

A large, light blue geometric graphic composed of interconnected lines and polygons, resembling a stylized network or a crystalline structure, is centered on the page. It is set against a background of light blue horizontal bands.

Equity Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

Prepared for ArcticNet • November 15, 2020
Updated • January 8, 2021

About

A first version of this document was prepared by Kelly Nolan, a seasoned expert in strategic affairs and organizational equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) training and strategies. Kelly consults with executives and boards on developing targeted EDI strategies in academia, and science, technology, engineering and computing sectors. Her clients include research and government institutions, corporations and global initiatives. Kelly develops targeted programs to improve gender equity and engage and retain diverse talent pools for a variety of industrial sectors. She specializes in organizational equity frameworks, training, assessment, and business development for external and internal relations for complex evidence-based, multi-stakeholder research organizations. A regular conference presenter, Kelly

has chaired diversity and workforce development streams for several technical and scientific conferences in Canada, the United States and Europe.

Numerous ArcticNet members participated in surveys and interviews which informed the first versions of this strategy. The strategy then benefitted from the generous input of an external committee who constructively criticized and built on previous versions of this document. This committee is composed of Indigenous People, elders, youth, consultants, and researchers. ArcticNet wishes to sincerely thank everyone involved in the process, and to encourage its members and partners to improve this evolving document by sending their concerns, comments and ideas to us at conduct@arcticnet.ulaval.ca.

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Preamble

ArcticNet is renewing its commitment to improving equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) within the Network. This report outlines recommendations that are specific to areas where ArcticNet can have influence to measurably improve the experiences of its diverse membership.

There is an indisputable body of evidence proving diverse teams produce better science. This strategy is also motivated by ArcticNet leadership's desire to share in the responsibility to promote positive change and cultural inclusion within its Network. It recognizes that the existence of systemic racism against racialized and Indigenous People, the impacts of colonialism in Canada, anti-2SLGBTQ+ discrimination, discrimination based on disabilities, gender inequality and any combination of these is limiting the full participation of many of ArcticNet's members and partners.

This EDI strategy attempts to move beyond inefficient checklists and small policy changes that do not lead to measurable results. This strategy sets a framework for continuous improvement that amplifies the contribution and improves the experiences of diverse members of the network.

Method

An exploratory analytical approach was used to inform this strategy. In September 2020, a survey was shared with ArcticNet members to estimate their sense of belonging and empowerment as well as their perceptions on career progression. More than 100 members participated to the survey, of which almost 40% were Principal Investigators (Collaborators=9%, PDF=5%, Students=31%, Research staff=10%, Other=7%), 74% were White (Racialized=13%, Inuit, Métis, First Nations=13%), and 53% were Women (Male=43%, Other=4%). Interviews (n=10) have been conducted with a small number of ArcticNet members. In this cohort there was a mix of backgrounds, age group, gender, and sexual orientation. We are aware continuous efforts should be done to give a voice to the more marginalized groups and we are committed to hear and include their concerns in this strategy.

Data analysis were incorporated as well as applying the latest best practices in equity, diversity and inclusion. This was completed with the aim of identifying challenges and gaps related to diversity, equity and inclusion. Within-group,

between-group, and group-to-overall quantitative analysis, as well as thematic qualitative analysis of written comments and interviews provided insights related to ArcticNet's diversity profile and inclusion experience. Recommendations in this report are based on these findings of ArcticNet's Equity Diversity and Inclusion Report as well as on relevant studies. This report endeavours to provide a strategy and framework that acknowledge past and current realities, and builds on past successes and on best practices. The report aims to provide strategies to grow ArcticNet's members' sense of belonging, promote equitable approaches and opportunities, and address barriers and inequities encountered by members of the marginalized groups. More details as well as a complete list of survey questions are available in the Survey Report.

Getting a perfect overview of potential discriminations among a network of research is not an easy task. We acknowledge we have not listed or heard all problematic situations, but we are committed to continue our work to make the network as inclusive as possible.

Current Landscape in Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Major events of 2020, including but not limited to the COVID-19 pandemic and filmed fatalities due to police brutality and inequitable treatment of racialized patient by hospital staff dramatically highlighted the deep societal inequities in Canada and around the world. There is a growing desire to understand how gender, race, socio-economic status, disabilities, education, citizenship status and geographic location impact the inequities and disparities being experienced by different populations.

These events have also changed the narrative around equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and have cast a critical eye on how some of these strategies are being implemented.

More and more organizations are seeking to develop EDI strategies and are motivated to review their policies and programs with an intersectional inclusive lens. While this motivation is a positive step, it is imperative to ensure that those who are implementing the strategy have the appropriate understanding of the current Canadian context. You cannot address equity, diversity and inclusion without acknowledging and understanding the trauma being experienced by your colleagues as a result of systemic racism and the prevalence of gender and sexual orientation bias.

