

# Stories from the Field:

Reporting on Equity, Diversity  
and Inclusion in Action



**UNIVERSITY  
OF ALBERTA**

# Land Acknowledgement

**Equity work is about recognizing and working to address the historical and ongoing effects of colonial violence. It is important to acknowledge that the University of Alberta, its buildings, labs and research stations are primarily located on the territory of the Néhiyaw (Cree), Niitsitapi (Blackfoot), Métis, Nakoda (Stoney), Dene, Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe (Ojibway/Saulteaux), lands that are now known as part of Treaties 6, 7 and 8 and the homeland of the Métis.**

The University of Alberta is committed to demonstrating respect for the peoples, sovereignty, lands, histories, languages, knowledge systems and cultures of all First Nations, Métis and Inuit nations. As a colonial institution, the University of Alberta is also committed to working in Good Relations with, and being held accountable by, First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples.

Those who are engaged in equity, diversity and inclusion efforts at the University of Alberta must be attuned to the way in which settler privilege can be reproduced in the course of their work and seek guidance from *Braiding Past, Present and Future: University of Alberta Indigenous Strategic Plan*.



# Acknowledgements

**The authors of this report wish to gratefully acknowledge all of those who responded to our request to share their EDI stories with us. Thirty-three individuals, departments, units and faculties responded to our questionnaire and 23 people were interviewed. Additionally, we heard from other members of the University of Alberta's leadership team through email outreach. To all of those who contributed directly or indirectly to this document, we thank you.**

To all of you who are labouring to identify spaces of inequity and who are working to remediate them, we see and appreciate the energy, thoughtfulness and heart you bring to making our university and the world a more equitable and just space.



# Document Roadmap

- Fulfilling a Promise .....6**
- The Provost’s Office Commitment to EDI:  
A Message from Dr. Verna Yiu – Interim Provost ... 8**
- Guiding Principles .....9**
- Gathering Stories of EDI.....12**
- Introducing the Stories: A Message from  
Dr. Evelyn Hamdon – Senior Advisor,  
Equity and Human Rights .....13**
- Section One: Institutional Actions and Activities ...15**
- Section Two: Learnings from the Field.....22**
- Imagining a More Equitable, Diverse and Inclusive  
Future: A Message from Dr. Carrie Smith –  
Vice-Provost (Equity, Diversity and Inclusion) .....36**



12

13

9

15

8

22

36










# Fulfilling a Promise through EDI






**The benefits of working to advance equity, embrace diversity and be more inclusive are individual, institutional, cultural and societal. When we choose to support EDI, we are not only making a commitment to diversity over sameness, belonging over marginalization and flourishing over survival; we are also creating the conditions for a campus community that protects individual dignities and human rights, promotes institutional innovation and excellence, and fights societal injustice.**

Part of a larger institutional commitment to cultivate a community where equity and diversity are fundamental to inclusive excellence, *Stories from the Field* captures the essence of the institution's many efforts to uplift the whole people. Guided by the *Strategic Plan for Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity*, the stories in the following pages build on the U of A's century-long history of innovation and risk-taking in the name of building a more inclusive institution, even as it is important to acknowledge that many were left out or excluded throughout these gains.



# EDI HISTORY

- 1908**  The **U of A opens its doors**, providing education to women and men of any denomination.
- 1911**  **Decima Eveline Robinson** is the first graduate of the U of A.
- 1928**  President H.M. Tory makes the promise for the U of A to **"uplift the whole people."**
- 1977**  **Collège St. Jean** becomes a full faculty at the U of A, becoming Faculté Saint-Jean and in 2005 Campus Saint-Jean.
- 1980** **Student Support and Disability Services** is established.
- 1982** **Women in Scholarship, Engineering, Science, and Technology (WISEST)** is formed.
- 1990** The **Office of Human Rights** is formed.
- 1990**  **Archbishop Desmond Tutu** gives the U of A's inaugural Visiting Lecture in Human Rights.
- 2005**  The first **Associate Dean of Diversity** at the U of A is established (held by Dr. Margaret-Ann Armour).
- 2006**  The **School of Native Studies** becomes Canada's first Faculty of Native Studies.
- 2008** The Institute for **Sexual Minority Studies and Services** launches in the Faculty of Education, renamed Fyrefly Institute for Gender and Sexual Diversity in 2022.
- 2013** The **Department of Women's and Gender Studies** is established in the Faculty of Arts.

- 2017**  The **Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Scoping Group** is formed.
- 2018** The U of A develops its first **Canada Research Chairs EDI Action Plan**.
- 2019**  The U of A's **Strategic Plan for Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity** is released.
- 2019**  The position of **Vice-Provost (Indigenous Programming and Research)** is established (held by Dr. Florence Glanfield in the inaugural role).
- 2019** The U of A signs the **Dimensions Charter** in support of diversity research.
- 2019** The U of A conducts its first **Workforce Diversity Census**.
- 2020** The Board of Governors approves a major revision to the **Recruitment and Selection of Employees Policy Suite**.
- 2021** The U of A signs the **Scarborough Charter** on Anti-Black Racism and Black Inclusion in Canadian Higher Education.
- 2021** The U of A conducts its first Student Diversity Census.
- 2022**  The U of A launches **Braiding Past, Present and Future: University of Alberta Indigenous Strategic Plan**.
- 2022**  The position of **Vice-Provost (Equity, Diversity and Inclusion)** is established (held by Dr. Carrie Smith in the inaugural role).
- 2023** The Office of the Provost publishes **Stories from the Field: Reporting on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in Action**.

The purpose of *Stories from the Field: Reporting on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in Action* is to build on the actions over the ensuing three academic years (from 2019/2020 - 2021/2022) and offer reflections on institutional actions over the past three years (2019/2020 - 2021/2022). The activities across campus, while varied, have done a great deal to advance EDI at the department, faculty and institutional levels. And while this report is intended to acknowledge and highlight those efforts, it is also intended to honour the struggles that are inherent within this work.

The information in this report should, therefore, be read as a reflection of many efforts and experiences. Not only does it detail the ways individuals have sought to embed the institutional principles of EDI into their work, the insights shared tell a story of key learnings, major successes, personal frustrations and institutional challenges. Collectively, these insights are intended to inform future strategies, policies and procedures as we seek to contribute to the long-standing promise to uplift the whole people by becoming a more diverse, equitable and inclusive institution.



## **A PROMISING EDI PRACTICE: Decolonizing the Graduation Process**

During graduation, the Faculty of Nursing has a faculty pinning ceremony where they acknowledge the heritage of their Indigenous students using ceremonious pins offered by an elder.

