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Equity Matters at Queen's University

Issue: 1; Vol: 1
May 2012



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Upcoming Events!

The Afro-Caribe Community Foundation of Kingston and District presents:

"A Taste of Africa & The Carribean"

Featured dishes on demonstration:

Ackee and salt fish, Roti and Curried Goat, Ugali/fufu and Peanut Stew, Wild mushroom in Peanut Stew with rice

June 19th

6-9pm

St. Andrew by the Lake United Church

Welcome Message from Director

Dear Queen's University Member:

Welcome to the first issue of *Equity Matters at Queen's*, a new, monthly electronic newsletter from the Queen's University Equity Office. This communication tool aims to provide you with information about innovative practices 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 will further explore challenges and issues faced by institutions of higher education relating to employment equity and also provide resources and ideas for improving equity in both academic and non-academic settings. Most importantly, the newsletter will also focus 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 provide 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 Office is responsible for coordinating and supporting the Employment Equity program at Queen's University. This program is designed to identify and eliminate barriers in the organization's employment procedures and policies, put into place positive policies and practices to ensure the effects of systemic barriers are

eliminated, and to ensure our workforce reflects our community. Increasing faculty and staff diversity and fostering an organizational culture and climate that welcomes and supports employment equity and inclusion lie at the heart of our work. We invite you to learn more about what we do and how we do by visiting our website www.queensu.ca/equity.

We welcome your comments and suggestions for future feature articles on the accomplishments and activities of faculty, staff, students, and alumni of Queen's University relating to employment equity. Please contact us at equity@queensu.ca

-Irène Bujara, Director Human Rights and Equity Office

Employment Equity "Bits and Bites"

Religious Accommodation

Accommodation refers to the removal of potential barriers for access to employment. It consists of a series of steps taken to ensure that everyone is able to participate fully in employment and employment related activities.



In most cases, employers in Canada must accommodate their employees' religious holidays. Both employers and employees need to understand their rights in this area.

Employers across Canada must provide eligible employees with a certain number of paid statutory holidays as stated in their province's employment legislation. Most jurisdictions recognize New Year's Day, Good Friday or Easter Monday, Canada Day, Labour Day and Christmas Day. Others include Thanksgiving, Remembrance Day and Boxing Day. While most of these holidays are secular in nature, some represent Christian holidays. The paid leave provided by the legislation eliminates the need for Christian employees to set up special holiday scheduling.

Human Rights Codes in Canada

Employees in Canada with other religious beliefs may also need leave from work to celebrate their different holy days. Provinces and territories in Canada generally have Human Rights Codes, laws which give every person the right to equal treatment with respect to religion. In cases involving religious holidays, the courts have interpreted this right as requiring Canadian employers to accommodate their employees' religious beliefs, unless doing so creates undue hardship.

The employer's duty to accommodate comes into effect when an employee's religious belief or practice conflicts with workplace requirements. This often involves scheduling problems created by the need for time off to celebrate religious holidays. Employers in Canada can satisfy the duty to accommodate religious leaves by arranging for employees to switch shifts, bank time, take compassionate leave or use floating days off. Other options include alternative arrival and departure

1 Redden St. Kingston
ON.

An event for the whole family!

Wade Davis at the IETP
(International Educators
Training Program)
Summer Institute
*Into The Silence: The
Great War, Mallory, And
The Conquest Of
Everest*

Tuesday, June 12,
7:30pm Chalmers
United Church (212
Barrie Street)

**National Aboriginal
Day**
Thursday, June 21, 2012
11:30am-1:30pm
Market Square, Lower
Courtyard

**Activities include: Free
traditional food,
Children's crafts,
Teachings, Sacred Fire,
Shawl dancing and
more...**

times, staggered work hours or a variation of lunch break.

The Process for Accommodation:

Step 1: Employee notifies supervisor of the need for and details of, the required accommodation. They work collaboratively to consider possible accommodations that would allow the employee to meet the job requirements.

Step 2: An accommodation plan is developed by Human Resources and the employee and supervisor. Discussions in developing the plan may also involve union representatives, and other offices as appropriate.

