EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION FRAMEWORK
Concordia University of Edmonton

Concordia University of Edmonton (CUE) is committed to fostering a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment for work, study, and living. CUE actively promotes dignity for all, rejecting actions and language that are harmful to mutual respect. As a post-secondary institution, thoughtful scrutiny and the civil debate of a variety of ideas and approaches are vital to the fulfillment of our purpose, and are encouraged as essential elements of inclusion. We strive to create a community that supports a diversity of perspectives.

CUE supports and embraces many forms of diversity, including race, ethnicity, nationality, gender identity and expression, class, religion, disability, age, economic status, geographic location, and language/linguistic ability. To facilitate an inclusive university, all forms of discrimination are strictly prohibited, and all members of our community share in the responsibility of recognizing, preventing, and responding appropriately to incidents of discrimination, along with engaging in the promotion and ongoing evolution of an accepting, supportive, and welcoming campus culture.

This framework has been designed to serve as a guide for promoting, encouraging, and supporting inclusion and diversity at CUE. It will be used as a tool for setting priorities, evaluating progress, and nurturing a diverse and inclusive university community. Additionally, this framework will support CUE's existing policies, strategies, and commitments, including our Discrimination, Harassment, and Accommodation Policy, Employee Code of Conduct, Student Code of Conduct, and Indigenous Strategy (currently in progress). CUE's EDI framework recognizes the ongoing impact of historical atrocities, and adopts and upholds the IHRA definition of antisemitism. In addition, it reflects our commitment to the Scarborough Charter on Anti-Black Racism and Black Inclusion in Canadian Higher Education, of which CUE was one of the original signatory universities.

PURPOSE

To reaffirm our commitment to creating and fostering an equitable, diverse, and inclusive collegial culture.

DEFINITIONS

- Equity - the removal of systemic barriers and biases enabling all individuals to have equal opportunity to access and benefit.

- Diversity – differences in race, colour, place of origin, religion, immigrant and newcomer status, ethnic origin, ability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and age.

- Inclusion – the practice of ensuring that all individuals are valued and respected for their contributions and are equally supported.

BACKGROUND

For 100 years, CUE has been a gathering place for students from around the world who are committed to making a difference and being leaders in the community. Previously a faith-based institution, CUE has evolved into a research-focused, pre-eminent small university where students come to discover their purpose, engage in discussion and scholarly debate, and work on projects to address the issues of today and tomorrow.

Our vision is to be recognized nationally and internationally for our graduates' knowledge, skill, integrity, and wisdom. We recognize that we will be unable to reach our full potential if we do not embrace equity, diversity, and inclusion in our workspaces, classrooms, research facilities, and community.

In our Academic Plan (2023-2028), we outlined a desire to be more inclusive and to welcome an expanded, diverse student body. To be successful, we committed to being deliberate and intentional in recruiting and retaining students from underrepresented populations, and to increase the number of faculty members from underrepresented groups.

Similarly, in our Strategic Research Plan (2019-2024), we committed to offering more opportunities to students and faculty members to engage in research on pressing issues, including issues related to social justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion. In addition, we are focused on internationalization and engaging in international partnerships to bring new perspectives to the CUE community.

As part of our commitment to creating and fostering an equitable, diverse, and inclusive collegial culture, we launched a survey to gain insights from our students, faculty, and staff on their experiences and perceptions pertaining to equity, diversity, and inclusion. All survey responses were provided anonymously. The survey found that the majority of students, faculty, and staff believe CUE is a diverse and inclusive community, and reported positive experiences on campus.

- **92%** of respondents reported that they have made an effort to get to know people from diverse backgrounds
- **90%** of respondents reported that they have been challenged to think about an issue from a different perspective than their own
- **82%** of respondents reported that they have made an effort to educate others about social issues
- **62%** of respondents reported that they have challenged others on issues of racism

Through the survey, we also learned that 46% of respondents reported that they had personally experienced and/or witnessed insensitive behaviour at CUE over the past year, and 35% reported that they had personally experienced and/or witnessed exclusionary behaviour at CUE over the past year. While we are proud of the progress we have made, it is evident that we still have work to do to achieve our goal of being an equitable, diverse and inclusive campus.

