



UNIVERSITY
OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF
MEDICINE & DENTISTRY

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Report 2024

Acknowledgement of Traditional Land

The University of Alberta respectfully acknowledges that we are located on Treaty 6 territory, the traditional and ancestral gathering place for diverse Indigenous peoples including the Cree, Blackfoot, Métis, Nakota Sioux, Iroquois, Dene, Ojibway/ Sauteaux/ Anishinaabe, Inuit and many others.

We acknowledge the many First Nations, Metis and Inuit who have lived in and cared for these lands for generations. We are grateful for the traditional Knowledge Keepers and Elders who are still with us today and those who have gone before us. We make this acknowledgement as an act of reconciliation and gratitude to those whose territory we reside on.



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Preamble

Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry (FoMD) Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI).

The work to complete this EDI report began in September 2023. The FoMD EDI portfolio had been without a lead for approximately 14 months but the EDI work continued across the faculty, in departments, units, divisions and programs. It was determined that an inventory of FoMD EDI-related activities would help bring champions together, create a platform for celebrating our successes and highlight next steps and directions.

Thank you to all of those who participated. It is acknowledged that during the information gathering, a few departments and potentially key partners were missed. This oversight was unintentional and due to the siloed nature of EDI work in FoMD and the causal methodology employed.

The recommendations shared are for preliminary discussion and will require confirmation, prioritization, support and monitoring for continued alignment with the University of Alberta strategic plans **SHAPE, Braiding Past, Present and Future, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion** and the FoMD **Vision 2025**.

The EDI Advisory Committee (EDIAC) is well positioned to help with this work; however, further support will be required in order for FoMD to strengthen its commitment to creating a work and learning environment that fosters accessibility, belonging, respect and value for all, and encourages engagement and connection.

As you read through this report I challenge you to consider, "What does belonging to FoMD mean to me?"

Lisa Purdy

Assistant Dean Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
March 2024



Definitions

The definitions presented below are adapted from the **University of Alberta Stories from the Field**.

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 protected grounds. Within universities, diversity encompasses these, as well as difference or variety in education, perspectives, opinions, heuristics, disciplines, faculties, skills and learning opportunities. Embracing diversity involves recognizing, respecting and valuing these differences to create a more inclusive and equitable environment by removing barriers and biases.

INCLUSION

Inclusion means that we create an environment where diverse people feel valued, respected and are able to meaningfully participate. Inclusion refers to enabling all individuals on our campuses to fully enjoy the opportunities the university has to offer, and to have all equity-deserving groups meaningfully represented in all aspects of university life and decision-making roles university-wide.

BELONGING

Belonging refers to the sense of being accepted, valued and connected to a particular group, community, place or social environment. It encompasses the feeling of inclusion, acceptance and recognition, where individuals feel that they are an integral and important part of a collective entity.

*It should be noted that EDI definitions are not static and simplistic but rather dynamic and adaptive and that the EDIAC will review current FoMD definitions as part of a review of FoMD policies, procedures and practices.

Context

The FoMD is committed to excellence and innovation in education, research and clinical care.

The values and commitments stated in the **Vision 2025** strategic plan have EDI at their core as we commit to *“Investing in an inclusive environment that recognizes and respects the dignity and humanity of individuals and communities.”*

We are now halfway through this strategic plan and EDI is woven throughout many of the action items for the final phase.

5-Year Vision Statement	Activities related to EDI to meet 5-Year Vision Statements
<p>5.1 Renewal of faculty is optimized to meet the Faculty’s and institution’s goals and objectives.</p>	<p>Standardized EDI training for all search and select committees. Within the standardized training for search and selection committees, be mindful of the committee constitution and include an EDI champion. Explore appointing a “guide” for the candidate during the interview/hiring process.</p> <p>Adopt an evaluation framework to ensure candidates are assessed transparently and in an unbiased manner.</p>
<p>5.2 The diversity of the communities (population within central and northern Alberta) that we serve is represented in our leaders, faculty, staff and students.</p>	<p>Update workforce census diversity metrics for faculty, staff and leaders.</p> <p>When operationalizing, ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the survey is short b. it allows individuals to not answer questions and to pick multiple answers per question c. it has a good communication strategy, and d. to be thoughtful of those who will not feel safe and will find the census threatening. <p>Map faculty against students and STATS Can diversity data (from the community) to show our progress and if needed identify and develop interventions.</p> <p>Develop a high-level Faculty workforce plan for clarity in vision of diversity targets.</p> <p>Create inclusive spaces and supportive work environments that encourage faculty, students and staff.</p>
<p>5.5 Effective supports to facilitate career progression are in place.</p>	<p>Encourage growth and yearly professional development of employees.</p> <p>Use the EDIAC to examine best practices and make recommendations on how to best support diverse groups in career progression (including mentorship, FEC).</p> <p>Introduce a graduated mentorship program to support individuals at all career stages.</p>

