

EQUITY COMPASS

The Equity Compass is a strategic framework outlining the focus for SFU's institutional equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) work over the next 5 years, 2023-2028. The Compass includes:

- The Purpose, Vision and Principles upholding the framework
- 5 Strategic Goals, 11 Objectives and a total of 34 Calls to Action for 2023-2028



PURPOSE

The purpose of the Equity Compass is to *provide direction for the realization of SFU's value of equity and belonging.*

VISION

At SFU, our equity work builds on our institutional commitment to advancing an inclusive and sustainable future. We therefore work towards an SFU that is a preferred research university known for practicing inclusive excellence and achieving equitable outcomes for members of its community.

PRINCIPLES⁷

We use the following principles to operationalize our work in the pursuit of both *equitable processes and outcomes*:

- 1. Truth and Reconciliation**
We center Indigenous knowledges into equity practices at the institution and respond to the calls to action in the SFU-ARC and Pathways reports.
- 2. Decolonization**
We integrate ways to unlearn and redress historical and current practices that have had deleterious effects on Indigenous Peoples and other people groups that have experienced colonization.
- 3. Trauma and Violence-Informed**
We recognize the correlation between past/historical violence and trauma on present psychological health, safety and wellbeing and will continually learn and embed practices that safeguard against further re-traumatization and/or violence.
- 4. Intersectional and Systemic**
We understand that individuals and groups with combinations of multiple identities protected under the British Columbia human rights code face compounded potential for systemic disadvantage and discrimination and consider that in our work.
- 5. Anti-Racist and Anti-Oppressive**
We critically examine institutional processes, systems, policies and structures to identify, decolonize and eliminate historical and enduring systems that perpetuate systemic racism and oppressions affecting groups identified in the British Columbia Human Rights Code.
- 6. Community Engagement and Dialogue**
We amplify SFU's successes as Canada's engaged university by ensuring we engage in dialogue with our First Nations Host Nations, local communities where our campuses reside, government, strategic partners and all connected to our post-secondary ecosystems to advance our equity goals and aspirations.
- 7. Critical and Developmental**
We collect and analyze evidence and data to critically evaluate outcomes, so we can make systemic changes where needed and otherwise develop new systems to achieved equity-centered outcomes.
- 8. Restorative and Transformative**
We understand that addressing systemic disadvantages is not enough. We need to transform systemic thinking and practices to create new equity-centered systems and structures.
- 9. Intercultural Competence and Cultural Humility**
We foster recognition of the knowledge and skills related to different cultures, experiences and social groups and maintain a focus on learning about and from all. We are courageous enough to learn and unlearn, work through conflict and apologize for our mistakes.
- 10. Safety and Care**
We create the conditions, through policies, practices and guidelines, that allow members of our community to feel cared for and confident that they will not be exposed to discrimination, bullying and harassment or hate and that they will be provided with clear avenues for reporting any incidents and be supported.

⁷ All principles as defined here in summary form are taken from existing reports such as *What's Next: The SFU Strategy*, the Pathways report glossaries and key references such as, but not limited to the following: Public Health Agency of Canada's 'trauma and violence-informed' definition, *Intersectionality: An Intellectual History Book* by AngeMarie Hancock (2016), *Emergent Strategy* by adrienne maree brown (2017), *Leading for Equity and Social Justice: Systemic Transformation in Canadian Education* Edited by Andréanne Gélinas-Proulx and Carolyn M. Shields (2022); Reynolds, M. (2014). Equity-focused developmental evaluation using critical systems thinking. *Evaluation*, 20(1), 75–95. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1356389013516054>



The following values as outlined in our *What's Next: The SFU Strategy* will guide how we approach our work on institutional equity priorities.

Values

ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND CRITICAL THINKING

We honour the autonomy of intellectual enquiry and explore ideas with academic rigour.

EXCELLENCE AND RESPONSIBILITY

We aspire to high standards and truth in information, accountable to one another and the public.

RESPECT AND RECIPROCITY

We build and sustain relationships with care and a desire for mutual growth.

EQUITY AND BELONGING

We create an inclusive, supportive and affirming community where all thrive.

ENGAGEMENT AND OPENNESS

We seek and include diverse perspectives and a wide circle of involvement.

RESILIENCE AND SUSTAINABILITY

We steward resources effectively, with the needs of present and future generations in mind.

INNOVATION AND ADAPTABILITY

We learn, unlearn and embrace uncertainty through discovery and failure.

