

Achieving Employment Equity at Queen's

Part 4: From Compliance to Inclusion



Council on Employment Equity

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INTRODUCTION

Almost twenty years ago, the Government of Canada enacted employment equity legislation to end systemic workplace discrimination against visible minorities/racialized persons, women, persons with disabilities, and Aboriginal peoples. However, it has only been in the last decade that we have seen a shift toward fostering inclusive workplaces has occurred in organizations and academic institutions across Canada. While many Canadian universities have invested resources and developed policies to build diverse workforces and ensure compliance with human rights and employment equity legislation, building an inclusive culture where all members of the university community feel engaged and valued has proven to be more challenging. The process of moving beyond compliance to inclusion—making concrete organizational changes to maximize the talents of designated equity groups—is ongoing.

Queen’s University’s commitment to fairness in employment opportunity extends beyond compliance requirements. For example, Queen’s has added members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Queer (LGBTQ) community to the four designated groups named in the Federal Contractors Program (FCP) and has implemented a gender-neutral washroom policy.

This report is the fourth in a series of joint publications by the Queen’s Equity Office and the Council on Employment Equity, highlighting employment equity activities at Queen’s.

The first publication, *Achieving Employment Equity at Queen’s, Part 1: Challenges*, introduces the concept of employment equity and its application to Queen’s.

The second publication, *Achieving Employment Equity at Queen’s, Part 2: Snapshots*, compares the diversity of the Queen’s workforce population to the diversity of the three domestic pools from which candidates are recruited (Canada, Ontario and the Kingston Census Metropolitan Area).

The third report, *Achieving Employment Equity at Queen’s, Part 3: Ten Years in Review*, outlines the representation of, women, Aboriginal peoples, racialized persons and persons with disabilities, in the workforce population at Queen’s over the past decade.

This fourth report, *Achieving Employment Equity at Queen’s, Part 4: From Compliance to Inclusion*, highlights a variety of innovative efforts and programs from various units across the University to promote inclusion. The Ban Righ Centre, the Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science and CFRC Radio have addressed inclusion challenges, demonstrating a range of successful staff, academic and student approaches. We hope these examples of diversity practices will assist other units in reflecting on their own practices.

Equity Portrait #1

Academic Unit:

The Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science



There are 161 faculty members, 105 staff members, 559 graduate students and 2053 undergraduate students who work and study in the Queen's Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science. The Faculty comprises five academic units: Chemical Engineering, Civil Engineering, Electrical and Computer Engineering, Mechanical and Materials Engineering, and Mining Engineering; and two non-academic units: the Queen's-RMC Fuel Cell Research Centre and the Integrated Learning Centre.

Representation

Overall, the Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science has met all four of its federally mandated (FCP) targets for equity-seeking groups in staff positions and two of its four goals for faculty members (visible minorities and Aboriginal persons). Gaps in representation of women and persons with disabilities indicate areas of under-representation.

Some units have achieved significant results in the representation of certain designated

groups. For example, the departments of Electrical and Computer Engineering, Mechanical and Materials Engineering and Mining Engineering have surpassed the FCP goal set for racialized faculty just as Civil Engineering has exceeded the expected representation rate for Aboriginal faculty.

While there are significant gaps for female faculty members, certain units have achieved higher representation rates than their national counterparts. The departments of Chemical Engineering (Queen's: 19.4% Canada: 16.8%) and Electrical and Computer Engineering (Queen's: 11.4% Canada: 7.8%) both have higher concentrations of female university professors than do other departments in those fields across Canada.

Reaching for Inclusion

The Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science has also made tremendous strides in creating an inclusive space for women students and faculty members. The Faculty, under the strong leadership of Dean Kim Woodhouse, has recognized how characteristics of the traditional teaching and learning environment in Engineering, negatively affects female students. The Faculty has used this knowledge to implement concrete changes which have shifted the culture towards one of inclusiveness.



Dean Kim Woodhouse

One key initiative is the development of the Queen's chapter of Women in Science and Engineering (W.I.S.E.), an organization that promotes the education of women in the science and engineering disciplines.

