Belonging – Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Task Force

Terms of Reference

Vision

St. Lawrence College is committed to cultivating an institutional culture that values, supports, and promotes belonging, equity, human rights, respect, and accountability among faculty, staff, and students. The College has identified "Belonging" as its fifth core value and mandate as an educational institution.

EDI Taskforce Executive Sponsors:

• Christopher Garnett, Vice-President, Human Resources & Organizational Development
• Glenn Vollebregt, President & CEO, St. Lawrence College

The College executive sponsors are committed to being active champions of equity, diversity, and inclusion on our campuses and in our communities. To this end, the sponsors commits to supporting and prioritizing the work of EDI + Belonging task force and commit to demonstrating accountability for progress over time.

Chair

Ekta, Singh, Senior Advisor, Belonging, Diversity, & Inclusion. The chair is responsible for coordinating the SLC 'Belonging' Task Force to gather information relevant to advancing the value of 'Belonging' at SLC. This role reports to the Vice President of Human Resources & Organizational Development for day-to-day issues, however, has accountability to the President and College Executive Team for regular updates and recommendations about the development of a College wide EDI plan.

Rationale: The human imperative

Using a human centered approach is at the core of the work of the Task Force in amplifying the values of belonging, diversity, equity, and inclusion in the College. By cultivating an environment where all individuals feel valued and can bring their authentic selves to work or the classroom, they are more likely to be more engaged, successful, and innovative in their endeavors.

EDI Taskforce Mandate:

Through a consultative and collaborative process, members of the EDI Taskforce will utilize an intersectional equity lens to establish and implement a College framework and recommendations for equity, diversity, and inclusion to address the needs of the tri-campus SLC community, internal and external.

The taskforce will work collaboratively to:

- Conduct an environmental scan and document progress in the College in the areas of EDI and the core value of *"Belonging"*

- Identify systemic barriers to EDI at SLC such as policies and processes, recruitment and admissions, program structure, and non-systemic barriers including lack of awareness and understanding, climate, and attitudes.

- Establish an implementation plan for reducing barriers and advancing the value of Belonging and EDI at SLC as a core value fundamental to all activities, including setting measurable targets and accountability to reflect commitment and monitor progress.

EDI Guiding Principles
1. Equity, diversity and inclusion are key principles of successful change management
2. Equity is sustained through senior leadership commitment and modelling
3. Equity is the mechanism through which diversity and inclusion are achieved
4. Equity is a tool to create equality for all students, employees, and communities through barrier elimination
5. Equity involves local and global communities
6. Equity is experienced differently for different people based on the intersection of identities
7. Equity builds on and enhances previous and existing initiatives
8. EDI tools and training are critical for continuous improvement and self-reflection
Source: Adapted from the Toronto Board of Education

Commitment
The Committee will:
• Meet on a bi-weekly basis for the initial six-month duration.
• Participate in working groups as needed;
• Reflect the diversity of the equity seeking groups at SLC;
• Develop and promote a vision of inclusion based on SLC's Core Value of 'Belonging;'
• Inject intersectionality into strategies to build bridges between communities;
• Be responsive to the SLC community's needs.
• Commit to transparency in our work. This includes providing the SLC community with regular progress updates and access to the data that supports our ongoing work and being open and clear in our decision-making process.

*Task force members can miss two **(2) meetings over the course of a semester** each calendar year, after which membership will be discontinued. *Exception for Faculty members – June/July meetings.*

Proposed EDI areas of focus

Six areas of focus will be created to advance EDI and guide the final recommendations across the College:
1. Access and Equity: Recruitment + Retention Students
2. Access and Equity: Hiring and Retention Employees/Faculty
3. Curriculum, Teaching and Learning
4. Campus Culture and Climate
5. Communications/Marketing
6. Alumni and Community engagement

EDI Task Force Member Roles & Responsibilities

Members are responsible and encouraged to do the following:
1. Come to meetings as prepared, active, and thoughtful participants
2. Actively participate and engage in all meetings
3. Engage in ongoing personal EDI- and IWBK related education and training
4. Read relevant resources posted on the EDI Taskforce webpage and engage in other professional development to support the advancement of EDI- and (Indigenous ways of knowing and being) IWBK -related education
5. Provide ongoing updates to their Faculty/Department on the work of the Taskforce when appropriate
 6. Share with their Working Groups and the Taskforce relevant feedback from the College to assist in responding, where possible, to areas of concern related to EDI and Belonging
7. Participate in providing updates and/or eliciting feedback on the work of the Taskforce through one or more of the following – conversations with peers, Knowledge Cafes, Lunch and Feedback sessions, Focus Groups, etc.
8. Develop and maintain a climate where mutual support, trust, respect, courtesy, teamwork, and creativity are valued;
9. Respect the individual worth and dignity of other members and, at all times, work together to achieve a common vision for the community;
10. Challenge ideas and not people, creating a climate where it is okay to disagree;
11. Communicate directly, concisely, and honestly, listen without interruption, and be open-minded, allowing a variety of opinions to be heard;
12. Communicate using inclusive and non-discriminatory language, respecting the spirit of the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Operating Principles:

