

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Committee Update #3
Department of Psychology, Queen's University
October 2020

Committee: Lisa Bas, Tess Clifford, Michele Morningstar, Trinda Penniston, Alix Young, Isabel Magsucang & Sari van Anders (chair)

The 2020-2021 EDI committee met for 1.5 hrs on Thursday October 8th for our fourth meeting. If you have questions about the items, feel free to get in touch with Sari van Anders. We welcomed each other back as well as our new undergrad members (Alix Young & Isabel Magsucang), updated ourselves about what we did in the previous meeting and between that meeting and this one, and then discussed the rest of our agenda. Here is a summary!

- Updates:
 - Sari will be working on the DEAP (university tool for departmental tracking of EDI efforts).
 - We are waiting to hear about the Distinguished Lecture Series fund and numbers.
 - We discussed Sari's meeting with AI, an Indigenous Elder from Indigenous Initiatives about our committee's name (see note about mandate and name below) and voted to go with Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (which was later changed to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion [EDI] at the department head's suggestion).
 - The head confirmed our budget (\$10,000).
 - We discussed documenting our time on the committee, since it is quite extensive, and decided this was probably useful mainly or only for faculty members but that members could choose to do so or not.
- We continued discussion on some policies.
 - We had to update our mandate document, since the head let Sari know that it needed to be voted on by the department. We voted to accept the new mandate (the mandate is below these meeting notes!) and send it to the department to approve.
 - We revisited one of the action proposals about a Cross-Canada network for grad students from equity-seeking groups that are so underrepresented in our department that we cannot have an internal community/networking/support group. We decided to hold off on this until another year, to allow us to focus more on smaller, more doable, and solely internal projects.
 - We voted to accept our method of selecting undergrads who apply if the undergrad committee send us more than two people.
 - We updated our timeline.
 - We discussed some of the considerations for the support committee, and asked Lisa to post the documents in our Teams channel so we could send feedback before our next discussion.
- We reminded our grad student members that they are itemizing and making priorities from the various grad student letters for our committee to work on or follow up on (we agreed that this was better than faculty doing this and potentially getting it wrong!).
- Website: Michele updated us and showed us the mock-up, and the site should be up soon (a lot of the waiting has been on the name change, which took a while because the committee wanted input from Indigenous communities at Queen's, and an appointment with an

Indigenous Elder from the university's Indigenous Initiatives office took a while to schedule, and then we were waiting on the department vote).

- Sari checked in about whether Teams was working for the committee's communications outside our meetings and everyone (except Sari) liked it and wanted to stick with it for now :)

Goals and Mandate
Psychology EDI (Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) Committee
Queen's University
10.10.2020

The goal of the Psychology EDI committee is to work towards lasting and meaningful change that makes our department diverse, equitable, decolonized, and inclusive in accordance with social justice principles. These principles include that: (a) progressive change needs to happen within structures, individuals, and our discipline; (b) that change is everyone's responsibility, and should not be disproportionately shouldered by marginalized groups; (c) and that power, privilege, and majoritized groups need to be named and addressed as well as oppression, marginalization, and minoritized groups.

We focus on EDI work around the five equity-seeking groups identified by the Canadian government and/or Queen's University: (1) members of racialized groups/visible minorities, (2) women, (3) Indigenous/Métis/Inuit/First Nations people, (4) people with disabilities, and (5) LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans/gender, queer) people. Some people clearly exist at the intersection of multiple oppressions that these five groups are subject to (e.g., not just misogyny, but misogynoir or transmysogyny). We also seek to work to improve the department for other minoritized groups, e.g., first-generation students, low income people, International students, etc. EDI needs and actions sometimes overlap for these groups and sometimes are distinct and the EDI committee aims to be thoughtful around shared and specific efforts. We focus on long-term change, but also a limited number of urgent issues as they arise.

The committee's work is to make change and we focus on the following areas, though not exclusively: teaching, supervision, research, service, climate, and hiring/recruitment. To that end, we develop principles, priorities, and procedures to help guide our work. We work with representatives of graduate students, undergraduate students, and faculty to inform and focus on change at all levels. We are a departmental committee, and will be a standing item on the Psychology Meeting agenda to share progress and invite involvement.

Some of our specific tasks include the following. We share guidance documents with the department that have suggestions, recommendations, and best practices. We organize invited speakers and training sessions. We will develop an annual plan and, in consultation with the Department Head, we will develop a budget; and we will report regularly on EDI progress from our committee and the larger department, including successes, barriers, and recommendations. We query the department to understand patterns of EDI activity, recruit volunteers for EDI initiatives, etc. We communicate with the department and sometimes outside of it, and develop notes about urgent EDI issues for the department to share. We partner with groups within our department or outside of it to meet committee goals. We consult on department materials related to EDI concerns when we are able to, with advance notice and encourage EDI being taken into consideration early in project development so there is time for us to give meaningful feedback. We bring EDI issues to the department, including to specific committees, for discussion and/or action. Because we focus on department-level structural change, **we do not** act on or investigate

Commented [SvA1]: The committee's original name was EDI but "decolonization" was added early on to try to signal a focus on Indigenous issues. Our committee voted to return the name to the original EDI (diversity, equity, and inclusion) and here is why: "Decolonization" is often used as a buzzword/metaphor but really has to do with giving land and self-governance back to Indigenous people. For example, Oxford Languages defines it as "the action or process of a state withdrawing from a former colony, leaving it independent." [This article](#) makes clear how "decolonization" is rife with misappropriation and misuse as non-Indigenous people use it (with good intentions!) to mean caring about Indigenous issues. Why does this matter? It matters because our committee name would have a term that *does not* reflect what it can do or its mandate, and thus overpromise and be *counter to Indigenous ways of knowing*. The EDI Chair brought this up with the committee, who partially agreed, but worried that removing "decolonization" might signal a removal of commitment to Indigenous issues. Dr. van Anders offered to discuss this with the Indigenous Initiatives Office. They set up an appointment between Dr. van Anders and an Indigenous Elder whom the office pays as a consultant for just these issues. It took a while for that appointment to happen but was helpful. The consultant – Allen Doxtator – explained that not only should we *not* have "decolonization" in the committee title, but that it would be inappropriate, wrong, and even offensive to have it in, because a state institution (like Queen's) and our department cannot do decolonization, and the word would be for show to *non-Indigenous* people, rather than represent meaningful change *to Indigenous* people. Dr. van Anders brought up concerns with "Indigenization" as a replacement, and Doxtator also clarified that, for similar reasons, "Indigenization" would be inappropriate, wrong, and also offensive, since we are not involving Indigenous people in our governance. Doxtator noted that this is an ongoing issue with new committees at Queen's who have good intentions but little understanding/knowledge of actual Indigenous issues and knowledge. The two agreed that EDI was perhaps the best title to avoid miscommunicating at best and being offensive at worst with misappropriations and misunderstandings of Indigenous social justice terms. Allen Doxtator would be happy to explain this further if people still don't understand, and he pointed out that the Truth and Reconciliation activities of Queen's are specifically aimed at the university partnering with Indigenous community members to enact change, and the committee is looking forward to doing that with upcoming initiatives.

EDI complaints about individuals (we can direct those with issues to those who can), nor do we do area-specific work though we can support areas in their work.

For information about past, present, and ongoing policies and change efforts, including those that successful or stalled, see our website. We aim to communicate updates regularly, with a large-scale overview annually.