This mandate "seeks to create a greater awareness of the opportunities that are available to these women". This is done through on campus events such as an annual conference, "Dinner with Industry", as well as a number of successful outreach programs for girls in the Kingston community.



Although mentorship and access programs such as those offered by W.I.S.E. counteract the feelings of isolation experienced by female students who find themselves in the minority in Engineering, other initiatives have also made a difference. Pedagogical reforms have changed the environment into a more collaborative one and the addition of course offerings dealing with environmental and social issues aim specifically to engage female students who have demonstrated a higher interest in those courses. The Faculty has also implemented a strategic communication plan complete with promotional materials that specifically target female high school students by highlighting the inclusivity of the program.

These initiatives have encouraged a stunningly high numbers of high school girls to pursue an engineering degree at Queen's (23%).

Another diversity initiative undertaken by the Faculty is the **Aboriginal Access Program**. The goal of the program is "...to develop programming which will encourage Aboriginal youth to stay in school and pursue post-secondary studies in the pure and applied sciences... work[ing] with First Nations communities - students, teachers, parents, elders and leaders - from across Canada to ensure that the programming we produce is relevant and meets the needs and expectations of the community. Cooperative partnerships of this kind are crucial."

The program engages Aboriginal participants who, in the current environment, do not achieve the required grades in math and science that are needed to enter Engineering and Applied Science studies. It does this by using materials and methodology that honour Aboriginal history, culture and traditions. By engaging



Aboriginal youth and teachers in a meaningful cross-cultural way, the program hopes to inspire them to pursue science and math at school and continue on to study engineering and applied science at the university level. The ultimate goal is that Aboriginal youth will become engineers who can effect positive change within their own communities. The Aboriginal Access Program, coupled with the strong presence of Aboriginal professors and researchers in the Faculty provides mentorship and creates a stronger sense of community for Aboriginal students.

Equity Portrait #2

Non-Academic Unit:

The Ban Righ Centre



The Ban Righ Centre is a small non-academic unit devoted to supporting mature women students at Queen's University. Four full-time staff members provide advice, referrals and financial assistance to students; develop and deliver programming for Queen's and Kingston community members; and bring staff, faculty and students together in a safe space which encourages mutuality and equality. In addition, three volunteer student employees contribute to community building by providing visitors with meals from global cultures.

Representation

Statistically speaking, Ban Righ has achieved its FCP mandated representation goals; there are no significant gaps between expected and actual numbers of employees from equity-seeking groups on staff in this unit, despite the fact that only two of the four groups are represented because of its small size.

Reaching for Inclusion

A Board composed of Queen's and Kingston community members is responsible for hiring staff members. While the Board has not developed its own equity policies and practices for recruitment and hiring, it does abide by Queen's Employment Equity Policy, which states that:

"Queen's University is committed to fostering an institutional culture which recognizes and respects the equal dignity and worth of all who seek to participate in the life, work and mission of the University, by developing policies, programs, practices and traditions which facilitate their free, safe and full participation and by eliminating direct, indirect and systemic discrimination, particularly against members of disadvantaged groups."

In its employment advertisements, for example, the Board always encourages equity-seeking groups to apply by incorporating statements about Ban Righ's respect for inclusivity and commitment to employment equity. Similarly, included in the interview are questions dedicated to the candidate's cross-cultural skills. This ensures that employees are able to provide services to a diverse community and that they are able to create a respectful workplace environment.

Moreover, employees in this unit receive training in accessibility issues and in the provision of positive spaces for persons of various gender identities and sexual orientations. This cross-cultural, accessible, positive space skill-set allows the staff of the Ban Righ Centre to prevent, identify and eliminate barriers in order to allow the full participation of a wide diversity of students, staff and faculty from the Queen's community; and to create an inclusive space for all Queen's community members many of whom consider Ban Righ to be "their home away from home".