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS 2023-2028

In Canada and the province of British Columbia, efforts toward equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) are informed by and exist within a constellation of legal frameworks that aim to protect people from discrimination, bullying and harassment and promote equity. These frameworks include federal, provincial, and territorial laws that outline specific rights and protections for individuals and groups and this Compass exists within the context of these frameworks. Some examples include:

- Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, s 7, Part 1 of the Constitution Act, 1982, being Schedule B to the Canada Act 1982 (UK), 1982, c 11
- Canadian Human Rights Act, RSC 1985, c H-6
- Criminal Code, RSC 1985, c C-46, s 319 (1)
- Employment Equity Act, SC 1995, c 44
- Employment Standards Act, RSBC 1996, c 113
- Human Rights Code, RSBC 1996, c 210
- Royal Commission on Aboriginal People's Final Report (1996)
- Multiculturalism Act, RSBC 1996, c 321
- Public Sector Employers Act, RSBC 1996, c 384
- University Act, RSBC 1996, c 468
- Occupational Health and Safety Regulation, BC Reg 296/1997
- The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007)
- The National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace (2013)

- The Truth and Reconciliation Commission Reports (2015)
- The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (2015)
- Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (2019)
- Workers Compensation Act, RSBC 2019, c 1
- The Recognition and Implementation of Indigenous Rights Framework (2019)
- The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (2019) and the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Action Plan 2022-2027
- Accessible British Columbia Act, SBC 2021, c 19
- Anti-Racism Data Act, SBC 2022, c 18

The Compass also needs to be operationalized in the context of all SFU Collective Agreements and will be responsive to any new legal and institutional frameworks that emerge during the implementation period.

Over the next five years (fiscal years), SFU community and constituents have asked for a focus on five equity goals, 11 objectives and a total of 34 calls to action. These goals, objectives and calls to action will guide our priorities and actions for the next five years. The Equity Office will report annually on our institutional progress and recognizes many of the goals, objectives and actions may continue to evolve and/or roll forward. Working towards an equity-centered future is a transformative change journey and we are calling on all SFU to put their hands on the compass wheel and work together to steer us collectively forward.

GOAL #1:

RESPECT, INCLUSION AND BELONGING CULTURE & STRUCTURES

The Inclusion and Belonging Culture theme within the Equity Compass framework (refer to Appendix 1) received the most comments at the roundtable discussions, with 37% of the analyzed written responses dedicated to it. Of those responses, 48% expressed positive feedback, 37% expressed neutral sentiments, and 15% expressed critical feedback. The theme of Respect and Belonging Structure received a similar distribution of sentiment with 47% positive feedback, 35% neutral feedback, and 18% critical feedback. However, this theme only accounted for 8% of all analyzed comments. Therefore, in this report, both the Inclusion and Belonging Culture theme and the Respect and Belonging Structure theme are combined.

Goal

All SFU community and constituents experience respectful engagement and have a strong sense of belonging.

“This problem cannot be solved at the institutional level alone; it will require an evolution of the attitudes of the community (evolutionary not imposed).”

Objectives

OBJECTIVE 1

Ensuring the effective implementation of processes to comply with EDI-related legislation and institutional commitments for other equity-deserving groups.

OBJECTIVE 2

Fostering a culture of inclusive excellence.

Actions

- 1 Create Respect and Personal Safety principles and a framework to implement SFU's respectful environment requirements.
- 2 Create a pan-university accessibility committee to meet compliance requirements and address recommendations in the Accessible British Columbia Act.
- 3 Develop an implementation plan to execute SFU's response to the Scarborough Charter on Anti-Black Racism and Black Inclusion in Canadian Higher Education to which SFU is a signatory and member.
- 1 Work with key partners across SFU to advance safety and respectful environment preventative education and awareness campaigns, including developing a student safety and respect policy navigator.
- 2 Collate resources in partnership with First Nations Host Nations and SFU Indigenous faculty, staff and students for cultural safety and humility in engaging with Indigenous community members.
- 3 Create resource toolkits, guidelines and funding structures to foster inclusive cultures through various strategies such as conversation circles, affinity groups/circles of inclusion, forums, seminars, keynote events, ethical cultural tours, and other types of inclusivity activities.
- 4 Advance initiatives to address 2S/LGBTQIA+ equity and inclusion structural gaps, including but not limited to changing record systems to support name change and adding gender-affirming benefits.

GOAL #2

ACCOUNTABILITY, LEADERSHIP, AND GOVERNANCE

The theme had the second highest number of analyzed comments during the roundtable discussions, accounting for 30% of all comments provided. Interestingly, while 25% of the comments were positive, 58% were neutral/raised questions, and 17% were critical. The feedback provided for this theme indicates the need for action.

