

Statement of principles

We recognize that the material and social conditions in which people live can vary radically, both inside and outside the university. We recognize that these differences in conditions can have a significant impact on educational, professional and personal lives and participation in science both inside and outside of the Department of Botany. These impacts may or may not be visible or easily measurable in terms of academic outcomes, career progression, and quality of life. We support social and operational changes aimed at achieving greater equity, diversity and inclusion in the Department, and define and discuss these goals below. The efforts of this committee are geared toward improving the material and social conditions under which our members study, work, and live as well as increasing equity of access to our Department's programs, activities, and opportunities; as a general principle, our actions are meant to include everyone (prospective and current students, postdocs, staff and faculty). We also strive to ensure that our interactions with, impacts on, the communities in which we work are equitable and inclusive.

Committee purpose and mandate

Our committee works from the following understanding of equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI)^[1]:

Equity refers to achieving parity in policy, processes and outcomes for people with diverse identities. It considers power, access to resources and opportunities, how people are treated, and how they treat each other. Our specific impacts and outcomes can be summarized in the following areas:

- Representational equity, relating to an expectation of proportional participation at all levels of our department
- Resource equity, relating to an expectation of equitable distribution of resources, and closure of equity gaps
- Equity-mindedness, relating to improved awareness of equity issues across our department, and a willingness by all to address this

Diversity captures differences in the lived experiences and perspectives of people that include race and ethnicity, colour, ancestry, place of origin, political belief, religion, marital status, family status, physical and mental disability, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, age, class, socio-economic situations, and educational background.

Inclusion is an active, intentional, and continuous process to address inequities in power and privilege, and to build a respectful and diverse community that includes welcoming spaces and opportunities for all to flourish.

Our overall focus will be advising on strategic directions for advancing EDI, consulting the department and giving guidance on changing policies and procedures, and inspiring new initiatives. For example, we may develop templates or guidance documents, and work to help existing committees within the department assess their activities, policies, and procedures through an EDI lens. We will also propose on-the-ground activities (such as EDI workshops and events) with appropriate expertise and experiences represented. We will seek funding for these activities and, where possible, work in coordination with other groups (e.g., Zoology EDI committee and EDIT group, Student Diversity Initiative at Science, UBC Equity and Inclusion Office).

A core aspect of our mandate will be regular assessment of the culture, climate, policies, and procedures within the department. As a first step, we will take stock of what is already happening within our department, across other units on campus, and within different disciplines of science. What surveys, reports, and resources are available? How have other departments been successful? We will benchmark

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the current climate and issues within the department through a series of surveys and/or focus groups, tailored to different groups within the department. This will include compiling quantitative statistics and qualitative descriptions of lived experiences. To gauge success and provide accountability, we will repeat surveys and/or reconvene focus groups regularly to measure change through time.

Membership

The committee will be composed of graduate students, postdocs, faculty and staff. As far as possible, it will include balanced representation of organizational positions (e.g., teaching and research, career stage, and subdisciplines within Botany) and diversity of lived experiences and perspectives (which are gained only through an individual's first-hand experiences and choices).

Processes

The committee will have a standing monthly meeting time. Co-chairs will schedule the meetings, circulate an agenda in advance (giving opportunities for input from the committee), and handle other logistical tasks. Other committee members will record minutes. We will strive to reach decisions by consensus. If consensus has not formed after reasonable opportunities for discussion, we will decide by majority vote, taking note of dissent. In instances where committee members are uncomfortable raising issues or sharing opinions in front of the entire committee, they can communicate them privately with one or both co-chairs, who will work with them to find a way to communicate their viewpoints to the committee. We will ensure that the workload of the committee is manageable and equitable.

Accountability and reporting structure

The committee will report to the Department Head (our "executive sponsor") once per term and bring up issues at Departmental faculty meetings for input and discussion. Co-chairs will strive to stay informed about the activities of analogous EDI committees, for example by connecting regularly with counterparts on the Zoology, Microbiology & Immunology, and other FoS departmental EDI committees. We will also stay abreast of resources and initiatives being developed by the UBC Faculty of Science and check in regularly with the Associate Dean of Equity and Diversity. The committee's recommendations will be directed to the Department Head and, when appropriate, to the Associate Dean of Equity and Diversity.

Review and amendments

EDI principles will be used for assigning committee members. Committee membership will be reviewed annually by the Department Head to ensure compositional balance. Openings on the committee will be announced to the department and self-nominations encouraged. Staff and faculty members will serve for at least two academic years, while students will only be asked to serve for one year (with flexibility as needed). Members will rotate off in a stepwise manner to maintain continuity of expertise. For example, terms for graduate student representatives will begin in September and January so that both students do not rotate off simultaneously.

These terms of reference will be reviewed and potentially adjusted every two to three years, or more frequently as needed.

Committee members and term of service (groups not in any specific order)

Grad Students:

Mariana Pascual Robles (Oct. 2020 - Dec. 2021)

Sean Ritter (Oct. 2021 - Sept. 2022)

Undergrad student:

Sumandeep Singh (Oct. 2020 - May 2021)

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Staff:

Christine Goedhart (Oct. 2020 -)

Postdoc/Research Associate:

Matt Whalen (Oct. 2020 -)

Faculty Members:

Amy Angert (Res; Oct. 2020 -)

Sunita Chowrira (EL; Oct. 2020 -)

Abel Rosado (Res; Oct. 2020 -)

Celeste Leander (EL; Oct. 2020 -)

Sean Michaletz (Res; Oct. 2020 -)

Jeannette Whitton (Res; Oct. 2021 -)

Former Members:

Jan Xue (Graduate student; Oct. 2020 - Oct. 2021)

Wesley Wong (Staff; Oct. 2020 - Aug. 2021)

^[1] Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committees: Getting Started Guide. UBC Equity and Inclusion Office, May 2020.