Method

Between September 2023 and January 2024, the Assistant Dean EDI held 51 meetings with students, faculty, senior leadership and those with EDI portfolios from 17 departments, training programs and various units across FoMD. The purpose of the meetings was to network with partners to share information and an understanding of EDI practices within their constituency, collect an inventory of current EDI activities, and identify concerns and activities where EDI support would be appropriate.

Both purposeful and snowball sampling were employed; however, there were departments not included and the potential that key individuals may have been missed. Interview notes were collated and underwent **qualitative thematic analysis**.



Findings

Activities

Conceptualization of EDI activities varied widely between departments, from a desire to learn about different cultural backgrounds as an avenue to create inclusive environments, to developing EDI strategic plans and teaching EDI-related curricular content. All partners expressed a commitment to further EDI in FoMD. The departments without overt EDI activities still display an underpinning of EDI principles as the concepts are framed using different language (such as fairness and respect).

Education

There are many EDI educational initiatives and activities across the FoMD at both the trainee and faculty level. The integration of EDI and consideration of EDI in curriculum is varied.

- Undergraduate Medical Education has completed an audit of EDI content in discovery learning, specific EDI recommendations related to curriculum innovations are being implemented, and a pre-clerkship reporting mechanism for students to voice concerns about EDI content has been implemented. The reporting system is currently being expanded to clerkship.
- UME is also creating EDI “primers” for medical school teachers and a mechanism to report back to teachers what was heard in the EDI reporting. There is a movement for advance review of teaching materials with an EDI lens and to provide concrete support to lecturers and teachers to update curriculum, including a new position of UME Director of Teacher Support.
- Some residency programs offer academic half-days on EDI, cultural competence and trauma-informed care. PGME is working on expanding the EDI curriculum.
- The Office of Research is exploring the creation of an Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Indigeneity (EDI-I) curriculum/module for graduate students.
- The Faculty Development Committee is mobilizing a variety of EDI-related offerings. Some departments have multiple EDI educational initiatives for faculty, staff and learners. EDI moments in departmental newsletters are being created and shared.
- EDI training is being provided for staff conducting learner admissions interviews. There are many tools available and varying levels of EDI training for volunteer assessors throughout all of the undergraduate programs. There is an opportunity to collaborate and put together a refined and robust training package. Post Graduate Medical Education is also creating interviewer training for the Canadian Resident Matching Service.
- One department noted an Indigenous admission pathway to Residency and has worked to decolonize clinical spaces for patients and trainees.
- Many in FoMD are considering classes/curriculum and events through an accessibility lens.

Engagement

- There are some unit/departmental-level EDI committees across FOMD (e.g., established in PGME, Surgery, Medicine and Psychiatry).
- Some departments have faculty members who are appointed specifically to address EDI; however, few have an FTE allocated to EDI leadership. All of the EDI champions would welcome collaboration for sharing and are supportive of a community of practice.
- There are a few departments/units establishing internal and external collaborations and partnerships. An example is one department participating in a Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) grant for a toolkit to assess readiness for EDI activities.
- Departments indicated a desire to have concrete EDI initiatives that could be supported and adopted.

