



SUBJECT	EDI Decision-Making Principles
SUBMITTED TO	People, Community & International Committee
MEETING DATE	March 16, 2022
SESSION CLASSIFICATION	Recommended session criteria from Board Meetings Policy: OPEN
REQUEST	For input only - No action requested
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the [Inclusion Action Plan](#) (IAP), EDI Decision-Making Principles is the first action item listed under Systems Change. Specifically, the action is to “develop, consult on, and implement guidelines for decision-making that incorporate equity, diversity, and inclusion principles.” This present draft contains three key components of the guidelines: Introduction, Principles, and Engagement and Consultation. It is presented for input to inform its next iteration, both in substance and in process.

The systems change goal of the IAP is “to advance intentional and proactive steps to change systems, structures, policies, practices, and processes to advance equity, diversity, and inclusion at UBC.” These draft guidelines have been developed by a working group that was chaired by the former AVP Equity & Inclusion, Sara-Jane Finlay, and which includes representation of students, faculty and staff. The working group acknowledges that broader and deeper consultations are necessary to produce guidelines that are effective, relevant and practical for the policy and decision-makers on the Board of Governors and Senates. The PCI Committee’s reflections and input are critical to assist the working group on honing the content of these guidelines and delineating the process for engagement and consultation with the broader university community.

Briefly, the document at this point in time covers:

Introduction – the background and context in which the need for these guidelines was identified.

Referencing UBC’s strategic commitments in other plans and reports, the Introduction strives to highlight the essential connection needed to bridge UBC’s stated core values and strategic goals with UBC’s operations and policies. That connection is an EDI framework for making decisions and policy. EDI or more accurately JEDI (justice, equity, diversity and inclusion), is the tool that all policy and decision-makers require in their day-to-day exercise of discretion, authority and duty in advancing the university’s commitments and bringing life to its core values. Two key questions are posed for every decision-maker to consider:

- 1) What kind of institution does UBC strive to be?
- 2) Does a decision/policy advance UBC’s JEDI commitments?

Principles – critical questions to be considered by each decision-maker in assessing, weighing and deliberating the information before them in alignment with UBC’s core JEDI commitments.

These questions are intended to prompt the decision-maker to intentionally and actively consider justice, equity, diversity and inclusion as core values and essential goals for the university to achieve through each and every decision and policy it makes. They ask the decision-maker to consider:

- Justice and inclusivity
- Legal duty to uphold human rights, as a paramount right
- Anti-racism
- Indigenous human rights
- Flexibility and a focus on context
- Compassion and human flourishing
- Transparency and accountability

Consultation and Community Engagement – highlighting the process to spark conversation, exchange ideas, hold space for dissent, and build community for these guidelines to reflect UBC’s ethos in exercising discretion.

Consultation and engagement activities are a primary means of communicating these guidelines and generating curiosity and interest. Effective implementation must be based on the values that the guidelines are based on: inclusion, respect, and fairness. The university community must be given fulsome notice of these guidelines, a fair opportunity to be heard and adequate resources and support to build capacity to act on them.

Input requested

We are requesting the PCI Committee’s input and suggestions generally, and in particular:

- Any accessibility barriers in regards to the constructs, language
- Ease of use and applicability of the Principles
- Key groups, individuals who need to be consulted and engaged
- What might be missing or weak in the logical sequencing from Introduction to Principles
- What resources/tools/procedures might be useful to supplement the Principles

APPENDICES

1. Draft EDI Decision-Making Principles

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Principles for Decision-Making

Mandate:

Goal 2.0 - Systems Change

Action A – EDI Decision-Making Principles

Leads: All VPs, Board of Governors, Senates

Develop, consult on, and implement guidelines for decision-making that incorporate equity, diversity, and inclusion principles

Action Planning Team 2A Terms of Reference:

Many of the policies and processes of the Board of Governors and the Senates interact with matters of equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI); however, the principles and values of EDI have not been clearly stated or integrated and weighed in the decision-making processes for our governance bodies.

Scope:

These Principles are intended for application to all decision-making processes and outcomes of UBC's governance bodies, namely the Board of Governors and Senates.

Introduction:

As a grateful guest on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territories of the Musqueam and Syilx peoples, UBC acknowledges its duty to advance and safeguard Indigenous human rights in all of its endeavours.

