

Objective 1: Strengthen Institutional commitment to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.

Systemic barriers - Please provide a high-level description of the systemic barriers (e.g. summarize what the barriers are and how they were identified):

There has been a lack of an institutional policy framework, and associated accountability, related to EDI and accommodations; therefore, EDI is not seen as an institutional priority.

Corresponding actions undertaken to address the barriers, and Data gathered and Indicator(s) - can be both qualitative and quantitative:

| Actions | Indicators and Metrics | Responsibility | Timeframe |
|---|---|---------------------------------|-----------|
| 1.1 Develop and implement the Saint Mary's University Employment Equity Policy. | Policy is in place | Executive Management Group & HR | 2020 |
| 1.2 Establish the Saint Mary's University Employment Equity and Diversity Steering Committee with composition from various stakeholders on campus. Once established, hold regular meetings of the Steering Committee | Committee established # of meetings Attendance | Executive Management Group & HR | 2021 |
| 1.3 Develop a Saint Mary's University Employment Equity and Diversity Plan, in consultation with stakeholders on campus. | Plan developed with accountabilities. | Executive Management Group & HR | 2021 |
| 1.4 Incorporate EDI themes within the updated Strategic Research Plan. | SRP approved and EDI themes identified. | AVP, Research | 2020 |
| 1.5 Faculty proposals to host a CRC must include an EDI commitment and these proposals will be given priority. | # of proposals received with EDI commitment statement included. | AVP, Research VPAR Deans | 2021 |

Progress and/or Outcomes and Impacts made during the reporting period:

1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 (In progress) A SMU Employment Equity and Diversity Policy has been approved by the Executive Management Group and a draft Terms of Reference and mandate for the Employment Equity and Diversity Committee is in progress. Once this document has been approved, the committee will be established. Once the committee has been populated, the committee will start the development of a plan. To further strengthen the commitment to EDI, Saint Mary's University has signed the Dimensions Charter and by doing so, commits to upholding the principles of the Charter.

The University has begun the process to develop a Diversity Excellence strategy. Members of the Saint Mary's community including faculty and staff were invited to participate in a series of consultations to help better understand their experience at the University. This provided participants the opportunity to discuss barriers to advance equity diversity and inclusion at the University. A total of three focus groups were organized by the Vice-President, Academic and Research and the Diversity and Inclusion Advisor. The next phase will include similar focus groups however participants will be invited to identify initiatives to consider for implementation.

1.4 (In progress) The renewal/update of the SRP (2012-2017) has continued to be delayed, however the SRP renewal is (finally) in final stages of approval, having been now communicated in a few methods to the SMU community over the last 3 months inviting comments; final version expected in June 2021. Contained within the SRP draft that has been communicated, and is now being finalized, is a clear and intentional focus on EDI themes. The new SRP identifies 5 Major Themes which are all specifically designed to be inter-disciplinary, to allow access to contribute from broad, diverse communities – providing a large expansion of access to contribute to the university's major research themes. Further, the new SRP identifies 7 specific Actions, one of which is directly related to EDI: "Engage in development of university diversity and equity strategies: ensure opportunities/programs for research mentorship and network building; develop holistic, inclusive graduate admission policies."

1.5 (next possible opportunity 2021 or 2022) The next potential available open Chair search won't begin until the latter half 2021 (or early 2022) and at that time, this Action will be engaged. There is some uncertainty as to whether or not we will launch this new Chair search at this time as we negotiate to understand the impact of the 2021 CRC re-allocation exercise.

Saint Mary's University is committed to have a diverse and representative workforce at all levels. The Institution is currently meeting its targets for women and members of visible minorities based on the current targets set. Although there is no target/gap for Indigenous Peoples or persons with disabilities, the Institution will make every effort to increase representation of these two groups.

Challenges encountered during the reporting period:

There was a re-allocation exercise conducted during this period that will result in a decrease in the number of CRCs. This may have an impact on the representation of current Chairs (targets) and possibly the timing of when the University will have opportunity to recruit new CRCs.

Next Steps (indicate specific dates/timelines)

The Diversity and Inclusion Advisor will continue to meet with individual departments to present the Employment Equity and Diversity Policy.

It is anticipated that the Employment, Equity and Diversity Committee will be in place by the fall of 2021. If everything goes as planned with the workforce analysis and the distribution of the resulting data, then we could have an Employment Equity and Diversity Plan in place to start fiscal 2022.

The University is currently developing an Accommodations Policy and, once finalized, the policy will be distributed throughout the University. As a follow up to the release of the policy, presentations will be made to members of the University leadership teams to ensure awareness and understanding of roles and responsibilities related to all aspects of the duty to accommodate.

Information gathered during the first stage of the Diversity Excellence Strategy consultations will be analyzed for common themes. Once this analysis is complete a message will go out to all members of the SMU community to seek participants for the next stage which will involve the identification of specific initiatives.