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May 2021 EDI Action Plan Progress Report: **"Challenges and Opportunities"**

> *Other than what has been outlined in the section above, outline any challenges and opportunities or successes regarding the implementation of the EDI action plan, as well as best practices that have been discovered to date. If COVID-19 has had an impact on the implementation of the institution's action plan, please outline how below. How has or will the institution address these challenges and opportunities?*

The primary challenges and opportunities have been highlighted well in the prior sections, with clear noting of these within each of the Key Objective sections.

As was noted in those sections, the main impacts of COVID-19 on implementing the EDI Action Plan were related to: (1) delaying (further) the finalization of the Strategic Research Plan renewal, and (2) delaying ability of the Deans to work together on developing a formal mentoring program for junior CRC Chairholders.

The delay associated with the SRP has now been overcome, and the SRP renewal themes/actions/highlights have been presented to the Saint Mary's University community in a few public/broad-based methods in the first half of 2021, and the final SRP will be approved in June 2021.

Note that an additional complication with developing a formal mentoring program for junior CRC Chairholders with the Deans has been the fact that 2 of the 3 line-Deans (Arts, Science, Business) have/are "Acting" as we are currently in the midst of active searches for a new Dean of Science and new Dean of Arts. We will wait until the new Deans are in place to work together on the mentoring initiative. This should allow completion of the planning/program by end of 2021.

May 2021 EDI Action Plan Progress Report - Part D: **Engagement with individuals from underrepresented groups**

Outline how the institution has engaged with underrepresented groups: e.g. racialized minorities, Indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, women, LGBTQ2+ individuals, during the implementation of the action plan (during the reporting period), including how they have been involved in identifying and implementing any course corrections/adjustments, if applicable. For example, how was feedback gathered on whether the measures being implemented are resulting in a more inclusive research environment for chairholders of underrepresented groups? How has intersectionality been considered in developing and implementing the plan (if applicable)? Have new gaps been identified? How will members of underrepresented groups continue to be engaged? (limit: 10 200 characters)

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The AVP Research formed a *"CRC Employment Equity and Diversity Advisory Committee"* at the onset of the development of the EDI Action Plan. This committee consists of a diverse group of faculty members, representing the various Faculties and equity deserving groups. The committee has been consulted in the development of the EDI Action Plan and will continue to be consulted on an ongoing basis. A committee meeting was initially planned for January 2021, however this has been delayed until Fall 2021 – at which time we will do a review of existing initiatives to ensure they are relevant, and make any necessary adjustments to the Plan. Several members of this advisory committee, because of their subject matter expertise, have also consulted on other university-wide EDI initiatives, including the re-envisioned Employment Equity and Diversity Commitment Statement and the development of the Employment Equity and Diversity Policy.

Moving forward, focus groups will be utilized as a means of engaging and consulting with faculty. The call to solicit participation from interested faculty will include language that emphasizes the importance of perspectives from equity-deserving groups.

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May 2021 EDI Action Plan Progress Report: PART E: <u>Efforts to Address Systemic</u> Barriers More Broadly within the Institution

Briefly outline other EDI initiatives underway at the institution (that are broader than those tied to the CRCP) that are expected to address systemic barriers and foster an equitable, diverse and inclusive research environment. For example, are there projects underway that underscore the importance of EDI to research excellence? Is there additional training being offered to the faculty at large? Are there initiatives to improve the campus climate? Please provide hyperlinks where possible. Note that collecting this information from institutions is a requirement of the 2019 Addendum to the 2006 Canadian Human Rights Settlement Agreement and provides context for the work the institution is doing in addressing barriers for the CRCP. (limit: 4080 characters)

The following initiatives under way to improve the campus climate:

- SMU Work Ways is an initiative to give faculty and staff flexibility to work when and where they are most effective.

- The new Office of Transformation (under the Vice-President Finance and Administration), in collaboration with a SMU faculty member and Chairholder (Dr. Kevin Kelloway), are now in the process of developing an Employee Engagement Survey to gather feedback on individual experiences on campus. The findings will guide improvements to campus climate.

- Human Resources is in the early stages of developing an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion framework, which includes our university's existing "Respectful Workplace" and "Healthy Campus" initiatives.

- The President's Standing Committee on the Prevention of Racism (PSCOTPR) was formed and has been actively engaged in a series of events across campus.

  Other initiatives which have already been reported on in earlier sections of this Progress Report are worthy of being mentioned/highlighted here, since they are in place on a broad campus-wide scale, and not only restricted to the CRC Program; these will be repeated here:

- A SMU Employment Equity and Diversity Policy has been approved by the Executive Management Group and a draft Terms of Reference and mandate for the Employment Equity and Diversity Committee is in progress.

- The University has begun the process to develop a Diversity Excellence strategy.

- The University has recently re-envisioned the Employment Equity and Diversity Commitment statement that will appear on all job postings. The new statement is more inclusive of all equity-deserving groups. The statement also includes information related to

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accommodations.

- Training by the Diversity and Inclusion Advisor on EDI, Accommodations and Unconscious Bias is delivered to faculty members and Deans as members of departmental search, appointments, promotion and tenure committees

- Saint Mary's University has recently signed on to be an Employer Partner with the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion.