

Achieving Employment Equity at Queen's

Part 1: Challenges



Council on Employment Equity

Office of the University Advisor on Equity

Queen's University

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Alternate formats of this booklet are available upon
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Introduction

For many people in Canada, discriminatory policies and practices block access to equal opportunity in the workplace. This is true within Canadian colleges and universities where “persistent concerns remain [...] about the nature and extent of the barriers facing academic staff who are members of equity-seeking groups—women, visible minorities, Aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people” ([CAUT Equity Review, Nov 2007](#)). Similar barriers obstruct the career paths of non-academic staff and research/contract employees belonging to equity-seeking groups.

Employment equity refers to a set of initiatives that serve to identify and eliminate discrimination against equity-seeking groups. An institution achieves equity when the percentage of equity-seeking employees within its workforce reflects the percentage of equity-seeking employees available within the Canadian workforce.

Achieving equity at Queen’s is both a legal obligation and an institutional goal. Under the *Federal Contractors Program* (FCP), the University is required to take necessary steps towards making its workforce population reflect the diversity of the Canadian workforce population. It targets four equity-seeking groups: women, Aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities and visible minorities. As the campus becomes more equitable, it also becomes more diverse, not only in terms of its workplace population but also in terms of “[...] pedagogical techniques used, research subjects explored, questions posed and methodologies employed” ([CAUT Equity Review, Nov 2007](#)). Achieving equity at Queen’s would therefore help fulfill its institutional vision of creating “an innovative, inclusive and vigorous community of learning and discovery that is committed to serving as a national resource for the betterment of our global society” (*Queen’s Strategic Plan: Engaging the World*).

Employment Equity in Canada

In 1984, Judge Rosalie Abella was commissioned by the Government of Canada to chair the Commission on Equality and Employment. The *Abella Report* (1984) compared the composition of the actual workforce, (Canadian employees actually working in Canada) to that of the available workforce (Canadians between the ages of 16-64).

It then revealed the presence of deeply embedded discriminatory barriers that denied certain groups access to equal opportunity in the areas of recruitment, retention, promotion, accessibility, accommodation, compensation, benefits, pension plans and training opportunities. These groups were: women, Aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities and visible minorities.

The Commission made a series of recommendations to the government, including:

- 1) *Requiring employers to take concrete measures to promote Employment Equity in the workplace.*
- 2) *Ensuring that women, Aboriginal peoples, people with disabilities and visible minority groups benefit from these Employment Equity measures.*
- 3) *Monitoring and enforcing compliance with these requirements through reporting mechanisms and onsite reviews.*

In 1986, the Government of Canada implemented the recommendations of the *Abella Report* in the *Employment Equity Act* and the *Federal Contractors Program*, to which Universities are subject.

The Federal Contractors Program

The *Federal Contractors Program* (1986) is an Employment Equity program which applies to all provincially regulated organizations with 100 or more employees and who receive individual contracts valuing \$200,000 or more from the Government of Canada.

As a federal contractor, Queen's University is required to comply with the following criteria:

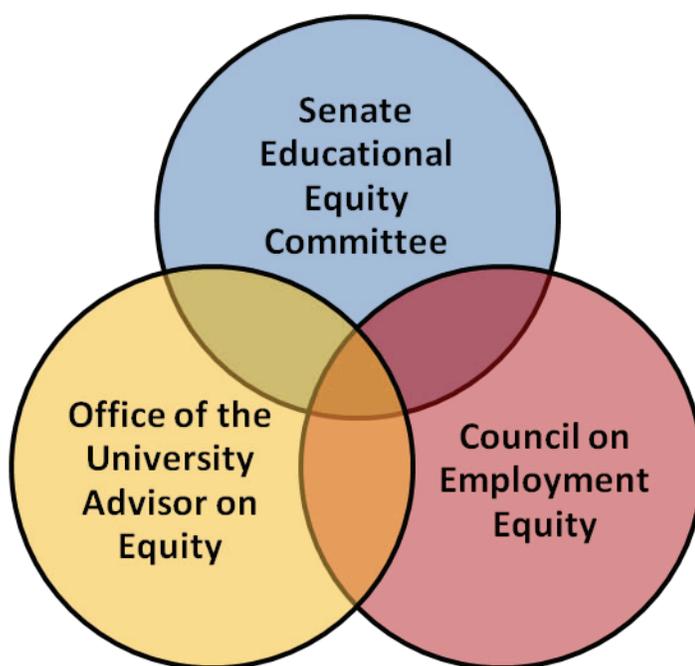
1. *Communication of Employment Equity to employees*
2. *Assignment of Senior official to be responsible for employment equity*
3. *Collection of workforce information*
4. *Analysis of workforce information*
5. *Employment Systems Review*
6. *Establishment of Goals*
7. *Development of an Employment Equity Plan*
8. *Adoption of Special Measures and Reasonable Accommodation*
9. *Establishment of a favourable workplace environment*
10. *Adoption of monitoring procedures*
11. *Authorization to Enter Premises*

This brochure is a fulfillment of the university's duty to communicate Employment Equity to employees. It is part one of a series of brochures to be developed that will explain why we have employment equity initiatives at Queen's, how we measure it and how we achieve it.

Equity Structure at Queen's

"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."

Queen's Employment Equity Policy



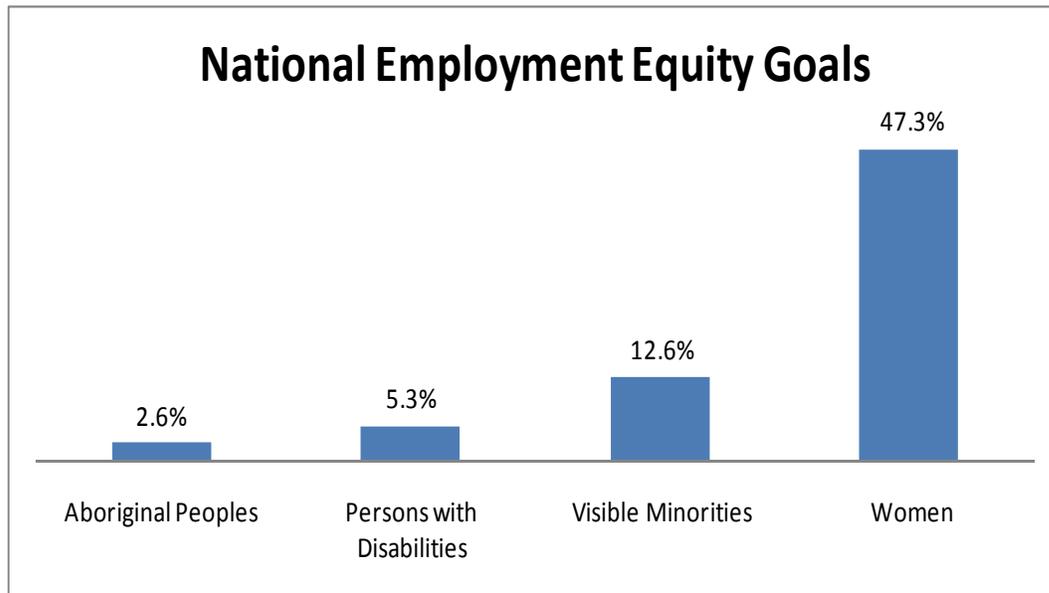
In 1997, the University created a three-part equity structure to help Queen's achieve Employment Equity. This structure is composed of the Office of the University Advisor on Equity (OUAE), the Council on Employment Equity (CEE), the Senate Educational Equity Committee (SEEC).