Community

There are multiple community engagement efforts underway. The students' associations in FoMD are actively involved with outreach and activities that support EDI. A few examples include:

- The Black Medical Students' Association hosts an annual community Black Health Fair and in collaboration with MD AIDE offers support for Black students throughout the medical school application process.
- The Medical School Association has an active EDI committee and among various other initiatives and advocacy efforts, hosts an annual Health Equity conference.
- The Medical Laboratory Science Students' Association and Radiation Therapy Students' Association host an annual Health Sciences Workshop.
- The MLSA is planning outreach to rural and inner-city high schools.
- The School of Dentistry has multiple community outreach activities.
- In summer 2024 the Department of Surgery will host an inaugural high school student surgery boot camp with sponsored tuition for Indigenous students.

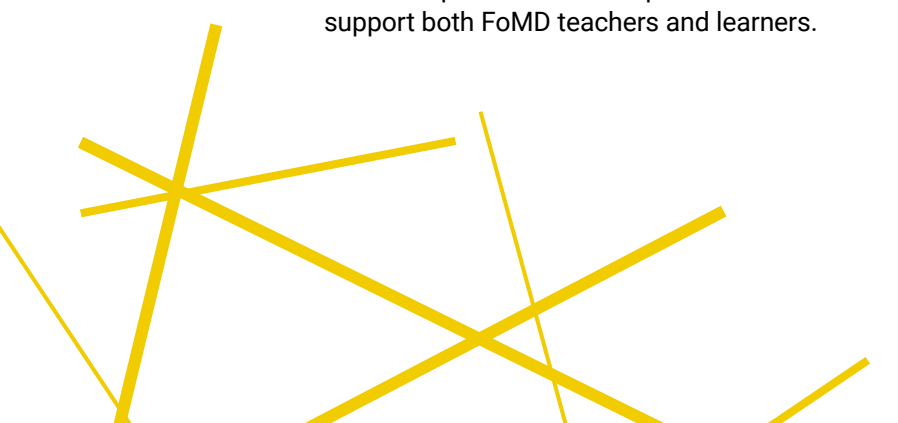
Recruitment and Retention

- Many departments indicate they are working on incorporating EDI across the selection process and many have already adopted recruitment best practices, such as collaboration with HR on every search committee, mandatory implicit association test completion for the search committee, standardized EDI questions and a checklist to ensure a diverse selection committee.
- The clinical departments use Alberta Health Services EDI training for joint AHS/FoMD search committees.
- There are many avenues for mentorship within FoMD; next steps will be a consultation with diverse faculty to ensure that the mentorship offerings are meeting the needs.

Challenges and Opportunities

There is agreement that EDI is integral to the work in FoMD; however, there can be an inability to mobilize due to varying reasons. Barriers experienced by those who engage in EDI activities within the Faculty include:

- FoMD is large and relatively decentralized so it is difficult to know “who is doing what” or where to go for support. Communication and information sharing are a challenge. Many EDI leads also feel that they would benefit from learning about the work of others and sharing some of their own successes with others.
- Because of the siloed nature of the work, there is some redundancy of EDI efforts. An example is multiple units/departments that are independently integrating EDI into recruitment (faculty and trainee admissions), and creating impactful “just in time” EDI educational materials.
- Grant support: Strong concerns were voiced about the lack of capacity to meaningfully complete the EDI requirements in Tri-Council grant applications. Researchers in FoMD clearly stated a need for guidance on successfully completing EDI requirements.
- Concerns were expressed about the apparent lack of diversity of FoMD leadership.
- Concerns were expressed about the lack of faculty renewal. This is related to dwindling numbers of new assistant professors in many departments that will impact the overall diversity of faculty. Ensuring diversity of new recruits is often further complicated by requirements of specific research expertise to fulfill departmental/faculty areas of focus.
- Resource allocation: Departmental Chairs are very aware of how overtaxed faculty are and are reluctant to ask faculty to commit to another duty like leading EDI activities.
- Some departments indicated a lack of EDI expertise and training as a barrier.
- There are varied interpretations of what EDI means and some resistant attitudes. This seems to be connected to what was described as EDI fatigue. Many partners recognized that FoMD members seem to experience discomfort in openly talking about EDI issues.
- The “**hidden curriculum**” in clinical spaces is often contradictory to the formal curriculum. There is a sense that peers from under-represented groups are often being asked to be the EDI “teachers.”
- It is difficult to quantify and recognize the success of EDI activities (for example measuring inclusive practices). There are very few formal evaluations of EDI activities.
- Across the FoMD there is a lack of nearby multi-faith space to allow students quick access during class breaks.
- There are places where the process of learner accommodations could be improved to support both FoMD teachers and learners.