# The Provost's Office Commitment to EDI:

## A Message from Dr. Verna Yiu — Interim Provost

**The activities and stories in *Stories from the Field: Reporting on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in Action* reflect a deep commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion. I am so impressed with the thoughtfulness, creativity and energy that students, faculty and staff bring to this work, and I know that these contributions will help to make the U of A more equitable, more inclusive and more diverse.**

When I accepted the position of Provost one of my priorities was and continues to be to support, empower and enable action on EDI across our campuses. Please know you have my appreciation for all of this hard work and my support as we look to the work ahead. Together, we can cultivate an institutional culture that values, supports and promotes equity, accessibility, human rights, respect and accountability among faculty, staff and students.





# Guiding Principles

“Everyone has a different EDI journey and the 8 principles of the *EDI Strategic Plan* have assisted us.”

**In 2019, the University of Alberta introduced a four-year *Strategic Plan for Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity*. Outlining a number of goals and deliverables, the plan articulated a shared institutional commitment to an accessible, equitable and inclusive community of students, faculty and staff by embracing the following principles (see pp. 9-11):**

## EQUITY

Equity is about fairness in access to education and employment and in the opportunity to succeed in these domains. Employment equity principles, policies, and practices enable equitable access, representation, opportunities, and meaningful participation of socially diverse people—from the federally designated and other equity-seeking groups such as women, members of visible minority groups, Indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, and LGBTQ2S+ people.

We recognize that policies, practices, informal processes, and language created by and for particular groups of people, with a default norm in mind, produce structural barriers that limit access and inclusion for other individuals and groups. Taking equity as a guiding principle means that the university will respect and value the differences of our members by actively identifying and removing barriers, including structural barriers, to ensure that historically excluded groups have the same opportunity to fully flourish at the University of Alberta.

## DIVERSITY

Diversity refers to difference or variety. In a broad societal EDI context, diversity refers to demographic or identity diversity, including that based on the protected grounds. Within universities, diversity encompasses these, as well as difference or variety in education, perspectives, opinions, heuristics, disciplines, faculties, skills, and learning opportunities. The University of Alberta supports and encourages diversity through the identification and removal of barriers and biases, and the creation of workplaces and learning environments that are free of harassment and discrimination.

## INCLUSION

Inclusion means that we value and cultivate full and meaningful engagement of historically and structurally excluded individuals and groups. Inclusion refers to enabling all individuals on our campuses to fully enjoy the opportunities the university has to offer, and to have all equity seeking groups meaningfully represented in all aspects of university life and decision-making roles university wide.

## HUMAN RIGHTS

Every person, by virtue of being human, is entitled to certain fundamental rights regardless of race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religious beliefs, gender, gender identity and gender expression, physical disability, mental disability, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, age, political beliefs, and any other protected ground as amended over time. Each person is entitled to a life of dignity, equality, and respect, free from discrimination, harassment, and bullying. The university's commitment to human rights is reflected in its policies and practices, as well as the supports it makes available to the members of its community.

## EQUALITY – SUBSTANTIVE

The University of Alberta embraces a substantive approach to equality—this means that achieving equality is not only a matter of treating likes alike (formal equality), but also requires us to consider and address the range of conditions that create experiences of disadvantage for some individuals and groups. We consider the full context and impacts of our practices and processes, recognizing that these may be experienced differently by different individuals and groups.

## INTERSECTIONALITY

An intersectional approach to equity, diversity, and inclusion begins from the understanding that the different vectors of social diversity, (race, class, gender, sexuality, disability, nationality, religion, language, age, etc.) do not exist separately or in isolation from each other. Instead, the various vectors of social diversity are interwoven and affect each other. Intersectionality focuses on how multiple, interwoven vectors shape social belonging, cultural representations, social and political institutions, as well as the material conditions of our lives in ways that are not reducible to any singular vector or social category. Initially developed by women of colour seeking to understand how their existence and experiences of marginalization could not be reduced to gender or racial categorization alone, today we understand that everyone's life is shaped by intersecting social categories. Intersecting social categories play a role in exclusion and shape social, political, and material marginalization and dominance. Experiences and systems of persistent social inequality cannot be understood without an intersectional framework.

## ACCESSIBILITY

Accessibility refers to the degree to which physical, pedagogical, and administrative structures of the University of Alberta are (re)designed to enable the full, meaningful, and equitable engagement of all of the university's community members. Accessibility includes, but is much broader than, ramped access to buildings. It also includes, for example, designing for physical, financial, sensory, social, and language-level access. Whereas accommodation refers to making specific changes to support the full participation of an individual who has encountered barriers, an accessible campus is one that seeks pro-actively to reduce as many barriers as possible, while creating efficient and transparent processes for individuals to gain the accommodations they require and are entitled to by law.

## RECONCILIATION WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Reconciliation refers to a process of building and sustaining respectful, ethical relationships between Indigenous peoples and the rest of Canada based on mutual understanding and respect. Universities across Canada have responded to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action in ways relevant to their institutional context. The University of Alberta has responded with an emphasis on capacity building and foundational change in support of Indigenous initiatives, programming, and personnel with a vision for making the U of A a welcoming place for Indigenous students, faculty, and staff. The university's EDI initiatives will endeavor to support the principles of the Indigenous strategic plan and prioritize cross-collaboration with it.

Each of these principles are underpinned by respect for the dignity, rights and full participation of those who live, work and learn within the university. Collectively, these principles have informed the stories of EDI shared throughout this document.

### A PROMISING EDI PRACTICE:

#### Acknowledging Land and Peoples

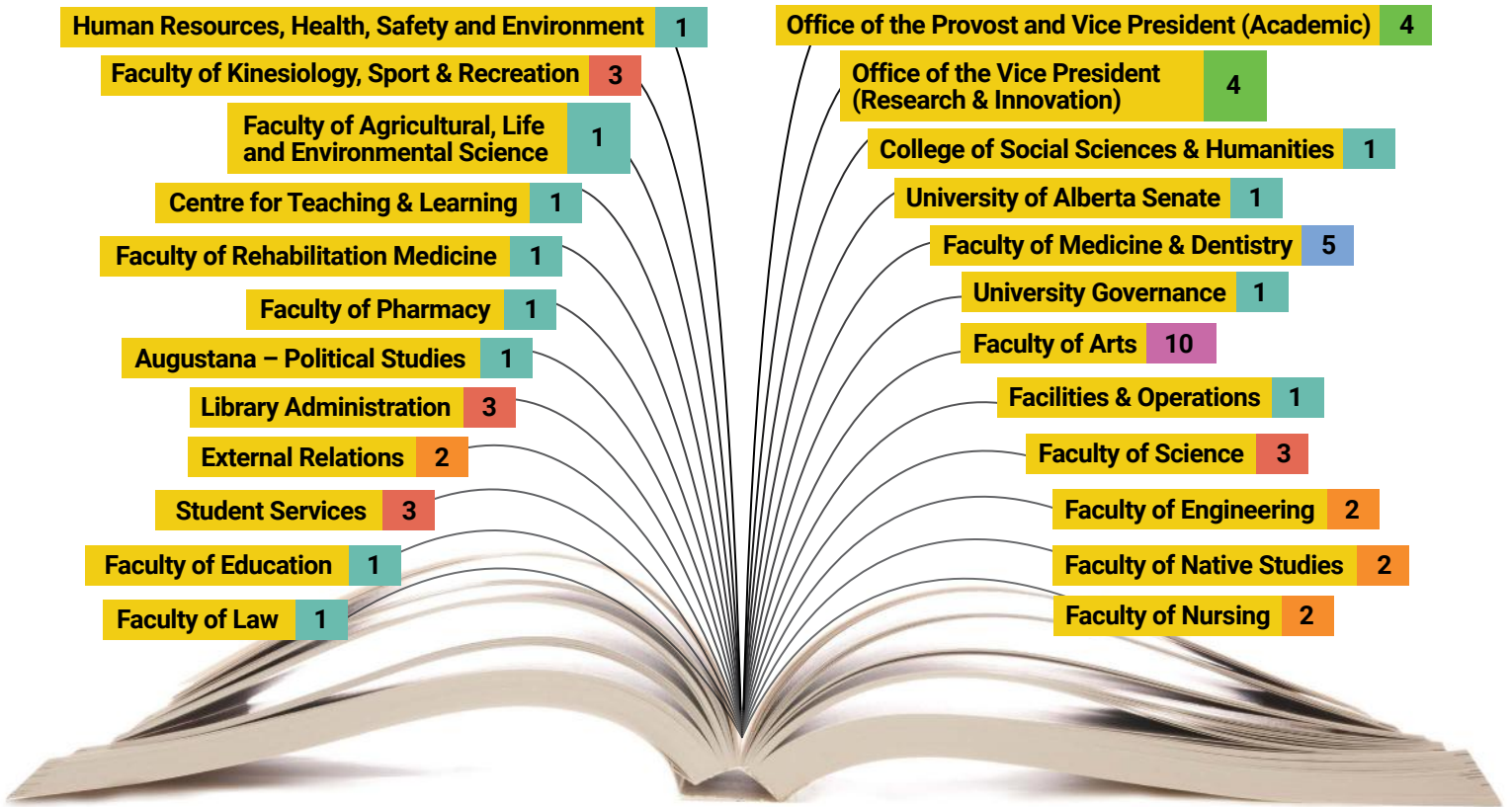
Indigenous flags will be erected in strategically visible places across the U of A campuses for a visual acknowledgement of land and peoples of this place.



# Gathering Stories of EDI

The information and stories shared throughout this document were gathered over the course of two years. In 2021, a series of interviews were conducted with 23 staff and faculty members. Throughout these interviews, individuals shared their experiences with advancing EDI, discussed key initiatives, and offered a number of theoretically grounded suggestions for becoming a more equitable, diverse and inclusive campus.

The following year, the Office of the Provost developed and circulated “Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Across Campus: A Questionnaire”. Reflecting on the outcomes identified in the 2019 *Strategic Plan for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity*, the questionnaire was designed to gather specific information about the EDI landscape in faculties, departments, portfolios and units. A total of 24 institutional areas were represented in the responses.



Collectively, the information from both the interviews and the questionnaire provides the foundation for this report. Not only do insights shared highlight a number of instrumental activities, major successes, key learnings and institutional challenges, they also paint a picture of where we are in relation to our strategic goals, and help to set a course for a more equitable, diverse and inclusive future.

# Introducing the Stories

## A Message from Dr. Evelyn Hamdon — Senior Advisor, Equity and Human Rights

**The stories that follow reflect the creativity, thoughtfulness, and commitment of those who are leading, championing and doing work related to equity, diversity and inclusion across our campuses. It is by no means an exhaustive accounting of EDI activities, but rather represents the breadth and depth of activities ongoing at the University of Alberta. We have organized the stories to broadly reflect where they originate, however, given the nature of the University — wherein people often collaborate — these demarcations are not neat, and nor do they need to be. We did our best to make sense of where the work was emanating from — but tracing the effects were beyond the scope of this project.**

The first section of *Stories from the Field* outlines the institutional actions and activities that have been undertaken in each area of the *Strategic Plan for Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity* and includes activities and initiatives that were or are, generally speaking, led by administrative units and portfolios, such as those within the Office of the Provost (including the Centre for Teaching and Learning), the Office of the Vice-President for Research and Innovation, University Services and Finance, External Relations, and Facilities and Operations.

The second section of *Stories from the Field* summarizes the stories shared by EDI leads and champions working in departments, faculties, departments and units. Most people observed that the Strategic Plan was a useful framework for mapping and shaping their work. That being said, the stories shared reflect the ways differing priorities were influenced by available resources. They also highlight the range of work that has been accomplished — from capacity building activities (such as workshops) to ambitious action plans with specific goals and accountabilities. But most importantly, what all of the stories emphasize is a commitment by members of the University of Alberta to take action, to make a contribution.

It is important to note that the work and experiences presented in both of these sections does not capture all

activities related to equity, diversity and inclusion, nor does it represent all of the experiences of those who continually champion this work. As such, it should not be read as a comprehensive picture of our institutional successes and challenges. Instead, the document should be read as an institutional snapshot: one intended to contribute to a collective understanding of where we are in relation to where we want to be.

The past few years have been deeply challenging and yet folks have continued to find ways to keep us moving towards our vision of being an equitable and meaningfully inclusive community. I have witnessed people working generously, collaboratively and with deep sensitivity and courage. It has been an honour to work alongside you. I have been inspired and moved.

Thank you, all for your care, for your commitment, for your solidarity.

Onward!

## A PROMISING EDI PRACTICE: Diversifying the Professoriate

As part of its ongoing commitment to EDI, the University of Alberta committed to diversifying the institution's professoriate by hiring twelve Black Scholars in the following faculties:

- Faculty of Arts
- Augustana Campus
- Campus Saint-Jean
- Faculty of Education
- Faculty of Engineering
- Faculty of Kinesiology, Sport, and Recreation
- Faculty of Law
- Faculty of Nursing
- School of Public Health
- Faculty of Science
- Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine







# Section One: Institutional Actions and Activities

“The collective commitment to the *EDI Strategic Plan* has kept EDI at the forefront of our planning and decision making processes. This has provided the lens from which we view many of our actions and I am very glad to see that EDI is becoming embedded into our collective consciousness.”

# Section One: Institutional Actions and Activities

**Continually striving to fulfill our institutional commitment has been a collective effort. Beginning in 2019, EDI has been woven into the fabric of our culture across the entire institution. Largely guided by the *Strategic Plan for Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity*, the majority of these efforts have contributed to one of five institutional themes:**

## 1. VISION AND LEADERSHIP

The university's leadership, communications, and statements about itself reflect a high-level, consistent and reliably strong commitment to EDI.

## 2. RESEARCH, TEACHING, AND PUBLIC SERVICE

Faculty are encouraged to do, and are recognized for, work that thoughtfully and rigorously incorporates or contributes to equity, diversity and/or inclusion.

## 3. WORKFORCE

The university's commitment to EDI is reflected in the recruitment, retention and advancement of faculty and staff; faculty and staff are prepared to work in a diverse environment and have the knowledge and skills needed to contribute to equity and inclusion.

## 4. STUDENTS, (RESEARCH) TRAINEES, AND STUDENT LIFE

The U of A's students, trainees, and post-doctoral fellows are provided with equitable access to: disciplines of study and scholarly opportunities; the study and dissemination of knowledge about EDI; an environment attentive to, and that addresses, barriers to inclusion, access and success (especially of historically excluded groups).

## 5. CLIMATE

The university strives to create an equitable and inclusive environment and culture for all members of its community.

Documented in the following pages are the institutional actions and activities (i.e., those led by members of senior leadership) that have been initiated or completed in each of the five themes.

**I. VISION AND LEADERSHIP**

THEME GOAL	The university's leadership, communications, and statements about itself reflect a high-level, consistent and reliably strong commitment to EDI.
<p><b>Institutional Actions and Activities</b></p>	<p><b>Office of the President</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signed the Scarborough Charter on anti-Black racism and Black inclusion.</li> <li>• Undertook the Black Faculty Excellence Cohort Hire in concert with the Academic Deans and the Office of the Provost.</li> </ul> <p><b>Office of the Provost – EDI</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepared <i>Stories from the Field: Reporting on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in Action</i>.</li> <li>• Undertook preliminary consultations for a future iteration of the <i>EDI Strategic Plan</i>.</li> <li>• Continued to play a leadership role in EDI across the post-secondary landscape through membership and executive leadership in Canadian Association for the Prevention of Discrimination and Harassment in Higher Education (CAPDHHE).</li> <li>• Facilitated the EDI Leads Network and Scoping Group.</li> </ul> <p><b>Office of the Provost – Vice-Provost Indigenous Programming and Research</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completed and launched the Indigenous-led <i>Braiding Past Present and Future: The University of Alberta's Indigenous Strategic Plan</i>.</li> </ul> <p><b>Office of the Vice-President External Relations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Created position of Partner, Communications and Marketing; Faculty Native Studies and Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity.</li> <li>• Revised Style Guide using an EDI lens.</li> <li>• Engaged in educational activities that include training provided by Dr. Toni De Mello and the formation of a book club.</li> </ul>



**2. RESEARCH, TEACHING, PUBLIC SERVICE**

THEME GOAL	Encourage and recognize faculty members for the carrying out research, teaching and public (academic) service work that thoughtfully and rigorously incorporates or contributes to equity, diversity and/or inclusivity.
<p><b>Institutional Actions and Activities</b></p>	<p><b>Office of the Vice-President for Research and Innovation (OVPRI)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Created and filled a dedicated Indigenous Initiatives and EDI position: Program Officer, Indigenous Initiatives and Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.</li> <li>• Revised terms of reference for all OVPRI awards and prizes through an EDI lens.</li> <li>• Created the Indigenous Engaged Research Grant.</li> <li>• Developed targeted postdoctoral awards for Indigenous and Black Scholars.</li> <li>• Identified and addressed challenges with appropriate remuneration (honoraria) and culturally appropriate gifts within the university context.</li> <li>• Supported the Black Faculty Excellence Cohort Hire initiative by contributing to workshops in advance, organizing welcoming reception and offering OVPRI research orientation.</li> <li>• Completed training for Chiefs of Staff (for others ongoing) in the Fundamentals of OCAP training course to better understand First Nations sovereignty; standing for ownership, control, access and possession, OCAP® is a tool to support strong information governance on the path to First Nations data sovereignty.</li> <li>• Contributions to Canada Research Chair EDI action plan as well as oversight of the CRC program and monitoring.</li> <li>• Implementation of the Canada Research Chair and Canada Excellence Research Chairs equity plans and targets.</li> <li>• Membership on Indigenous Research Strategies Taskforce, established by Vice-Provost (Indigenous Programming and Research).</li> <li>• Developed EDI and Research resource for researchers (launch January 2023).</li> </ul> <p><b>Office of the Provost – Learning Initiatives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Released report of the Equity, Diversity &amp; Inclusivity Review of Teaching Awards Working Group.</li> <li>• Launched COVID-19 Remote Teaching Awards pilot following recommendation of the Working Group.</li> </ul>

## 2. RESEARCH, TEACHING, PUBLIC SERVICE, CON'T

<p><b>Institutional Actions and Activities</b></p>	<p><b>Office of the Provost – Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hired two Lead Educational Developers: 1) Indigenizing Curricula and Pedagogies, and 2) Critical Pedagogies and EDI. Work underway for additional positions in the areas of access, Indigenous curriculum, and anti-racist pedagogies.</li> <li>• Decolonized job postings, interview questions, and negotiation processes, which have since been modeled by Teaching Centres across the country.</li> <li>• Hosted the first-ever student keynote conversations on Accommodation and Proactive Design during the 2022 Festival of Teaching and LearningL “(Re)Imagining Post-Pandemic Pedagogies.”</li> <li>• Developed and launched 8-part EDI webinette series.</li> <li>• Hosted a series of kitchen table conversations and land-based sessions at Augustana.</li> <li>• Continued work on linguistic justice.</li> <li>• Continued involvement with the Educational Developers Network of Alberta.</li> </ul> <p><b>Office of the Provost – Library</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developed “Equity, Diversity, &amp; Inclusivity Subject Guide” for faculty, staff and student use, including foundational resources and further reading.</li> </ul>
--	--

## 3. WORKFORCE (FACULTY AND STAFF)

<p><b>THEME GOAL</b></p>	<p>The university’s commitment to equity, diversity and inclusivity is reflected in the recruitment, retention and advancement of faculty and staff which sees all faculty and staff prepared to work in a diverse environment and to have the knowledge and skills necessary to contribute to equity and inclusivity.</p>
<p><b>Institutional Actions and Activities</b></p>	<p><b>Office of the Provost – EDI</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engaged in research on EDI in teaching awards and recruitment processes.</li> <li>• Provided training, consultation and developed supplementary educational and informational resources on EDI in recruitment processes.</li> <li>• Provided training to support the integration of an EDI lens into Faculty Evaluation Committee processes.</li> <li>• Provided training on EDI for those involved in the adjudication of awards and scholarships.</li> </ul>

### 3. WORKFORCE (FACULTY AND STAFF), CON'T

#### Institutional Actions and Activities

- Coordinated training for selection committees involved in the Black Faculty Excellence Cohort Hire initiative.
- Supported the integration of EDI into training offered by other units and portfolios such as Human Resource Health Safety and Engagement, the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, and External Relations.

