

Western University DIVERSITY and INCLUSION PLAN (2011 – 2015) For Faculty and Staff



Introduction and Background

Western strives for excellence and understands that we must adapt and embrace organizational change that recognizes the existence of challenging societal issues regarding the distribution of power and privilege on our campus.

Western recognizes that diversity enriches our experience, broadens our perspectives and allows us to compete effectively for talent at the local, provincial, national and global level. Diversity has been identified as “one of the twelve principles at the heart of our institutional self-definition”.

Diversity: as part of our commitment to excellence, we seek to recognize and remove the obstacles faced by traditionally under-represented groups in order to facilitate their access to and advancement at Western. We respect and celebrate the diversity of people who make up our community (Engaging the Future, 2006, p.3).

Western has reaffirmed its commitment to diversity by articulating key directions for *Supporting faculty and staff* in the Update to the University’s Strategic Plan that was provided to Senate at its meeting on September 24, 2010.

- Sustaining the core/central services that support the work of faculty and staff across the University
- Increasing the attention paid to career mentoring for faculty (teaching and supervision, curriculum design, grant applications, promotion and tenure)
- Emphasizing staff access to professional development and training
- Emphasizing the formal opportunities for development of leadership and management skills by current and prospective academic and support unit leaders
- Increasing diversity among staff and faculty, with the aspiration of surpassing the national averages for representation of designated groups in our sector
- Sustaining and expanding Western’s efforts to inculcate a culture of respect in all of our activities as a university community

An emphasis on diversity supports Western’s aspirations to raise its international profile and expand its efforts within the region and around the world to attract the best talent to our workforce. In a workplace that respects and celebrates diversity, we can draw upon our colleagues’ different backgrounds and experiences and address challenges and conduct research in new and innovative ways.

Western's formal commitment to diversity dates back to 1988 when the University first became a signatory to the Federal Contractors Program (FCP)¹. Western has met its accountabilities under the FCP, which include, inter alia, the development of an Employment Equity Plan² and the conduct of an Employment Systems Review³ and regular workforce analyses⁴. Employment equity means the hiring of the candidate best suited for a position from an appropriately diverse applicant pool in a manner that avoids conscious and unconscious biases and barriers that disadvantage designated groups and minorities.

The diversity and inclusion strategic priorities outlined in this plan reflect recommendations made by Western community members who were asked to review and respond to the Employment Systems Review as well as suggest further ideas that could have a positive impact on Western's diversity. While the Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan will be guided by the offices of Equity & Human Rights Services, Human Resources, Faculty Relations and the Vice-Provost (Academic Planning, Policy and Faculty), the support of all of Western's leaders, faculty and staff will be vital as we work together to achieve these goals.

Vision

WESTERN UNIVERSITY IS A COMMUNITY THAT RESPECTS, ACCEPTS, NURTURES AND CELEBRATES THE DIVERSITY OF ITS MEMBERS. WESTERN IS COMMITTED TO DIVERSITY AND SEEKS TO CREATE A CULTURALLY-INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY BY IMPLEMENTING THE FOLLOWING PRACTICES.

1. ENGAGING AND RETAINING THE BEST TALENT

Western strives to attract and retain the best talent available in an increasingly diverse workplace.

Canada's labour market is changing. It is estimated that by 2031, between 25% and 28% of the population will be foreign-born. Between 29% and 32% of the national population could belong to a visible minority group. (Source: Statistics Canada study, *Projections of the Diversity in the Canadian Population, 2006-2031*, published March 2010).

According to the International Personnel Management Association's Benchmarking Committee, "diversity efforts in the workplace facilitate the exchange of new perspectives, improve problem solving by inviting different ideas, and create a respectful, accepting work environment." Surveys have demonstrated a positive impact on high performance where leadership teams include a diversity of ages, ethnicity, and

gender. A diverse workforce also can improve organizational productivity and creativity. While leading a diverse community can be a challenge, there is also potential for great accomplishment.

Key Actions:

Recruitment, Selection and Hiring

- Advertisements for positions at Western will have due regard to employment equity considerations (i.e., credentials and skills).
- Targeted outreach and selection methodologies that avoid biases and barriers will be implemented to address areas of under-representation of designated group members.
- Representations of Western’s diversity shall be considered and featured in print ads, web materials and other materials used for students, staff, faculty and campus promotions.

Training and Development

- Implement systemic ways to ensure that more women and other designated groups achieve leadership positions at Western. Consideration of training and development opportunities will be paramount to such implementation.
- Review and develop a career-planning system for faculty and staff.

Resignation and Retirement

- Implementation of a “leaving/resignation survey” strategy to allow employees choosing to leave Western to identify any barriers that contributed to their departure.

2. INCLUSION AND CONNECTIVITY OF THE COMMUNITY

Western is a community where all members feel valued, respected and included.

In an increasingly global world, driven by social media and online communications, we sometimes lose sight of the value of knowing your neighbour and colleagues. As we met with people in preparation for this plan, we consistently heard messages that indicated a desire for community-building and connecting with others. We heard requests for mentoring, networking, social gatherings, etc. While some of these requests were faculty, or staff, or department, or unit-specific, we were struck by the number who simply stated a desire to connect with others within the greater-Western community.

Key Actions:

- Review Western’s current orientation process for new staff and faculty. Ensure we are effectively welcoming and connecting with new members of our campus.

- Review and enhance the current mentoring programs available at Western. Ensure that learning opportunities are extended to those who wish to become mentors.
- Explore creating new networking opportunities at Western.
- Implement a recognition program for Diversity and Inclusion Champions.
- Review and develop diversity-based services at Western for faculty and staff.

3. ACCESSIBILITY AND ACCOMMODATION

Western is accessible to all and respects people’s different needs.

