

CANADA RESEARCH CHAIRS PROGRAM (CRCP) INSTITUTIONAL EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (EDI) ACTION PLAN AND EDI STIPEND REPORT

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Does your institution have an EDI Action Plan for the CRCP? Yes.

PART A. EDI ACTION PLAN

Reporting on Key Objectives Analyses, Systemic Barriers, Objectives and Indicators

Date of most recent plan (e.g. latest revision of the public plan):	10/21/2019
Rating given action plan in most recent review process:	Satisfies
Name of vice-president level representative responsible for ensuring the implementation of the plan:	Jonathan Newman

EDI ACTION PLAN KEY OBJECTIVES

Key Objective 1

Brief description of S.M.A.R.T. Key Objective 1:

Creating a more inclusive environment at Laurier will lead to a more inclusive environment for CRCs and their research teams. We recognize that attracting a more diverse workforce alone will not necessarily result in a more inclusive environment, and that retention and advancement are key to maintaining a thriving, equitable and inclusive environment. Laurier's Employment Engagement Survey, employment systems review, and environmental scan highlighted the need to increase education and support around the experiences of individuals from equity deserving groups.

Systemic barriers:

Laurier's environmental scan showed that the greatest and most persistent underrepresentation gaps exist among faculty who identify as racialized. Laurier acknowledges that gaps exist in the representation of faculty who identify as Indigenous, having disabilities, and women. As part of Laurier's environmental scan, the employee engagement survey revealed that many Laurier employees believe that the Laurier community does not represent the diversity of communities with which its campuses are located. Furthermore, survey participants identified EDI as one of the three key drivers for employee engagement. Laurier's employment systems review that assesses recruitment, onboarding, promotion, and retention processes identified opportunities for improving hiring practices.

As a result several needs were identified: (1) a lack of senior leadership dedicated to coordinating efforts across various units to implement policies and practices that address EDI as it pertains to equity deserving groups and the boarder Laurier community; (2) the need to increase the number of resources and educational opportunities around the experiences of individuals from equity deserving groups; and (3) the need for better education and training around EDI to encourage hiring practices aimed at diversifying Laurier's faculty.

Corresponding actions undertaken to address the barriers:

- a) Recruit, select and onboard a Senior Advisor, EDI who will be a tenured faculty member with expertise in EDI and will report directly to the Provost & VP: Academic. This role will support Deans, academics, instructors, and researchers in embedding more equitable and inclusive practices.
- b) Embed a specially trained EDI Champion on all CRC candidate selection committees and require EDI training for all of those involved in decision making regarding CRC allocation, recruitment, retention, and advancement.
- c) Create and roll-out toolkit tailored to researchers (including CRCs) on how to better embed EDI-informed practices into their research teams and research practices.
- d) Create and roll-out toolkit tailored to faculty (including CRCs) on how to embed EDI into their recruitment, assessment, and promotion practices.
- e) Recruit a Strategic Recruitment Consultant to, among other things, evaluate recruitment, selection and employment branding and outreach processes to embed best practices in equity.

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Data gathered and Indicator(s) - can be both qualitative and quantitative:

a) AVP: EDI:

1. Hiring of AVP: EDI.
2. Number of consultations by the Senior Advisor EDI.

b) EDI Training:

1. 100% of CRC candidate committees include a trained EDI Champion.
2. 100% of decision makers trained.

c) Researchers Toolkit:

1. Number of researchers who have used the toolkit tailored to researchers in embedding EDI-informed practices into their research teams and research practices.

d) Recruitment Toolkit:

1. Number of researchers who have used the toolkit tailored to faculty in embedding EDI into their recruitment, assessment, and promotion practices.

e) Strategic Recruitment Consultant:

1. Number of candidate recruitments that engaged the Consultant.
2. Embedding best practices that enhance all aspects of recruitment (job postings and onboarding).
3. Number of equity advocates developed across units/departments within Laurier.

Progress and/or Outcomes and Impacts made during the reporting period:

a) Laurier's Senior Advisor: EDI role was elevated to Associate Vice-President: EDI (AVP: EDI). Prof. Barrington Walker was successfully recruited and joined Laurier in January 2020 as AVP: EDI.

b) As outlined in Wilfrid Laurier University Faculty Association (WLUFA) Full-Time Faculty and Professional Librarians Collective Agreement, all faculty Appointment and Promotion Committees are required to have at least one Equity Representative on the committee. This voting member, along with the committee Chair undergo equity in hiring and tenure training and receive specialized supports throughout the hiring and onboarding process. In addition to this training, all members of the CRC hiring committee must complete the unconscious bias training module on an ongoing basis. Deans were also provided with information on the new process and provided guidance on how to oversee equity in the hiring process in Winter 2020.

c) The Office of the AVP: EDI is in the processes of developing (to be launched in May 2021) a toolkit in the form of an online course and resource library that guides researchers in embedding EDI-informed practices into their research teams and research practices. The course, titled "Inclusive Labs and Research Teams," begins by building literacy in EDI principles and providing some on exclusions in the research ecosystem and higher education in Canada. It then guides researchers on how to formulate grant proposals that take EDI into consideration throughout the research and knowledge-mobilization processes. Sections on inclusive research team-building, recruitment, and retention follow, and include guidelines for fostering an inclusive research environment. The toolkit ends with a set of discipline-specific research toolkits with examples of literature covering barriers to inclusion within specific fields, calls to action, and examples of inclusive research methodologies. The toolkit includes an optional quiz, the completion of which can be used as a metric for uptake and measuring researcher competencies.

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d) The Equity in Hiring and Tenure Toolkit was launched in September 2020. The toolkit is a “living” resource that will be continually updated and refined as questions come up and new resources become available. The toolkit is part of required training for all Appointment and Promotion Committee Chairs and Equity Representatives.

e) CRC recruitment committees actively work with Laurier’s Strategic Recruitment Consultant to advertise CRC job postings widely to ensure that there is representation from equity deserving groups in the applicant pool. CRC recruitment committees are also provided with resources and guidance on how to create inclusive job postings and all postings are reviewed by Laurier’s Equity and Accessibility Officer. Similarly, resources on inclusive assessment, interviews, selection, and onboarding are provided to CRC recruitment committees. Since the onset of COVID-19 the Consultant has been engaged in providing guidance on how to conduct interviews in a remote environment. Laurier also entered into a new partnership with IndigenousLink in Summer 2020. With this new partnership all Laurier job postings are sent to 28,000 Indigenous Offices across the country.

Challenges encountered during the reporting period:

a) Prof. Barrington Walker was hired as Laurier’s first AVP: EDI and full professor in summer 2019. Due to prior commitments, the start of his appointment was delayed till January 2020.

b) Laurier and its Faculty Association bargained a new Collective Agreement in Summer 2020 with the inclusion of an Equity Representative on each full-time faculty hiring committee. Turnaround time for training was short and had to be quick as academic hiring starts over the summer for some disciplines.

c) Ensuring relevance to faculty across a wide array of disciplines and research cultures. Given the abrupt move to remote learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Laurier’s Instructional Designers have been overwhelmed supporting instructors across the institution. This resulted in delayed opportunities for support for the Researchers Toolkit development.

d) The toolkit is evolving and will continue to grow. One challenge is that the toolkit is housed on Laurier’s internal website that does not allow for the number of users to be tracked. As a result, there is no data on the number of individuals who have used the toolkit.

e) This new partnership with IndigenousLink took some time to establish.

Next Steps (indicate specific dates/timelines):

a) The AVP: EDI is the Co-Chair of Laurier’s EDI Strategic Planning Committee (SPC-EDI). The Committee will consult with the Laurier community on a one-on-one basis (starting January 2021). A community wide SPC-EDI survey will be administered to inform the EDI Strategic Plan in Winter 2021.

b) As required in the WLUFAs Full-Time Faculty and Professional Librarians Collective Agreement, Appointment and Promotion Committee Chairs and Equity Representatives will continue to receive equity in hiring and tenure training from the Equity and Accessibility team in Human Resources. Starting in Summer 2021, all members of any Appointment and Promotion Committee will also complete equity in hiring training.

c) Next steps include developing a communication plan and operationalizing (Summer 2021) the Researchers toolkit through promotion by the Office of Research Services, and Departments and Faculties to encourage engagement and completion of the quiz. To increase uptake of the toolkit as a resource, the EDI Training

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Specialist will be collaborating with the Office of Research Services, faculty with relevant expertise, and Teaching and Learning to create an EDI Dialogues series (starting Fall 2021) for faculty that facilitates ongoing focused discussions of the issues addressed in the toolkit.

d) Next steps include surveying Chairs and Equity Representatives to see what further improvements can be made to the Recruitment Toolkit (April 2021). The Researchers Toolkit and Recruitment Toolkit will also be reviewed to see if they should be combined or remain separate (Summer 2021).

e) Future CRC recruitment committees will continue to engage with the Recruitment Consultant.

Was funding from the CRCP EDI stipend used for this key objective? Yes.

How much of the funding was spent on this key objective?

\$3,386

If an amount was entered in the previous question, indicate specifically what the funds were spent on.

Action c) 4 undergraduate research associates and three undergraduate digital design students were hired to build interactive modules on Laurier’s MyLearningSpace and to research discipline-specific EDI topics for the Researchers toolkit.

EDI Stipend Impact Rating

Please rate the extent of the impact the EDI Stipend has had on your institution in meeting this key objective:

- Extensive impact (the EDI Stipend had an extensive impact on achieving progress)

Indicate in the table below any leveraged cash or in-kind contributions provided by the institution

Leveraged cash or in-kind contributions from your institution (if applicable):

	Amount \$	Source / Type (cash or in-kind)
1	-	N/A
2	-	N/A

Key Objective 2

Brief description of S.M.A.R.T. Key Objective 2:

Although Laurier has collected demographic data for several years, the data has only been analyzed using the principles of the Federal Contractors program. The analysis has not utilized an intersectional approach, and data from casual employee groups such as contract teaching faculty (instructors) remains limited. In conducting the environmental scan, comparative review, and employment systems review, it was difficult to gauge the effectiveness of various EDI initiatives and areas where new initiatives are needed. To better understand what changes will have the most impact, Laurier needs to better understand its environment and systemic barriers to inclusion. This also includes embedding more contemporary data analysis approaches such as intersectional analysis and data disaggregation to deepen our understanding of unique experiences among individual clusters of Laurier's population and the FDGs.

Systemic barriers:

A major systemic barrier identified is Laurier's inability to make evidence-based EDI-informed decisions and effectively assess the impact of various EDI initiatives due to the lack of sufficient data collection and analysis across various clusters of Laurier's institutional population. In the absence of such data and analyses, gaps in understanding policies and programs that could potentially have the greatest impact on EDI will persist.

In response to these barriers, several areas with data deficiencies were identified, including: (1) the lack of equity data on contract faculty and post-doctoral fellows; (2) the lack of data on the experiences of FDGs and 2SLGBTQ+ of the Laurier community; (3) the lack of equity data on CRC applicants during recruitment processes, (4) the lack of knowledge on challenges faced by CRCs (e.g., barriers to their inclusion) and (5) the need to increase the EDI knowledge of Research Facilitators, as they represent the Office of Research Services staff who directly support CRCs.

Corresponding actions undertaken to address the barriers:

- a) Develop, expand, implement, and promote a more contemporary institutional employment equity survey that is available online and easy to update. Perspectives from the larger Laurier community (including individuals from across FDGs and 2SLGBTQ+ community) will be used to develop the new survey. Expand data collection to include contract teaching faculty (instructors) and post-doctoral fellows.
- b) Embed applicant self-identification survey into all CRC job postings with expansion to all Laurier postings including faculty and contract teaching faculty (instructors) postings.
- c) Develop a Self-Assessment Team as outlined in the Dimensions Pilot Program which specifically looks at the experiences of CRCs through an intersectional lens.
- d) Develop metrics as outlined in the Dimensions Pilot Program to understand barriers to inclusion experienced by CRCs from equity deserving groups and the larger Laurier community.
- e) Increase the EDI knowledge of the ORS staff as it relates to support for CRC, researchers, and research teams through training. Equip Research Facilitators to better collect qualitative data from CRCs.

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Data gathered and Indicator(s) - can be both qualitative and quantitative:

a) Employment equity survey:

1. New survey developed by working groups for each equity deserving group.
2. Infrastructure in place to allow the survey to be completed/ updated easily online.
3. Response rate of the new survey compared to the previous survey.
4. 100% response rate for CRCs.

b) CRC job postings and recruitment:

1. Applicant equity survey response rate for CRC positions.
2. New Applicant Tracking System implemented which invites all applicants for all job postings to self-disclose.
3. Applicant equity survey response rate for all job postings.

c) Dimensions pilot self-assessment team development:

1. Number of current or past CRCs engaged in the self-assessment team.
2. A collective development of a protocol for gaining intersectional understanding of the Laurier community, including FDGs and 2SLGBTQ+

d) Understanding barriers to inclusion experienced by CRCs through the Dimensions Pilot Program:

1. Number of metrics specific to the CRC experience.
2. Number of CRCs who participate in providing data.

e) Increase EDI knowledge of ORS staff:

1. 100% of Research Facilitators trained to conduct interviews with CRC's during their yearly meetings (using the newly developed interview instrument).
2. Interviews conducted with all CRCs.
3. Number of comparative analyses performed to identify variations in CRC experiences.

Progress and/or Outcomes and Impacts made during the reporting period:

a) Laurier launched a new employment equity demographic survey in February 2020. The updated survey is now available to contract teaching faculty and has been calibrated to capture changing identities. Additionally, it can be completed by all employees online at any time. The new survey was created in consultation with Laurier's Employment Equity Advisory Committee which includes employees with lived experience from equity deserving groups. The relaunch of the new equity survey included a 6-week marketing blitz where over 1200 employees updated their equity data. The overall full-time employee response rate for the new survey is in-line with previous response rates (around 85%), including 100% completion rate for current CRCs. The response rate for contract teaching faculty is low (~20%). Laurier is working, in partnership with the union to increase this response rate.

b) The applicant equity survey was initially imbedded into CRC job postings in 2018. Laurier launched a New Applicant tracking System in summer 2020. The Applicant Tracking System has been used for all staff hiring with plans to expand it to faculty hiring in Fall 2021. When reviewing staff recruitment, the applicant equity survey response rate was 93%, providing Laurier with valuable information about the applicant pool and how individuals who identify across equity deserving groups advance through our recruitment process.

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c) Dimensions Pilot EDI Self-Assessment Team (EDI-SAT) was established in November 2020, through the Office of the AVP: EDI and the Dimensions Program Coordinator. Currently, the EDI-SAT consists of 11 team members from a range of offices and roles at the University. The EDI-SAT will carry out the institutional scan and assessment alongside developing strategic recommendations as outlined in the Dimensions Pilot Program. To ensure a common understanding of equity-related issues in the Laurier context prior to beginning scan and assessment activities, EDI-SAT members participated in trainings and roundtables on i) Unconscious Bias and ii) Accountability and Research delivered by Laurier EDI Training Specialist.

d) One of the major gaps identified in early discussions surrounding EDI at Laurier was the gaps in student-related information. The EDI-SAT will launch Laurier's voluntary Student Self Identification Form in February 2021. The Form is confidential and collects self-identification information related to legal sex, gender, sexual identity, gender identity, caregiving status, race, generation status, disability, and religion. Information collected can be disaggregated and linked to administrative data (e.g., student program, age, 1st generation status, etc.) to identify patterns and trends in inequitable barriers faced by students (e.g., admissions, retention, on-campus employment).

More broadly, the EDI-SAT is in the early stages of refining Laurier's context-specific scope of the Dimensions Institutional Scan. The scan will focus on three major domains including i) Human Resources and Work Conditions, ii) Research and iii) Organization and Culture and the ways in which these areas intersect with equity in the greater university research ecosystem.

e) Research Facilitators have been involved in diverse EDI training events and workshops. Two facilitators are members of Laurier's CRC EDI Action Plan Working Group and Laurier's Dimension Pilot Program EDI-SAT. Facilitators were trained to conduct interviews with CRCs. Laurier continues to assess barriers to inclusion faced by CRC by conducting yearly interviews that assess their experiences from an environmental, comparative and employment lens. Since the creation of the original CRC EDI Action Plan, two sets of interviews have been conducted with each CRC. Due to Laurier's small CRC population, specific matters arising from these interviews cannot be shared for reasons of confidentiality. However, emerging challenges and identified barriers are tackled on a person-by-person basis by connecting CRCs with senior leadership and staff who can provide appropriate supports and assistance.

Challenges encountered during the reporting period:

a) The launch of the updated employment equity survey was successful, however the persistent low response rate for Contract Teaching Faculty remains a challenge.

b) Migrating faculty recruitment on the new Applicants Tracking System continues to be a challenge for many reasons. There is some resistance from units who believe moving to a more automated system will deviate from disciplinary norms and create a disadvantage in attracting top talent. Faculty applications themselves are complete packages that are large and often involve multi-file and are very different than what the applicant tracking system was designed to accept from applicants. There is also some resistance among Appointment and Promotion Committee members to learning a new software. Bringing faculty recruitment onto the new applicant tracking system will be approached in phases to allow for proper education and support.

c) In recruiting the new AVP: EDI role, the anticipated start date was July 2019 but given the incumbents previous priorities, the start date was January 2020. It took some time for the new AVP: EDI to establish and onboard roles within the Office of the AVP:EDI. One of these roles was the Dimensions Program Coordinator position.

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d) The Laurier Dimensions Pilot Program experienced some delays early on (e.g. COVID-19) and therefore, the EDI-SAT has not yet commenced work on assessing the experiences of the CRCs through an intersectional lens.

e) No Challenges.

Next Steps (indicate specific dates/timelines):

a) Continue to work with the union to promote the employment equity survey to Contract Teaching Faculty. This will include additional literature, web resources, and advertising campaigns due to launch in Fall 2021.

b) Some faculty recruitments will be piloted on the applicant tracking system in Fall 2021 with the intention of bringing all faculty recruitment on the system by the end of 2022.

c) The EDI-SAT is actively reaching out to CRCs with the aim of recruiting a CRC representative. The EDI-SAT will launch its Student Sub-Committee collaborating with Student Unions to identify representatives in March 2021. Student representatives are both undergraduate and graduate (i.e. Masters and PhD). In Winter 2021, the EDI-SAT will begin the work of the Dimensions Pilot Program institutional scan leading to the institutional assessment beginning in July 2021. Following the assessment, recommendations will be developed and delivered to Laurier's EDI-SPC and the AVP: EDI in October 2021. Submission of Laurier's Dimensions application to federal administrators will take place in 2022.

d) See c) above.

e) Laurier will continue to conduct one-on-one interviews with each CRC. However, what remains missing after two years of these interviews is collective shared experiences among our CRCs (i.e., how they collectively experience Laurier's institutional environment). To respond to this gap in knowledge, the goal is to bring all CRCs together for a focus group on their experiences on a biennial basis (starting Fall 2021).