#### Office of the Provost – Dean of Students

- Formed a staff-facing Dean of Students EDI Working Group to progress knowledge and practices and develop initiatives (programming, events, workshops, data collection and data analysis).
- Engaged in initiative involving University of Alberta Athletics staff aimed at developing female sport administrators and coaches through a targeted Canadian University Sport Administration Certificate program.

#### Office of the Vice-President University Services and Finance – Performance, Analytics and Institutional Research

- Completed the 2019 Workforce Diversity Census and developed a communications strategy around the public release.

#### Office of the Vice-President University Services and Finance – Human Resources, Health, Safety and Environment (HRHSE)

- Conducted needs assessment on Indigenous Initiatives (II) and equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) (internal to HRHSE).
- Adoption of an HRHSE II & EDI Commitment.
- Establishment of an II and EDI working committee.
- Creation of a specialized II and EDI portfolio.
- Embedded the practice of Land Acknowledgments in key meetings.
- Creation and launch of “Inclusion Awareness Moments.”

#### Office of the Vice-President University Services and Finance – Shared Services

- Produced “A Common Approach to Working Together.”
- Integrated II and EDI into the unit’s Strategic Plan.
- Engaged in community initiatives: staff work to support the community within which they work (Boyle Street Co-Op).
- Worked to create safe, healthy and inclusive spaces for staff, students and visitors with the Building Operations Committee.



**4. STUDENTS, (RESEARCH) TRAINEES, AND STUDENT LIFE**

<p><b>THEME GOAL</b></p>	<p>While fostering an environment that is attentive to – and that addresses – barriers to inclusion, access, and success, the university strives to provide its students, trainees, and postdoctoral fellows with equitable access to disciplines of study and scholarly opportunities, including the study and dissemination of EDI knowledge.</p>
<p><b>Institutional Actions and Activities</b></p>	<p><b>Office of the Provost – Dean of Students</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Created and filled the position Student Coordinator – Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity to create and enhance programming and education on EDI.</li> <li>• Initiated work on a campus-wide assessment to address the Black Student Collective’s Calls to Action for race-based data on experiences with and access to student services.</li> <li>• Coordinated and provided supports and services through the Student Equity &amp; Accessibility Facilitation Team to remove access- and equity-related barriers or restrictions to students’ academic and campus participation; projects included event/program accessibility checklists and planning, trans-identifying student supports, classroom accessibility challenges, human rights education, policy and procedure review.</li> <li>• Consulted with campus communities on incorporating EDI in orientation activities and content, including improved accessibility, resources and programming for those student populations not currently engaged with orientation.</li> </ul> <p><b>Office of the Vice-President University Services and Finance – Performance, Analytics and Institutional Research</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completed the 2021 Student Demographic Diversity Census with upcoming communications strategy and public release of report.</li> </ul>

**A PROMISING EDI PRACTICE:**

**Respecting Pronouns**

The Faculty of Pharmacy introduced a pronoun pin campaign. Led by student leaders, this pin campaign is intended to foster a safe and more inclusive learning environment.



# Section Two: Learnings from the Field

**“I have been both surprised at the openness of many to engage in discussion and actual work with EDID as the focus. But I am also surprised at how difficult it is to dislodge long-held biases or to even make them evident in various parts of our University operations.”**



## Section Two: Learnings from the Field

**While the stories we heard from individuals championing EDI work were unique to their institutional areas, the harmonies and commonalities across faculties and departments were much more apparent than the distinctions and differences. As demonstrated in the following pages, key messages were shared in eight separate, yet interrelated, areas: 1) Leadership Portfolios and Structures; 2) Collection of Data; 3) Local Plans and Strategies; 4) Evaluation and Reviews; 5) Teaching and Research; 6) Training and Education; 7) Collaboration and Engagement; and 8) Institutional Barriers. Individuals working in different faculties and departments also shared similar accounts of their area's successes and learnings. These accounts are also summarized in the following pages.**

### 1. LEADERSHIP PORTFOLIOS AND STRUCTURES

#### KEY MESSAGE:

**Structures to advance EDI are varied and reflect available resources and local priorities.**

Across campus, the structures that enable the work of EDI to continue, are varied. This appears to reflect local resources (and perhaps lack of resources) as well as preferences.

In some cases, formal investments in senior leadership positions have been made (e.g., Director of EDI, Associate Dean, Engagement and EDI) or the EDI portfolio has been added to existing leadership positions (e.g., Assistant Dean).

In other cases, committees have been struck with membership being voluntary and guided by individual interest in and commitments to EDI.

**"We are appointing a Director of EDI for the Faculty effective September 1st and the individual in this role has been serving as special advisor to the Dean since February."**

**"A Faculty EDI committee with representatives from each department was created in 2019, and is formally being written into faculty committee documentation in 2022."**



## 2. COLLECTION OF DATA

### KEY MESSAGE:

**We need varied processes to collect usable EDI data.**

Whether using data available through the Performance, Analytics and Institutional Research (PAIR) portfolio or locally collected data, it is clear that there is an appreciation of and a desire for good data to inform EDI plans and priorities and to track growth and ensure accountability.

The university has undertaken two diversity surveys: one for staff and one for students. At the time of this writing the student survey results had not been released but it was clear that the Census Results for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity is valued and used by faculties and departments. This data is used, for example, to track demographic diversity and to aid in decision-making processes.

Other faculties and departments have also developed tools and processes to gather information about both employees and students to support localized priority setting (with respect to EDI), to enhance admissions and recruitment processes and to monitor progress on student and faculty diversity. These local data collection initiatives reflect the desire to establish baselines to track diversity within individual faculties and departments.

**“We have relied on data collected centrally to assist us in our EDI decision-making and monitoring of progress. This data includes information in the Acorn data warehouse, and the results of the workforce diversity census. I am eagerly awaiting the release of the student demographic diversity census, and administration of the Inclusivity survey.”**

**“We’ve instituted a survey for applicants at the Faculty level to get a sense of who is applying and plan to institute the same survey for admitted students to determine who is admitted. This information will be used to inform our admissions processes to identify whether there are patterns of equity-seeking individuals not being admitted into our professional programs.”**

### 3. LOCAL PLANS AND STRATEGIES

#### KEY MESSAGE:

Local EDI plans are necessary to reflect the depth and breadth of situated priorities.

Individuals and groups working at the level of units, departments, faculties and portfolios are developing EDI plans that are guided by the strategic directions but which address 'local' priorities and concerns.