Western respects the duty to accommodate articulated in the Ontario Human Rights Code and the goals of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.

Western is committed to ensuring that each individual has genuine, open and unhindered access to services, as well as employment and academic opportunities, which are free from systemic or other barriers.

Key Actions:

- Review of guidelines and services related to accommodation.
- Proactively incorporate, as feasible, the draft AODA Standards as opportunities arise to do so.
- Implement and communicate a system of reporting and responding to accessibility-related concerns.
- Work to develop and foster positive dialogue about attitudes and stereotypes regarding accessibility and accommodation of persons with disabilities. Efforts should be focused on enhancing the understanding of needs, the process for accommodation and how accommodations are beneficial to the organization.

4. WORK-LIFE BALANCE

A healthy work-life balance is a major determinant of employee satisfaction.

Maintaining a balance between personal and work life is often a challenge in today’s busy world. For many years, Western has offered supports, such as the Employee Assistance Program, an on-site Staff/Faculty Health Clinic and a child-care facility, designed to help faculty and staff access convenient and timely services. An employer who finds creative and proactive ways of supporting a healthy work-life balance will gain a more committed, productive and positive workforce.

Key Actions:

- Continue to develop and offer programs and sessions to staff and faculty that enhance their health and well-being.

- Ensure employees have knowledge about the supports available to them (and their families) at Western and within the London community.
- Review of the current policies and issues relating to leaves of absence.
- Recognize and depict (in advertising, outreach materials) an inclusive definition of “family” and encourage employees to define “family” as it is most appropriate to his or her own circumstances (i.e. single-parent, same-sex relationship, common-law, married without children, etc.).
- Endorse images that depict healthy work-life balance models.

5. A COMMUNITY FREE OF HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION

Every member of the Western community has the right to study, work and conduct his or her activities in an environment free of harassment and discrimination.

In addition to protecting employees and students from discrimination and harassment as defined in the Ontario Human Rights Code, Western’s policies have prohibited personal (or, general) harassment for years. Recent amendments to the Occupational Health and Safety Act now require employers to respond to concerns of workplace violence or harassment. Western takes its commitment to a Safe Campus Community seriously and will act promptly to address any complaint of harassment or discrimination.

Key Actions:

- Review and revise the current harassment and discrimination policy(ies) and process(es) to ensure efficacy for the Western community. Specific consideration will be given to a process for bringing issues forward when there is a power imbalance or fear, as well as a process for addressing “climate” or systemic issues.
- Continue programs that facilitate and support a respectful and inclusive environment for faculty and staff.

6. DIVERSITY LEADERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Western’s leaders and managers are accountable for diversity.

While a university is a collegial environment, there is no doubt that individuals look to the leaders of the institution to facilitate the setting of priorities and goals and to be held accountable for the delivery of the same.

Key Actions:

- Provide specific equity and diversity-related data and resources to all leaders and managers and human resources relevant to their department and/or unit in

order to assist in and measure diversity and employment equity efforts and outcomes.

- Require all those who participate in human-resource based decisions (i.e., hiring, performance management, etc.) to continually improve their diversity competencies through professional development and/or learning opportunities.
- Recognize diversity as a core competency of leadership.
- Expect attendance by leaders and managers at mandatory, on-going learning opportunities about how to build a supportive and respectful organizational culture.
- Institute processes and accountabilities to ensure that Selection, Promotion and Tenure, and Annual Performance Evaluation Committees are employing equity-principles in the course of their work. Such processes to include training, monitoring and reporting to the relevant Dean and the Provost's office.

All Western community members are invited to help create a respectful and inclusive community where diversity is embraced. For further information about these priorities, or for information regarding employment equity at Western, please contact the office of Equity & Human Rights Services:

Tel: 519.661.2111 x83334

Email: equity@uwo.ca

Web: www.uwo.ca/equity

Equity & Human Rights Services wishes to thank the following individuals and groups for their valuable input into this Plan: The President's Standing Committee on Employment Equity Committee, The Employment Systems Review Working Group, The University of Western Ontario Faculty Association, Professional and Managerial Association, The University of Western Ontario Staff Association, The Post-Doctoral Student's Association, Betsy Skarakis-Doyle, Clare Tattersall, Cheryl Jamieson, Vivian Peters, Attendees at the PSCEE World Café.

¹ The Federal Contractors Program (FCP) was initiated by Cabinet in 1986 and operates parallel to the Legislated Employment Equity Program (LEEP). Whereas the Employment Equity Act (1995) covers federally regulated employers, the FCP applies to provincially regulated employers with a workforce in Canada of 100 or more employees. Specifically, the FCP applies to contractors – those provincially regulated employers which receive federal government goods or services contracts of \$200, 000 or more. As a condition of bidding on federal contracts, such contractors are required to certify in writing their commitment to employment equity. Contractors which refuse to honour their commitment to employment equity and are found non-compliant with program criteria may lose the right to receive further federal government contracts.

² Western's Employment Equity Policy is found in the Manual of Administrative Policies and Procedures (MAPP) at section 3.2 (<http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/mapp/section3/mapp32.pdf>). Several of Western's collective and employee agreements also include employment equity articles.

³ An Employment Systems Review was conducted between January and June of 2009 by an external consultant. A full summary of the consultant's findings is available here: http://www.uwo.ca/equity/docs/FINAL_ESR_REPORT.pdf. The consultant's recommendations have been recorded and will be implemented, where appropriate and possible. A copy of the Employment Equity Action Plan, containing these recommendations and prepared pursuant to FCP guidelines, is available upon request from the office of Equity & Human Rights Services (www.uwo.ca/equity).

⁴ Available at: <http://www.uwo.ca/equity/reports.htm>