equity policy, and the results of equity programs and initiatives at the university.

As a general policy, all members of the university community are responsible to foster a climate of educational equity. However, each administrative unit is responsible for the implementation of this policy in its sphere and is charged with developing measures to insure accountability for promoting educational equity and diversity and achieving meaningful progress. These may include, for example, reforming individual and collective performance reports to account for educational equity and diversity or incorporating these issues in internal academic reviews, among other possibilities.

Acts that transgress the ethic of educational equity and take the form of violations of university codes of conduct, whether through harassment, discrimination, or other means, should be directed to appropriate authorities and university bodies, like the Human Rights Office, Equity Office, and equity representatives of faculty, staff and student associations, and pursued through relevant processes and disciplinary procedures.

APPENDIX I

<u>PREAMBLE AND INSTITUTIONAL HISTORY</u>

In the early 1990s, several reports and studies made recommendations concerning equity such as the *Access Study* (1993), the report of *Student Perceptions of Graduate Education at Queen's* (1993), and the report of the *Principal's Advisory Committee on Race Relations* (1991). These recommendations led to the establishment, in 1997, of the Senate Educational Equity Committee (SEEC) to assist the Queen's community in recognizing and addressing systemic barriers to educational equity.

Despite efforts of the Queen's community, however, no comprehensive policy dealing specifically with educational equity had been developed. The SEEC recognized that equity efforts at Queen's would continue to be fragmented without a comprehensive educational equity policy and strategy for its implementation drawing on appropriate resources and the commitment of institutional leadership. In 2001, in accordance with its mandate, the SEEC developed and the Senate approved a general policy statement addressing educational equity at Queen's. This document was intended to affirm the University's commitment to educational equity and to encourage all levels of the University to identify and address educational equity issues. Unfortunately, without clear implementable goals and lines of accountability, the document has not been helpful in influencing strategic and widespread advancement of educational equity goals at Queen's.

Since 2001 there have been pockets of progress as well as continuing challenges, some of which have been examined in additional studies and reports that provide consistent findings and recommendations that include the Henry Report (2004)[iv] and the Queen's Diversity, Anti-Racism, and Equity (DARE) Report (2009)[v] submitted to the Vice-Principal (Academic). In the context of some progress and renewed energy towards addressing educational equity at Queen's, the SEEC revised the Policy Statement for a renewed commitment from the Senate. In order to advance the collective effort to achieve a climate of educational equity, this revised policy will require endorsement and engagement as well from the senior administration, involvement from all levels of the University to develop and implement actionable procedures and practices, and the incorporation of accountability measures and their regular monitoring. To this end, SEEC has commissioned a research study for 2009-10 of best practices for implementing educational equity in Canadian institutions of higher education.

Proposed draft for discussion by Senate, October 22, 2009

APPENDIX II

DEFINITIONS, ANNOTATIONS and CONCEPTS[vi]

DEFINITIONS

Climate
Climate refers to the prevailing social and cultural attitudes, standards or conditions of a place. Climate includes the effects of explicit, formally institutionalized policies, as well as the effects of a range of informal practices and implicit policies that, despite their relative subtlety and variability, and the fact that they may not be intended as such, contribute to the social and cultural conditions created within the environment.

Curriculum
Curriculum encompasses all formal learning in the educational setting. Formal learning happens through institutional content and methodology (pedagogy) and is informed by official policies governing admissions, evaluations, standards, and accreditation. Informal learning occurs through the social and environmental contexts in which the learners find themselves.

Designated Groups
Designated Groups in Canada refers to women, members of visible minorities (racialized groups), Aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities and such other groups as may be included in the definition of "designated groups" in the *Employment Equity Act,* Statutes of Canada 1995, c. 46, as amended from time to time. The following definitions are drawn from this act but reflect language adopted in the Queen's Equity Census:

Aboriginal peoples
An Aboriginal Person is a North American Indian, Métis or Inuit, or a member of a North American First Nation. An Aboriginal Person may be a treaty status or a non-status, registered or non-registered Indian.

Members of visible minorities/racialized groups[vii]
A member of a visible minority/racialized group is someone (other than an Aboriginal person as defined above) who self-identifies as non-white in colour or non-Caucasian in racial origin, regardless of place of birth or citizenship

Persons with disabilities

A person with a disability[viii] has a long term or recurring physical, mental, sensory, psychiatric or learning impairment and:

- considers himself/herself to be disadvantaged in employment by reason of that impairment; or

- believes that an employer or potential employer is likely to consider him/her to be disadvantaged in employment by reason of that impairment

Proposed draft for discussion by Senate, October 22, 2009

This definition also includes persons whose functional limitations owing to their impairment have been accommodated in their current job or workplace.

Disabilities may include but are not limited to:
Physical, functional and/or mobility disability (e.g., arthritis, paraplegia, cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, spinal cord injuries, spina bifida); blindness or low vision; deafness and/or hardness of hearing; speech disabilities; chronic medical conditions (e.g. diabetes, chronic pain, HIV/AIDS, chronic fatigue syndrome, kidney disease, seizure disorders); developmental disabilities (e.g. Asperger syndrome, autism, fetal alcohol effect), learning disabilities (e.g. dyslexia); psychiatric disabilities or mental disorders (e.g. bipolar disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder)

Women

Although the status of women within the public sphere has improved over the last few years, women continue to be under-represented in some employment and educational fields.

Discrimination
Discrimination means any form of unequal treatment based on one of the following grounds, whether imposing extra burdens or denying benefits: age, creed/religion, gender identity, sexual preference, family status, marital status, disability (both physical and mental), race, ancestry, place of origin, ethnic origin, citizenship, colour, social condition or any analogous ground. It may be intentional or unintentional. It may involve direct actions that are discriminatory on their face, or it may involve rules, practices or procedures that appear neutral, but have the effect of disadvantaging certain groups of people based on the grounds named. Discrimination may take obvious forms, or it may occur in very subtle ways.

Diversity
Diversity in an institutional context refers to the condition of including and accounting for the academic, educational, and/or career development needs and realities of students, staff and faculty belonging to varying social identity groups.

Educational Equity
Equity in an educational institution is achieved when all members of our society have fair and equal opportunity to participate in and enjoy the benefits of an education, including the opportunity to experience success and human dignity while developing the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary to contribute as leaders and citizens in society.

Employment Equity
Employment equity is a voluntary or legislated program or set of activities designed to ensure that a workplace has equality of opportunity for all of its employees and prospective employees in the areas of recruitment, hiring, remuneration, benefits, training, promotion, retention or dismissal.

Proposed draft for discussion by Senate, October 22, 2009

Environment
Environment refers to the physical place as well as the surrounding social and cultural attitudes, standards and conditions that influence the milieu. Consequently, environment includes the climate as well as the physical surroundings and the conditions of work or study present in the institution. This encompasses not only the buildings and facilities, but also the services available, including support services such as counseling, advisory, health, residences, libraries, media and technologies, and extracurricular activities such as clubs, sponsored events, and sport activities.

Equity Seeking Groups
Equity Seeking Groups includes the four Designated Groups in addition to groups whose members experience violence, harassment, discrimination, exclusion, stigmatization, and prejudice based on any other human rights ground (listed in the definition of discrimination above).

Racialized Group
See above "visible minority" in designated groups.

ANNOTATIONS AND CONCEPTS

Applying Equity in Education
In accordance with our obligations under human rights legislation and Queen's policies, the scope of equity in education includes, but is not limited to, equity in access and benefits; curriculum and instructional materials and practices; assessment and evaluation materials and practices; inclusive education such as cross-cultural, intercultural, anti-racist, feminist and non-sexist; campus culture and environment; student development and faculty enrichment; employment; leadership development; and organizational development and change.

Equal Treatment Does Not Mean the Same Treatment
The concept of equity goes beyond equal treatment (where everyone is treated the same) to fostering a barrier-free environment where individuals benefit equally. It recognizes that some people or groups of people may require additional and/or unique approaches in order to achieve equal benefit.

The Relationship between Employment Equity and Educational Equity
There are both important relationships and differences between the concepts of educational and employment equity, Employment equity's focus is limited to the workplace and the institutional structures and jurisprudence that govern it. Educational equity in the university context encompasses all parts of the institution involved in the process of teaching and learning and their associated systems of governance. The SEEC's focus is on educational equity.

The cornerstone of employment equity is equitable access to education and training programs for all employees. This access is required to enable individuals to reach their

full potential. Employment equity, in turn, is fundamental to fully achieving educational equity because it is central to the creation of a welcoming and supportive educational environment. Universities, therefore, have a key role to play as change agents in the achievement of equity in society.

Impact of Climate

The interaction of climate and other factors in the environment can influence how successful an institution will be at attracting and retaining a diverse community that reflects Canadian society, is engaged and feels valued. Because of their relative invisibility, the informal practices influencing climate can be pervasive enough to erode the capacity of certain individuals to participate fully in academic settings and to undermine the institutional programs designed to promote equity. Although such practices may not be intended as harmful, they are often the major contributors to the systematic disadvantage of equity seeking groups.