Some examples of local priorities include:

- Reviewing hiring, recruitment and adjudication practices and policies.
- Updating student accommodation policies and processes.
- Developing strategies for student recruitment.
- Integrating wise EDI practices into curriculum development and pedagogies.

**“[In our] 4-year EDI Strategic Roadmap... [w]e have outlined activities in the areas of admissions, curriculum, individual learning, etc.”**

**“[We] created an action plan that includes: hiring more black professors; ensuring safe spaces for equity denied students; implementing an anti-oppressive education course in our undergraduate program; ensuring the selection processes for hiring new faculty members are informed by EDID; decolonizing curriculum; ensuring clear pathways for students to report experiences of racism or inequity.”**

### A PROMISING EDI PRACTICE:

#### EDI in STEM

An NSERC funded PromoScience project provides Augustana teachers working in Sciences, Technology, Engineering and Medicine (STEM) with training related to Indigenous knowledges.

## 4. EVALUATION AND REVIEWS

### KEY MESSAGE:

Despite many individual units, departments, faculties and portfolios having examined various activities and processes using an EDI lens, reporting is not yet systematized.

From the activities reported on, it is clear that a great deal of review work has been undertaken. These include reviews of current practices as well as reviews of EDI plans. These reviews are being used to inform decision-making and future planning.

Additionally, these review activities are being used to ensure that an EDI lens is being applied to important areas of their work.

A system for reporting will help to create a more fulsome picture of where we are with respect to our institutional and local goals.

**“We are currently reviewing our Faculty’s committee policies and structures with an EDI lens, including our hiring procedures and spousal hiring procedures.”**

**“We do a yearly review of the actions taken on our strategic roadmap and see what kind of progress we’ve made in that regard.”**

**“All department standing committees are required to review and revise their TOR in order to ensure that all departmental activities are conducted in accordance with EDI best practices.”**



## 5. TEACHING AND RESEARCH

### KEY MESSAGE:

While the importance of EDI in research and curriculum design was noted in plans and priorities, more support (both centrally and locally) is required.

There seems to be a general awareness of the need to integrate EDI into both teaching and research. The impetus for this new focus, while varied, has come largely from Tri-Council requirements as well as the need to respond to the 2019 *Strategic Plan for Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity*.

Across campuses, faculties and departments are working to support staff and trainees as they develop their capacities to integrate EDI, in meaningful ways, into their teaching and research programs. Examples of how this is being done include mentorship programs, targeted hires and the development of guides and workshops.

The guidance that has come as a result of the 2019 *Strategic Plan for Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity* is appreciated and valued. That being said, more is needed to ensure EDI is systematically integrated into the teaching and research ecosystems at large.

**“Preparing the EDI section for research proposals for the tri-council granting agency has been of particular interest, and early efforts have focused on this. Incorporating indigenous perspective into teaching has also been of interest, and this is an objective for the next academic year.”**

**“We have hosted an ‘EDI seminar’ series open to all members of the university, which has covered training on various EDI topics, such as how EDI can be incorporated into research and teaching.”**

**“Lack of administrative and budget support for ongoing EDI initiatives precludes us from making significant progress in developing EDI resources.”**

## 6. TRAINING AND EDUCATION

### KEY MESSAGE:

**A variety of EDI resources and initiatives have been developed, hosted and circulated; but more support is needed to ensure high quality opportunities are available in all areas of the institution.**

Individuals and groups working at the level of units, departments, faculties and portfolios have invested in a number of educational resources and opportunities. Examples of these efforts include the development of a variety of EDI resources including toolkits, guides, templates and checklists as well as the implementation of a number of EDI workshops, dialogues, seminars and reading groups.

The investments that have been made have indeed increased the EDI knowledge and proficiency of many individuals across campus. However, more support is needed to ensure high quality resources and learning opportunities are available to individuals in all units, departments, faculties, and portfolios.

**“We host a series of talks/ speakers focussed on EDI and invite members of our community to participate in reading groups with texts that focus specifically on EDI commitments, including challenging settler colonialism.”**

**“We have created a website where lists of resources and information are provided for Faculty and students. We also regularly disseminate resources for course delivery and integration of EDI-II principles and have had monthly roundtable discussions on teaching and integration of EDI principles.”**

**“We would like to modify our website to have [EDI] materials available to our Department members, but we have limited capacity to do this at this point given.”**

## 7. COLLABORATION AND ENGAGEMENT

### KEY MESSAGE:

**Internal and external partnerships have been instrumental in advancing EDI.**

Whether engaging with other members of the University of Alberta or partnering with organizations and groups beyond the institution, individuals and groups working at the level of units, departments, faculties and portfolios continue to develop a variety of mutually beneficial partnerships in order to advance various EDI related priorities.

These mutually beneficial forms of engagement, while unique to each area, have resulted in a variety of new community-based partnerships, the development of innovative courses and resources and participation in a number of knowledge-sharing networks and mechanisms.

**“We have been collaborating with a local NGO to increase our uptake of Indigenous students. These groups are underrepresented in the undergraduate and graduate student bodies, as well as in the academic personnel.”**

**“We are part of the Educational Developers Network of Alberta and I am the EDI Coordinator with over 90 post-secondary institutions collaborating in developing and sharing EDI resources.”**

**“We co-created INT D 222 Indigenous Health with Native Studies about 5 years ago. This is a required course for all of the students in our undergraduate programs.”**



## 8. INSTITUTIONAL BARRIERS

### KEY MESSAGE:

A number of structural and interpersonal barriers still exist for those championing EDI.

While progress has been made, barriers still exist that prevent some areas from achieving significant changes.

The barriers that staff and faculty members discussed were a lack of financial resources and human capacity, contradictory policies and processes (e.g., collective agreements, hiring policies), and resistance from others – ranging from unsupportive leadership to bullying by other faculty members.

“We would like to enhance our support to these critical initiatives, but current resourcing is proving presently limiting.”

“Some leaders fully supported initiatives, while others did not, so implementation was inconsistent and results were inconsistent.”

“The barriers we have encountered include Collective Agreement constraints, individual and program resistance and in some instances, bullying by faculty members of those who are seeking to move the work forward.”

### A PROMISING EDI PRACTICE: Decentering Eurocentric Knowledges

In the Department of Political Science, there is consistent support for pedagogy and curriculum content in critical race theory, feminism, disability studies and Indigenous politics among a wide range of instructors.

## SUCCESSSES AND LEARNINGS

In order to fully appreciate the successes and learnings that are shared throughout the following pages, it is important to emphasize the context in which our collective EDI actions and activities have taken place.