This report endeavours to ensure its recommendations will help lay the foundation for continuous improvement and reflection.

Setting a Foundation for Effective Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

Inclusive research environments work to ensure that members of non-dominant cultural or social groups have a fair chance of progressing in the organisation alongside members of the traditionally dominant groups. This requires a deep personal and collective commitment from members of the dominant groups.

For an effective equity, diversity and inclusion strategy to have impact, the dominant groups must develop empathy, humility and be responsible for becoming informed about the concerns, harms, and apprehensions of others. Without this, efforts are often performatory and tokenized. Furthermore, the dominant groups must take steps to diversify their own professional networks and step outside their comfort zones.

Guiding Principles

- Directors, staff, committee members and principal investigators must be informed about and acknowledge the impacts of colonialism in research, and the impacts of colonialism, systemic racism, gender and sexual bias, ableism, and poverty in Canada.
- It is important that those experiencing exclusion are not held responsible for explaining and reliving their traumatic experiences or “proving” their experiences are different from the dominant groups.
- Particularly, given ArcticNet’s diverse communities, it must be acknowledged that it is due to privilege that some members are blind to the inequities within the Network.
- EDI efforts cannot be activities to convince the dominant groups of the value of EDI work but rather efforts that specifically address improving the experiences of its diverse members.
- Demonstrate respect by implementing and funding cultural awareness initiatives and workshops on the impacts of colonialism and by remunerating members of marginalized groups participating in those efforts.
- Determine measurable key performance indicators for each EDI goals for the network and regularly assess ArcticNet members’ sense and perception of belonging, empowerment and progression.

Recommendations

1. Goal: ArcticNet Funded Research are Inclusive and Safe Environments

- Acknowledge and address personal safety and discriminatory challenges faced by women, 2SLGBTQ+, racialized and Indigenous People and people living with disabilities in field, vessel/ship, laboratory, and international research.
- Publicly acknowledge and admonish sexism, racism, ableism and anti-2SLGBTQ+ sentiment in field work and Arctic research.
- Hold local, national and international partners to the same standards.
- Establish an independent reporting mechanism for fieldwork and research activities incidents with ArcticNet partners through an Arctic Research Code of Conduct during fieldwork.
- Review official communications channels and events to ensure these platforms are not celebrating research groups that do not uphold these values.
- Review existing policies around negative experiences that put the victim’s wellbeing above organizational reputation or the pursuit of scientific excellence. Work directly in a timely manner with communities when negative experiences arise.
- Review any complaints for repeated behaviour. Review Code of Conduct for events and take the necessary steps to address this issue.
- Be accountable.

2. Goal: ArcticNet Supports Work Life Balance in Research

- Review policies, research criteria, conference organization, and funding opportunities to ensure they are inclusive for parents and those with care obligations.
- Ensure opportunities are accessible to those needing to supplement income or care for families.
- Survey for best practices and flexible solutions.
- Create incentives and awards that support work/life balance, perseverance and non-linear career paths.
- Create space for discussing and addressing EDI work at all committee, governance meetings and events.
- Support and celebrate different pathways in academia and research.
- Review one size fit all competitive criteria that favours those without financial or family obligations such as publication rates and international engagements.
- Collectively reflect on the meaning of research excellence.

3. Goal: Creating and Supporting Culturally Safe Research Environments

- Continue to formally acknowledge the impacts of colonialism and ArcticNet's responsibility to work respectfully and in harmony with Northern communities and continue to acknowledge the privilege for having access to these waters and territories to conduct research.
- Implement incentives and criteria that promote completing training on EDI topics and on Canada's colonial history and its impact on Canada's Northern Communities for ArcticNet's dominant groups.
- Design culturally safe spaces for Inuit, Métis, First Nations and racialized ArcticNet members to understand their specific experiences.
- Create more space for diverse perspectives on panels, committees, presentations and communications channels.
- Continue to celebrate diverse cultures and communities across Canada's northern communities.
- Using Inuktitut on ArcticNet's website, and images of Northern peoples benefited ArcticNet's reputation but not the people of the North. In appreciation of access to Northern territories, co-design with Northern partners an advocacy program that directly addresses some of the challenges and amplify the successes specific to Northern communities.
- Create opportunities for cultural mentorship.
- Ensure criteria to promote gender equality does not come at the expense of Indigenous peoples and Northern people's representation.
- Be visibly active allies for Canada's Northern peoples.
- Repair by tangible actions, not empty words.