Planning: Agendas will be circulated a minimum of three days in advance of the meeting and meeting notes, when applicable, will be circulated within one week after the meeting.

Terms of Reference: The Terms of Reference will be reviewed on an annual basis and revised if needed.

Membership

The EDI Taskforce will seek representation, tri-campus, from St. Lawrence College students, employees (Support staff, Faculty, union, and administrative staff), Alumni, and Industry and Community-based partners.

Term

One-year term starting November 2020.

Definitions

Equity is a just, fair, principled approach to uphold equal treatment for all. It recognizes that while all people have the right to be treated equally, not all people experience equal access to resources, opportunities, or benefits. Achieving equality does not necessarily mean treating individuals in the same way and may require the use of specific measures to dismantle barriers. *(Informed by Queen's University Equity and Human Rights Office, 2020)*
 *Note: At SLC, equity-seeking groups refer to communities who were historically and who are currently underserved and underrepresented. These groups include Women, Indigenous Peoples, Persons with Disabilities, Racialized Persons, Persons from diverse Gender Identities and Persons who identify as LGBTQ+.

Diversity refers to the unique and interrelated dimensions of human identity, which include race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, socio-economic status, nationality, citizenship, religion, sexual orientation, ability, age, family status, linguistic diversity, and marital status. Importantly, diversity also includes the unseen dimensions of identity, such as beliefs, ideologies, value systems, worldviews, traditional knowledge and lifestyles, and personal interests. Valuing diversity involves appreciating the opportunities that stem from intercultural dynamics and plurality of beliefs and values utilizing the rich resources that exist in diverse community environments. *(Informed by Abbotsford Community Development Council; Abbotsford Community Services, 2017)*

Inclusion means that all people have the right to be respected and appreciated as valuable members of their communities. Inclusion in post-secondary education means welcoming, supporting, and resourcing all people to succeed, whether students, faculty, staff, or administrators. Inclusion in the organization means all individuals are treated fairly and respectfully, have equal access to opportunities and resources, and can contribute fully to the organization's success. (Informed by Universities Canada; Talent Intelligence).

Belonging is the feeling of being part of something and mattering to others. We create it through inclusion, which consists of intentional acts. Belonging is a feeling and therefore a far more powerful force than any D&I strategy could ever be. It is a fundamental human need, a word that translates across any language or culture, and a feeling that every human

is wired to want. Individuals don't need to be popular or liked by everyone, but they do need to have a sense of belonging somewhere and with someone. (Sands, 2019)

Change Agent. The members of this task force are considered change agents of the College. Changes agents are individuals or groups that undertake the task of initiating and managing change in an organization. Change agents can be internal, such as managers or employees who are appointed to oversee the change process. In many innovative-driven companies, managers and employees alike are being trained to develop the needed skills to oversee change (Tschirky, 2011). Change agents also can be external, such as consultants from outside the organization.

References

https://medium.com/@AnitaSands/diversity-and-inclusion-arent-what-matter-belonging-is-what-counts-4a75bf6565b5

https://ufv.ca/media/assets/presidents-office/edi-resources/EDI-Guiding-Principles-with-feedback-from-Feb-19-meeting.pdf

https://ufv.ca/media/assets/presidents-office/edi-resources/2020-01-30-EDI-TF-Terms-of-Reference-and-Definitions.pdf

https://www.abbotsford.ca/city_hall/news_and_media/setting_the_record_straight/affordable_housing_and_homelessness.htm

https://diversity.umich.edu/strategic-plan/

http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/equity.pdf

https://naaee.org/sites/default/files/lunenburg_fred_c._managing_change_the_role_of_change_agent_ijmba_v13_n1_2010.pdf

http://hrs.humber.ca/human-rights-equity-diversity/edi-taskforce/edi-definitions.html

https://www.queensu.ca/hreo/home