QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY EDUCATIONAL EQUITY POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

Queen's University recognizes that the values of equity and diversity are vital to and in harmony with its educational mission and standards of excellence. It acknowledges that direct, indirect and systemic discrimination exists within our institutional structures, policies and practices and in our community. These take many forms and work to differentially advantage and disadvantage persons across social identities such as race, ethnicity, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, faith and socioeconomic status, among other examples.

Queen's is committed to counteracting discrimination in this institution and developing a climate of educational equity that recognizes and respects the equal dignity and worth of all who seek to participate in the life, work and mission of the University. Such a climate is created and maintained by developing a university-wide commitment to and understanding of educational equity, supported by policies, programs, curricula, practices and traditions that facilitate individuals' and equity-seeking groups' free, safe, and full participation.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES[i]

- Educational equity does not evolve in a vacuum. The external environment from which students, staff and faculty are drawn, the community that they will eventually serve, and the internal environment of the institution should all form part of the critical analysis used in developing a climate of educational equity.
- Administrative and academic procedures affect educational equity. The means of access, admission and retention of a wide diversity of students, methods of recruitment, evaluation, retention and promotion of diverse faculty and staff as well as other procedures should be addressed as part of educational equity.
- A university encourages educational equity when its members consider what, how, by whom and for whom teaching and learning occurs and in what environment.

IMPLEMENTATION

All units and members of the campus community are expected to contribute to the pursuit of educational equity within Queen's. However specific administrative bodies and individual leaders within the University have unique responsibilities and are accountable for specific aspects of educational equity.

Proposed draft for discussion by Senate, October 22, 2009

Under the direction of the Senate:

1. It is the responsibility of the Principal, with the support of the Deans and the Vice-Principals, to articulate and support educational equity principles and values as well as to build educational equity expectations into the criteria considered in formal internal academic review processes, in program assessments and annual reports of administrative units, or other regular system reviews as determined by specific units.

2. It is the responsibility of heads of academic and administrative departments to recognize unit-specific challenges, to identify unit-specific educational equity goals in consultation with their members and, where relevant, students, and to assess their progress comprehensively across all relevant domains. These may include the following five areas, identified in the Henry Report (2004)[ii]:

    i) Leadership and Institutional Culture
    ii) Access and Recruitment
    iii) Retention
    iv) Research and Curriculum
    v) Broader Learning and Working Environment (Climate)

3. It is the responsibility of individual departments and offices (both academic and administrative) to develop and implement policies and practices to achieve educational equity within their units based on this policy statement and guidance by the Senate Educational Equity Committee, which provides a yearly report to the Senate. Furthermore, heads are responsible for reporting regularly on these measures and assessing progress to their respective supervisors as well as to their unit members and, where relevant, students.

4. It is the responsibility of equity services and other relevant support units (e.g. Human Rights Office, Equity Office, Centre for Teaching and Learning) to coordinate education and training as specified in this policy in consultation with individual units. The Equity Office will continue to be responsible for collecting reports, circulating information, promoting awareness and monitoring progress of unit educational equity initiatives.

5.

6. The University enjoins the representative bodies for undergraduate, graduate and professional students to assume the responsibility to create equity-seeking policies and to report appropriately on their implementation.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Concerns regarding this policy and its implementation may be brought in writing to the attention of the Senate Educational Equity Committee, which reports to the University Senate. SEEC may request updates on equity and diversity developments, the implementation of educational equity policy, and the results of equity programs and initiatives at the university.

As a general policy, all members of the university community are responsible to foster a climate of educational equity. However, each administrative unit is responsible for the implementation of this policy in its sphere and is charged with developing measures to insure accountability for promoting educational equity and diversity and achieving meaningful progress. These may include, for example, reformT0c2.4108 EMC /eUnive3,felopmhov

APPENDIX I

PREAMBLE AND INSTITUTIONAL HISTORY

In the early 1990s, several reports and studies made recommendations concerning equity such as the *Access Study* (1993), the report of *Student Perceptions of Graduate Education at Queen's* (1993), and the report of the *Principal's Advisory Committee on Race Relations* (1991). These recommendations led to the establishment, in 1997, of the Senate Educational Equity Committee (SEEC) to assist the Queen's community in recognizing and addressing systemic barriers to educational equity.

Despite efforts of the Queen's community, however, no comprehensive policy dealing specifically with educational equity had been developed. The SEEC recognized that equity efforts at Queen's would continue to be fragmented without a comprehensive educational equity policy and strategy for its implementation drawing on appropriate resources and the commitment of institutional leadership. In 2001, in accordance with its mandate, the SEEC developed and the Senate approved a general policy statement addressing educational equity at Queen's. This document was intended to affirm the University's commitment to educational equity and to encourage all levels of the University to identify and address educational equity issues. Unfortunately, without clear implementable goals and lines of accountability, the document has not been helpful in influencing strategic and widespread advancement of educational equity goals at Queen's.