Goal

We implement clear coordination of EDI-related work across the institution, with appropriate allocation of resources. Our accountability measures move us beyond a benevolence/goodwill/performative approach to equity.

“How will the university make bold changes to dismantling harmful systems and workplace/learning cultures?... I still think there is a question of how those actually doing the work will be supported. Most of us do this in addition to our full-time jobs and experience burn out and not enough support.”

Objectives

OBJECTIVE 1

Measuring, tracking, and reporting our progress on EDI goals via Equity Office reporting.

OBJECTIVE 2

Establishing clear leadership roles, responsibilities, and provide decentralized support to ensure institution-wide progress on EDI.

Actions

- 1 Identify baselines, generate benchmarks, and create indicators, targets, and metrics in service of EDI.
- 2 Develop a comprehensive toolkit to facilitate and standardize tracking, reviewing, and evaluating the university's performance on EDI recognizing that a range of methods from developmental evaluation to qualitative and quantitative assessment and even research studies may be used as appropriate.
- 3 Develop and publish an EDI progress report annually that highlights the organization's efforts and achievements in the area of EDI.
- 1 Support Executives to develop 5-year EDI objectives that simultaneously align with the Equity Compass and respond to their unique needs; support Deans, faculty administrators and Chairs and Academic Directors with their EDI action plans and/or initiatives as needed.
- 2 Integrate EDI-related criteria into leadership performance evaluations, SFU's performance and development program and SFU's core competencies framework.

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Objectives

Actions

OBJECTIVE 3

Embedding an equity lens into governance, policy and leadership at SFU.

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- 3 Develop a toolkit for academic departments and administrative units to assist in the implementation of the Equity Compass, including guidelines for appropriate time release and/or add pay considerations for those taking on equity work such as departmental equity committees.
 - 4 Coordinate and facilitate synergies across complementary institutional-level strategic plans and commitments, such as the SFU Pathways reports and Indigenous strategic plans, the Strategic Research Plan and the Sustainability and Climate Action Plan.
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- 1 Review existing institutional policies as they come forward for community consultation from an equity lens and make systemic equity-centered recommendations.
 - 2 Support the board of governors, senate, senior leadership and faculties and staff units with EDI advice as requested for consideration in all governance and administrative activities.
 - 3 Partner with Provost Office and Student Services to provide advice on student equity concerns and collaborate on solutions.

GOAL #3

EDUCATION AND CAPACITY-BUILDING

This theme received the third highest number of analyzed comments, accounting for 15.5% of all comments. The sentiments of the feedback were largely positive, at 55%. Thirty-six (36%) were neutral or raised questions, and only 9% raised concerns and considerations.

Goal

SFU community are provided with EDI education, capacity-building activities and access to resources so that EDI becomes an integral component of their learning, teaching, research and work. We are known as a Centre of Excellence for inclusive excellence research and education.

We need: “Educational opportunities for all of SFU and find the spaces and opportunities for those who wish to learn.”

Objectives

OBJECTIVE 1

Providing ongoing Inclusive Excellence training to all SFU leaders.

OBJECTIVE 2

Providing EDI learning and training that is responsive to the evolving needs of our community.

Actions

- 1 Create and pilot an Inclusive Excellence Leadership Development program (IELDP) for SFU's Executive Team, Senior Leadership Team, and Chairs and Academic Directors, specifically in relation to anti-racism, anti-oppression, equity, diversity, and inclusion.
 - 2 Collaborate on scaling out the RESPECT Indigenous education program to ensure cultural safety for all Indigenous Peoples.
 - 3 Develop concept, proposal and framework for a Centre for Inclusive Leadership Excellence.
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- 1 Develop and implement a cohesive EDI learning and training framework that is accessible, comprehensive, and addresses the diverse needs of the university community. This framework will collate resources and provide a range of learning pathways, from communications and awareness campaigns to foundational knowledge to deeper development to practical applications for integrating EDI lenses and practices into learning, teaching, research and work at SFU.
 - 2 Develop a comprehensive inventory of current SFU EDI initiatives, resources, and specialists or experts to ensure effective coordination, collaboration, information sharing and access to EDI supports.
 - 3 Support a community of practice of EDI leads/practitioners to develop their local area action plans and build their EDI knowledge and capacity.

GOAL #4

EMPLOYMENT AND PAY EQUITY

This theme accounts for 6% of all analyzed comments, with a split of about 54% positive and 46% neutral or critical comments.