Research Facilitators will continue to expand their EDI knowledge through EDI training opportunities available at Laurier and externally. For example, all Research Facilitators will complete the 4 Seasons Reconciliation Course that has been developed by First Nations University of Canada by Spring 2021. In addition, all Research Facilitators will complete Laurier's Inclusive Workplace Certificate program that includes five modules on ways to build an inclusive and equitable workplace by March 2022.

Was funding from the CRCP EDI stipend used for this key objective? No.

Key Objective 3

Brief description of S.M.A.R.T. Key Objective 3:

As a university, policies and procedures guide Laurier's operations, its everyday decisions, and informal interactions. They inform and are created by institutional culture and they can simultaneously create both opportunities and barriers to inclusion. Laurier's employment system reviews (i.e., faculty recruitment and promotion processes, staff recruitment, and the recruitment, onboarding, retention, and advancement of CRC), comparative reviews, and environmental scan highlighted opportunities to make Laurier's policies and procedures, even informal ones, more inclusive.

Systemic barriers:

Laurier recognizes that policies and procedures, including informal ones, have great impact of the experiences of its CRCs. Often, the lack of policies and procedures creates less transparency and opens the door to systemic barriers to inclusion. Laurier and its faculty association are both committed to working together to reimagine its policies and procedures through an inclusive lens. The employment systems review showed that there is a need to eliminate systemic barriers to the inclusion of individuals from equity deserving groups and increase faculty knowledge of equitable hiring and promotion practices. A Bilateral Committee was established to make recommendations to the WLUFA Full-Time Faculty and Professional Libraries Collective Agreement by expanding the current equity consideration to be inclusive of all FDGs including women. In addition, Laurier's comparative reviews, employment system review, and environmental scan further identified the need to promote more inclusive practices as well as identified the underrepresentation of specific equity deserving groups within Laurier's workforce. The reviews revealed that there is a need to evaluate EDI issues within smaller units to bolster the retention of individuals across equity deserving groups. In addition, Laurier's environmental scan showed that there is an underrepresentation of individuals with disabilities.

Corresponding actions undertaken to address the barriers:

- a) Evaluate and recommend improvements to the WLUFA Full-Time Faculty and Professional Librarians Collective Agreement equity articles and identify systemic barriers to the recruitment and promotion of faculty (including CRCs).
- b) Expand the number of units who are using the Diversity Equity Assessment Planning (DEAP) Tool. The DEAP tool provides a framework for units to evaluate their own policies, procedures, and practices through an EDI-lens. It will help units evaluate inclusivity, identify areas for growth in EDI, understand issues of representation within their body of employees and develop interventions to address them. There are also particular dimensions dedicated to the research environment.
- c) Alignment of all CRC policies and procedures with the new CRC guidelines including embedding EDI considerations in CRC allocations, renewals, and advancement.
- d) Create a more accessible campus for Laurier faculty, staff, and students with diverse disabilities by fulfilling the goals of Laurier's Accessibility Plan (2016-2019).

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Data gathered and Indicator(s) - can be both qualitative and quantitative:

a) Equity articles:

1. Collective agreement updated to reflect contemporary best practices in equitable and inclusive recruitment and promotion practices that are in-line with the CRC requirements.
2. Number of faculty from equity deserving groups at all levels of the institution.

b) DEAP tool:

1. Number of units using the DEAP tool. Number of unit specific action plans created through the DEAP tool.

c) CRC policies and procedures:

1. Comparative review indicating that all policies are in compliance with CRC policies and procedures.

d) Accessibility:

1. 100% of websites compliant with accessibility standards.
2. Number of faculty, staff and students who have completed accessibility training

Progress and/or Outcomes and Impacts made during the reporting period:

a) Upon completion of its work, the Bilateral Committee provided both the University and Union with a list of recommended Collective Agreement changes. These changes were accepted through collective bargaining and incorporated into the WLUFA Full-time Faculty and Librarians Collective Agreement in Summer 2020. Changes included the addition of an Equity Representative on every Appointment and Promotion Committee, additional training, and various procedural changes to improve equity.

b) The Office of the AVP: EDI is working with a steering committee to develop an Institutional EDI Strategic Plan. Similarly, the Office of Indigenous Initiatives is also working with the community to create an institutional Indigenization Strategic Plan. Every department will be asked to respond to these cornerstone strategic plans. The DEAP tool will be one option available to help units develop their own action plans in response to the strategic plan. As such, with the shift towards institutional strategic planning, departmental action plans have been paused. There are many departments who have started their self-evaluation process using the principles outlined by the DEAP tool, but formal DEAP tool uptake has been halted.

c) Laurier is continuing to ensure institutional compliance with all CRC policies and procedures.

d) Laurier's Accessibility Plan (2016-2019) expired meeting much of its goals. Laurier's web properties are in compliance with legislation and are accessible to those using assistive devices. Supports to students have been increased and refined. Laurier actively considers accessibility when designing and renovating its built environment. Several accessibility related workshops, education and tools have been made available to the Laurier community. Resources to employees with disabilities have also been expanded and more appropriately marketed.