Since 2001 there have been pockets of progress as well as continuing challenges, some of which have been examined in additional studies and reports that provide consistent findings and recommendations that include the Henry Report (2004)[iv] and the Queen's Diversity, Anti-Racism, and Equity (DARE) Report (2009)[v] submitted to the Vice-Principal (Academic). In the context of some progress and renewed energy towards addressing educational equity at Queen's, the SEEC revised the Policy Statement for a renewed commitment from the Senate. In order to advance the collective effort to achieve a climate of educational equity, this revised policy will require endorsement and engagement as well from the senior administration, involvement from all levels of the University to develop and implement actionable procedures and practices, and the incorporation of accountability measures and their regular monitoring. To this end, SEEC has commissioned a research study for 2009-10 of best practices for implementing educational equity in Canadian institutions of higher education.

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APPENDIX II

DEFINITIONS, ANNOTATIONS and CONCEPTS[vi]

DEFINITIONS

Climate

This definition also includes persons whose functional limitations owing to their impairment have been accommodated in their current job or workplace.

Disabilities may include but are not limited to:
Physical, functional and/or mobility disability (e.g., arthritis, paraplegia, cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, spinal cord injuries, spina bifida); blindness or low vision; deafness and/or hardness of hearing; speech disabilities; chronic medical conditions (e.g. diabetes, chronic pain, HIV/AIDS, chronic fatigue syndrome, kidney disease, seizure disorders); developmental disabilities (e.g. Asperger syndrome, autism, fetal alcohol effect), learning disabilities (e.g. dyslexia); psychiatric disabilities or mental disorders (e.g. bipolar disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder)

Women

Although the status of women within the public sphere has improved over the last few years, women continue to be under-represented in some employment and educational fields.

Discrimination
Discrimination means any form of unequal treatment based on one of the following grounds, whether imposing extra burdens or denying benefits: age, creed/religion, gender identity, sexual preference, family status, marital status, disability (both physical and mental), race, ancestry, place of origin, ethnic origin, citizenship, colour, social condition or any analogous ground. It may be intentional or unintentional. It may involve direct actions that are discriminatory on their face, or it may involve rules, practices or procedures that appear neutral, but have the effect of disadvantaging certain groups of people based on the grounds named. Discrimination may take obvious forms, or it may occur in very subtle ways.

Diversity
Diversity in an institutional context refers to the condition of including and accounting for the academic, educational, and/or career development needs and realities of students, staff and faculty belonging to varying social identity groups.

Educational Equity
Equity in an educational institution is achieved when all members of our society have fair

Environment

Environment refers to the physical place as well as the surrounding social and cultural attitudes, standards and condi

full potential. Employment equity, in turn, is fundamental to fully achieving educational equity because it is central to the creation of a welcoming and supportive educational environment. Universities, therefore, have a key role to play as change agents in the achievement of equity in society.

Impact of Climate

The interaction of climate and other factors in the environment can influence how successful an institution will be at attracting and retaining a diverse community that reflects Canadian society, is engaged and feels valued. Because of their relative invisibility, the informal practices influencing climate can be pervasive enough to erode the capacity of certain individuals to participate fully in academic settings and to undermine the institutional programs designed to promote equity. Although such practices may not be intended as harmful, they are often the major contributors to the systematic disadvantage of equity seeking groups.

When policies and practices are created without accounting for the needs and realities of marginalized groups and when they are maintained through bias or prejudice, they contribute to undermine and isolate social groups. This devaluation and exclusion of certain individuals, whether or not formal and overt barriers to their advancement have been eliminated, forms the basis of discrimination. The cost of such discrimination is borne by those who are marginalized in this way and do not have the opportunity to reach their full potential, as well as by the educational institutions and society which do not get to benefit from the talents and capabilities of everyone.

Removing Barriers to Access

Access is the ability of an institution to create a barrier-free climate and environment; thus creating opportunities for the inclusion of the greatest diversity of students, staff, faculty and visitors to enter and participate in the teaching, learning, working and residential functions of the university. A barrier-free inclusive university commits itself to the removal of discrimination, harassment, and marginalization of all groups protected under the Human Rights Code, but in particular those equity seeking groups that have traditionally/ historically faced barriers and under-representation including Aboriginal peoples, racialized individuals, persons with disabilities, women, and gay/ lesbian/ bisexual/ trans identified persons.

Reaching and attracting members of marginalized and under-represented groups requires the presence of a university-wide commitment to inclusion. Some means by which to demonstrate this commitment are through a strategic plan, policy documents, action plans, course offerings, resources for accommodation, and responses to harassment and/or discrimination and specialized programming. Active search and recruitment strategies that make an effort to connect with equity seeking groups, would benefit from raising explicit awareness about existing resources and supports at Queen's, as well as highlighting the University commitment to a barrier-free climate and environment. Applying a broader lens to the evaluation of students, staff and faculty seeking access to Queen's so as to account for diversity of backgrounds and experiences of applicants

would also have the likely impact of diversifying the pool of individuals who access the university.

Improving Retention
Retention