The Office of the University Advisor on Equity: The Office of the University Advisor on Equity is charged with promoting the University's equity goals. Its activities include the yearly collection and analysis of employment (new hire census) and educational equity (student applicant census) data; the coordination of the University's equity (FCP) and accessibility (Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act—AODA) plans and the provision of equity training and monitoring mandated by the Collective Agreement between the Queen's University Faculty Association and the University. For more information about the OUAE please visit www.queensu.ca/equity.

Council on Employment Equity: The Council on Employment Equity reviews policies and practices related to Human Resources and makes recommendations for modification, elimination or renewal. The CEE also monitors the University's effectiveness in the administration and implementation of Employment Equity policies and practices. For more information about the CEE and its current membership, please visit: www.queensu.ca/equity/ceemandate.php.

Senate Educational Equity Committee: The Senate Educational Equity Committee is responsible for educational equity-related policy in all matters pertaining to the academic mission of the University. For further information about SEEC, please see: www.queensu.ca/secretariat/senate/committee/standing/equity.html.

National Employment Equity Goals



Statistics Canada. *2001 Census of Canada: Highlight tables*. Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 2003.

According to the FCP, achieving equity in a workplace means creating an employee population that reflects the diversity of the national workforce. National employment equity goals are determined from statistics gathered by Census Canada. They are calculated by dividing the total number of Canadian employees from each given equity-seeking group by the total number of Canadian employees.

According to the 2001 Census, the total Canadian workforce population was made up of almost seventeen million employees, 2.6% of whom were Aboriginal peoples, 5.3% of whom were persons with disabilities, 12.6% of whom were visible minorities, and 47.3% of whom were women. These four percentages represent Canada's national employment equity goals until later this year when new Census data will be revealed. This is the diversity that employers, who fall under the FCP, strive to reflect through their equity initiatives.