RESPONSIBILITIES

All members of our university community have a role in creating and fostering an equitable, diverse, and inclusive collegial culture.

Our mission is to be a community of learning grounded in scholarship and academic freedom, preparing students to be independent thinkers, ethical leaders, and citizens for the common good. As a post-secondary institution, our mission is central to our purpose, and we must remain committed to advancing our mission through everything that we do.

Pertaining to equity, diversity, and inclusion, our university community is accountable to:
- Recognize, acknowledge, and address existing biases, assumptions, and stereotypes that inhibit opportunity in work and learning environments;
- Lead change through moderation, collegiality, and kindness;
- Take an action-oriented approach to dismantling barriers;
- Provide awareness and education to advance understanding of how colonialism, racism, antisemitism and ongoing oppressive practices continue to impact dominant social, political, and academic narratives;
- Foster a culture that promotes and embraces equity, diversity, inclusion, wellness, and belonging; and
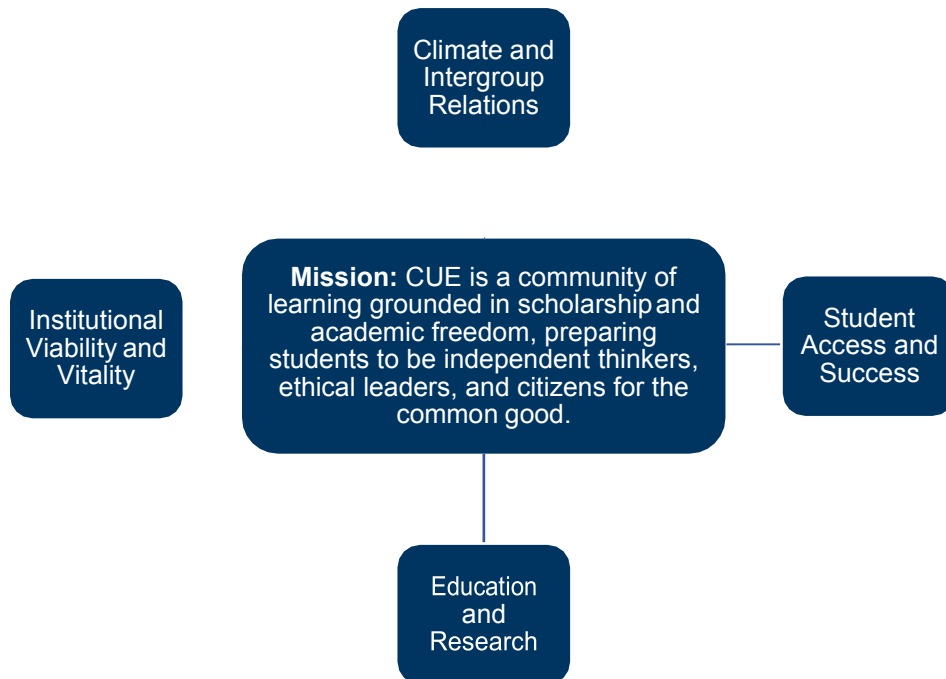- Ensure the voices and perspectives of underrepresented groups are included in decision-making processes.

Additionally, our institutional leadership is accountable to demonstrate commitment and action toward achieving an equitable, diverse, and inclusive collegial culture at CUE by critically reviewing structures, systems, policies, procedures, and university-sanctioned documents to ensure adequate representation, accessibility, and inclusivity.