Challenges encountered during the reporting period:

a) The Bilateral Committee submitted its recommendations in Fall 2019. As collective bargaining was planned for Summer 2020, there was a delay in the adoption of the recommendations.

b) With the activities related to both the EDI Strategic Plan and Indigenous Strategic Plan, departments have been less inclined to start action planning until these cornerstone documents have been released. In addition, people resources put in place to support the DEAP tool were redeployed to support the EDI strategic planning exercise.

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c) No challenges

d) Much of the Accessibility Plan was implemented as planned. There could be further improvements in training uptake for instructors.

Next Steps (indicate specific dates/timelines):

a) In addition to the Collective Agreement updates related to equity in hiring and promotion, Laurier and the union also agreed on requiring all units to create promotion and tenure guidelines by June 20, 2022. These guidelines will provide increased clarity and transparency (including EDI considerations) on the tenure and promotion process.

b) Like other institutional strategic planning exercises, all departments will be asked to respond to the new EDI and Indigenous Strategic Plans by developing their own action plans (2022). These plans may incorporate principles from the DEAP tool or other frameworks.

c) Continue to follow requirements.

d) Laurier is in the process of developing a new Accessibility Plan (2021-2022). Unlike previous plans, this plan will only cover two years to ensure it aligns with the institutional EDI Strategic Plan and recommendations of the Dimensions Program. Also, as COVID-19 has disproportionately impacted those with disabilities, the extensive community consultation required to write a well-thought-out accessibility plan was not possible during the 2020 academic year.

Was funding from the CRCP EDI stipend used for this key objective? No.

PART B. CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Outline any challenges and opportunities or successes regarding the implementation of the EDI action plan, as well as best practices that have been discovered to date. If COVID-19 has had an impact on the implementation of the institution's action plan, please outline how below. How has or will the institution address these challenges and opportunities? (Limit: 5100 characters)

Over the last two years, Laurier has invested in building a foundation to support Indigenization and EDI. In 2020, the Office of the AVP: EDI was created, and the Office of Indigenous Initiatives was expanded; under the VP Academic and Provost. The Office of the AVP: EDI is led by the AVP: EDI, a tenured full professor, who is guiding the development of a comprehensive institutional strategy related to EDI, advising on improved metrics and evidence-based decision making related to EDI, and providing advice, support, and expertise to units in achieving their own EDI related goals.

The Office of the AVP: EDI also includes three new positions: (1) an EDI Support Specialist whose role supports special projects including the EDI strategic plan development; (2) an EDI Training Specialist who designs and facilitates training opportunities and tools that help faculty bring EDI into their research and teaching; and (3) a Dimensions Program Coordinator who is coordinating Laurier's commitments under the Dimensions Program. Laurier's Office of Indigenous Initiatives is well established, working with students, faculty, administration, and staff to foster understanding about Indigenous histories, cultures, traditions, and worldviews. The team values connections to Indigenous communities and outreach via events and specialized

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opportunities. A new AVP: Indigenous Initiatives has been recruited and will start July 1, 2021. The new AVP: Indigenous Initiatives, working with the Director of Indigenous Initiatives, will lead the development of an Indigenization Strategic Plan, expand supports to faculty, and continue to provide advice, support, and expertise to units in achieving their own Indigenization goals. These supports and strategic planning exercises will create a more inclusive environment at Laurier.

In 2019, Laurier joined the Government of Canada's Dimensions EDI Canada initiative. This included signing onto the Dimensions Charter, being awarded an EDI Institutional Capacity- Building grant and being included in the Dimensions Pilot Program. The EDI Institutional Capacity-Building grant allowed Laurier to hire the AVP: EDI and Dimensions Coordinator as well as creating the recruitment and researchers toolkits.

As part of the Dimensions Pilot Program, Laurier is one of 17 institutions actively working to foster transformational change within its research and teaching ecosystem through unearthing and addressing systemic barriers faced by members of underrepresented or disadvantaged groups. Through the Pilot Program, Laurier established an EDI-SAT in November 2020.

