TERMS OF REFERENCE

Standing Committee on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
Department of Bioresource Engineering

Equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) are inseparable from excellence in the modern university. McGill University's Strategic Plan for 2020-2025[1] highlights the manifold benefits of EDI in the academy; stronger students, stronger research, and stronger, more sustainable communities. The plan defines Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion as:

Equity: Equity, unlike the notion of equality, is not about sameness of treatment. It denotes fairness and justice in process and in results. Equitable outcomes often require differential treatment and resource redistribution to achieve a level playing field among all individuals and communities. This requires recognizing and addressing barriers to opportunities for all to thrive in our University environment.

Diversity: Diversity describes the presence of difference within any collection of people. In discussions of social equity, diversity addresses differences in social group membership related, for example, to race, Indigenous identity, class, gender identity or expression, sexuality, disability, ethnicity, and religion. Discussions about diversity linked to access and equity require knowledge and understanding of historical and contemporary experiences of oppression and exclusion.

Inclusion: Inclusion refers to the notion of belonging, feeling welcome and valued, having a sense of citizenship. It also speaks to a capacity to engage and succeed in a given institution, program, or setting. Inclusion calls for recognizing, reducing, and removing barriers to participation created by social disadvantage or oppression, and can result in the reimagination of an institution, program, or setting

As the University's plan states, "EDI are more than rhetoric; they are central to McGill's academic mission and vision." By extension, EDI is also core to the goals and continued success of the Department of Bioresource Engineering.

1. Mandate

The Standing Committee on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion will develop an EDI vision and strategy in touch with needs of modern engineering pedagogy and sensitive to historic inequities in the field of engineering broadly and bioresource engineering specifically. We will translate this vision into an EDI Plan in accordance with the McGill EDI strategy, that will provide actionable steps to improve in EDI in the Department's day-to-day operations. To make this a reality, the committee will provide a forum for consultation, dissemination, feedback, and discussion on matters of EDI in the Department. The committee strives to incorporate best practices in EDI into Departmental teaching, research, administration, and outreach, serving as an example for cognate departments and schools at McGill and other institutions.

It should be noted that the committee does not handle specific cases of discrimination or other grievances related to EDI in the Department. Staff, students, or faculty with such cases are encouraged to use the university's system for reporting harassment, discrimination, and sexual violence: https://www.mcgill.ca/how-to-report/

2. Goals & Objectives

The goals and objectives of the committee are:

- Develop an ongoing EDI plan for the Department and monitor progress towards stated goals of said plan;

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[1] https://www.mcgill.ca/equity/files/equity/mcgill_strategic_edi_plan_2020-20251.pdf

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- Foster a greater understanding and awareness of EDI to staff and students in the Department through the organization of training, events, dissemination of relevant information, and by sharing best practices from other institutions and engineering professional organizations (licensing bodies, academic societies, etc.);
- Build and maintain a Departmental website for the EDI committee;
- Provide consultation as requested in Departmental hiring and student recruitment;
- Work with internal and external partners to find ways to incorporate EDI into the BREE curriculum;
- Serve as a liaison between BREE staff, students, and faculty, and central EDI resources provided by the university and interfacing with the Faculty level committee focusing on EDI (Faculty planning committee).

3. Guiding Principles

The committee will:

- Reflect the diversity of the equity seeking groups in the Department;
- Develop and promote a vision of inclusion based on the Department's EDI Plan;
- Be committed to operating with effective, respectful and inclusive communication;
- Promote and operate through a consensus decision–making process;
- Be responsive to the changing EDI needs of the Department and society writ large.

4. Committee Composition

Membership will be comprised of:

- Leadership in the form of a Chair or co-Chairs (tenured professors or indefinite term ranked CAS);
- Faculty representatives (tenured professors or indefinite term ranked CAS);
- Representatives of the administrative staff;
- Representatives of postdoctoral fellows and research staff;
- Representatives of BREE graduate students;
- Representatives of BREE undergraduate students.

The committee will promote diversity in its composition so as to ensure involvement from members of groups that have historically underrepresented in the field of engineering in Canada.

5. Terms of Appointment

Members shall be appointed for one (1) year. They may be re-appointed upon application for a total of three (3) consecutive terms. Leadership shall be elected by the members for a one (1) year term.

6. Meeting Frequency

The committee will meet at least two (2) times per year or as needed.

7. Duties and Conduct

Members shall reflect a courteous and professional manner when interacting with each other, students, faculty, and academic support staff. Specific duties include:

a. Leadership

Co-Chairs are expected to:

- Preside over committee meetings and ensure smooth functioning of the meetings;

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- Prepare agendas for the meetings in consultation with other committee members;
- Schedule and organize meetings in consultation with other committee members;
- Manage and update the EDI website with support from other committee members;
- Draft EDI Plan and progress reports with support from other committee members;
- Liaise with central EDI staff as needed;
- Sit on the Faculty planning sub-committee on EDI.

b. Committee Members

Committee members are expected to:

- Attend and actively participate in all EDI meetings;
- Attend events and initiatives organized by the EDI committee, depending on availabilty;
- Contribute time, knowledge, skill, and expertise to the fulfilment of the Committee's responsibilities;
- Undertake the work necessary to help fulfil the goals of the Department's EDI plan;
- Communicate important information to and liaise with members of their respective communities (e.g. undergraduate students, graduate students, etc.).

8. Qurom

In accordance with general operating procedures of a Departmental committee.

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