FRAMEWORK

Our approach to diversity and inclusion draws on the work of Daryl G. Smith, professor emerita of education and psychology at Claremont Graduate University. In *Diversity's Promise for Higher Education* (2015), Smith emphasizes four broad and interrelated dimensions:
- Climate and Intergroup Relations
- Student Access and Success
- Education and Research
- Institutional Viability and Vitality

CUE embraces this approach as it is mission-centric and action-oriented, and was designed to consider the context of post-secondary institutions in a pluralistic and interconnected world.

Climate and
Intergroup
Relations

Institutional
Viability and
Vitality

Mission: CUE is a community of
learning grounded in scholarship and
academic freedom, preparing
students to be independent thinkers,
ethical leaders, and citizens for the
common good.

Student
Access and
Success

Education
and
Research

Climate and Intergroup Relations

CUE will be intentional and take a holistic approach to equity, diversity and inclusion to ensure
our campus is welcoming, respectful, collegial, and kind.

- Promote an atmosphere where differing strengths can be recognized, understood, and
  valued.

Student Access and Success

CUE will be thoughtful and strategic in our efforts to recruit, admit, engage, support, retain, and
graduate a diverse student population.

- Ensure demographics are broadly representative of Canadian society, CUE will prevent
  tokenism by ensuring focus on inclusive behaviours, such as EDI goals and
  interventions for each administrative unit and department.

Education and Research

CUE will create a community that supports a diversity of perspectives, and promote teaching
and research about equity, diversity, and inclusion.

- Ensure implementation of meaningful education to students via coursework and to
  researchers through incentives, awareness, and opportunities.

Institutional Viability and Vitality

CUE will focus on building our institutional capacity and structures for equity, diversity, and
inclusion.

- Ensure adequate resources and attention is allocated to reaffirm our commitment to
  creating and fostering an equitable, diverse, and inclusive collegial culture.

USING THIS DOCUMENT

The purpose of this framework is to reaffirm our commitment to creating and fostering an equitable, diverse, and inclusive collegial culture for which we all have a role in creating. This framework has been designed to provide guidance to members of the CUE community.

Each member of the CUE community should take time to become familiar with this framework, and their responsibilities both as an individual and as part of the larger campus community. At the same time, this framework should serve as a guide for units across campus as they build strategies and make workplans annually. All strategies and workplans should include a focus on equity, diversity, and inclusion, with goals that directly and explicitly relate to this framework and measurable objectives.

Units will be invited to share progress with the President and Vice-Chancellor each June. Moving towards greater EDI is a long-term journey, and one that we take seriously. For that reason, meaningful change is prioritized over speed.

CONCLUSION

To be Canada's pre-eminent small university, we must amplify our commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion, and take meaningful actions to support our students, faculty, staff, and community. We must celebrate successes, recognize our shortcomings, and continue to build our capacity to foster equity, diversity, and inclusion as central elements to our institutional mission. As we move forward, we will be intentional and coordinated, and look forward to sharing our progress with the CUE community.

ACTION PLANS

Climate and Intergroup Relations Action Plan	
Immediate Goal	**Long-term Objective(s)**
Increase the promotion of EDI related research throughout campus through the website, school bulletins, and research conferences.	Create opportunities to highlight research and projects being conducted by students, faculty, and staff focused on diversity and inclusion to further enrich campus climate and further enhance intergroup relations. Share information about diversity and inclusion across multiple channels and in multiple formats to build a collective understanding at CUE. Maintain high visibility of diversity and inclusion resources.
Identify community groups and collaborate with groups for resources, student opportunities and community involvement.	Initiate and strengthen relationships with community groups working to promote and advance diversity and inclusion.

Provide opportunities for EDI onboarding training and ongoing EDI training for all staff. Have free ongoing student and faculty EDI training workshops.	Increase formal and informal opportunities for students, faculty, and staff to participate in intercultural and intracultural learning on campus.
Build EDI perspectives into marketing and communications.	Share information about diversity and inclusion across multiple channels and in multiple formats to build a collective understanding at CUE.
Create an EDI tab on the CUE Website that shares EDI progress in all areas identified in this framework.	Maintain high visibility of diversity and inclusion resources.