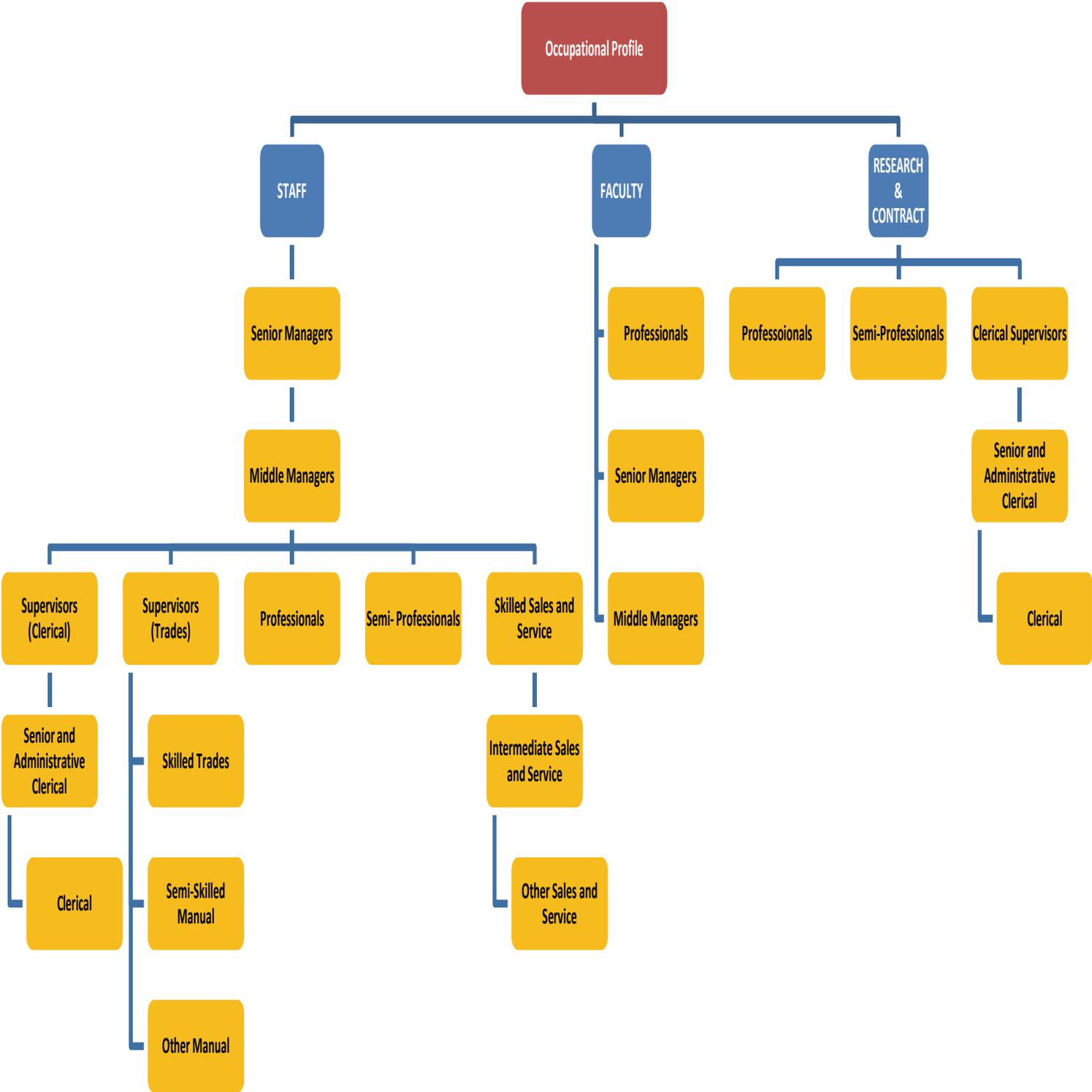
Employment Equity Occupational Groups

A workplace whose overall population reflects the diversity of Canada may not necessarily have achieved equity. Take, for example, an institution where the majority of employees from equity-seeking groups work in the lowest paying, least stable jobs. Such an institution may have achieved global equity, but it has not attained equity in all parts of the workforce. To ensure that equity-seeking groups obtain equal opportunity for success in all positions, the FCP requires that employers achieve equity within each of the following fourteen occupational groups:

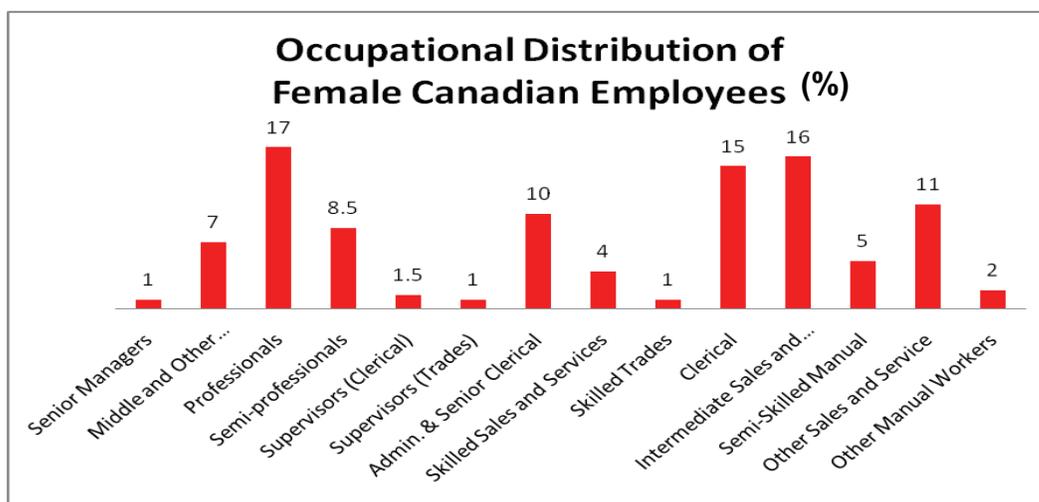


Queen's Occupational Classifications

Queen's uses three major classifications for its employees. These map on to the fourteen Employment Equity Occupational Groups as illustrated below.