UBC is committed to creating a respectful, fair, and inclusive institution in which all faculty, staff, and students flourish. UBC is also a public institution. As such, its central academic mission must be in service of the public interest. Through its various strategic plans, UBC has articulated that justice, equity, diversity and inclusion must underpin all UBC decisions, activities, and interactions. As an institution, we recognize that:

- unjust and inequitable outcomes have resulted from the long-term effects of colonial public policy and institutional practices that reinforce systemic racism and discrimination;
- UBC is a global agent and our decisions have global impact;
- our educational mission must be informed by commitments to anti-racism, anti-oppression, reconciliation, decolonization, and justice;
- faculty, staff, and students can only thrive where there is a culture of respect and inclusion;
- a failure to advance UBC's core strategic commitments on justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion will continue to perpetuate and amplify injustice and harm upon those who are systemically marginalized.

The core values expressed in documents such as the Indigenous Strategic Plan, the Inclusion Action Plan, the UBC Strategic Plan and the Anti-Racism and Inclusive Excellence Task Force Report must be embedded into not only what UBC does, but how UBC does it. Decisions relating to policy development and, most importantly, implementation must be informed and

guided by justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion for the goals of these and other plans and reports to be achieved.

The Board of Governors and Senates have respective jurisdiction, authority and responsibility to make decisions that have profound impacts on UBC as an institution, its members and the broader community. When justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion are at the centre of decision-making, we ensure that the diversity and richness of our lived experiences, the societal values expressed in human rights legislation, and the shared commitment to undoing racism and colonial harms become embedded in all that we do at UBC.

This is neither a simple nor easy task. It will require institutional courage to critically examine and determine:

- What kind of institution does UBC want to be? If UBC does not centre our values of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion in all aspects of its academic mission, what does it stand for? What harms will be created or perpetuated?
- Does a decision, policy or action advance UBC's commitment to justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion or does it increase the risk of harm? Support decolonization? Move UBC and the local and global communities it serves towards reconciliation and justice?

The Principles outlined below prompt decision-makers to be deliberately values-focused in both the processes and outcomes of decision-making. In making decisions, on policy or individual cases, decision-makers must seek input and feedback from those who will be impacted so that their diverse lived experiences within and beyond the university are considered and weighted as relevant. Decision-makers must recognize and mitigate against the potential harms on marginalized community members and ensure that decisions are understood and supported by those who will be impacted, particularly for communities beyond UBC and with the host nations.

Fair, equitable and inclusive decisions require specific steps, including the consideration of context-specific circumstances and the diverse environments in which the decision is made and is to be implemented. The intersections of identity characteristics must be acknowledged to avoid overly simplistic categorizations and solutions. Embedding justice, equity, diversity, inclusion, and decolonization into the fabric of the institution cannot be achieved without ensuring that UBC decisions are guided by its core values which are reflected in the Principles below.

Principles:

All decision-making at UBC must be informed and guided by the university's core commitments to justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion, which includes dismantling racism and advancing Indigenous human rights. Decision-makers must consider all of the following Principles in their decision-making processes and outcomes.

The decision-making process and ultimate outcome:

- make UBC a more just, accessible and inclusive institution;
- recognize our legal responsibilities to human rights and do not privilege academic freedom over human rights;
- advance UBC's commitment to anti-racism and Indigenous human rights;
- acknowledge systems of white supremacy and support decolonization;
- promote a culture of human flourishing;
- prioritize relationality over competition;
- are focused on equity, not sameness;
- weigh and balance individual circumstances/contexts;
- are informed by a flexible, compassionate and wellness-centred approach.

Transparency and accessibility are key to demonstrating that these Principles have been considered, applied and embedded in decision-making. This will require not only policies and procedures to embed these Principles but also training and resources to build competencies for decision-makers and those who support them.

Consultation & Community Engagement – Next Steps

These Principles must be informed and amplified by and in the diverse community of UBC students, staff and faculty. In the broader context of local and global exigencies and societal expectations and demands for post-secondary institutions to advance justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion, these Principles can have a far-reaching impact beyond UBC's borders.

Fulsome engagement and genuine consultation in accordance with the values articulated in these draft Principles are necessary to foster trust and credibility in the process and investment by UBC community members to bring these Principles to life.

Proposed process includes:

- Smaller group consultations with the Board of Governors and Senates
- Early engagement with UBC's host nations and Indigenous students, faculty and staff
- Listening sessions with core working groups and committees whose focus is on justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion
- Engagement with various constituency representatives (e.g. student, faculty, and staff unions and associations)
- Communication through virtual means with platforms for online feedback