

Report of the Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity Committee

March 29, 2023

Co-Chairs: A. Maxwell-Alleyne & E. Dimitrova

Members: Y. Dawood, A. Fernandez, T. Lemmens, M. Shaffer, S. Stern, J. Asiimwe, E. Bailey, T. Chan, T. Gardiner, T. Golombek, E. Orchard

Students: J. Jiang (2L), P. Mohan (3L), A. Krishna (3L) (*ex officio*), S. Sadri (2L) (*ex officio*), Y. Kobayashi Lui (Grad), M. Nikouei (Grad)

Committee Mandate

On August 31, 2022, Dean Jutta Brunnée set out the following mandate in a letter to the Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity Committee (“the Committee”):

“The 2022 Report of the Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity Committee set out recommendations to enhance EDI and anti-racism efforts at the Law Faculty and were developed following past consultations with equity-seeking student groups. From those recommendations, **I ask the Committee to identify priorities that could be operationalized in the 2022-2023 academic year. These identified priorities will provide important input into the development of the Law Faculty’s ‘EDI Action Plan.’ In addition to advising on the EDI Action Plan, I ask the Committee to provide input, as needed, on the Faculty’s EDI Strategic Plan that will be developed in conjunction with the academic planning process.** The Committee may be engaged on a range of strategic priorities including developing the Faculty’s EDI mission and vision statements.”

The Committee met five times during the academic year. Below is a summary of its discussions and response to the Dean’s mandate letter.

Committee Recommendations

1. EDI Action Plan

The following three priorities were identified: ***inclusive teaching, facilitated training and community engagement***. Three subcommittees were struck to recommend strategies that can be operationalized over the next 6 – 12 months.

- ***Inclusive teaching*** refers to pedagogy and teaching approaches that address the needs of students from diverse backgrounds, learning modalities, and abilities. These strategies contribute to an overall inclusive learning environment in which all students perceive to be valued and supported.

Recommendations:

- i. **Offer resources and coaching to support law faculty in exploring inclusive teaching.**

The Office of the Assistant Dean, EDI should prepare a catalogue of resources, including articles, modules and asynchronous learning offerings about inclusive teaching.

ii. Collaborate with interested law faculty who could coach colleagues on inclusive teaching.

After gauging faculty members' interest and perceived needs, develop informal peer-coaching opportunities to enhance inclusive teaching strategies. This might include, for example, a faculty-only workshop.

- **Facilitated Training** supports faculty, staff and students in developing knowledge, awareness and skills in EDI.

Recommendations:

i. Provide multiple EDI training sessions to students.

These sessions should be offered in different formats to various student cohorts. For example, in addition to the EDI and Professionalism sessions, consider online offerings. Student groups should continue to be engaged in considering the content/speakers for EDI sessions.

ii. Offer faculty and staff EDI training sessions.

Specifically offer training to faculty and staff in trauma-informed teaching, sensitivity training and navigating discussions about equity on campus.

- **Community Engagement** offers an opportunity for the Faculty of Law to infuse the EDI planning and implementation process with insights from community stakeholders including academic institutions, community organizations and outreach programs.

Recommendations:

i. Identify existing partnerships between the Faculty of Law and community stakeholders and foster engagement.

The Faculty benefits from the support and expertise of many community organizations through its programs and initiatives (e.g. BFL, PBSC and LAWS). The law school should strengthen connections with EDI communities of practice to enrich and inform our innovative approaches to EDI.

ii. Create a pilot EDI Community Advisory Group

The Community Advisory Group would be a resource for the Assistant Dean EDI with a targeted mandate. Composed of 3 -4 faculty and alumni, this group would provide advice on navigating sensitive issues and situations. To further inform this proposal, the Committee should consider the approach taken by the Faculty of Medicine.

2. Faculty's EDI Strategic Plan

The Committee suggested that kindness, belonging, collaboration and rigor be the values underpinning the EDI Strategic Plan and guiding the development of the EDI mission and vision statements.

The law school's **EDI mission statement** should describe our commitment to inclusive excellence and diversity of lived experiences amongst our students, staff and faculty.

The law school's **EDI vision statement** should reflect our commitment to an equitable and diverse community.

Ongoing Role of the EDI Committee

The Committee provided the following suggestions on what its role might be in supporting EDI at the law school and the Assistant Dean, EDI going forward.

- Connect students, staff and faculty.
- Discuss emerging and ongoing EDI issues.
- Amplify community voices.
- Advise on EDI initiatives.
- Ensure accountability.
- Address problems proactively and as they arise.
- Develop policy recommendations.