Student Access and Success Action Plan	
Immediate Goal	**Long-term Objective(s)**
Create a recruitment plan that increases recruitment of our underrepresented communities.	Increase strategic and targeted outreach to, and recruitment of, students from historically underrepresented communities.
Create more scholarship and bursary offerings for our underrepresented communities	Enhance scholarship and bursary offerings for students from historically underrepresented communities.
Intentionally remove barriers underrepresented students may face in accessing student supports.	Increase commitment to retention and student support to ensure student success, appropriate progress toward degree, and timely graduation.
Encourage departments to meaningfully increase their EDI efforts and professional development related to EDI.	Emphasize the value of diversity expertise and professional development on EDI within each administrative unit and department.
Create a strategy to increase study abroad opportunities for students. Provide activities and events that are inclusive and highlight our international students' diverse backgrounds.	Support initiatives to augment CUE's internationalization.
Create a mentorship program that includes campus and community connections that is open to the entire campus community.	Seek opportunities to introduce mentorship programs for both students and employees.

Education and Research Action Plan	
Immediate Goal	**Long-term Objective(s)**
Host department specific workshops focused on meaningfully including diverse perspectives to their respective subjects. Ensure instructors use inclusive teaching practices to avoid tokenizing underrepresented students.	Develop initiatives that enable all instructors to infuse diverse issues and perspectives into curricular (as relevant to the topic and scope of the course) and program development projects, and support innovative teaching approaches such as instructor-led study abroad.
Promote discussion and mobilization of research that contributes to our EDI framework.	Introduce knowledge mobilization activities and initiatives to support the enhancement of equity, diversity, and inclusion across the CUE community.

Encourage students and employees to participate in activities relating to EDI mentorship program (ex. conference participation, service learning, workshops, speaker series, study abroad, promote cultural programs offered through the Office of Extension and Culture etc.).	Create opportunities for students and employees to engage in activities and initiatives on campus that promote equity, diversity, and inclusion. Increase the capacity for students and employees to bring diverse perspectives to CUE by providing open opportunities and accessible resources.
Increase research project funding for underrepresented researchers. Introduce an EDI framework within the Office of Research Services	Support equitable access to funding opportunities for all researchers and increasing equitable and inclusive participation in the research system.
Host research workshops focused on including EDI approaches to research projects. Introduce incentives for research projects that have meaningful applications of EDI.	Promote the integration of EDI-related considerations in research design and practices.

Institutional Viability and Vitality Action Plan	
Immediate Goal	**Long-term Objective(s)**
Create and review policies within an EDI lens.	Integrate equity, diversity, and inclusion goals into policies, practices, and strategies.
Collect employee demographic information and use it as a guide for who is underrepresented.	Have employee demographics that are broadly representative of Canadian society, CUE will prevent tokenism by ensuring focus on inclusive behaviours.
Create a strategic hiring plan to encourage underrepresented and qualified individuals to apply for positions within the university.	Have practices and policies (hiring, recruitment, promotion, performance management, succession planning) that align with equity, diversity, and inclusion goals.
Provide regular EDI training for Board Members, Vice-Presidents, President & Vice-Chancellor, and the Chancellor.	Develop and establish training and professional development opportunities on equity, diversity, and inclusion for senior leadership and governance bodies.
Create budget plans that account for the expansion of EDI interventions and fund goals towards the EDI framework.	Ensure adequate resources are allocated to reaffirm our commitment to creating and fostering an equitable, diverse, and inclusive collegial culture
Collect demographic data on students, staff, and faculty through regular administration of surveys and use this data to identify existing Gaps.	Improve data collection methods to enhance accuracy of demographic statistics to identify and address existing gaps
Update EDI related initiative outcomes on the website and through the State of the University Address.	Share progress and publish reports on equity, diversity, and inclusion initiatives and outcomes.