Work Already Underway

Integration of EDI principles into search committees

We are currently piloting a curriculum that integrates small amounts of EDI training into each phase of the search process, “EDI moments.” The curriculum will be part of a package of hiring best practices that individuals chairing a search committee can adopt. It will integrate the FoMD recruitment document “*Growing Wisely*,” university recruitment materials, curriculum and discussion questions for the committee to consider, a facilitation guide, and actionable tips to weave EDI into each phase of the search. The next step is to share the proposed module with FoMD HR partners and EDI leads from interested departments for feedback. A Google website will be created to host this module and other EDI tools.

As work of the EDI office overlaps with other units across the Faculty Affairs portfolio (Professionalism, Wellness, Faculty Development, Clinical Faculty), collaborative efforts to create and evaluate initiatives framed on EDI principles need to be leveraged. For example, collating all FoMD activities related to **retention** into a well-articulated strategy as an initial step. This would include onboarding, mentorship, faculty development and a faculty evaluation committee. Exit interviews of faculty who leave FoMD should be explored to help capture feedback as part of an evaluation framework of retention activities.





Recommendations

The recommendations below are meant to begin discussions on EDI priorities as a stepping stone to a formalized FoMD EDI action plan.

1. FoMD EDI community of practice

Create a forum for EDI leads and champions (faculty, staff or trainees) with similar interests, concerns or projects to come together. Help to optimize EDI efforts across FOMD and establish best practices. Otherwise, there is a risk of inefficient, siloed and duplicate EDI efforts. The mechanics of the community of practice should be determined by those interested in participating in order to ensure it is fulfilling expectations and needs.

2. EDI leads

Each department/unit within the FoMD has at least one EDI lead. This faculty or staff member should be equipped with the necessary resources and support (including protected time) to carry out EDI-related responsibilities. The new community of practice will support EDI leads and foster collaboration. Resources for planning, implementing and evaluating EDI initiatives are vital to address and avoid reinforcing the “*minority tax*” burden placed on faculty, staff and learners from under-represented groups who contribute their time and expertise.

3. Communication

Development of an overarching communication strategy and an educational/promotional EDI campaign for FoMD. This will require the support of a communication specialist.

A broad strategy of communication using varied media platforms to share diverse

personal messages, relevant EDI developments and celebrate days of significance. An example includes discussion of a pilot “Diverse Scholars Amongst Us,” a podcast to celebrate the scholarly products of racialized FoMD members. From community consultation, appropriate strategies to celebrate EDI across all of FoMD can be developed.

EDI reports should be a standing agenda item at regular intervals at FoMD leadership committees and Faculty Council and included in annual FoMD reporting to engage with FoMD activities and garner feedback.

Dissemination of EDI findings and actions in FoMD to diverse partner groups in various formats will help ensure accountability and transparency of EDI activities and support an EDI lens when new policies, practices, programs, etc. are developed.

Add an EDI moment to the beginning of meetings – a short definition, antidote, quote or story. A repository of EDI moments, hosted on the Google website, could be created to facilitate this.

4. Workforce census for faculty and leadership

An investment of resources is required for systematic and safe collection, analysis and sharing of EDI-related information with all community members. The data should be used to understand the current FoMD landscape, set priority areas of focus, and align with University of Alberta strategies. There are many logistical considerations for the survey, including confirming survey questions and planning and delivering a communication strategy prior to survey execution.