Over the next 18 months, the EDI-SAT will conduct a comprehensive institutional scan of EDI-related policies, programs, practices, and initiatives and perform an in-depth, reflective assessment of the university's research-related system. The scan and assessment will inform the development of actionable steps to help address the gaps identified. The EDI-SAT will significantly support Laurier's CRC EDI Action Plan. Particularly, the work of the EDI-SAT will centre on expanding equity-related institutional data collection, identifying strengths and gaps in Laurier's research ecosystem and fostering an inclusive culture of research excellence.

COVID-19 has had significant impacts at Laurier. As the university pivoted towards a remote environment, adjusted research practices, and provided support to employees and students during this challenging time, it was necessary to redeploy resources to address urgent needs. As a result, recruitment initiatives were delayed in hiring the AVP: Indigenous Initiatives and there were delays in establishing the AVP: EDI team. Developing and populating both the EDI-SPC and Dimensions EDI-SAT were also delayed. As the Indigenization strategic planning exercise heavily involved working with community, it was temporarily put on hold in recognition of the disproportionate impact COVID-19 is having on Indigenous communities. The Dimensions Pilot Program ran into delays with the delayed delivery of the handbook and rolling out its education plan, resulting in new timelines for the program. These are just a few examples of how COVID-19 has impacted Laurier's CRC EDI Action Plan during this reporting period.

PART C. REPORTING ON EDI STIPEND OBJECTIVES NOT IN PART A

Not applicable.

PART D. ENGAGEMENT WITH UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS

Outline how the institution has engaged with underrepresented groups: e.g. racialized minorities, Indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, women, LGBTQ2+ individuals, during the implementation of the action plan (during the reporting period), including how they have been involved in identifying and implementing any course corrections/adjustments, if applicable. For example, how was feedback gathered on whether the measures being implemented are resulting in a more inclusive research environment for chairholders of underrepresented groups? How has intersectionality been considered in developing and implementing the plan (if applicable)? Have new gaps been identified? How will members of underrepresented groups continue to be engaged? (Limit: 10 200 characters)

The EDI Action Plan is overseen by Laurier's CRC EDI Working Group that includes representation from the Office of the AVP: EDI, Office of Indigenous Initiatives, Equity and Accessibility, Human Resources, Faculty Relations, Office of Research Services, Laurier Centre for Women in Science, Centre for Students EDI as well as current and previous chairholders. Membership includes individuals from all FDGs and the 2SLGBTQ+ community, past and current CRCs, and individuals with expertise in fostering EDI. The Working Group meets quarterly to address progress, establish benchmarks, and develop short and long-term actions; however, due to COVID-19, Working Group meetings were halted and resumed once members transitioned to working from home. Moving forward it is expected that the Working Group will meet quarterly to look at progress and update short and long-term actions. Laurier's participation in the Dimensions EDI Canada initiative and development of the institutional strategy for Indigenization and intuitional strategy for EDI will support and inform the work of the Working Group.

Feedback on Laurier's CRC EDI Action Plan has been gathered and will continue to be gathered through annual CRC Interviews that have been conducted with each individual CRC over the last two years. In these interviews, Research Facilitators probe issues around three broad themes: (1) Comparative issues (i.e., research challenges and successes, sufficiency of support they are receiving, etc.), (2) Environmental issues (i.e., sense of belonging at Laurier, EDI related challenges, relationships with colleagues, students, and staff) and (3) Employment System issues (hiring practices, fairness and diversity, EDI in research and research team-based hiring). CRCs are also given the opportunity to bring up concerns that may be outside the scope of the interview instrument. A gap that was identified is the collective shared experiences among CRCs. To respond to this gap in knowledge, the goal is to bring all CRCs together for a focus group on their experiences.

Several actions outlined above include consultations and committees with membership from individuals who identify among equity deserving groups (i.e. those with disabilities, women, Indigenous Persons, racialized persons, members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community), please see below.

Laurier's new employment equity demographic survey that was launched in February 2020 was created in consultation with Laurier's Employment Equity Advisory Committee which includes employees with lived experience as members who identify across equity deserving groups.

As mentioned above, the Dimensions EDI-SAT is made up of members with diverse EDI and institutional research backgrounds including administration, faculty, and students. The EDI-SAT and its Student Sub-Committee aims to be and remain diverse, with team members self-identifying among the equity deserving groups.

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In the launch of the EDI-SAT first major activity – the Student Self Identification Form – open student focus groups were held. To ensure an intersectional lens in developing the Form, diverse focus group participants completed a self-identification form to make sure there was representation in discussions from individuals who identify across equity deserving groups. Development of the Form also included collaboration with Laurier Offices or groups such as the Centre for Student Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, Laurier’s International Centre, Students Unions, and Accessibility and Equity.

The “Inclusive Labs and Research Teams” toolkit was created by the Office of the AVP: EDI. The toolkit material has and will continue to embed input from the EDI faculty colleagues and members of the EDI Committee of WLUFA as it is continually updated, expanded, and operationalized.