4. Goal: Improving Diverse Representation and Visibility

- Create succession plans for ArcticNet leadership that will appropriately represent Northern communities within the decision making apparatus of the Network.
- Actively sponsor diverse candidates, and ensure selection criteria and candidate selection have equity frameworks to mitigate bias.
- Continue to appropriately represent gender diversity but with a focus on representation of racialized women, acknowledging that they are often overburdened by those tasks. Value and remunerate those contributions.
- Review selection criteria for bias, and ensure they do not exclude specific groups.
- Complete a formal evaluation of selection of awards and candidate selection process for bias.
- Ensure activities are overseen by those with EDI expertise and cultural knowledge.
- Support Indigenous and Northern peoples' business wherever possible.
- Develop an inclusive communications strategy which amplify a broad diversity of voices from within the network

5. Goal: Support Research that is Designed by the North for the North

- Build equitable criteria for all Northern communities to engage with ArcticNet and research teams regardless of size or existence of regional governments.
- Create incentives and awards for research projects that are co-designed with Northern communities, embrace traditional knowledge with respect and answer science questions that are valuable to Northern communities. Develop incentives that increase the merit of research that serves the North.
- Celebrate and grow North by North initiatives.
- Host events when possible in the North, continue to explore novel ways to support interaction and networking with Northerners.
- Ensure criteria for gender balance on research teams does not inadvertently exclude racialized, Inuit, First Nations, Métis and Northern scholars' participation.
- Create specific networking and research work opportunities for Northern youth.
- Continue to support groups, initiatives and organisations which promote inclusion in northern research (i.e., Polar Pride, Polar Impact, Arviat Film Society).
- Continue to support the establishment of northern post-secondary institutions

Specific Recommendations for Annual Meetings

- Continue to have First Nations, Inuit and Métis cultural opening and closing ceremonies at all ArcticNet events. Ensure this engagement is compensated work.
- Create specific culturally safe spaces for diverse members.
- Have culturally sensitive counselors at large meetings to support those attending the meeting who may be experiencing trauma or experiencing a sense of cultural exclusion.
- Canvas attendees annually about their accommodation requirements.
- Amplify efforts to have Northern attendees attend ArcticNet's Annual Meeting.
- Ask participants what accommodations they may require.
- Consider offering a room for breastfeeding, daycare or support for care for young children, prayer or reflection rooms, buddy system for first time attendees especially for youth and Northerners.
- Ensure safety protocols are in place for evening and social events.
- Ensure greater diversity of speakers at Student Day and during the conference.
- Provide more programming on social sciences.
- Create more support for Northern youth to attend and participate.
- Include workshops on EDI training and cultural safety training sessions.
- Establish an independent and timely reporting mechanism for incidents which may happen during the annual meeting

Timeline



Phase one:

1

- Present and share results of EDI exercise and EDI strategy with staff, committees and directors.
- Publish and socialize recommendations and EDI strategy with ArcticNet members and partners and solicit feedback, review and tailor approach as needed.
- Select EDI and culturally safety training options for directors, staff and committees.
- Share the provided recommended courses and reading materials across the Network.
- Conduct a communications audit to ensure all channels and events have equitable representation of diverse members and that content reflects the goals of this plan.
- Continue to amplify North by North results and outcomes.
- Begin to work on a progressive succession and mentorship plan to address representation challenges, engage organizations and experts for advice.
- Explore ways to have Indigenous/Northern led evaluations of programs and activities.
- Create key performance indicators for each EDI Strategy goal.
- Create metrics for each goal.
- Establish necessary resources and budget requirements; create an operational plan.

Phase two:

2

- Create time on all committee and board meetings to review EDI goals and progress.
- Create EDI review process for selection criteria for research funding.
- Create an international working group and public statement to address safety issues in scientific fieldwork.
- Implement recommendations for Annual Meeting.
- Work on implementing activities that demonstrate active allyship for Canada's Northern peoples and communities.
- Explore ways to support Inuit, Metis or First Nations businesses.
- Conduct quarterly review of formal complaints and negative experiences and take action where required and possible.
- Draft an approach for Indigenous/Northern led evaluations of programs and activities.
- Continue to establish succession plans, identify upcoming vacancies and expand candidate selection efforts to purposefully engage new diverse candidates, expand professional networks to work with diverse associations and organizations.

Phase three:

3

- Begin work with international partners to establish a fieldwork code of conduct and consider establishing third party reporting mechanisms.
- Explore cultural mentorship options and scan the Network for best practices.
- Create an annual awards program based on EDI goals.
- Promote selected allyship activity.
- Pilot Indigenous/Northern led evaluations of programs and activities.
- Create incentives and awards for research projects that are co-designed with Northern communities, fully embrace traditional knowledge, and answer science questions that are valuable to Northern communities.
- Review succession planning efforts, explore the option of having an EDI expert observe candidate selection process to mitigate bias.
- Track and measure who has completed EDI training, ensure directors, committee members and staff have completed training.

