Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity

Expires: April 30, 2027

1. Facts

1. The following words are defined to help inform the policy:
   a. Equity: the recognition and respect of equality of opportunity. Equitable treatment involves acknowledging and respecting diversity and actively addressing the barriers that prevent equal inclusion, opportunity, and recognition due to ongoing and historical oppressions and power dynamics.
   b. Diversity: the existence of differences among individuals and groups based on, but not limited to, gender identity, gender expression, age, race, ethnic or national origin, religion, sexuality, sexual orientation, ability, language, size, marital status, or social class.
   c. Inclusivity: the ongoing practice that enables and empowers all individuals on campus, regardless of any barriers they face due to aspects of their identities, to foster a sense of belonging and fully experience University.
   d. Marginalization: the exclusion and relegation of certain individuals and groups to positions of lesser value, power, and access to opportunity within society.
   e. Disadvantage: a circumstance or situation that puts an individual or group in an inferior or less favourable position compared to others, resulting in compromised access to resources or opportunities.
   f. Discrimination: the differential treatment of an individual or group, typically to their disadvantage, on the basis of their perceived status or characteristics.
   g. Harassment: any behaviour, act, comment, or display that demeans, and or causes personal, psychological, or social harm to an individual or group, including acts of intimidation or threat.
   h. Oppression: the exercising of power over a marginalized group by a dominant group through domination and exploitation resulting from historically and culturally constructed ideas of superiority and inferiority. Oppression is a systemic phenomenon that can manifest in individual or institutional actions, whereby marginalized groups are subjected to political, economic, cultural, or social injustices.
   i. Privilege: the unearned advantages extended to a dominant group. These may include cultural, economic, political, social, and institutional rights maintained by systems of oppression--at the expense of marginalized groups. These advantages are actively reproduced through the normalization of the dominant group.
   j. Intersectionality: the recognition that individuals may experience interconnected systems of oppression differently, in varying configurations and degrees of intensity, due to their membership in multiple identity groups.

2. Discrimination and harassment may take the form of:
   a. Barriers that prevent students from participating in programs and activities due to their race, gender, sex, socioeconomic status, disability, religion, or membership to any particular group;
   b. Remarks, including jokes or innuendos, that are based on racist, sexist, ableist, homophobic, or transphobic sentiments;
   c. Promotional materials, events, or performances that use stereotypes based on any and all grounds protected under the Alberta Human Rights Act;
   d. Offensive comments and/or actions that demean, humiliate or threaten an individual or group;
   e. Printed or digital material, displays, and graffiti that demean, humiliate or threaten an individual or group; and
   f. Sexual harassment, including remarks, jokes, or innuendoes about a person’s body, attire, age, marital status, gender, sexuality, sexual orientation, perceived sexual orientation, or perceived gender identity.
3. Discrimination is prohibited based on the following protected grounds:
   a. race;

b. color;
c. ancestry;
d. place of origin;
e. religious beliefs;
f. gender, gender identity, and gender expression;
g. physical disability;
h. mental disability;
i. marital status;
j. family status;
k. source of income;
l. sexual orientation;
m. Age;
n. political beliefs; or
o. any other groups as amended from time to time

4. The University of Alberta is home to a diverse group of students and staff that come from various backgrounds and hold a multitude of identities.
5. Students deserve equitable treatment regardless of their gender identity, gender expression, ethnic or national origin, marital status, race, religion, sexuality, sexual orientation, ability, language, size, or socioeconomic status, age, and gender.
   a. Gender identity, gender expression, ethnic or national origin, race, religion, sexuality, sexual orientation, ability, language, size, or socioeconomic status, age, and gender often do not exist separately from each other but are interwoven.
6. Students may have different lived experiences depending on how these identities intersect.
7. According to the results of the 2019 Census Results for Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity specific to UAlberta Staff
   a. Staff: 22.8% self-identify as a visible minority
   b. Students: 27.0% self-identify as a visible minority (2018)
      i. Note: This number may actually be higher due to low international student turnout in the 2018 annual survey.
   c. Staff: 3.2% Indigenous (3.5% of women, 2.5% of men)
   d. Students: 4.0% Indigenous (ARUE)
   i. Within the Indigenous cohorts of both staff and students, roughly two-thirds are Métis and roughly one-third are First Nations. Indigenous Peoples and visible minorities appear underrepresented on staff compared with the student body.
8. Not all students identify their gender to be within the male-female binary.
9. According to the results of the 2019 Census Results for Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity specific to UAlberta Staff
   a. Staff: 61.8% women, 37.3% men
      i. The CREDI notes that women had a higher survey response rate than men.
   b. Students: 55.0% female, 44.9% male (ARUE)
   c. Staff: 1.1% gender-fluid or non-binary, 0.5% another gender identity
   d. Students: 1.2% non-binary or other (2019), 2.5% transgender, gender non-binary, or other (2020)
   e. Staff: 13.3% identified as something other than heterosexual
   f. Students: 10.7% LGBTQ2S+ (2018), 12.9% (2019), 17.2% (2020)
   i. Broadly speaking, staff and students have comparable proportions of sexual and gender minorities
10. In 2013, the UAlberta Institute for Sexual Minority Studies and Services (ISMSS) released their ‘Safe Spaces Campus Climate Report. Overall this survey reveals serious concerns in relation to the ways sexual and gender minorities feel on campus.
    a. The survey shows a notable increase in students being uncomfortable being open about their sexual orientation and gender identity on campus
    b. “Since 2012/13, comfort making relevant expressions to professors and instructors decreased significantly for sexual minorities and drastically for gender minorities”
    c. There are large concerns over the lack of access to gender-inclusive washrooms

11. In 2019 the UASU Department of Research released the Advocacy Annual Survey Report. This report spoke to a number of EDI issues experienced by students on campus:
    a. In 2021 the UASU EDI Taskforce completed the EDI and Student Supports Survey
    b. The survey found that “Several equity-seeking groups were especially likely to say that students like them did not know where to find support in the University of Alberta community: gender minorities, disabled students, BIPOC students as a whole, Asian students, and Black and/or Indigenous students.”
    c. Services and supports for LGBTQ+ students are lacking
    d. Existing alternatives to gendered spaces on campus do not have appropriate signage to address their inclusivity nor are they widely accessible to students who aren’t aware of their location or existence.
12. Students that are racialized, from low-income households, ethnic minorities, transgender, non-binary, sexual minorities, women, students living with disabilities, and international students may feel unsafe or unwelcome within the campus community.
13. Students face barriers to obtaining non-binary living conditions in housing and residence.
    a. Gender Inclusive housing is an available option for students at the University of Alberta in which students are assigned a living space regardless of their gender, gender identity, sex, or gender expression.
        i. Although this exists, there are still additional barriers that need to be addressed in creating greater access to non-binary living spaces in housing and residence on campus.
14. International students and students from ethnic minorities face additional barriers to obtaining housing and residence accommodations.
15. Historical and ongoing processes of oppression disadvantage and harm historically marginalized groups of people.
16. According to the results of the 2019 Census Results for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity specific to UAlberta Staff.
    a. Staff: 4.9% persons with disabilities, plus 1.5% ‘another identity that should be protected on similar grounds as a disability.’
    b. Students: 4.0% persons with disabilities (2018), 12.6% neurodiverse (2019)
17. The most common challenges faced by both staff and students were psychological and/or cognitive. Students were more likely to have visual challenges; staff were more likely to have hearing and mobility challenges. Students can and do present with multiple disabilities. Students are required to submit formal documentation of disability or chronic disease to be eligible for permanent accessibility accommodations. [1]
18. The most common disability a student presents with is a psychiatric condition including, but not limited to, diagnosed mental illness and Autism Spectrum Disorder.
19. Students living with chronic illness face additional obstacles while achieving a post-secondary education. This may include but is not limited to difficulty concentrating or memorizing, chronic pain, and/or fatigue.
    a. Due to the varying nature of chronic illness; health conditions may need to be often monitored by health care professionals. This requires ongoing medical appointments which may have an impact on a student’s attendance and therefore their academic performance.
20. Students who experience chronic health conditions, in addition to those with a disability, may face additional prejudice and stigmatization. These feelings can discourage or create additional emotional obstacles in accomplishing post-secondary education.
21. The continuing transition to integrate technology in class environments, for example, the evident implementation during the COVID 19 pandemic, creates an additional barrier for students with a lack of access to technology, lower socioeconomic status, and those with an unstable internet connection, including those in rural communities.
22. Familial economic stress or personal financial hardships, or perception of such, affects the emotional capacity of students and their academic outcomes.
23. Students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds may not be as likely to participate in unpaid work internships or experiential learning opportunities due to additional responsibilities and concerns regarding finances. These students may also not be able to relocate in order to access these opportunities.
24. International students contributed to 14.5%, i.e 4,940, of the undergraduate student population in 2020-21. The University of Alberta has a diverse student population with 102 countries of citizenship among

international students.[2]

25. There is a disparity between domestic and international tuition where international students pay approximately 4.5 times in tuition expenses than domestic students.[3]
26. Although one of the top reasons for international students to choose to study in Canada is its reputation as a tolerant and non-discriminatory society, a lot of international students on campus face discrimination based on their race, ethnicity, and accents.[4]
27. As a result of COVID-19, a lot of international students faced travel restrictions. Accessibility in terms of remote learning was an issue for international students due to drastic time-zone differences.5
28. In order to support and practice inclusivity of the francophone community present on campus, including CSJ, it is pertinent to provide important information regarding academics and other facets of student life in both English and French.
29. We recognize religion is often a basis for discrimination and therefore working to create an inclusive space is pertinent in improving the learning and working environment - this means advocating for greater access to prayer space on campus and recognition of additional holidays in our calendar.
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2. Resolutions

1. The Students' Union shall advocate for an increase in specialized supports that reflect thediverse needs of the campus community.
2. The Students' Union shall support the development of community engagement processes that consider equity and diversity.
3. The Students' Union shall advocate that the University of Alberta provide meaningful professional development opportunities for faculty, staff, and students to learn about Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.
4. The Students' Union shall advocate that the University create scholarships and bursaries that specifically address Black, Indigenous, People of Colour (BIPOC) individuals who are financially insecure.
5. The Students' Union shall advocate for sustained support and funding of programs that promote the involvement of members of the communities who are underrepresented in student governance as indicated by ongoing research focused on equity, diversity, and inclusivity.
6. The Students' Union shall advocate that the University of Alberta uphold its commitments to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity as outlined in the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity Strategic Plan.
7. The Students' Union shall take additional measures to intentionally recruit staff from diverse backgrounds. Specifically, the Students' Union will strive to achieve a staff structure that is reflective of the community, as was outlined in the Workforce Diversity Data document by the University of Alberta
8. The Students' Union shall continue to publish reports that highlight the lived experiences of marginalized groups, their representation at all levels of governance, and that illustrate the continued oppression of the nation, province, and institution on marginalized communities.
9. The Students' Union shall strive to provide a variety of food options at major events that meet the diverse cultural and dietary needs of the community.
10. The Students' Union shall advocate that fraternities, women's fraternities, and sororities at the University of Alberta create clear and inclusive chapter policies on the admittance of non-binary students identifying with the gender requirements of the organization into their organizations.
11. The Students' Union shall advocate that the University of Alberta formally recognize the existence of gender identities outside the male-female binary.
    a. The Students' Union shall advocate that the University of Alberta use gender-neutral terms wherever

possible in their documents.

b. The Students' Union shall advocate that the University of Alberta include additional gender options on forms and documents for students other than "male" and "female".

c. The Students' Union shall advocate that the University of Alberta not require students to disclose their gender on Bear Tracks or as part of their student file.

12. The Students' Union shall advocate that the University of Alberta not require students to gain administrative approval for changing their gender on any official documentation, including through Bear Tracks.
13. The Students' Union shall advocate for the creation and accessibility of gender-inclusive washrooms in every building on campus.
14. The Students' Union shall advocate for the implementation, accessibility, and creation of appropriate signage for alternatives to gendered spaces on campus.
15. The Students' Union shall advocate that the University of Alberta not require students to meet with an advisor prior to placing them in Gender Inclusive Housing upon their request.

    a. The Students' Union shall advocate that the University of Alberta allow students to choose between gender-segregated housing or gender-inclusive housing in their residence application, and to abide by the students' preferences within reason.

    b. The Students' Union shall advocate for an inclusive campus community where students of all backgrounds feel safe and welcome.
16. The Students' Union shall support collective advocacy with community partners that encourage advocate the Government of Alberta to change the Alberta Building Code in its next iteration to include single-unit washrooms free of gender restrictions in every public building with sufficient occupancy.
17. The Students' Union shall advocate to the provincial and federal government for an increase in specialized, on-campus, university-led accessibility services.
18. The Students' Union shall advocate for an increase in per-student accessibility funding from the federal and provincial governments.
19. The Students' Union shall advocate that the University include accessibility features in all new buildings and work to include accessibility features in existing buildings wherever practical.
20. The Students' Union shall advocate that the University of Alberta pursue universal design initiatives in the classroom rather than privileging per-student accessibility accommodations.[10]
21. The Students' Union shall advocate that all examinations are designed to be completed in half of the time available to the student.
22. The Students' Union shall advocate that the University of Alberta mandate all professors run their classroom documents through an accessibility program whenever possible.

    a. The Students' Union shall advocate that the University of Alberta mandate professors post all lecture materials online to ensure that all students have universal access to class materials regardless of religious, cultural, or social commitments.
23. The Student's Union shall advocate for the improvement of the academic accommodations system to ensure the needs of students with accommodations is evaluated and solutions are created in consultation with these students.
24. This includes improved access and ease of use associated with accommodations
25. The Student's Union shall work to create greater opportunities for students to work with their advisors in times of need - including students with chronic illnesses dealing with immense change in their personal life afflicting challenges in their academics
26. The Student's Union shall advocate for greater accommodations for students with limited access to a stable internet connection.
27. The Student's Union will aid in creating greater awareness of which classes are available online and which classes are available in person (including hybrid options) in order for students to plan their course structure in accordance with their needs and access to internet connectivity.
28. The Student's Union will bring greater awareness to paid opportunities for career development for students.
29. The Student's Union will work with International students, Indigenous students, Black students, and other pertinent stakeholders, in order to address discrimination faced by students on campus as a result of race, ethnicity, and accents.

    a. This would include working with student groups and associations such as, but not limited to, the International Students' Association, Indigenous Students' Union, and the Black Students' Association.
30. The Student's Union will work with student groups and associations, such as the International Students' Association, to address the needs of international students directly in regard to addressing discrimination on campus.
31. The Student's Union will work to ensure EDI practices are met in all facets of student life.

3. References

1. https://www.ualberta.ca/current-students/academic-success-centre/accessibility-resources/register/index.html
2. ANNUAL REPORT ON UNDERGRADUATE ENROLMENT 2020 / 21
3. Ibid.
4. https://nationalpost.com/news/canada/is-it-in-my-head-international-students-recall-experiences-of-covert-racism-and-gaslighting-in-canada
5. https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/u-of-a-international-students-say-attending-class-in-middle-of-the-night-is-taking-a-toll-1.5827602
6. ANNUAL REPORT ON UNDERGRADUATE ENROLMENT 2020 / 21
7. Ibid
8. https://nationalpost.com/news/canada/is-it-in-my-head-international-students-recall-experiences-of-covert-racism-and-gaslighting-in-canada
9. https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/u-of-a-international-students-say-attending-class-in-middle-of-the-night-is-taking-a-toll-1.5827602
10. ANNUAL REPORT ON UNDERGRADUATE ENROLMENT 2020 / 21

Revision #2
Created 25 January 2023 13:50:02 by Abner Monteiro
Updated 24 February 2026 06:40:57 by Jonathan Olfert