Goal

We have equitable employment practices in place for all aspects of the employment relationship, including recruitment, hiring, succession-planning, promotion, performance management, retention and exit.

“ [We need] specific support ... to advance recruitment and promotion activities (policy and procedures in TPC criteria, job ads, search procedures) ”

Objectives

OBJECTIVE 1

Advancing Employment and Pay Equity commitments in partnership with Employee Groups and subject to Collective Agreements.

OBJECTIVE 2

Attracting and retaining employees from equity-deserving groups¹⁰.

Actions

- 1 Relaunch SFU's employment equity advisory committee and ensure comprehensive implementation of its Employment Equity Policy (GP 19).
 - 2 Review the staff and faculty employment life-cycle from an equity-lens, including periodic market benchmark and pay equity surveys in alignment with collective and basic agreements where applicable, to develop plans for improvement.
 - 3 Ensure SFU completes and maintains its certification as a Living Wage employer.
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- 1 Establish a BC Human Rights Commission-approved special program and internal guidance and training to facilitate preferential, limited, and/or targeted hiring to address the systemic and institutional underrepresentation of Indigenous and Black staff and faculty.
 - 2 Develop recruitment and retention programs and supports for underrepresented and equity-deserving groups based on promising practices internally and across the sector.
 - 3 Share data benchmarks and assist units to create target goals at all levels of the institutions to increase diversity where needed to reflect the communities we serve, especially in leadership positions and university governance structures.

¹⁰ This objective inherently assumes recruitment of equity-deserving faculty and staff based on designated groups in the Employment Equity Act who meet and exceed merit-based criteria for roles but are still underrepresented due to systemic barriers. Suggested reading 1) Employment Equity Act; 2) Henry F. James C. E. Li P. S. Kobayashi A. L. Smith M. S. Ramos H. & Enakshi D. (2017). The Equity Myth: Racialization and Indigeneity at Canadian Universities. UBC Press; 3) McDonald, A. (2021). ["The Racism of the 'Hard-to-Find' Qualified Black Candidate Trope"](#); and 4) Wang, Y. (2020). ["Researchers Seek to Improve Representation with Canadian Black Scientists Network"](#).

GOAL #5

EQUITY DATA

While this theme only accounted for 4% of the analyzed comments provided during the roundtable discussions, it has frequently been cited as a stumbling block to evidence-informed policy, decision-making and strategy development for EDI initiatives at SFU. It is possible that many constituents were already aware that the data taskforce was operational and so considered this theme as already in-progress, thus already spoken-for. SFU recognizes the significant importance of equity data and will continue this critical work as follows.

Goal

SFU regularly collects data to support equitable and accountable decision-making; and measure progress toward fulfilling institutional commitments to EDI.

“Starting to look at data - this is a great start... SFU not collecting data - how do we address things like diversity without knowing what this looks like @ SFU.”

Objectives

OBJECTIVE 1

Establishing an equity data taskforce.

- 1 Establish an ongoing Equity Data Taskforce with individuals in functional roles relevant to data collection, analysis, and reporting.
- 2 Develop a Terms of Reference for the working group, including a clear purpose and roles and responsibilities and ensure all compliance considerations such as those outlined in the British Columbia Anti-Racism Data Act for post-secondary institutions are integrated.

OBJECTIVE 2

Developing a data equity framework.

- 1 Establish clear and ethical (do no harm)¹¹ data governance procedures, protocols, and guidelines for collecting, storing, accessing, analyzing, safe-guarding, reporting, and communicating on EDI data (e.g., demographic, representation, and campus climate data). Establish protocols to ensure data sovereignty and sharing between SFU and Indigenous Peoples and groups.
- 2 Launch equity surveys: a) job applicant self-identification/declaration survey, b) faculty and staff equity census, c) student diversity census, and d) campus climate survey.
- 3 Develop and implement a strategy to ethically and seamlessly integrate demographic data into relevant administrative and human resource data sets, in order to identify patterns, trends, and potential solutions to equity and inclusion issues¹²; support SFU constituents with the skills to access, interpret, and use data to create, sustain, and advance EDI efforts.

¹¹ British Columbia Human Rights Commissioner (2021). Disaggregated data: Summary of recommendations to prevent harm to communities. Accessed February 13, 2023 from: <https://bchumanrights.ca/publications/datacollection-harm/>

¹² e.g., financial, procurement, enrollment, degree completion, recruitment, service, compensation, and turnover data