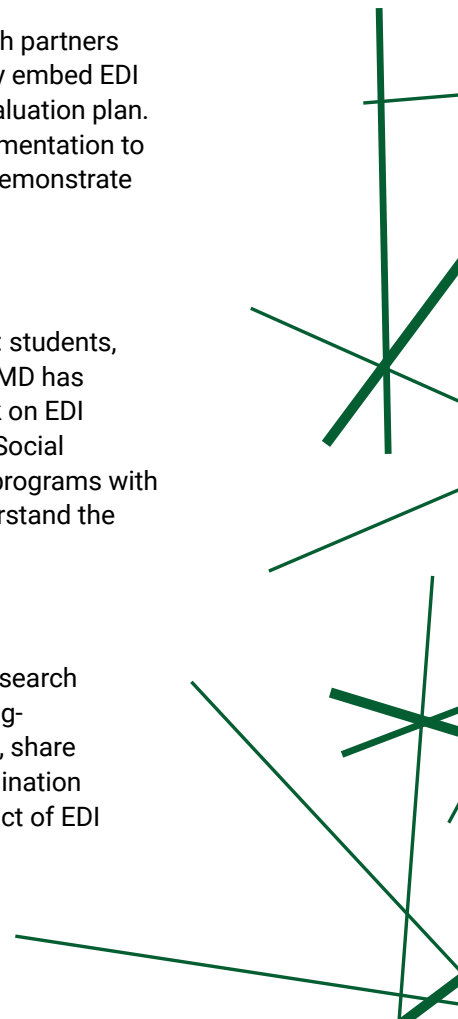
From an updated workforce census of faculty and leaders, engagement with partners and community can begin to update diversity categories and systematically embed EDI throughout recruitment and retention. These strategies must include an evaluation plan. This recommendation requires a robust communication plan prior to implementation to ensure transparency. This is a critical aspect of UME accreditation and to demonstrate progress on FoMD Vision 2025 goals.

5. Community consultation

EDI work includes collaborating with two related but different communities: students, staff and faculty who learn or work in the FoMD, and the people that the FoMD has a mandate to serve. A process will be developed to obtain regular feedback on EDI priorities from those internal to the FoMD. We will also work alongside the Social Accountability Unit, Wâpanachakos Indigenous Health Program and other programs with established community-based advisory groups and councils to better understand the EDI-related priorities of the diverse communities that the FoMD serves.

6. Interprofessional research collaborations

Foster excellence and innovation in EDI by establishing interprofessional research collaborations through the College of Health Sciences EDI network. The long-term goal is to work toward an EDI hub to foster coordination of EDI efforts, share learning, collaborate, support capacity development and encourage dissemination of EDI success. This would help to amplify and evaluate the collective impact of EDI across CHS.



7. Grant support for researchers

Expand capacity within the grant services offered to include specific help for editing and polishing the EDI elements of grants. Researchers will still need to do the initial self-reflection followed by individualized support. The next step is to conduct focus groups or interviews to identify barriers, resource gaps and how best to support grant applications. There is an opportunity to collaborate with the College of Health Sciences and University EDI leads network.

8. Resource allocation

The EDI office will require resource allocation to facilitate project management of EDI initiatives and collaboration with partners. An EDI staff person would support the EDI Office, EDIAC and FoMD EDI champions/leads with the completion of action items, strategic directions, programming and evaluation (surveys, data analysis, reports).

9. EDIAC and Anti-Racism Commitment to Change

Reimagine the **EDIAC** and **ARCTC** terms of reference to allow for project-based work. With support, the EDIAC can plan, implement and monitor faculty-level EDI action items.

Suggested EDIAC activities:

- Retention plan
 - Survey departments and collate all retention activities in FoMD.
 - Literature review of best practices.
 - Bring all aspects together in a retention framework that aligns with University policies and practices.
- Annual EDI report card: Use existing inventory frameworks to annually summarize EDI efforts.
- Explore the feasibility of using “Belonging” as a communication strategy.
- Evaluate all FoMD policies, guidelines and procedures (including diversity policy review).
- Redesign of FoMD EDI web space
- Workforce census planning
- Pronoun campaign
- Plan and participate in community consultation
- Grant support for research

Appoint an ARCTC co-chair, forge a vision to continue the anti-racism, anti-oppression work started in FoMD to ensure the goals of social justice and principles of anti-oppression are reinforced. An extension of this work is ensuring the FoMD keeps our commitments to the Scarborough Charter.