Only months after the *2019 Strategic Plan for Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity* was launched, a global pandemic was declared, forcing the University of Alberta, like all universities across the country, to not only adhere to a set of public health mandates, but also engage in a series of conversations about the benefits and harms of the application and removal of these mandates. During this time, there were also events that led to a ground-swell of support for anti-racist movements. Throughout 2021, for example, a number of campus-based initiatives sought solidarity with the Muslim and Asian communities by condemning the Islamophobia and anti-Asian racism that was sparked by the pandemic.

**“While it is important to acknowledge the hardships and heartaches of the past few years, they must not overshadow the successes and learnings that have happened simultaneously.”**

Around the same time, a number of ongoing violences inflicted by colonial institutions were coming to the fore. The violent murder of George Floyd resulted in a commitment to meaningful actions to address anti-Black racism and to promote Black inclusion through the development and signing of the Scarborough Charter. Similarly, the uncoverings of mass graves at residential schools across the country forced post-secondary institutions – and indeed all of Canada – to not only acknowledge the harmful legacy of colonial education systems, but also publicly renew their commitments to the Truth and Reconciliation’s Calls to Action. Add to this a growing awareness of campus-wide accessibility issues, as well as an institutional restructuring that resulted in a range of workforce disruptions and other individual and systems-level consequences, and it is easy to see how this rare combination of events resulted in what one respondent referred to as “a perfect storm.”

The development of this “perfect storm” did indeed create and/or uncover a number of ongoing crises and everyday challenges. It was, however, also the catalyst for a number of the collective EDI actions and activities reported in the previous pages. Therefore, while it is important to acknowledge the hardships and heartaches of the past few years, they must not overshadow the successes and learnings that have happened simultaneously. It is for this reason that we end this section by highlighting the EDI successes and learnings shared by those who championed a series of EDI actions and initiatives despite it all.

## GREATEST SUCCESSES

**“a genuine desire to create a culture among students and staff that embeds EDI into all levels of our teaching, research and service”**

When asked to describe their greatest EDI success, the majority of respondents discussed two cultural shifts. The first was an overall awareness of the need for EDI training and initiatives. Rooted in an acknowledgement that our institutional processes and practices privileged some groups more than others, this awareness created what one respondent referred to as *“a genuine desire to create a culture among students and staff that embeds EDI into all levels of our teaching, research and service.”*

The second cultural shift was a commitment by those in positions of power to invest in the people, structures and processes required to realize the goals articulated in the *Strategic Plan for Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity*. Credited for both their *“energy and knowledge”*, these leaders *“built trusted relationships with other leaders and advocated for EDI...creating a lot of momentum.”*

Faculties and departments that were committed to *“embedding EDI”* within their overall culture also shared a number of successes in four primary areas.

**“showcasing of research exploring questions that intersect with issues of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion”**

### 1. Teaching and Research

For some faculties and departments their greatest successes came in the areas of teaching and research. In the context of teaching, some areas suggested *“academic programs”* and *“teaching spaces”* were their greatest success. In other areas of the institution, research-specific activities such as the *“increased awareness...about the great potential of women as researchers”*, the *“showcasing of research exploring questions that intersect with issues of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion”* and *“incorporating EDI into grants”* were the most celebrated EDI activities.

**“incorporating EDI into grants”**

## A PROMISING EDI PRACTICE: Decentering Eurocentric Knowledges

The Faculty of Kinesiology, Sport and Recreation has made a commitment to deep accessibility in a variety of ways. Physical spaces have been designed and/or retrofitted for disabled students and instructors. Change rooms and washrooms are also gender inclusive and deeply accessible.



**“webinette series based on the 8 EDI Principles from the EDI Strategic Plan”**

**“our most visible success would be recently increasing diversity of our faculty complement and of our student body”**

**“our students have worked together with faculty members to add important content to the curriculum... They’ve pushed for more diverse student engagement in the governance of our program and currently have broader representation on our curriculum and admissions committees”**

## 2. Training and Education

As demonstrated in the previous section, faculties and departments have successfully developed and shared a variety of EDI related workshops, tools and resources. In some areas of the institution, these educational opportunities were described as being their greatest success. Some examples include, a *“webinette series based on the 8 EDI Principles from the EDI Strategic Plan”* and *“EDI statements in syllabus templates.”*

## 3. Hiring and Recruitment

Faculties and departments that were successful in this area reported increases in the diversity of staff and students. For example, when asked about their EDI successes one respondent shared *“our most visible success would be recently increasing diversity of our faculty complement and of our student body.”* Similarly, a second respondent suggested their new hiring practices were *“amazingly successful”* because they were now *“done with full EDI compliance and education.”*

## 4. Collaboration and Engagement

For some faculties and departments their greatest successes were their ability to work with other areas of the institution and/or members of the student body. Within these areas, collaboration with *“other faculties”* the *“EDI scoping group”* and the *“EDI Faculty Leads Group”* were the most celebrated EDI activities. In other areas of the institution, *“working with the student body to foster a safer and more inclusive learning environment”* was considered their greatest success. Some of the ways faculties have engaged with students was articulated by one respondent who wrote, *“Our students have worked together with faculty members to add important content to the curriculum... They’ve pushed for more diverse student engagement in the governance of our program and currently have broader representation on our curriculum and admissions committees.”*



# IN WHAT AREA(S) DO YOU FEEL YOUR EDI EFFORTS HAVE BEEN MOST IMPACTFUL?

Respondent #	Overall Culture	Hiring and Recruitment	Teaching	Research	Awareness	Approach to Services	Academic Program Evaluation
1		•					
2				•			
3		•					
4		•	•	•			
5	•	•	•	•			
6	•	•	•	•			
7	•	•					
8	•	•	•	•			
9	•	•	•				
10	•		•				
11	•	•					
12	•						
13							
14	•	•					
15	•	•	•	•			
16	•						
17	•	•	•	•			
18	•	•	•	•			
19	•						
20	•					•	
21		•			•		
22	•					•	
23	•						
24	•		•	•			
25	•				•	•	
26	•				•	•	
27		•					
28							•
29	•	•			•	•	
30	•				•		
31	•		•	•			
32	•		•	•	•	•	•
31		•	•	•	•		

\*This question was included the *Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Across Campus: A Questionnaire*. It was a multiple choice question.

## KEY LEARNINGS

As we look toward building a more equitable, diverse and inclusive future, it will be important that we continue to learn from our past. Listed below are eight learnings shared by those who have been championing EDI over the past few years. Based on their personal experiences with EDI, these eight items not only summarize key learnings from their past activities, they also offer us a checklist that can be used to hold ourselves to account as we continue to engage in the complicated and complex work of EDI.

