Laboratory Medicine & Pathobiology
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Guidelines: Incorporation of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion (EDI) Principles and Practices in Department of Laboratory Medicine & Pathobiology Committees

1.0 LMP Commitment to Equity, Diversity, Inclusion (EDI)

The Department of Laboratory Medicine & Pathobiology (LMP) at the University of Toronto (U of T) is committed to the principles of EDI (which includes indigeneity and accessibility) and Wellness in all that we do.

This includes

a. recruiting and retaining learners, staff and faculty that reflect the diversity of our society,

b. recognizing identity, trauma, and resilience of diverse individuals and groups including, but not limited to, Indigenous groups and individuals with disabilities, who may be LMP staff, students, faculty, or affiliated with LMP, or patients, and considering the impact of our policies and practices on these groups,

c. creating, supporting, and maintaining a learning and working environment that is free from discrimination, harassment, intimidation, bullying, and disrespectful behavior, and

d. ensuring that our programs and curricula prepare LMP members to meet the needs of the diverse communities they will serve in their careers in Canada and around the world.

2.0 Definitions

a. Equity: "Implies fairness and impartiality. A distinct process of recognizing differences within groups of individuals and using this understanding to provide equal opportunities." (Direct quote from: [Faculty of Medicine Diversity Advisory Council: Terms of Reference](#))

b. Diversity: "Diversity embodies inclusiveness, mutual respect of multiple perspectives, and serves as a catalyst for change resulting in equity. In this context, we are mindful of all aspects of human differences; including and not limited to, socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, language, nationality, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, geography, disability, and age." (Direct quote from: [Faculty of Medicine Diversity Advisory Council: Terms of Reference](#))

c. Inclusion: "Inclusion is a core element for successfully achieving diversity. Inclusion is achieved by nurturing the climate and culture of the department through professional development, education, policy, and practice. The objective is to create a climate that fosters belonging, respect, and value for all and encourage engagement and connection throughout the department and community." (Direct quote from: [Faculty of Medicine Diversity Advisory Council: Terms of Reference](#))

d. Indigeneity: "Can be seen as the re-doing or reaffirming of education to include Indigenous ways of knowing, thinking, feeling, and being. It involves elevating the voices of Indigenous peoples, elevating traditional, and cultural knowledge, and intentional

inclusion of Indigenous ways of teaching and learning to form and create pedagogical approaches." (Direct quote from: Queen's University: Office of Indigenous Initiatives)

e. Accessibility: "Giving equitable access to everyone along the continuum of human ability and experience. Accessibility encompasses the broader meanings of compliance and refers to how organizations make space for the characteristics that each person brings." (Direct quote from: American Alliance of Museums: Diversity, Equity, Accessibility and Inclusion).

3.0 Objective

Together with the LMP Terms of Reference template, this document will aid in the development of committees that are guided, composed and governed by EDI principles, with memberships that are representative and inclusive of the diverse dimensions of LMP.

4.0 Benefits for committees that respect equity, diversity, and inclusion principles

a. Ensure representation of the broad LMP community.

b. Better anticipate and consider concerns and perspectives of all constituencies.

c. Draw upon a broad and representative range of competencies and knowledge to solve complex issues and develop creative solutions.

d. Attract and engage talented individuals to LMP.

e. Enhance excellence throughout LMP.

f. Uphold the University's commitment to fairness and inclusion.

g. Ensure that members of the LMP community feel included in activities/decision making.

h. Dismantle barriers which prevent meaningful participation in departmental decision making.

i. Advocate decolonization and recognition of Indigenous worldviews and values.

5.0 Incorporation of EDI principles into committee practices

5.1 Committee member recruitment

a. Committee recruitment methods should be transparent and standardized for all.

b. Recruitment of members could involve identification of potential members by staff, learners, research staff, faculty, and committee members. Self-nominations could also be considered.

c. Members should be recruited from the LMP community. Members should be informed of opportunities by advertising at LMP meetings and in newsletters, encouraging nomination by LMP members, and promoting committees in LMP-wide newsletters, emails, and seminars.

5.2 Committee membership

a. Create committees that are composed of individuals who are diverse in knowledge, worldviews, and experiences.

b. Consider that group composition affects deliberation and consensus reached (Cooper & Carr 2010; Mallery et al 2019).

c. Composition should consist of a variety of perspectives and expertise to achieve the committee's purpose.

d. Membership can be based on different lived experiences, skills in specific areas, disciplinary diversity, education level/training.

e. Committees should contain LMP representatives from different academic units and locations and alumni.

f. Identify voices and perspectives that are missing within the committee and develop strategies to recruit individuals who can provide those perspectives.

g. Ask Vice Chair, Promotion and Mentorship to reflect on membership.

h. Selection criteria should be transparent and standardized for all potential members.

i. Consider that groups larger than five members are more likely to be led by a dominant speaker (Fay et al. 2000). When appropriate, establish working groups consisting of five members maximum, with the goal of increasing the potential for dialogue and generation of novel ideas.

5.3 Committee member term length

a. Maintain records of involvement on Departmental Committees to ensure new members are invited to participate and that other members are not committed to many committees for long periods of time.

b. Review membership cycles on a yearly basis.

c. New members should join at regular staggered cycles when possible.

d. To improve committee member participation and retention, provide new members with an orientation session on the roles and expectations of the committee.