Consultations to inform Laurier’s institutional wide EDI Strategic Plan is being undertaken by Laurier’s EDI Strategic Planning Committee (SPC-EDI). In 2021, the Committee will engage Laurier community members on a one-on-one basis and through a community wide SPC-EDI survey (expected to be launched Winter 2021) to inform the EDI Strategic Plan that will be translated to the CRC EDI Action Plan.

PART E. OTHER EDI INITIATIVES

Efforts to Address Systemic Barriers More Broadly within the Institution

Briefly outline other EDI initiatives underway at the institution that are expected to address systemic barriers and foster an equitable, diverse and inclusive research environment. Please provide hyperlinks where possible. Note that collecting this information from institutions is a requirement of the 2019 Addendum to the 2006 Canadian Human Rights Settlement Agreement and provides context for the work the institution is doing in addressing barriers for the CRCP. (Limit: 4080 characters)

Laurier is committed and has prioritized EDI as a vital strategy and is central in Laurier’s [Strategic Plan \(2019-2024\)](#), [Strategic Academic Plan \(2015-2020\)](#), and [Strategic Mandate Agreement](#).

Laurier is participating in the [Dimensions Pilot Program \(www.wlu.ca/news/news-releases/2019/may/federal-funding-will-help-laurier-increase-equity-diversity-and-inclusion-among-researchers.html\)](http://www.wlu.ca/news/news-releases/2019/may/federal-funding-will-help-laurier-increase-equity-diversity-and-inclusion-among-researchers.html) and the [EDI Institutional Capacity Building Grant \(www.wlu.ca/academics/research/research-services/equity-diversity-and-inclusion.html\)](http://www.wlu.ca/academics/research/research-services/equity-diversity-and-inclusion.html) that will enhance Laurier’s EDI initiatives.

In Summer 2020 Laurier developed a University wide [EDI Action Plan](#) based on research, consultations, and the Employee Engagement Survey within the Laurier community. The Action Plan includes priorities focused on the entire institution, students, faculty and staff. Institution-wide strategies and initiatives include:

- (1) developing an institutional strategy for Indigenization; and
- (2) an institutional strategy for EDI;
- (3) participating in the federal government’s Dimensions Pilot Program for EDI self-assessment;
- (4) establishing a clear policy definition of racism and an accompanying reporting system of accountability;
- (5) reviewing Special Constable Service interactions with Black, Indigenous, and racialized members of the Laurier community and how reports of racism are responded to and addressed;
- (6) reviewing hiring and training processes; and
- (7) increasing the diversity of our senior leadership. For actions and timelines that also include student, faculty and staff initiatives, see: www.wlu.ca/about/discover-laurier/equity-diversity-and-

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[inclusion/index.html](#).

Central to the Action Plan, Laurier is developing two strategic plans: Laurier's Indigenization strategic plan (Spring 2021) and an [institutional strategy for EDI](#) (Fall 2021 [www.wlu.ca/about/discover-laurier/equity-diversity-and-inclusion/news/2021/share-your-views-about-edi-at-laurier.html](#)). Laurier's AVP: EDI ([www.wlu.ca/news/news-releases/2019/oct/new-senior-advisor-equity,-diversity-and-inclusion-to-lead-comprehensive-strategy-at-laurier.html](#)) elevated from the former senior advisor role is leading the development of the institutional strategy for EDI. Laurier has also elevated its former Senior Advisor: Indigenous Initiatives role to AVP: Indigenous Initiatives, tasked with leading the development of Laurier's Institutional Indigenization Strategy ([www.wlu.ca/news/news-releases/2021/march/laurier-appoints-darren-thomas-associate-vice-president-of-indigenous-initiatives.html](#)).

In support of the Action Plan and new strategic plans, Laurier is taking a significant step toward Indigenization and reconciliation and EDI by hiring no less than six new Indigenous full-time faculty members and six Black full-time faculty members. The initiative is part of Laurier's broader Faculty Rejuvenation efforts to advance strategic academic and research goals, enhance academic excellence and student experience, and strengthen collaborative and interdisciplinary initiatives. Laurier will recruit no less than 12 tenured and tenure track appointments from emerging and established Black and Indigenous scholars within any of Laurier's faculties over the next three years. Faculty scholarship will be aligned with the six themes in Laurier's Strategic Research Plan. Laurier's Indigenous Faculty Advisory Council and Black Faculty and Staff Caucus will advise on posting, recruitment, and retention.

News release: [www.wlu.ca/news/news-releases/2021/may/laurier-to-hire-more-indigenous-and-black-faculty-members-through-inclusive-excellence-initiative.html](#)

REVIEW

- I have reviewed my responses and I am ready to submit my report.

END

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