Challenge # 1: Occupational Distribution



Human Resources and Social Development Canada. *2001 Census of Canada: Manual—2001 Employment Equity Data Report*. Ottawa: Human Resources and Social Development Canada, 2004.

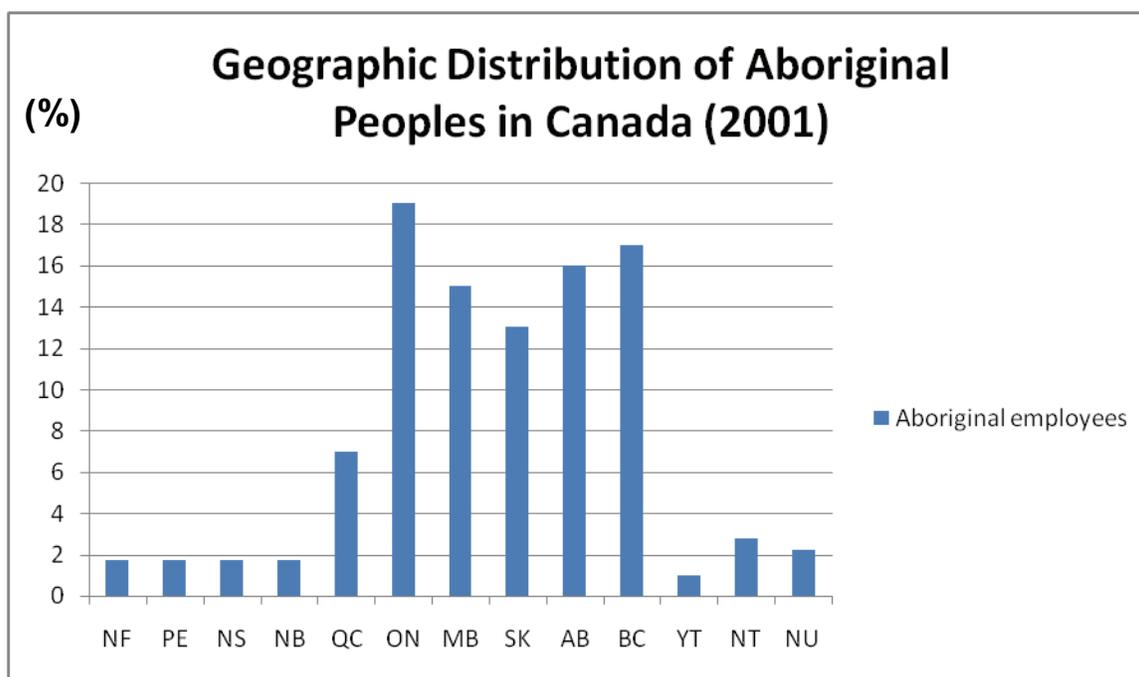
Achieving equity will be more challenging for some occupational groups than for others.

For example, in 2001, the Canadian workplace had already achieved, or was very close to achieving, equity for women in clerical, professional, and sales and service occupations. It had not, however, achieved equity in management, trades and labour positions, where very few women work.

Historically, these kinds of occupations have been considered to be more appropriate for men than for women. Discriminatory barriers are deeply entrenched not only in the workplace, but also in society as a whole. Sex-role socialization may start in the family but is reinforced in the educational system and it is consequently at the root of employment equity. This is why educational equity is fundamental to achieving employment equity.

The following pages will outline some of the other major challenges to achieving employment equity.