Suggested ARCTC activities:

- Anti-racism policy review
- Review and update previous ARCTC recommendations,
- Align the recommendations with broader on-going EDI work

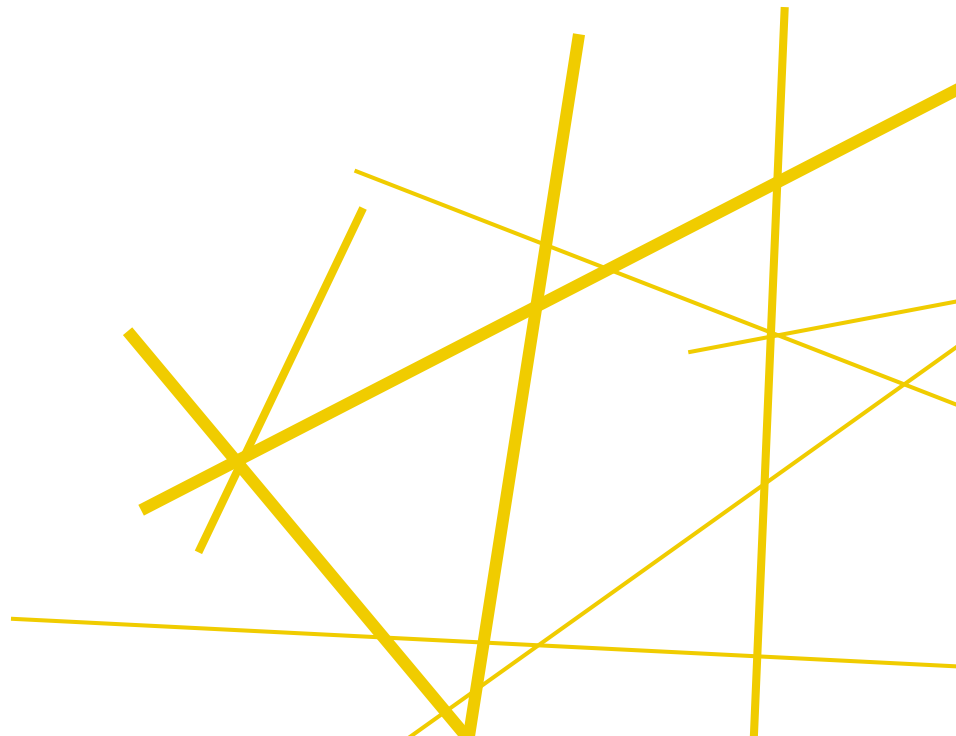
Immediate Next Steps

The EDI office will employ a summer student assistant to help with EDI activities:

- Review of academic and grey literature and to glean information on successful EDI strategies and practices.
- Work with FoMD partners to begin to curate available resources and create infographics and tools – such as a multi-faith calendar that outlines significant days that may require accommodations or workplace modifications – and start to build a central repository for these products.
- FoMD EDI web space updates
- Orientation package for undergraduates that outlines accommodations, multi-faith calendar, multi-faith prayer space and human rights.
- Build on the recommendations included in this report to create an action plan and timeline to accomplish EDI goals.

Ideas for further investigation:

- Further explore collaborations with FoMD student groups
- Conduct focus groups/interviews with researchers to identify barriers, resource gaps and how best to support grant applications.
- Work with the University EDI Leads Network to create an EDI “tip sheet” for event planning.
- Continued collaboration with the VP EDI to ensure alignment with institutional initiatives such as UAPPOL hiring suite, FEC framework.
- Expand EDI conversations to FoMD staff.
- Create subsequent processes and supports that align with HR to address EDI issues.



Final Considerations

The importance of communication and working together to achieve an “inclusive environment that recognizes and respects the dignity and humanity of individuals and communities” (Vision 2025) cannot be overstated. Almost every partner mentioned the lack of transparency, communication and the siloed nature of the work we do in FoMD. It is essential that the EDI Office have mechanisms to actively communicate with all partners and communities to build relationships and continue the collaborative nature of the work.

To achieve meaningful change within FoMD we must recognize that EDI is closely aligned with power and principles of anti-oppression. Oppressions are often invisible as they are deeply embedded into our institutions. The consequences of racism, sexism, homophobia, ableism, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, ageism, classism and other forms of oppression are far-reaching and can prevent equity. The Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry must consciously weave principles of equity, diversity and inclusion in all that we do.





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