

Valuing Differences

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Universities are places where new ideas and perspectives can form a life of their own.

Ideas grow and take shape in the minds of students, staff and faculty, becoming living entities when discussed, encouraged and nurtured. An idea changes and adjusts through the influences of many, until it grows into a new concept or approach with potential to affect positive change for our communities.

Fresh perspectives are as integral to academic enterprise as blood is to life. Accordingly, The University of British Columbia recognizes that diversity amongst its students, staff and faculty is essential to ensure a lively learning environment where ideas and perspectives are given voice. Being a diverse community is not enough, however; UBC must ensure that those voices perceived to be 'different' are recognized and appreciated.

The values of mutual respect and equity are therefore central to the University's strategic planning document, *Place and Promise: The UBC Plan*, in which UBC articulates its commitment to building intercultural aptitudes and creating a strong sense of inclusion. *Valuing Difference:*

A Message From Anne Condon and Tom Patch

In the winter of 2009, we were asked to co-chair a committee to develop a strategic plan to advance equity and diversity at UBC.

The committee received input from a wide range of individuals and groups, both in-person and online. We were impressed by the strong and broad-based commitment to inclusion that was expressed by students, faculty and staff. That input helped shaped *Valuing Difference: A Strategy for Advancing Equity and Diversity at UBC*.

A clear message was that, to succeed, UBC's equity and diversity strategy must be aimed at inclusion in all aspects of university life. Advancing equity and diversity is not just about a diverse workforce and student body; it must also be about curriculum and scholarship, pedagogy and climate, and equitable opportunities. Above all, it requires demonstrations of commitment from the University's leadership.

We also heard about some of the outstanding equity-related initiatives that are already underway across the University. Several of those initiatives are highlighted within this document. One of the goals of this strategy is to support those efforts by locating them as part of an overarching effort to advance equity and diversity at UBC.

We would like to thank everyone who provided input into this plan, especially the Advisory committees on both campuses and the Working Group that contributed many hours of their time. We also want to recognize the many people on campus who are committed to equity and diversity at UBC.

This strategic plan is not the end of the process. To give it effect there must be an ongoing commitment to implement its recommended actions and to monitor and report on its progress. We look forward to participating in that process.

Anne Condon (Co-Chair), Professor of Computer Science,
Faculty of Science



Tom Patch (Co-Chair), Associate Vice President, Equity

Valuing Difference

Equity and diversity are not abstract goals;
they are essential qualities of an **outstanding institution**.

UBC embraces equity and diversity as integral to our academic mission. We encourage and support participation of the widest range of perspectives in our exploration and exchange of knowledge and ideas. An essential component of academic excellence is a truly

open and diverse community that actively fosters the inclusion of voices that have been underrepresented or excluded. Thus, UBC is committed to fostering a living, learning, and working environment to which all can contribute and within which all can thrive.

An environment that fosters equity inspires innovation in teaching, research, scholarship, and service. It enhances wide-reaching opportunities for mentoring. Its diverse communities and varied experience and expertise will make it a welcoming destination for the best and brightest faculty, staff, and students.

I. Introduction

UBC has a rich history. We recognize that part of this history includes the suppression or exclusion of some of the voices that make up our diverse society. UBC has taken great strides in moving beyond that history. Nevertheless, some legacies of exclusion must still be addressed.

Women now comprise more than half of the UBC workforce, and almost a third of employees on the Vancouver campus identify themselves as “visible minorities”.

However, women and visible minorities continue to be underrepresented in leadership positions. Aboriginal people and persons with disabilities are underrepresented in many sectors of the UBC community – indeed, the representation of people with disabilities is declining¹. UBC’s student body appears to be more diverse than our workforce. But too many students from underrepresented groups continue to report that they feel marginalized or tokenized within their classes and they do not see their lives and experiences reflected in the curriculum.²

Much has been done and continues to be done to make UBC more inclusive of and welcoming to groups

that may have been excluded or underrepresented in the past. Many excellent initiatives are advancing equity and diversity in units across the University.³ The following plan is not intended to replace those initiatives. Rather, it aims to provide an overarching framework that will, over five years, embed equity and diversity more deeply into UBC’s institutional practices and will support the efforts of individual units. For background on the plan, see diversity.ubc.ca.

As part of the Place and Promise project, this plan provides an opportunity to embed equity and diversity goals in all aspects of strategic planning. There is a particularly close relationship between the goals of this plan and those of the Focus on People and the Aboriginal strategic initiatives.

“Equity” and “diversity” are broad terms capable of many interpretations. The plan begins, therefore, by defining these terms and providing some context.

¹ Detailed information on the representation of women, visible minorities, Aboriginal people and persons with disabilities in the UBC workforce is available at the UBC Equity Office website at: <http://www.equity.ubc.ca/data/>.

UBC's Vision, Values and Commitments

The values of integrity, mutual respect, equity and the



Action Plan

Achieving equity and diversity at UBC requires more than vision; it requires an adjustment in our practices at many levels. Such organizational change will not happen without **a genuine commitment to take action to achieve the vision.**

The following Action Plan is intended to give effect to UBC's commitment to achieving an equitable and diverse university. It does so by proposing actions that

II. Strategic Commitment

A strategic commitment, in its most visible form, means that the leadership includes people whose diverse lived experiences can expand thinking and direction by bringing new perspectives, who can represent voices from the perimeter, and who can challenge the status quo. It is at the strategic level that faculties can establish sustainable change through earmarked resources

and visible champions, can foster a welcoming and supportive campus environment and can ensure that grassroots initiatives are properly supported and recognized. Most if not all of the actions in later parts of this document can be incorporated into strategic plans proposed in this area.

- UBC's commitment to equity and diversity are expressed through this plan and other strategic plans including the Aboriginal Strategic Plan and Focus on People
- In 2009 the number of childcare spaces at UBC Vancouver was increased by 31% to 599. The objective is to increase it to 1000 in the next 5-10 years

- UBC conducted an accessibility audit in 2010, results are pending
- More than 50% of UBC Vancouver students identify themselves as ethnically Chinese or another category of Asian. 7% of UBC's academic leaders identify themselves as "visible minorities"

Working Climate - Science Faculty

A diverse workplace signals that the faculty draws from the best talent available, that our students get a well-rounded education, and that our research programs are informed by diverse perspectives. Diversity is not only synergistic with excellence, but also promotes equitable access to the rewards of an academic career.



Simon Peacock,
Dean, Faculty of Science
Striving for a diverse
and supportive faculty

Recent reports on the working environment, parent leave and mentoring within the Faculty point to ways the university can foster excellence by providing a more supportive and equitable environment for all of our faculty. These reports, and consultation with the faculty, provided thoughtful recommendations on steps that UBC Science and the UBC administration can take to address current problems and concerns.

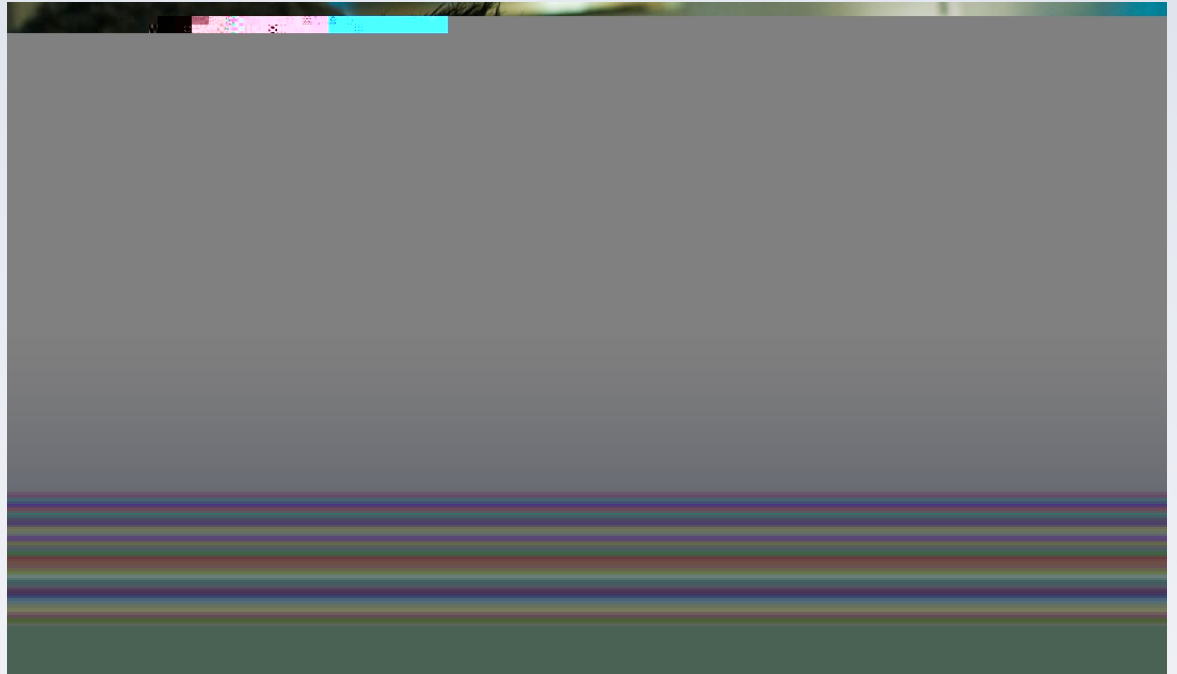
The Faculty of Science Dean's Office has already acted on several of these recommendations, but we have much work ahead of us and must all work together to be successful. We must increase our efforts to hire outstanding women and men from different cultural, ethnic, and economic backgrounds, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, or disability status. We must also ensure that all of our faculty are comfortable in expressing their viewpoints, are supported in doing their best work, have support for family responsibilities, and know that their accomplishments are valued.

[illegible]

III. Curriculum and Classroom Climate

a) Curriculum and Scholarship

Curriculum and academic inquiry are powerful tools for promoting diversity and equity. A curriculum that reflects and embraces diversity challenges and



Curriculum and Scholarship (Action Items)

Actions [Timeframe]	Possible Metrics	Oversight
Strike a Task Force to identify ways to expand students' options for courses and co-curricular experiences which deepen their understanding of equity and diversity issues and that are appropriate to their field of study. A plan may include: • Modifying existing courses and creating new courses, or extra-curricular experiences; • Identifying new resources needed to sustain such courses, including the funding of teaching assistantships. • Identifying ways to increase flexibility in students' curriculum [18 months]	• Number of courses focusing on diversity issues • Number of other courses that include significant content related to equity and diversity • Publication of Task Force plan	Provosts
Conduct a feasibility study on ways to promote both basic and applied research related to equity and diversity including identification of mechanisms that would foster, coordinate, and disseminate research regarding equity and diversity issues. [Two years]	• Level of funding for research on diversity issues • Publication of a feasibility study	Provosts, VP Research
Create programs, such as second degree programs or interdisciplinary options, that provide new ways for entering fields in which certain groups are significantly underrepresented [Ongoing]	• Quality and uptake of alternate routes to programs; graduation rates of students from underrepresented groups	Provosts, Deans

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT

Across North America, participation of women in Computer Science (CS) degree programs at PhD-granting institutions has dropped consistently, from over 18% in 1993 to just 11% in 2009. Helping to reverse this trend, UBC's Bachelor of Computer Science second degree program (http://www.cs.ubc.ca/prospective/ugrad/how_to_apply_second_degree.shtml)

Educational Outreach in the Downtown Eastside

Humanities 101, the cornerstone in UBC's

b) Classroom Climate

As a university community, we consider the free and lawful expression of ideas and viewpoints to be essential to our mission. As scholars, we believe that discussion across boundaries and across pre-conceptions is a necessary condition for the resolution of even the most intractable conflicts. As instructors, we have the responsibility to ensure that these discussions take place within our classrooms. Indeed, the university classroom is where these vital lessons must be taught if we are to equip our students to confront and address the challenges of the 21st century.

Classroom Climate (Action Items)

A strategic commitment to equity and diversity means that we must act in ways that proclaim and define the parameters of respectful debate, and that we must foster

vigorous debate within those parameters. Our classroom and co-curricular climates must welcome the testing of new ideas, diverse and marginalized viewpoints, and

emerging opinions as well as majority viewpoints. To this end we will take the following actions:

Develop a classroom climate policy statement for UBC and tools to measure its effectiveness.	Achievement of statement; campus-wide awareness measures; instruments for assessing progress on classroom climate	Provosts, AVP Equity, Ombudsperson
Hold an annual open forum about the meaning of respectful classrooms – model respectful debate in this setting.	Achievement of the event; attendance at this event	VP Students
Work with the GSS on a graduate studies climate policy, taking account the mixed classroom/research setting of graduate studies.	Establishment of this policy; breadth of engagement of grad student community	Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies (UBCV), Dean, College of Graduate Studies (UBCO), Ombudsperson
Support students to develop ways of expressing their		

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT

“What I Learned in Class Today” – Exploring Classroom Discussions of Aboriginal Content

In 2007, two undergraduate students in the First Nations Studies Program – Karrmen Crey and Amy Perreault – embarked on a research project to examine the ways in which classroom discussions of Aboriginal issues were being addressed at UBC.

The intent of the project was to bring awareness to the impact of these discussions, which often stirred up feelings of alienation and anger for the Aboriginal students in the classrooms.

The first phase of the project resulted in a series of nine videotaped interviews of students – who shared their stories of classroom conversations. Karrmen and Amy created companion resource materials to be used in conjunction with the video interviews, organized into modules around specific themes. The second phase of this project, begun in 2008, includes interviews of instructors and administrators, capturing their insights and challenges in facilitating discussions of Aboriginal issues. The video recordings and supporting resources for What I Learned in Class Today can be found at <http://fnsp.arts.ubc.ca/projects/classroom>⁷



⁷ This and several other initiative descriptions are quoted directly from a report for the Equity Office prepared by Lori J. Charvat. To read the full report, Exemplary Practices in Equity and Diversity Programming: University of British Columbia – Vancouver (2009), go to http://equity.ubc.ca/files/2010/06/exemplary_practices_in_equity_and_diversity_programming_UBCV.pdf.

Black 1.2%
Arab 0.5%
Aboriginal 1.0%

Chinese 38.4%

Filipino 2.6%

Korean 7.5%
Japanese 1.8%

Black 1.8%
Arab 0.8%
Aboriginal 2.6%

Filipino 2.0%
Chinese 8.9%

Korean 1.9%
Japanese 1.4%

Conduct research to identify barriers that prevent qualified applicants from disadvantaged groups from admission to UBC, whether they arise during the application process or earlier. Develop tools to measure progress in removing those barriers. *[Ongoing with annual progress reports]*

Develop effective recruitment strategies, including

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT

Revise the existing UBC Employment Equity Plan to:

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PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT



- Women make up 56% of the workforce on both campuses. They comprise 37% of the faculty on the Vancouver campus and 42% on the Okanagan campus. 27% of academic administrators, such as Deans and Heads, are women.
- Approximately 15% of faculty on both campuses identify themselves

V. Supporting Success

The benefits of a diverse community are maximized when all members of the community are included and valued in the discussion and exchange of knowledge and ideas. Full participation in the life of the institution enhances well-being and thus



Educate UBC's workforce on ways to recognize and address challenges and opportunities that arise in the context of their work that relate to the diversity of the student population. Specifically, provide

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PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT

Aboriginal Access Studies

One of the most significant barriers to participation of Aboriginal students in post-secondary education is the need to qualify with academic course grades. Of the 47% of Aboriginal students who complete high school, only 8% graduate with a university eligible GPA. In addition to academic

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AAS successful. AAS looks to provide an educational experience of the “whole person”; physical, emotional, social and intellectual wellbeing are all foundational. This holistic approach is a key concept of medicine wheel teachings where there is an interrelationship

model can be seen in variations throughout different North American tribal groups. Because these teachings are familiar to an Aboriginal worldview, AAS students are able to identify with the program and its holistic elements.

The AAS initiative is succeeding in removing or reducing the barriers to post-secondary education for some Aboriginal students. Of the 64 students who have registered in AAS, 67% are in post-secondary education. Of the 67% in post-secondary education, 48% are enrolled at UBC Okanagan either in a degree program (28%) or as a continuing AAS student (20%). Degree programs to which AAS students have successfully been admitted include: Arts, Science, Management, Education and Social Work.

Supporting Workforce Success (Action Items)

Identify and address barriers to well-being and success of faculty and staff from underrepresented groups.

Track measures of success, such as promotions, salary, or awards, and address systemic inequities in these measures. *[Ongoing, expanding scope over time]*

- Results of employee satisfaction and climate surveys



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA