York University Decolonizing, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (DEDI) Council Terms of Reference

1. Introduction

York University has a long-standing commitment to access, inclusion, equity and diversity; it is a leader in creating a more equitable, diverse and inclusive community on all its campuses. It is committed to decolonizing, equity, diversity and inclusion (DEDI).

2. Mandate

The DEDI Council ("the Council") is an advisory body to the President and the Vice-President Equity, People and Culture (VP EPC), with responsibility for providing input and recommendations on how to advance York University's DEDI initiatives, projects, and practices and to provide oversight of the required actions from approved recommendations. The Council enables and supports York students, faculty, instructors and staff to participate meaningfully in the planning and implementation of York's DEDI strategy, initiatives, projects and practices, with the goal of cultivating a diverse campus culture that is equitable and inclusive. The Council will be guided by the principles set out in the DEDI Strategy.

3. Objectives

3.1. The Council will receive annual updates on the progress of implementation of the DEDI strategy and provide input and advice on the implementation.

3.2. Monitor the external environment for emerging issues and promising practices on DEDI to provide advice back to the University.

3.3. Support the Insights speakers series through provision of advice on topics of importance to inform community dialogue and education.

3.4. Provide a forum in which members discuss DEDI challenges and opportunities to foster an integrated and collaborative approach to DEDI initiatives across the University.

3.5. Receive advice and direction from the sub-committees of the Council.

3.6. From time to time connect with emerging communities of practice, such as gatherings of DEDI practitioners, affinity groups, etc.

3.7. Through informed discussion, identify and examine specific high priority issues and develop recommendations for the President and Vice-President to consider implementing.

3.8. Identify and review current university DEDI practices and initiatives and ascertain opportunities for synergies and engagement.

4. Expectations of Members

4.1. The Council operates in an atmosphere of collegial co-operation, where all participants respect each other's participation through sharing of expertise, information and strategies, and promotes awareness within the community of EDI issues as it pertains to the development of the strategy.

4.2. Members are expected to attend meetings where possible, and when not, to make the effort to understand what happened in a missed meeting prior to the next meeting.

4.3. Members are expected to act as a two-way conduit of communication to their constituencies; they should report back to constituencies and solicit feedback as appropriate which can be passed back to the Council.

4.4. Members are expected to contribute to the discussions and work of the Council, and to support DEDI initiatives across the University.

5. Consensus-Based Advice & Decision-Making

5.1. The Council primarily makes decisions on items to bring before the President and Vice-President; no decision at Council is binding. It will strive to find common ground and consensus where possible; it is understood that a single voice reflecting areas of common ground and consensus will speak persuasively to the University leadership. While a consensus view will be sought, the Council acknowledges that the diversity of the Council may result in multiple points of view being provided on some issues.

5.2. Advice is formulated, to the extent possible, by consensus, while striving to reflect the diversity of views of the membership. A consensus approach for advice to be given by the Council will be based on the following:

5.2.1. All members have an equal voice and an opportunity to be heard.

5.2.2. Consensus means accepting or consenting to a proposal that has achieved popular support from members, even if the proposal is not a personal first or preferred choice out of the available options. Consensus does not require concurrence on every point, but rather broad agreement on the general approach and a willingness to accept an overall course of action to put before the leadership of the University.

5.2.3. It is understood that members have diverse and unique perspectives, may have divergent views, and consensus on all matters is not required.

5.2.4. If consensus is not practicable, required or where diversity of views may assist in the circumstances, the Council will formulate members' advice, highlighting areas of concurrence and divergence.

5.2.5. If consensus is required (e.g., on a binary decision to be made by the Council), a simple majority vote will be used. In the event of tie, the Chair's vote will be relied on to break the tie.

5.3. The Council's advice-giving and decision-making may be informed by such things as feedback, perspectives, environmental scans, promising practices, research, data, recommendations and lessons learned.

6. Meetings

6.1. The Council will meet a minimum of two times a year.

6.2. The Chair will schedule the meetings with appropriate notice, taking care to avoid times where the academic calendar creates barriers for participation (i.e. exams, summer term).

6.3. The Chair will determine the meeting format (ie. in person, virtual, or hybrid) with a view to creating the most equitable opportunities for participation.

6.4. Technical/Administrative Support to the Committee:

6.4.1. The administration of the Council shall be taken up by the Technical Support to the Committee (see membership), provided by the Office of the VP EPC.

6.4.2.   All records of the meetings, including the minutes, shall be retained in accordance with the Common Records Schedule (CRS) under York University's Information, Privacy and Copyright Office.

6.4.3.   The Technical Support to the Committee shall be responsible for ensuring correspondence and advice provided by the Council are available to relevant people or bodies, including the membership of sub-committees and other relevant bodies or offices.

7. Reporting

7.1. The Council will report on its activities to the Office of the President every second year and will invite them to attend a meeting from time to time.