Some of the formal and informal equity initiatives undertaken by staff at Ban Righ include:

Ban Righ's Equity Initiatives

- Strategy for compliance with the FCP
- Inclusion of equity statements in recruitment ads
- Questions about cross-cultural competencies in interviews
- Training in accessibility and positive space
- Funding for members of equity-seeking groups
- Cross-cultural counselling for international students
- Rooms that can be reserved by any Queen's community member for praying, studying or breast-feeding
- Targeted programming on issues relevant to members of equity-seeking groups (Black History Month Event, International Women's Week Event, and Aboriginal Awareness Week Event)
- Accessible space and print materials for persons with disabilities
- Free international lunches (soups from around the world)
- Aboriginal bursary and award

Through these formal and informal supports for equity, the Centre aims to create a safe, inclusive, welcoming space for all students, staff and faculty at Queen's University in order to encourage women students to complete their education, and faculty and staff to remain at Queen's; and through this contribute to the diversification of the university workforce and the retention of staff and faculty from diverse backgrounds.

No unit is without challenges. One of the key challenges that Ban Righ faces is the lack of formal instruments for promoting

and evaluating equity. While all staff members are very well trained in equity-related issues and provide a wide variety of informal equity supports to students from all equity-seeking groups, they do not use a formal equity lens when determining the substance of their programming and when evaluating its services.

The staff at Ban Righ has recognized this challenge and is taking concrete steps to address them. Its Director, for example, is currently taking a course from the Faculty of Education which she hopes will help her create an even more inclusive space on campus. She intends to apply what she learns from "Theories of Evaluation EDUC 828" to evaluate equity at Ban Righ.

Some of the questions she intends to ask include: Who is using our services? Are the four designated groups named in federal legislation equitably represented within our student, staff, faculty and Kingston community contingents? How do equity-seeking groups enjoy our programming? Do they feel included? What could we do differently to diversify our services, to make them inclusive for all equity-seeking groups? What can we do to reach out to those equity-seeking groups who are not using the service?



Carole Morrison,
Director, Ban Righ
Centre

Equity Portrait #3

Student Administered Unit:

CFRC Radio 101.9 FM



CFRC is Queen's University's campus-community radio station, operating since 2003 under the umbrella of AMS corporate services. The station features four permanent staff members and over 100 volunteers, many of whom are Queen's students, faculty and staff members. The mandate of the station is to challenge mainstream culture by creating networks amongst under-represented groups through music and the spoken-word. This focus on community building is woven not only into the programming but also into the fabric of the workplace.

Representation

As a student service, CFRC does not fall under the auspices of the Federal Contractors Program. Therefore, Queen's University does not monitor the representation rates of equity-seeking groups amongst the radio station's employees and volunteer base. However, representation rates are not the only tool available to design for inclusion. As demonstrated below, the AMS and the CFRC staff incorporate concrete inclusion measures that go beyond statistical compliance.

Reaching for Inclusion

Through its diverse programming, both on and off the air waves, CFRC reaches out to Queen's and Kingston community members who may feel isolated or alienated, while widening the horizons of other community members who stand in solidarity with equity-seeking groups. For example, local residents were featured on a program dealing with the challenges of living in poverty in Kingston. Women celebrated International Woman's Day and the voices from racialized communities celebrated Black History Month while Aboriginal and LGBTQ programmers raised awareness about National Aboriginal Day and Pride Week. Programming that will broadcast the voices of senior citizens and persons with intellectual disabilities producing their own shows from their own, off-campus and non-university, homes has also been planned.

Listening actively to such programming fosters a sense of inclusion for newcomers to Queen's University who may not easily find the multifaceted and diverse communities they seek. This community includes more than the employment equity seeking groups named in legislation (women, persons with disabilities, visible minorities and Aboriginal peoples) and extends to the LGBTQ community, seniors, youth and those affected by poverty. Many faculty, staff and student volunteers of CFRC find that the station becomes a home away from home. Staff members strive to maintain a workplace that is warm and welcoming, reflecting in its policies and practices, the same principles of inclusivity, empowerment and solidarity that its programmers promote through music and the spoken-word.