When policies and practices are created without accounting for the needs and realities of marginalized groups and when they are maintained through bias or prejudice, they contribute to undermine and isolate social groups. This devaluation and exclusion of certain individuals, whether or not formal and overt barriers to their advancement have been eliminated, forms the basis of discrimination. The cost of such discrimination is borne by those who are marginalized in this way and do not have the opportunity to reach their full potential, as well as by the educational institutions and society which do not get to benefit from the talents and capabilities of everyone.

Removing Barriers to Access

Access is the ability of an institution to create a barrier-free climate and environment; thus creating opportunities for the inclusion of the greatest diversity of students, staff, faculty and visitors to enter and participate in the teaching, learning, working and residential functions of the university. A barrier-free inclusive university commits itself to the removal of discrimination, harassment, and marginalization of all groups protected under the Human Rights Code, but in particular those equity seeking groups that have traditionally/ historically faced barriers and under-representation including Aboriginal peoples, racialized individuals, persons with disabilities, women, and gay/ lesbian/ bisexual/ trans identified persons.

Reaching and attracting members of marginalized and under-represented groups requires the presence of a university-wide commitment to inclusion. Some means by which to demonstrate this commitment are through a strategic plan, policy documents, action plans, course offerings, resources for accommodation, and responses to harassment and/or discrimination and specialized programming. Active search and recruitment strategies that make an effort to connect with equity seeking groups, would benefit from raising explicit awareness about existing resources and supports at Queen's, as well as highlighting the University commitment to a barrier-free climate and environment. Applying a broader lens to the evaluation of students, staff and faculty seeking access to Queen's so as to account for diversity of backgrounds and experiences of applicants

would also have the likely impact of diversifying the pool of individuals who access the university.

Improving Retention
Retention builds on the principles described in the understanding of *access* and also makes a long-term sustained commitment to a barrier-free climate and environment where members of equity seeking groups are provided with fair and equitable opportunities for advancement and inclusion in all aspects of the University life. By embedding equity and diversity principles into all university policies, procedures, and practices, Queen's community members are reminded and reassured that inclusion and removal of barriers are not limited to one unit but, rather, are a responsibility shared amongst all students, staff, and faculty. Being proactive with respect to removal of barriers – whether that be attending to classroom acoustics or valuing the many forms that scholarship can take – and raising awareness about the resources and supports available, has the potential to create an institution where under-represented group members feel welcome and included.

A possibility for aiding retention is to seek input from members of equity- seeking groups, without making their contributions tokenistic or overly taxing. Another consideration that would recognize the value of diversifying the Queen's community is including equity and diversity goals among measures of excellence. While working towards greater retention of equity-seeking and under-represented groups, it is vital to learn from the experiences of those who belong to those groups and have left Queen's. The understanding gathered from the exit surveys and interviews could assist in removing barriers, discrimination, harassment and other climate and environment conditions that make working, living, teaching and learning at Queen's less desirable.

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[i] Queen's University Equity Office (2009). *Educational Equity for Prospective and Current Student,* Retrieved from http://www.queensu.ca/equity/content.php?page=EducationEquityStudents
[ii] For more on the Henry Report please see
http://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/senate/Mar30_06/SEECHenryRpt.pdf
[iii] See the committee's terms of reference:
http://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/senate/committe/standing/equity.html
[iv] For more on the Henry Report please see
http://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/senate/Mar30_06/SEECHenryRpt.pdf
[v] The Queen's Diversity, Anti-Racism, and Equity Panel convened a number of sessions with students, staff, and faculty at the request of the VP Academic's office in Winter 2009. The report has been made available subsequently to SEEC for discussion in Fall 2009.
[vi] All the following are defined or articulated as relevant specifically to the domain of educational equity and are not intended to be exhaustive. Definitions and concepts may in other contexts have different meanings or emphasis.
[vii] Recognizing that race is a social construct, the Ontario Human Rights Commission describes people as "racialized person" or "racialized group" instead of the more outdated and inaccurate terms "racial minority", "visible minority", "person of colour" or "non-White".
[viii] Some members of the disabled community are beginning to prefer the term "disabled person" to "person with a disability." To them, "disabled" means that environmental barriers interfere with their ability to participate. Disability is as much a function of the environment as it is something that you are born with or acquire. Consequently, "impairment" is increasingly less used as a term for disability, although it persists in current statutes.

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