# EDI

## A CHECKLIST FOR THE FUTURE

- EDI work must acknowledge that universities are colonial institutions marked by whiteness.
- EDI work must account for the lived experiences of exclusion, harm and oppression.
- EDI work requires a commitment to (un)learning and humility.
- EDI work is labour intensive and requires stamina.
- EDI work is often exhausting and alienating.
- EDI work needs to be valued by and integrated into all areas of the institution.
- EDI work requires dedicated resources.
- EDI work requires institutional accountability.

# Imagining a More Equitable, Diverse and Inclusive Future:

A Message from Dr. Carrie Smith —  
Vice-Provost (Equity, Diversity  
and Inclusion)

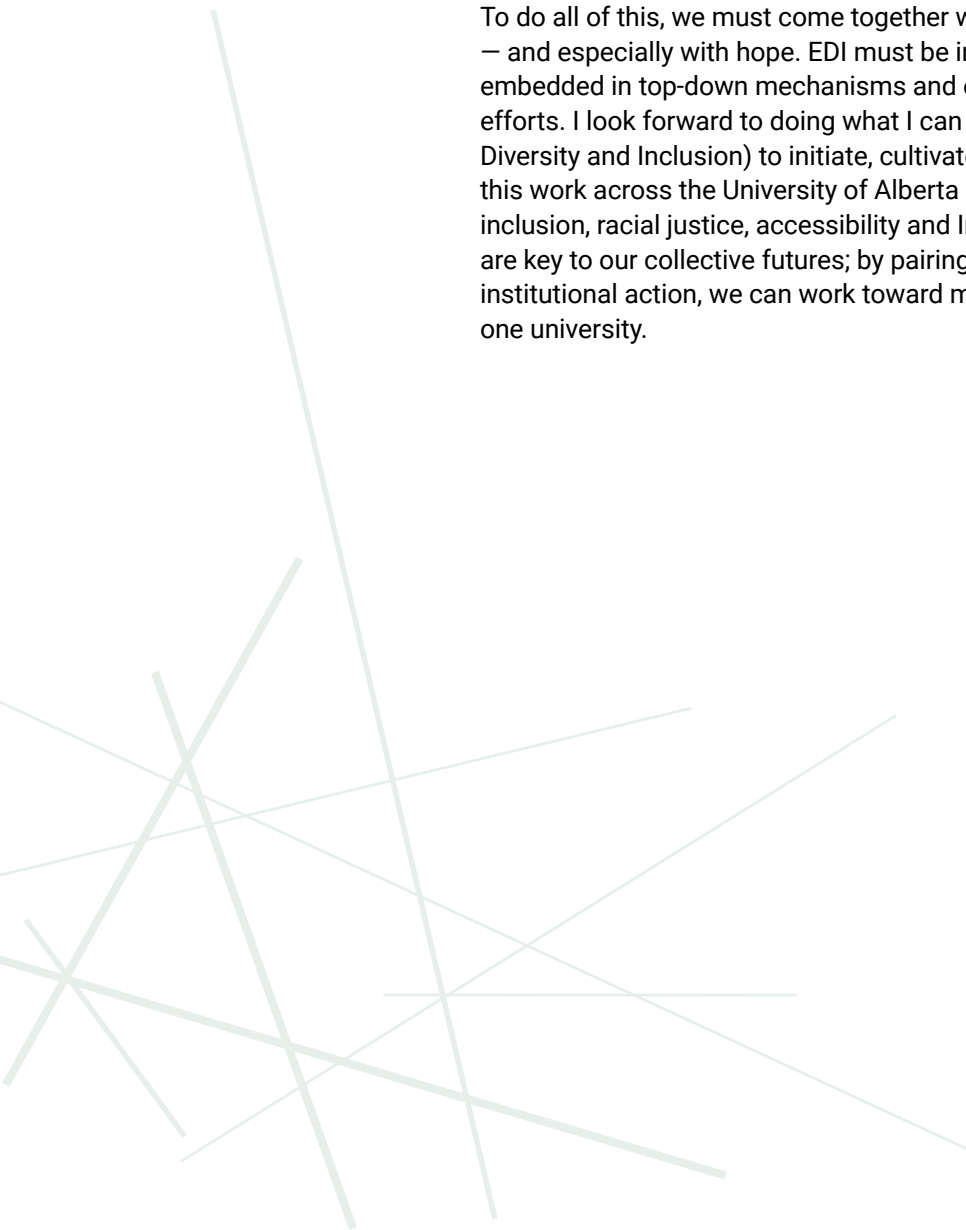
The University of Alberta is a top teaching and research destination for scholars and students worldwide. The stories and actions collected in this report speak to our collective recognition that to remain excellent, we must break patterns that serve to replicate the status quo by benefiting some and excluding others. Universities are colonial institutions marked by white supremacy. This fact runs through all past, current and future challenges for the University of Alberta. But addressing this is also our greatest opportunity. EDI efforts demand concerted change with the work threaded throughout all activities, supported by investment in good structures and infrastructures and the accountability of leadership. I am deeply impressed by how members of our university have not only taken these commitments to heart, but have advanced innovative plans and actions despite the personal losses, daily challenges and disruptive transformations that the last few years have thrown our way. *Stories from the Field* not only captures and celebrates these actions in their individual and unique plurality, but the report also tells an exceptional story of collective effort to which I am honoured to bear witness.





As we look to the future, we must continue to embrace EDI with courage. Current practices that are working well must be bolstered and enhanced, while others must be scrutinized, transformed, developed or imagined. Institutional leaders must make public commitments with clarity of purpose and conviction in the knowledge that an equitable and just institution is a thriving institution and diverse decision-making bodies make better decisions, buoyed by the intellectual leadership of faculty and student research in areas such as race, gender, sexuality, socioeconomics, religion, language, neurological diversity or disability. The commitment to promote and support equity, diversity and inclusion is one that goes together with research innovation, transformative pedagogy, student employability, sustainable resource management, staff satisfaction, prominent international standings, supporting a “Culture of Care” and a thriving campus community. Together we can create the conditions in which priorities are identified and actions taken collaboratively without replicating harmful structures, and ensuring that inclusive, accessible, just and equitable efforts continue to move forward deliberately.

To do all of this, we must come together with passion and generosity – and especially with hope. EDI must be integrated and iterative, be embedded in top-down mechanisms and emerge from grassroots efforts. I look forward to doing what I can as Vice-Provost (Equity, Diversity and Inclusion) to initiate, cultivate, champion and support this work across the University of Alberta ecosystem. Equity, diversity, inclusion, racial justice, accessibility and Indigenous human rights are key to our collective futures; by pairing individual convictions with institutional action, we can work toward making lasting progress as one university.







**UNIVERSITY  
OF ALBERTA**

**Office of the Vice-Provost,  
Equity, Diversity and Inclusion**

2-40E South Academic Building  
Edmonton, Alberta  
Canada T6G 2G7

[uab.ca/edi](http://uab.ca/edi)

# Leading with Purpose.