For example, the CFRC volunteer application form announces that “the AMS is an equal opportunities employer” and that “hiring will be done in accordance with AMS Hiring and Appointment Policy and Procedures”, the very first guiding principle of which is a written commitment to act in compliance with the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Canada Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It also signals the thoughtfulness and concrete readiness of the station to accommodate the requirements of candidates from equity-seeking groups: “Please describe any special needs, including childcare, for which we may accommodate at the time of your orientation.”

Applicants who are invited to attend an Orientation session, as the first step of the interview process, are required to familiarize themselves with the station’s policies and procedures, some of which deal directly with issues of human rights and equity. For example, the CFRC policies and procedures state explicitly the employment equity goal is to “allow individuals and members of marginalized and oppressed communities to produce media on their own terms, with their own voices and perspectives”. Indeed, in order to fulfill the mission of programming, such as “focus” programming dealing with National Aboriginal Day, International Women’s week, Black History Month and Pride week, persons from equity-seeking groups are not only strongly encouraged to apply but also prioritized in the recruitment and hiring process.

Beyond employment equity principles regulating the recruitment and hiring process are rules of conduct within the station governing a respectful work

environment for all employees. For example, in the volunteer’s policy manual, one of the five basic rules of the station reads as follows:

“Neither in its advertising, on its premises nor in any aspect of its operation will CFRC accept words or actions that malign or subject to ridicule any individual or group on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation, economic or social status, age, religion or ability.”



Queen’s faculty, staff and students who work at CFRC enjoy the friendly yet professional ambiance at the station, meet people from all walks of life, and become part of a strong community of like-minded people that live the principles of equity, always reaching for inclusion.

Community Outreach

CFRC Programs

- ▶ Below the Line
- ▶ News and Focus
- ▶ Programming Youth Internship
- ▶ Focus Programming
- ▶ CFRC-OPIRG Anniversary Speaker Series
- ▶ Radio Residencies
- ▶ Rideaucrest Radio: New Horizons for Seniors program
- ▶ Community Living Radio Collective

<http://cfrc.ca>

Equity Office Digest

A summary of new equity initiatives



Units may find it useful to explore university initiatives when considering ways to meet their equity goals. This past year, the Equity Office launched a number of new initiatives focused on fostering an inclusive university climate and valuing and respecting everyone. The following initiatives can enhance the equity related components of programs, policies, and services throughout the University.

Employee Resource Groups (ERG's):

Fifteen years ago, employee resource groups or affinity groups, as they were mostly known in the corporate sector, were loosely formed and socially oriented organizations in which people from similar under-represented demographic groups got together. These social groups evolved into professional forums to network for job opportunities and to provide for career mentorship and support. These groups came to include the word "resource" in their name because they became significant resources to their organization's mission and goals, substantially contributing to recruitment, retention, engagement, and talent development. American Universities such as Yale and Harvard University are leaders in creating and supporting employee resources groups for staff and faculty in higher education. These institutions have witnessed an increase in designated equity group representation in recruitment and retention which they attribute to the success of these resource groups. Initially Employee Resource Groups included broadly defined groups for women, visible/racialized minorities, LGBTQ and persons with disabilities, but have now expanded to include those focused on specific equity-seeking groups within specific areas, such as women in management and racialized persons in senior leadership positions.

The University wishes to launch ERG's at Queen's as an initiative to contribute to the University's broader employment equity goals by contributing to a favourable work environment which will attract and support the successful inclusion and retention of members of equity-seeking groups. Still in the initial planning and community consultation stage, the Equity office has organized two small informational focus group meetings, one with faculty and staff and another with members of the senior leadership team to gauge institutional readiness. In addition, we have been fortunate to have the Senior VP of Diversity and Equity at KMPG Canada- *Michael Bach* come to Queen's to speak to the senior leadership team about the value and importance of ERG's in institutions of higher education. We anticipate a busy ERG planning year for 2013. Community members who are interested in this initiative may participate by joining the Equity listserv. (Please contact the Equity Office at equity@queensu.ca to join.)

