

2.4.5 Equity

1. The British Columbia Institute of Technology Faculty and Staff Association (the “Association”) is committed to securing equity for members of groups that have been marginalized and who are disproportionately excluded from full participation in both the Association and BCIT. Such groups that have been marginalized include but are not limited to:
 - 1.1. Indigenous peoples;
 - 1.2. women;
 - 1.3. racialized people;
 - 1.4. neurodivergent persons;
 - 1.5. persons with disabilities;
 - 1.6. socio-economically disadvantaged persons; and
 - 1.7. lesbian, gay, bisexual, asexual, transgender, queer, genderqueer, non-binary, and two-spirit persons.
2. The goal of equity is to achieve inclusiveness and social and economic justice through recognition, respect, numerical representation, accountability, responsibility, and the development of balanced, healthy, and harmonious working environments.
3. Equity guarantees all people the freedom to realize and fulfil their potential, free from inequitable restrictions such as systemic discrimination; employment and education inequities; lack of accommodation; and institutional structures, policies, and practices which perpetuate systemic discrimination and may enable a climate of hostility. An inclusive union or workplace is one that is active in eliminating these restrictions and practices and promotes the full democratic participation of all its members. Realizing equity is both an individual and a collective responsibility.
4. Commitment to equity begins with the acknowledgement of inequity and demands proactive redress for the effects of systemic discrimination. The Association commits to providing leadership in the work of combating systemic discrimination, removing barriers, and actively promoting inclusivity by acknowledging the role that systemic discrimination plays in its own structures and practices and taking steps to address it and additionally by using its union role to advocate for change at BCIT.
5. Systemic discrimination results from normative practices. Within the Association and at BCIT, systemic discrimination has manifested itself in barriers to access, employment, governance, inclusion, respect, and acceptance.
 - 5.1. In the Association, systemic discrimination has resulted in inequitable representation on committees, as Tech Reps, on the Board of Directors, and within FSA staff hiring, as well as neglect of issues of equity in bargaining and negotiation.
 - 5.2. At BCIT, systemic discrimination has resulted in inequitable results in hiring decisions and career advancement, in inequitable representation on committees, in management, and in resource allocation.

- 5.3. In the BCIT teaching environment, systemic discrimination has resulted in particular forms of knowledge production, dissemination, and pedagogy being privileged over others. This practice has limited the scope of scholarship for marginalized groups.
6. The Association will therefore prioritize diversity in its own work and advocate that BCIT prioritize diversity by:
 - 6.1. Recognizing different and diverse experiences of various marginalized groups,
 - 6.2. Welcoming diverse substantive contributions to knowledge, and
 - 6.3. Facilitating and demanding diverse representation of difference in terms of vision, values, cultural mores, methodologies, and epistemologies in critical analysis.
7. The Association recognizes the importance of Indigenous perspectives that see equity as a continuing struggle to achieve and maintain balance between living things. The Association advocates for implementing Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada recommendations for improving educational attainment and equity for Indigenous students at BCIT. These recommendations include but are not limited to:
 - 7.1. Developing culturally appropriate curriculum and respecting and honouring Treaty and non-Treaty relationships in curriculum;
 - 7.2. Providing educational materials and support for instructors on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms;
 - 7.3. Providing educational materials and support for instructors on how to build student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect; and
 - 7.4. Developing educational materials for all faculty and staff regarding the history of Indigenous peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, treaties and Indigenous rights, Indigenous law, and Indigenous-Crown relations, and developing and providing skills-based training for all faculty and staff on intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.
8. Further, the Association will do its own decolonizing work by considering and implementing actions such as the following:
 - 8.1. Including a land acknowledgement in the recommended email signature template, on all print and digital publications, and at all FSA-organized events and member meetings;
 - 8.2. Where possible and appropriate, inviting an Elder from BCIT's Indigenous Services to provide an opening at FSA-organized events and member meetings;
 - 8.3. Recognizing non-colonial knowledge as equivalent;
 - 8.4. Providing ongoing internal learning opportunities for staff and directors.
9. The Association recognizes the importance of acknowledging the incredible diversity possible regarding gender identification, gender expression, and sexual orientation, and acknowledges that self-identification is the sole and whole measure of a person's gender. The Association will therefore advocate for:
 - 9.1. Raising awareness of and cultivating appreciation for gender diversity at BCIT;