5.4 Committee procedures, including decision making processes

a. Set clear ground rules which explicitly promote inclusion when a committee is formed and review them yearly and/or with onboarding of new members. Being clear on expected conduct creates a safe space, makes everyone aware of their rights and responsibilities, and ensures that all members can contribute to decision-making processes.

b. The lead should be aware of how often members speak or provide input into decision-making process to ensure participation from all members.

c. Encourage participants to "step up" or "step back," if they are typically more reserved or outgoing, respectively.

d. Make space for different types of communication and thinking styles.

e. Consider power dynamics between committee members (which may arise due to differences in seniority or marginalization).

f. Explore different decision-making processes (i.e., live polling, anonymous surveys, dotmocracy voting, etc.).

g. Identify unconscious bias and acknowledge impact it may have on decision making

h. Committee members must actively seek the opinions and perspectives of stakeholders who will be affected by decisions (i.e., contact form and call out to faculty).

i. A plan should be established to incorporate stakeholder knowledge and relay such considerations.

j. Stakeholders should be given a means to communicate with committee at any time throughout and/or after the decision-making process.

k. Consider the appointment of an EDI advocate to help guide decision making

l. Promote goal setting for committees regarding EDI principles.

5.5 Unconscious bias

a. All members should be trained to understand and recognize unconscious bias and structural barriers.

b. Systemic inequities and unconscious bias are inhibitory to the intended outcomes of diversification.

c. Adequate training on the histories of structural barriers is necessary to address inequitable power dynamics.

5.6 Accessibility

a. Set up ways for members to access documents related to committee work (i.e., meeting minutes, agendas, and resources). Clear criteria (e.g., confidentiality) must be provided for excluding documents from public disclosure.

b. Ensure that all members find resources (i.e., content and proceedings of meetings) and meetings (includes physical access) accessible.

c. Policies must be flexible to ensure appropriate and active participation from all members.

5.7 Indigenous Perspective

a. Committees need to have an indigenous perspective that reflects impact on this community, and other disadvantaged groups, and how they might promote their equity, diversity, and inclusion

b. To incorporate an indigenous perspective into LMP, we may consider learning about and addressing decolonization, indigenization, and incorporation of Indigenous pedagogies

c. Consider the impact of LMP policies and practices on individuals or groups of individuals who may have been impacted by historical trauma and discrimination

d.   Evaluate if past procedures need to be updated to reflect best practices

e.   When new procedures, practices, or policies are devised by LMP committees, it may be beneficial to form formal and informal partnerships with Indigenous organizations if appropriate

f.   Terms of Reference documents and agendas for each committee should include a Land Acknowledgement

   i.   A suggested acknowledgment is: "We acknowledge the land on which the Faculty of Medicine operates. For thousands of years, it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and most recently, the Mississaugas of the Credit River. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land."

   ii.   Committees may also choose to ask one member to reflect on the land acknowledgement at each meeting.

   - Questions that one may wish to reflect on include:

      - What is your relationship to the land?

      - How do your research, work, and other aspects of your life benefit from the privilege of being, living, and learning on this land?

5.8   Recognition

Identify ways to recognize members for their contributions.

6.0 References & Resources

Cooper, L. A., & Carr, P. (2010). Race, disadvantage and faculty experiences in academic medicine. Journal *of General Internal Medicine*, *25*(12), 1363–1369. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11606-010-1478-7

Mallery, T. A., Mittman, I. S., Castillo-Page, L., Eliason, J., & Chapman Navarro, J. R. (2019). A stochastic model of consensus reaching in committee decisions for faculty advancement, promotion and tenure: does diversity matter? *Journal of the National Medical Association*, *111*(4), 418–426. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jnma.2019.01.012

Phillips, K., Northcraft, G., & Neale, M. (2006). Surface-level diversity and decision-making in groups: when does deep-level similarity help? *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, *9*(4), 467–482. https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430206067557

Fay, N., Garrod, S., & Carletta, J. (2000). Group Discussion as Interactive Dialogue or as Serial Monologue: The Influence of Group Size. *Psychological Science*, *11*(6), 481–486. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9280.00292

Thomas, J. M. (2018). Diversity Regimes and Racial Inequality: A Case Study of Diversity University. Social Currents, 5(2), 140–156. https://doi.org/10.1177/2329496517725335

Shapiro, I., Project Change (U.S.), Aspen Institute, & Roundtable on Comprehensive Community Initiatives for Children and Families. (2002). Training for racial equity and inclusion: A guide to selected programs. Aspen Institute.

Kayes, P. E. (2006). New Paradigms for Diversifying Faculty and Staff in Higher Education: Multicultural Education, v14 n2 p65-69 Win 2006.

Faculty of Medicine Diversity Advisory Council: Terms of Reference

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion at the University of Toronto

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Report 2019 - University of Toronto

The Centre for WISE Practices in Indigenous Health

Queen's University: Office of Indigenous Initiatives

American Alliance of Museums: Diversity, Equity, Accessibility and Inclusion

Recruiting and Hiring Diverse Faculty Guidelines – Toronto Metropolitan University

Best Practices in Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in Research - Government of Canada

Provost's Advisory Committee on Equity - University of Waterloo

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committees: Getting Started Guide - University of British Columbia

Inclusion Action Plan - University of British Columbia

Guide to Conducting Accessible Meetings – Ontario Municipal Social Services Association

Inclusive Committee Formation – Vanderbilt University

Forming an Inclusive Hiring Committee – University of Colorado

Diversity and Inclusion: A Toolkit for Committees – State Bar of Wisconsin

Queen's University: Society of Graduate and Professional Students EDII (Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Indigeneity) and International Students Resource Guide

First Nations House Indigenous Student Services

Women's College Hospital Centre for Wise Practices in Indigenous Health

Indigenous Health in Ontario: An introductory guide for medical students

Office of Indigenous Health

Indigenous Gateway

Indigenous Cultural Competency Toolkit

Centre for Indigenous Studies