Equity Matters at Queen's: Employment Equity e-newsletter

In June 2012, the Equity Office launched its first issue of *Equity Matters at Queen's*, an electronic newsletter providing the Queen's community with information about innovative practices, ideas, individual profiles and events relating to Employment Equity.

The newsletter focuses on three main areas: *Employment Equity "Bits and Bites"*, *Equity in Focus* and *Equity in the Community*. Each of these areas further explores the challenges and issues faced by institutions of higher education relating to employment equity and also provides resources and ideas for improving equity in both academic and non-academic settings. Most importantly, the newsletter focuses on profiling members of **equity seeking groups** (such as women, persons with disabilities, Aboriginal peoples, visible minorities, and members of the LGBTQ community) at Queen's and provides an opportunity for them to share their thoughts on the ways in which Queen's can establish a work environment that supports the successful integration of all equity-group members.

The Equity Matters at Queen's newsletter is sent bi-monthly to community members who have subscribed through the Equity listserv. Any community member can receive the newsletter by contacting the Equity Office at equity@queensu.ca.

The Equity Diagnostic and Planning Tool

The Equity Office has developed an electronic, interactive Equity Diagnostic and Planning Tool to assist units in assessing their compliance with equity goals. It provides a complete profile of all available equity related data for the unit, including, for example, the current faculty, staff, and student complement with respect to designated equity groups, the unit's compliance with employment equity training under the collective agreement and compliance with other mandated equity related training such as customer service training under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and its standards.

There are **three main components** of the tool. Together they represent a cyclical process through which faculties can become more aware of how they are performing in equity and diversity related matters. The three components include:

- ▶ **Reviewing** the quantitative data relating to the four designated groups as it pertains to staff, faculty and students.
- ▶ **Reflecting** on a unit's performance in attracting, retaining, and supporting designated groups.
- ▶ **Responding** by developing in-house goals and targets for improving equity and diversity in the unit.

The Equity Office has supported units who are reporting for the purposes of the University's Cyclical Program Review through the use of the Equity Diagnostic and Planning Tool.

The Employment Equity Award



The Provost and Vice-Principal (Academic) Alan Harrison presented the inaugural 2011 Employment Equity Award to Wendy Powley, a staff member in the School of Computing.

Ms Powley founded Women in the School of Computing (WISC) at Queen's, an informal support, networking and social group for all women faculty, staff and students. The group has provided outreach and mentorship to young women in the Kingston community through the LEGO robotics program with the hope of educating and inspiring more girls to consider a career in computing.

A Council on Employment Equity initiative, the Queen's Employment Equity Award is awarded annually to recognize and celebrate achievements of individuals and groups who, through their ongoing diligence and commitment, are helping Queen's become more representative and inclusive.

Note: Summarized from an article appearing in the Queen's News Centre, December 14, 2011

Additional Resources

Best Practices at Other Universities

Although Queen's offers many of the individual services listed below, other Universities have gone a step beyond and offer "Hubs" (York University) or "Portals" (UBC) or other methods that provide ease of access (George Brown College). In addition, Queen's is proud to have instated its first gender-neutral washroom policy and will be examining the issue of multi-stall washrooms in the near future; UVic's student union building experience may be informative in this respect.

York University Accessibility Hub provides an online location for all accessibility issues on campus. The Hub provides tools and resources to understand accessibility issues. The Hub supports equity by providing information and contacts for:

- **Alternate Exams and Tests:** York's [Alternate Exam and Test Scheduling website](#)
- **Assistive Technology:** Assistive technology is defined as any piece of equipment or item that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities. Find out what kinds of [assistive technology are available](#).
- **Counselling & Disability Services:** [Counselling & Disability Services](#)
- **Computing at York:** [Assistive Technology Lab](#)
- **Emergency Preparedness:** [Emergency Preparedness Guide for People with Disabilities](#) along with the Emergency Response Guidebook
<http://www.yorku.ca/epp/guidelines/index.htm>.