Challenge #2: Geographic Distribution



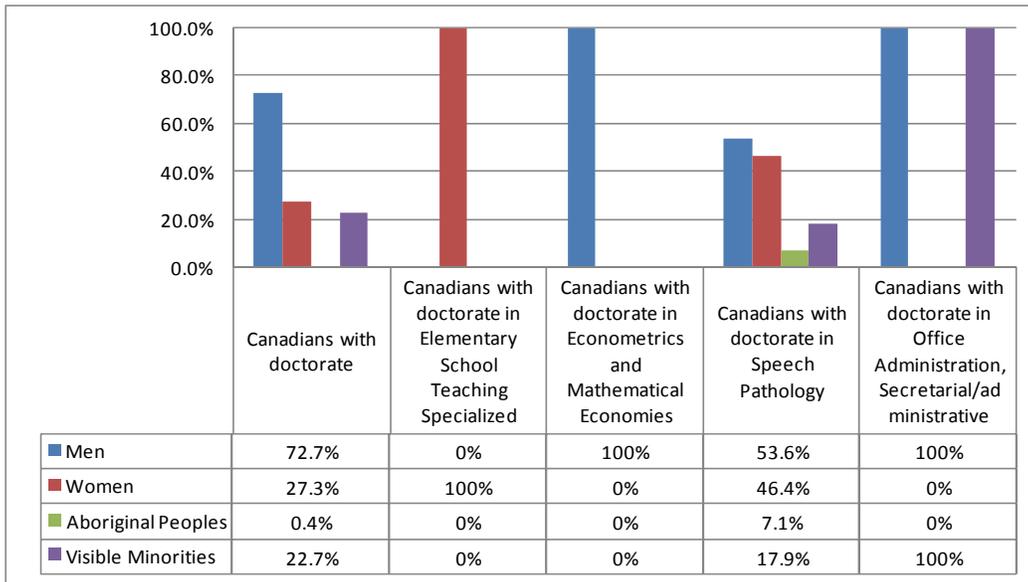
Human Resources and Social Development Canada. *2001 Census of Canada: Manual—2001 Employment Equity Data Report*. Ottawa: Human Resources and Social Development Canada, 2004.

Another statistical factor that presents a challenge to achieving equity is geographic distribution. In 2001, the majority (81%) of Aboriginal peoples lived in Ontario, British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba and Saskatchewan. Only one third (compared to 68% of the total population) lived in urban centers.

This distribution has implications for universities conducting local job searches. Even at universities like Queen's, which is located in the province where the Aboriginal population is most dense, the fact that most Aboriginal candidates live far from Kingston affects the University's opportunity to achieve equity for this group when conducting a local search for given positions.

This means that very special efforts are required to recruit Aboriginal candidates in order to achieve our national equity goal of 2.6%.

Challenge #3: Educational Achievement



Human Resources and Skills Development Canada. *2001 Census of Canada: Representation of designated groups by major field of study*. Ottawa: Policy, Reporting and Data Development, Labour Standards and Workplace Equity, Operations Directorate,

Another statistical factor that presents a challenge to achieving equity is educational achievement. Across Canada, in 2001, around one hundred thousand employees had a doctorate. 72.7% of those employees were men, 27.3% were women, 0.4% were Aboriginal peoples and 22.7% were visible minorities. Given this educational achievement distribution, equity-seeking universities are often perplexed as to how to meet national employment equity goals for teaching faculty.

Within certain major fields of study, this challenge either increases or decreases. For example, consulting the chart above we can see that if Queen's wanted to hire a professor of Econometrics and Mathematical Economics, its pool of candidates would consist entirely of White males. On the other hand, if it needed an Elementary School Teaching Specialized professor, its pool of candidates would consist entirely of White women. Aboriginal candidates would be available in such fields as speech Pathology, and male visible minority candidates would be abundant in the field of office administration (Secretarial/Administrative).

Recapitulation

Background

Even since the Abella Report inspired the Federal government to create the *Employment Equity Act* and the *Federal Contractors Program*, Employment Equity initiatives have been a reality for many Canadian employers. As a Federal Contractor, Queen's is required to take all steps necessary to achieve employment equity for women, Aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities, and visible minorities as a whole and within each of its job classifications.

National Employment Equity Goals

Canadian employment equity goals are determined by calculating the percentage of the national workforce in 2000-2001 who were in each of the four equity seeking groups. Universities across Canada measure employment equity groups against these figures.

National Employment Equity Groups

The Government requires that its constituents achieve equity within their workforces in general, and within each of fourteen occupational groups in particular.