8. Revision of the Terms of Reference

8.1. The Terms of Reference maybe revised by the President and/or Vice-President on their own initiative or upon the recommendation of the Council.

9. Membership

9.1. The membership of the DEDI Advisory Council reflects the pan-university scope of the DEDI Strategy and the interconnection embedded in the strategic goals and implementation initiatives

9.2. The membership should reflect the diversity of the university community but should not only include members of equity-deserving communities. The DEDI Strategy is an important initiative for the whole university community, and we must all play a part in ensuring its successful implementation.

9.3. The membership shall consist of no more than 25 members at any given time and will include no fewer than six faculty or instructors, six non-academic staff and four students, and will aim for representation from all campuses in the combined categories below:

9.3.1.   Appointed members. Members appointed by the Vice-President Equity, People and Culture and/or the President, consisting of no more than 10 individuals, which may include, but is not limited to, appointments from any of the following: SexGen, RISE, Enable York, Indigenous Council, Black Inclusion Advisory Council, President's Sustainability Council, appointments from the community at-large.

9.3.2.   At-Large Representatives. Through an open call for expressions of interest, at-large representatives will be selected by the Vice-President and a group of advisors, ensuring the selected representatives will be broad-based, and include members of the student body (both graduate and undergraduate), staff, instructors and faculty. A minimum of 12 and maximum of 14 members will be selected. See also Appendix A.

9.3.3.   Chair, ex-officio

Vice-President Equity, People and Culture

9.3.4.   Technical Support

Administrative and technical support for the Council will be provided by the Office of the Vice-President Equity, People and Culture.

9.4. Appointments.

    9.4.1.   Ex-Officio members shall hold their position for the duration of their appointment in that role.

    9.4.2.   Students appointed to the Council will serve a one-two year term, depending on their ability to make such a commitment.

    9.4.3.   Employees appointed to the Council will require acknowledgement and permission to serve on the Council by their supervisor and will serve a two-year term. Two-year terms will be scheduled on a staggered basis to ensure overlap of Council membership. The first year of the Council's existence will require some appointments to be either a one- or three-year term to support this staggered approach to membership.

10. Sub-committees

The sub-committees play an important role in overall goals of creating an inclusive community.

10.1.   The Council may create sub-committees in response to community needs, either ad hoc or permanent basis.

10.2.   The following sub-committees are established and report to the Council: RISE, SexGen and Enable York.

10.3.   The sub-committees have their own Terms of Reference and membership which are created by the sub-committees, recommended by the Council to, and approved by, the Vice-President Equity, People and Culture.

10.4.   Sub-Committee Chairs will be appointed by the Vice-President, Equity, People and Culture.

10.5.   The sub-committees will report, on an annual basis, their activities and initiatives to the Council.

10.6.   The sub-committees will also act as advisors to the University community.

Appendix A. Call for Applications to the Council

Timeline.

August - September – Call for applications for membership to the entire university community.

October – Review of applications and decision-making.

November – first meeting of Council, schedule of meetings established.

Committee Member Competencies.

We are seeking members who can demonstrate most of the following competencies:

Knowledge of equity, diversity and inclusion in the postsecondary sector

- includes the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to create learning environments that foster equitable participation of all groups and seeks to address issues of accessibility, equity and inclusion, oppression, privilege, and power. Individuals with this competency have a sense of their own agency and social responsibility that includes others, their community, and the larger global context.

Ability to cultivate a common vision

- ability to engage with students, faculty, staff and administrators to understand their unique and complex needs and commit to working collaboratively with all levels of leadership to build policies and programs that advance DEDI and equity-mindedness.

Institutional & political acumen

- understanding of the institutions' unique organizational and governance structures, and its intersections with government, community and industry at all levels, which includes law, policy, and history,
- ability to respond effectively to sensitive situations, reconcile competing interests and build consensus around a policy and plan of action.

Results-orientation

- demonstrates strong commitment to the development of a practical and effective strategies, tactics, actions, etc.,
- ability to develop and articulate goals which unite people in the pursuit of objectives worthy of their best efforts.

Lived Experience

- personal knowledge about the world gained through direct, first-hand involvement in everyday events as an individual who identifies an equity-seeking group as a part of their identity.

Application form will require:

Name (First & Last)

Affiliation (Staff/Faculty/Instructor/UG student/Grad Student/Post-doc)

Position/level or year of study

Dept./program of study and degree

Suggested Questions:

Question 1: Share with us your motivation for wanting to be a member of this Council.

Question 2: How do you demonstrate the competencies we are looking for in Council members?

Question 3: Share with us any skills or experiences you believe would benefit the Council in its work.

Application Review Committee

The Application Review Committee will be chaired by the VP Equity, People and Culture. Technical Support will be provided by staff in the VP's Office. Appointments to the Committee may include the Executive Director, Centre for Human Rights, Equity and Inclusion, the AVP Faculty Affairs, appointments from the Division of Students, Faculty of Graduate Studies and/or others at the discretion of the VP but should not exceed five appointments.