Step 3: Accommodation is implemented.

Step 4: The situation is reviewed periodically to ensure that the accommodation continues to meet the needs of the employee.

For more information or support, please contact the:

Chaplain's Office ext. 32186

The Equity Office ext. 32563

The Human Rights Office ext. 36886

** Part of this article was taken from Employee Rights and Religious Accommodation by Natalie Fraser, a practicing lawyer in Whitby, Ontario for seventeen years and is now a freelance legal writer.*

Equity In Focus: The Case for Employee Resource Groups at Queen's

Ten years ago, employee networks or affinity groups, as they were mostly known in the corporate sector, were loosely formed social based organizations in which people from similar underrepresented demographic groups got together. These groups created a forum to network for job opportunities



and to provide opportunities of career mentorship and support. More recently, the term came to include the word "resource" in their name because they became significant resources to their organization's business goals, substantially contributing to recruitment, retention, engagement, and talent development. Employee Resource Groups (ERG's) include groups for women, visible/racialized minorities, LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgendered and Questioning) and persons with disabilities, but have also expanded into specific cultural communities such as Asian, African American, and Latino.

Today, these groups are fixtures in most large scale companies such as: KPMG, Sodexo, Ford, Deloitte, Proctor and Gamble among many others.

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 due to the tremendous success of these resource groups.

American Express was DiversityINC's 2011 Top Company for Resource Groups and has one of the longest, most varied and most effective history of using its resource groups for talent recruitment and development as well as for marketplace connections.

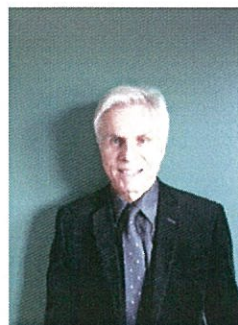
Kenneth I. Chenault, Chairman and CEO of American Express expresses:

"We want American Express to be an inclusive brand and inclusive company. We want our shareholders, customers and employees to feel that 'no matter who I am, I am going to be included. I am going to be valued.' Our Employee Networks promote this inclusive culture by developing and engaging our employees while supporting the growth of our broader business objectives. If you have people with different perspectives and backgrounds that come from different environments, represent different races, ethnic and gender groups, the reality is you're going to have a richness of perspectives that will allow you to think in a very creative way."

Employee resource groups increasingly are the best vehicles for institutions of higher education to find, assess, and develop talent from people from historically underrepresented groups. The Queen's University community could benefit from further exploring these groups and how they might complement the existing diversity policies and programs currently in place.

Equity In the Community

Gordon Smith: Chair of Queen's Council on Employment Equity



Gordon E. Smith, Associate Dean in the Faculty of Arts and Science, and Professor of Ethnomusicology in the School of Music, has been reappointed for a three-year term as Chair of the Council on Employment Equity. A member of the Aboriginal Council at Queen's since 2006, Dr. Smith was first appointed Chair of the Council on Employment Equity in 2009. The Council on Employment Equity (CEE) was established in 1989 and was given a mandate by the Principal to promote a climate favourable to equity on campus with a focus on human resources matters. The Council meets five a year and is made up of over 10 employee group representatives and administration ex-officio members.

"I am delighted and honoured to continue working as Chair of the Council

on Employment Equity for the next three years. Over the course of the past several years, in addition to assisting in the monitoring and reporting on the University's compliance with the Federal Contractors Program (FCP), the CEE has made excellent progress towards to achieving related goals, including inviting new employee groups to have representation on the CEE, and the establishment of an annual Queen's Employment Equity Award. With the establishment of the **Federal Contractors Program (FCP) Action Group**, which reports to the CEE, and recently streamlined processes for prioritizing initiatives and achieving goals, I am confident that the communications and training initiatives currently in the planning stages will come to fruition under leadership of the CEE and the Equity Office, and with the cooperation and support of administrators and employee groups at the University." For more information on the CEE and the Federal Contractors Program Action Group, please visit [The Equity Office](#).



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