Challenges

Occupational, Geographical, and Educational Attainment distribution represent significant challenges to equity-seeking employers. To face these challenges, special efforts to recruit and retain equity-seeking employees are required. These workplace efforts must be coupled with educational equity initiatives which will encourage a more diverse segment of the population to receive education and training for positions that traditionally excluded them.

Strategies for Achieving Equity

We all can play a role in helping the University achieve its Employment Equity goals

- Participate in the Queen's University "*I Count*" Census.
- Find out about Employment Equity and how it can contribute to success for Queen's University.
- Inquire about Employment Equity practices and goals within your own department.
- Support the creation and maintenance of a workplace climate that is inclusive of and welcoming for all, including Aboriginal peoples, members of visible minority/racialized groups, people with disabilities, women.
- Ensure equity practices are followed with regards to each stage of the recruitment process: position advertisement, interview, job offer and orientation.
- Note that the Faculty Collective Agreement goes beyond the FCP and lists sexual orientation and gender diversity among the areas requiring special measures to ensure equity.
- Assess your department with regards to accessibility for people with disabilities and develop plans for removing any identified barriers.
- Learn about responsibilities for accommodating people with disabilities and/or faith requirements.
- Take a Positive Space session to ensure a positive climate for employees of all sexual orientations and gender identities.
- Find out about available resources to assist in achieving equity.
- Ensure an understanding of harassment/discrimination policies at Queen's.

Strategies for Addressing Inequity

- Recognize your rights and responsibilities under the FCP. It targets the achievement of Employment Equity for four designated groups: Aboriginal peoples, women, visible minorities and people with disabilities.
- Understand that at the time of the *Abella Report*, which designated four groups as the beneficiaries of employment equity, there was no data on the representation rates of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people in the workforce. This is because the Census did not collect data on the sexual orientation or gender identity of the Canadian workforce population. This does not mean that these and other historically disadvantaged groups do not deserve equal opportunity in the workplace.
- Recognize your rights and responsibilities under the Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC). The code makes it unlawful to discriminate or harass on several grounds including: race, sex, colour, ancestry, place of origin, ethnic origin, marital status, same sex partner status, sexual orientation, age, disability, citizenship, family status and religion .
- Fight discrimination. If you perceive that a policy or practice within your unit is discriminating against any of the groups protected by the FCP or the OHRC, voice your concerns to your supervisor or, in confidence, to the Advisory Service provided by the Queen's Human Rights Office.

Resources

Council of Canadians with Disabilities www.ccdonline.ca

DAWN Ontario: Disabled Women's Network dawn.thot.net

Department of Canadian Heritage www.pch.gc.ca

Federal Contractors Program www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/lp/lo/lsw/we/programs/fcp/index-we.shtml

Office the University Advisor on Equity at Queen's www.queensu.ca/equity

Ontario Human Rights Commission www.ohrc.on.ca/

Ontario Human Rights Commission's Publication on the Duty to Accommodate www.ohrc.on.ca/english/publications/disability-policy_3.shtml

Queen's Ban Righ Centre www.queensu.ca/dsao/ind/banrigh/index.htm

Queen's Council on Employment Equity www.queensu.ca/equity/cee.php

Queen's Four Directions Aboriginal Student Centre www.queensu.ca/dsao/4dasc/4D-1.htm

Queen's Human Resources www.hr.queensu.ca

Queen's Human Rights Office www.queensu.ca/humanrights

Queen's International Centre www.queensu.ca/quic/home.htm

Queen's Multicultural Calendar multiculturalcalendar.com/ecal/index.php?s=c-queen

Queen's University's Policy for Employees with Disabilities www.hr.queensu.ca/policies/personal-workaccom.php

Status of Women Canada: Women's Equality www.swc-cfc.gc.ca

For your convenience, this publication is available online on our website at: www.queensu.ca/equity and may be obtained in alternative formats as well.

Notes:

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