- **Print Accessible Design:** [10 simple rules to consider in your design](#)
- **Teaching Students with Disabilities:** [Faculty Resource Guide.](#)
- **Tips for Customer Service:** [Tips for Customer Service](#)
- **Transcription Services, Library Accessibility Services:** [Library Accessibility Services](#)
- **Transportation:** An on campus accessible van is available through [Parking and Transportation Services](#) for students with physical disabilities.
- **Websites, Accessibility Guidelines:** [Accessibility Guidelines](#)

The **University of British Columbia** provides an Aboriginal Portal which brings information from various units on campus to one space. The Portal includes initiatives that support equity such as:

- **Aboriginal Initiatives: Classroom Climate Series**

The development of academic and professional programming in the area of classroom climate is relatively new and unexplored. Aboriginal Initiatives programming at the Centre for Teaching, Learning and Technology (CTLT) responded by creating an innovative professional development series called Aboriginal Initiatives: Classroom Climate.

- **New UBC-Langara program to help more Aboriginal students get university degrees**

The University of British Columbia and Langara College have partnered to create a transfer program to support First Nations, Métis and Inuit students working toward a university degree.

- **Common Threads: Understanding Indigenous Realities in the Philippines & Guatemala**

On September 14, 2012 over 50 students, faculty members and artists from Vancouver gathered at the First Nations Longhouse for “Common Threads”, a conference to celebrate the solidarities between the indigenous peoples of the Philippines and Guatemala.

George Brown College provides a tool for faculty members when addressing diversity in the classroom. The tool consists of the following headings: Diversity, Disability, Mental Health, Gender, Class, Race, Sexuality and Other Resources. Some examples of resources available in the tool are: a checklist for responding to student diversity, a document outlining the challenges and opportunities of diversity in the classroom and a course on creating inclusive classrooms. The full tool can be found at:

http://www.georgebrown.ca/faculty_and_staff/diversity/classroom/

The **University of Victoria** Student Union Building (SUB) implemented a multi-stall concept for gender-inclusive washrooms. Two formerly gendered washrooms were reopened as multi-stall gender-inclusive washrooms, meaning any person of any gender can use either space.

The only visible changes to the washrooms were the replacement of signs at the entrance of each bathroom as well as a partition built around the urinals in the former men's washroom.

UVic Pride, a campus advocacy group for queer and trans students, began a campaign for gender-inclusive washrooms in January 2011. Within the same month, a board motion was passed to investigating the installation of gender-inclusive washrooms.

Conclusion

The Faculty of Engineering and Applied Sciences, the Ban Righ Centre and the CFRC are three units of which Queen's community can be proud and provide inspiration for achieving equity at Queen's University. The Faculty of Engineering and Applied Sciences has looked beyond statistical compliance, by strategically tackling the barriers within the educational system which discourage Aboriginal youth and young women from pursuing a career Engineering. This initiative will eventually lead to increased enrolment of these equity-seeking groups at the undergraduate level, which will, in the longer run, assist the faculty in its attempt to attract and retain Aboriginal and women professors. The Ban Righ Centre has surpassed its mandate to support mature women students returning to University, by embracing international students, staff and faculty through its open-door policy, diverse programming, prayer rooms, and cross-cultural counselling. The CFRC, through its programming, policies and practices, provides members of Queen's community, especially those from equity-seeking groups, with networks of solidarity and equal opportunities to have their voice heard and respected on the airwaves and in the workplace.

The Equity Office and the Council on Employment Equity would like to invite other units to find inspiration in these three equity innovators, and to avail themselves of the equity tools and initiatives that have been developed over the past few years (www.queensu/equity). We strongly encourage Queen's community members to nominate fellow students, faculty, staff and external community members for the 2013 Employment Equity Award.

Together, we can go beyond compliance to create a culture of inclusion.

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