

Organizational Culture Working Group
DRAFT PLAN – July 19, 2021

Goal:

Provide the Strategic Framework Steering Committee with an articulation of up to three high impact ideas, or operational priorities, which will bring to life the new Queen's strategy. Specifically, these operational priorities should aim to enhance the Queen's culture and community, "ensuring that in the workplace we live our values, and that our human resources, organizational structure, processes and culture are properly aligned to fulfil our mission." (Strategic Framework Goal #6)

Proposed Operational Priority 1: Develop an official Inclusive Culture policy with commitments to continuing actions.

Background:

Previous reports from the PAC-Berri (1991) to PICRDI (2018) have identified the culture of Queen's as a major barrier to inclusion and a sense of belonging among faculty, students and staff. Previous attempts have been made to address exclusion and marginalization, particularly through the TRC Task Force mandate (2015) and PICRDI process (2018) that sought to implement particular recommendations from the Henry Report (2004), DARE Panel Report (2009), and Diversity and Equity Taskforce agenda (2011). In Summer 2020, the university's senior leaders issued the Declaration of Commitment to Address Systemic Racism.

As data from the recent [Student Experiences Survey](#) reflects, there remains much work to be done, in order to achieve a dynamically inclusive community that lives its values and accomplishes the educational vision articulated in the new [Strategic Framework](#).

Proposal:

It is recommended the University develop an officially-sanctioned, strength-based policy that articulates a community-wide commitment to inclusion and belonging, as well as a positive climate. It should align the principles and values of the University with expectations for administrative leadership, faculty, staff and students, to foster an inclusive culture that emphasizes and balances a community of learning, safety, respect, and accountability.

An Inclusive Culture policy would articulate roles and responsibilities of leaders, as well as our community as a whole, and would include active commitments to a culture of inclusion and

belonging as norms and expectations. In particular, it would acknowledge the central role that senior leadership plays in role modelling and implementing the university's values in their everyday work.

The policy would identify specific actions to be taken, by senior administration, leaders, faculty, staff, and students, to demonstrate its implementation, and outline how the impacts of the policy would be assessed.

A healthy organizational culture depends on accountable leadership that assumes responsibility to exemplify and implement institutional values and expectations. An inclusive culture should be based on:

- values of compassion, empathy, and caring to ensure psychological safety, as well as intellectual and social wellbeing;
- appreciation of and learning from individual and group differences;
- mutual respect for collegial governance and equality of diverse voices in decision-making;
- promotion of autonomy, freedom and curiosity to learn;
- courage to challenge our presumptions and grow as people and community;
- honest, truthful recognition of failures and problems; and
- accountability in taking responsibility for actions.

Rationale:

An inclusive culture is a goal that will be achieved with the implementation of both proactive and responsive strategies. Designing a policy that articulates norms and emphasizes expectations will help reinforce positive action and give guidance, rather than only articulating reactions to proscribed behavior. Accountability remains a vital and crucial component, and should be framed through what the university encourages and expects, as well as what behaviours are disallowed and unacceptable to the community.

Such a policy would align with the university's [Campus Wellbeing Framework](#) (2020), that represents the shared wellbeing vision of more than 1,800 Queen's community members who expressed campus wellbeing as being rooted in a culture of care, inclusion and respect, social connectedness, the places we learn and work, and in the multiple dimensions of personal health. The development of the Campus Wellbeing Framework was guided by the Okanagan Charter, adopted by Queen's in 2019, that calls on post-secondary institutions to embed health and well-being in all aspects of campus culture.

Implementation/Actions:

Initiate the university policy development process, which includes opportunities for community feedback, to create an Inclusive Culture Policy. Whether passed as a Senate policy, like the Academic Integrity policy (a good model for an Inclusive Culture policy), or affirmed by university leadership, the policy must imply active steps. Some suggestions include operational priorities 2 and 3.

Proposed Operational Priority 2: Expand structures and operations to support the growth and recognize the value of Employee Resource Groups

Background:

Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) aim to build community among equity-deserving employees, fostering a sense of belonging through opportunities for development and networking. They are reported to have a myriad of benefits for their members and for the organization, including assisting with recruitment and retention. ERGs can also be consulted, as part of the university's policy development processes, to reduce barriers and promote the full participation in employment among equity-deserving employees.

Various ERGs have been operating somewhat informally at Queen's for the past several years, with support from the Human Rights and Equity Office, the Office of Indigenous Initiatives and Human Resources. They were created at a "grass roots level", by and for equity-deserving individuals and groups. Much of the work of members and leaders is currently done "off the side of their desks", including over lunch hours and outside of paid work time.

The Provost's Office provides some annual funding to groups sponsored by a faculty or administrative unit. See: <https://www.queensu.ca/inclusive/initiatives/employee-resource-groups>

ERGs with formal status within the university include:

- Queen's Womens' Network
- Women in Science at Queen's
- Queen's Association for Queer Employees
- Indigenous Staff and Faculty Network

Other groups have expressed interest in evolving into an ERG, most notably, the Queen's Black Faculty and Staff Caucus, as well as an emerging Queen's University Muslim Inclusion Network (QUMIN).

Proposal: It is recommended the university formalize structures and resources for existing and additional ERGs to promote sustainable, systemic support.

Actions would include:

- developing an ERG policy that would articulate the ability to use paid time - e.g. 3 hours per week, consistent with the policy on pursuing education – subject to operational requirements, to support consistency across units;
- facilitating access to, and the creation and sustainability of ERGs;
- increasing awareness of, and communications about ERGs, including in recruitment and onboarding initiatives and programs;
- integrating ERG engagement and leadership opportunities into professional development and HR offerings;
- articulating participation and leadership roles in ERGs as a valued and supported option for university service, including the potential for release time (per QUFA Collective Agreement), and for HR's performance development goals and processes;
- ensuring endorsement of time spent on ERG activities during regular work hours, subject to operational requirements;
- allocating ongoing budgets, and expanding support to resource ERGs appropriately;
- explicitly linking ERGs to the university's mission, vision, and values;
- recognizing leader and member contributions;
- coordinating existing mentorship programs within ERGs (as appropriate) to reflect the power of one-on-one connections and support;
- coordinating with relevant student organizations to integrate communities and communication across faculty, staff, and students.

Progress could be measured through the following:

- Number of ERGs
- Membership and engagement reach
- Breadth of activities
- Personal and community impacts of activities/events
- Member satisfaction/trust

- A comparative analysis of retention (i.e., does Queen's retain equity-deserving employees associated with ERGs at a rate higher than those not associated, and compared to non-equity-deserving employees)

Proposed Operational Priority 3: Develop and implement a Faculty and Staff Climate and Engagement survey

Background:

The university has recently completed a census campus climate student survey, sponsored by the implementation team for the university's Declaration of Commitment to address systemic racism.

The survey reflects student experiences of racism, exclusionary and discriminatory behaviours, and sexual violence on campus and insights will be used to inform the university's continued efforts to foster greater inclusivity and equity, and ensure Queen's is a safer and more welcoming place for everyone.

There has not been any similar survey of faculty and staff.

Proposal:

It is recommended the university develop and regularly implement a Staff and Faculty Climate and Engagement Survey, consistent with the Student Experiences Survey, to:

- confirm an evidence-informed baseline for understanding the current climate among faculty and staff;
- help inform planning to support a diverse, inclusive, health-promoting, and vibrant campus community;
- identify areas of focus for action and next steps, and
- provide a benchmark against which to measure change over time.

Domains of assessment should be identified (e.g. mental health) that reflect priorities that promote wellbeing and inclusion, and meet the National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace. The survey would allow the university to measure, over time, the extent to which we are living our values, as well as the outcomes of operational priorities 1 and 2, above. It could also measure how actions taken have resulted in the proper alignment of human resources, organizational structure, processes and culture to ensure the university is fulfilling its mission.

Consideration should be made to use Queen's expertise and resources in the design and implementation of the survey.

The university should also continue regular and consistent climate and engagement survey of students, as it develops faculty and staff surveys.

References:

Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion, Employee Resource Groups: Toolkit for Diversity and Inclusion Practitioners, 2015: <https://ccdi.ca/media/1073/20150716-ccdi-report-erg-toolkit.pdf>

University of Michigan Climate Survey Reports: <https://diversity.umich.edu/data-reports/climate-survey/>

National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace: <https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/what-we-do/workplace/national-standard>

National Standard of Canada for Mental-Health and Well-Being for Post-Secondary Students: <https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/studentstandard>

Queen's Student Experiences Survey: <https://www.queensu.ca/inclusive/initiatives/student-experiences-survey/overview>

Queen's Campus Wellness Project and Framework: <https://www.queensu.ca/campuswellnessproject/>