- 9.2. Providing all-gender washrooms (and changerooms where applicable) in all buildings at all BCIT campuses; and
 - 9.3. Providing educational materials and support for instructors on how to build student capacity for non-gender-essentialist understanding, empathy, and mutual respect in the face of gender diversity.
10. Further, the Association will do its own work in ensuring respectful language and practices reflective of gender diversity by considering and implementing actions such as the following:
- 10.1. Using gender neutral / gender inclusive language for all FSA communications
 - 10.2. Identifying and correcting gender stereotypical language in legacy documents by updating them
 - 10.3. Including staff and director individual pronouns as a regular practice when naming staff and directors in FSA communications (such as email signatures, name tags, titles, meeting introductions, website profiles, etc)
 - 10.4. Providing ongoing internal learning opportunities for staff and directors.
11. The Association recognizes the importance of acknowledging the wide range of human neurologies and neurological differences, including Autism, ADHD, OCD, Tourette's, dyslexia, and other cognitive differences. The concept of neurodiversity is not a denial of the very real disabilities conditions like Autism can present. Rather, the Association recognizes that these conditions are ways of being, not diseases, and they are best met with acceptance and support at whatever level is appropriate. The Association will therefore advocate for:
- 11.1. Raising awareness of and cultivating appreciation for neurodiversity at BCIT;
 - 11.2. Developing and enhancing supports in offices and programs around the institute to make them neurodiverse-friendly, including:
 - 11.2.1. Supplying visual and video closed caption access to information resources rather than text-only, and
 - 11.2.2. Providing alternative communication channels for feedback such as online or offline alternatives to public speaking at meetings or events;
 - 11.3. Responding to issues where our neurodiverse members are not receiving appropriate supports or are encountering barriers to thriving safely in their jobs;
 - 11.4. Improving human resources and appointment practises to support neurodiverse hiring, including, but not limited to:
 - 11.4.1. Educating selection committees,
 - 11.4.2. Providing alternatives to traditional interviewing, and
 - 11.4.3. Providing specialized onboarding including orientation, training, and mentoring suitable for neurodiverse hires;
 - 11.5. Creating opportunities for students, faculty, staff, and alumni to learn about neurodiversity; and
 - 11.6. Adapting "traditional" conceptions of teaching, including pedagogical, research, and administrative functions, to be more inclusive of neurodiverse faculty and staff,

including, but not limited to:

- 11.6.1. Adopting pedagogical techniques such as delivery of content through online lectures and other appropriate and pedagogically sound online and off-line alternatives to public speaking, and
 - 11.6.2. Providing online and offline alternatives to face-to-face meetings, office hours, and committee participation.
12. Further, the Association will do its own work in ensuring a respectful and safe environment for differently abled and neurodiverse individuals by considering and implementing actions such as the following:
- 12.1. Creating an FSA Accommodation Plan to actively support differently abled and neurodiverse members
 - 12.2. Adding accommodation language to all event and meeting announcements
 - 12.3. Considering accessibility of communications such as website accessibility features, closed captioning, visual or video as well as text communications, etc
 - 12.4. Providing ongoing internal learning opportunities for staff and directors.
13. The Association will take a leadership role in the realization of equity by negotiating equity provisions in agreements and by promoting equity within the Association and its governance structure. Success requires openness, transparency, and accountability in all aspects of institutional life.
- 13.1. In our practices and operations as an employer, the Association will actively advance equity, including but not limited to anti-discrimination and anti-harassment training and policies, equitable hiring and recruitment practices, employment equity, accommodation, and salary equity.
 - 13.2. In the Association's regular cycle of policy review and new policy development, the Association will apply an equity lens, as articulated in this Equity Policy, to the work of reviewing and developing policies.
14. The Association will actively seek out opportunities for improving equity for all of the groups mentioned in 1 above, both within the Association and within BCIT. The Association commits to sharing this policy with all members of hiring committees established within the FSA.

Revision History

| Date | Revision (Brief description) |
|---------------------------|--|
| January, 2021 | Stage 3 review brought to Board for approval |
| September & October, 2020 | Changes presented to the board based on regular policy review cycle, including feedback from FSA Equity Caucus, staff, and board |
| May 17, 2017 | Approved by Board as new Policy |
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