Phase four:

4

- Measure impact and survey membership to assess progress.
- Conduct formal Indigenous/Inuit led evaluation of programs and activities. Implement approaches that support the recommendations of the evaluation.
- Assess ongoing EDI training requirements; continue to share stories that amplify diversity and novel approaches to co-designed research.
- Review metrics and Key Performance Indicators to ensure they align with new member survey results.
- Publish EDI progress reports and review strategy effectiveness annually.
- Review demographics and diverse representation and create targeting initiatives supporting equitable inclusion of diverse members.
- Work with community leaders to further explore training and cultural exchange opportunities.

Conclusion

An inclusive research organization puts an EDI lens on all their programs, policies and funding mechanisms. This strategy endeavours to create a foundation for ArcticNet to foster meaningful change, promote best practices, create novel approaches to challenges and offer resources and support to its members.

Appendix

A

Definitions

Southerner - person residing in Canada's more populated southern regions

Northerner - persons residing in Canada's vast northern and Arctic regions

North - Canada's vast northern and Arctic regions

South - Populated southern regions of Canada

Race - is a "social construct". This means that society forms ideas of race based on geographic, historical, political, economic, social and cultural factors, as well as physical traits, even though none of these can legitimately be used to classify groups of people.

Racialization - The process through which groups come to be socially constructed as races, based on characteristics such as ethnicity, language, economics, religion, culture, politics.

Intersectionality - The idea that, in individuals, multiple identities (for example, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, ability) intersect to create a whole that is different from the component identities.

Equity- Fairness, impartiality, even-handedness. A distinct process of recognizing differences within groups of individuals, and using this understanding to achieve substantive equality in all aspects of a person's life.

Discrimination - Treating someone unfairly by either imposing a burden on them, or denying them a privilege, benefit or opportunity enjoyed by others, because of their race, citizenship, family status, disability, sex or other personal characteristics.

Systemic or institutional racism - Consists of patterns of behaviour, policies or practices that are part of the social or administrative structures of an organization, and which create or perpetuate a position of relative disadvantage for racialized persons. These appear neutral on the surface but, nevertheless, have an exclusionary impact on racialized persons.

Social participation - Involvement in meaningful activities (social, cultural, physical, educational, recreational, etc.) that increase one's sense of belonging and well-being.

Appendix B

Resources

Articles of interest

Federal Anti-Racism Engagement Strategy:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/campaigns/anti-racism-engagement/what-we-heard.html>

Statistics Canada:

Women and sexual minority students more likely to experience discrimination: https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/200915/dq200915b-eng.htm%20https://cca-reports.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/wur_fullreporten.pdf

Expert Panel on Women in Academia:

https://cca-reports.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/wur_fullreporten.pdf.pdf

Radical Inclusion Report - Simon Fraser University Academic Women:

<https://www.sfu.ca/academicwomen.html>

Numbers Take Us Only So Far:

<https://hbr.org/2017/11/numbers-take-us-only-so-far>

Resources:

Indigenous Canada:

<https://www.coursera.org/learn/indigenous-canada>

Building Equity Frameworks to Interrupt Bias:

<https://biasinterrupters.org/about/>

San'yas Indigenous Cultural Safety Training:

<http://www.sanyas.ca/>

Anti-Racism resources and definitions:

https://www.yesmagazine.org/issue/world-we-want/2020/02/19/antiracism-language/?gclid=Cj0KCQjwlvT-8BRDeARIsAACRFiX6A1ext-JZlo-v-LtRpMEj7l-aIK-EIU1V-QqCuSqTU-v0JiDsviyUaAlxUEALw_wcB

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Call for Actions:

<https://assets.documentcloud.org/documents/2091412/trc-calls-to-action.pdf>

Research Articles

<https://www.sfu.ca/education/faculty-profiles/mpidgeon.html>

Recommended and Referenced Books:

The Equity Myth: Racialization and Indigeneity at Canadian Universities.

Frances Henry, Enakshi Dua, Carl E. James, Audrey Kobayashi, Peter Li, Howard Ramos, and Malinda s. Smith.

Inclusive Equality: The Relational Dimensions Of Systemic Discrimination In Canada

Colleen Sheppard

Disability and Campus Dynamics, HE 154 1st Edition

Wendy Harbour

White Fragility

Robin D'Angelo

Research and Reconciliation – Unsettling Ways of Knowing Through Indigenous Relationships

Edited by: Shawn Wilson, Andrea V. Breen, Lindsay Dupré