Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

Terms of Reference

Written by the Integrated Program in Neuroscience (IPN)

December 2020

I.   Definitions

Key terms that are consistently used throughout this document are defined as follow:

"IPN" means the Integrated Program in Neuroscience at McGill University;

"University" means McGill University in Montreal, Quebec;

"EDI" means Equity, Diversity and Inclusion;

"Committees" means either one or all three of IPN's EDI committees: Systems Committee, Knowledge Committee, and Empowerment Committee;

"Members" means the members of the IPN EDI committees;

"Leader" or "leadership" means the IPN Director or the IPN directorship, respectively;

"Equity*" is defined by the University as follows: 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*" is defined by the University as follows: 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. Diversity should be understood as uniting rather than dividing. The term calls upon us to appreciate both the differences and interconnectedness, and to recognize and respond to systemic and institutionalized discrimination.

"Inclusion*" is defined by the University as follows: 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.

*These definitions are currently adopted by the University and are stated in its [Strategic Plan 2020-2025](). The University recognizes that these definitions may vary amongst communities and can evolve over time, and are thus, fluid.

II.   <u>Introduction</u>

With approximately 500 M.Sc. and Ph.D. students and more than 230 supervisors, the IPN is the largest interfaculty graduate program and one of the largest neuroscience graduate programs in North America. Neuroscience training within the IPN spans the full spectrum of research fields, from cellular and molecular neuroscience to behavioural and cognitive neuroscience.

It is evident that IPN's academic excellence and reputation are amplified by the diverse experiences, abilities, and identities of its students, supervisors, and staff. In order to maintain its high-calibre status, the IPN recognizes that it is critical, now more than ever, to continue nurturing and implementing EDI principles and practices in its operational, academic, and research structures.

Moving forward, the IPN is pleased to present its EDI mandate as follows:

- To research, analyze, and revise its existing policies and processes to reflect fundamental EDI principles;

- To promote awareness, educate, and transfer knowledge to its internal and external stakeholders, including its students, supervisors and staff, about EDI principles and best practices;

- To research, organize, and implement programs and projects to highlight and empower the spirit of EDI within and external to the IPN and the University.

In order to dutifully and effectively carry out its EDI mandate, the IPN is establishing three specific EDI committees:

- IPN EDI Systems Committee

- IPN EDI Knowledge Committee

- IPN EDI Empowerment Committee

The purposes of each of these committees are explained in the following section (*Section III*).

III. Committees & Purposes

IPN EDI Systems Committee

The purpose of the IPN EDI Systems Committee is strategic; this committee will study how the IPN works - from recruitment to student progress to graduation - and will provide evidence-based policy suggestions to the IPN leadership. The leadership will then use the committee's recommendations to make informed, evidence-based, systems-based policy decisions that will robustly advance EDI principles and the objectives listed in its mandate.

IPN EDI Knowledge Committee

The purpose of the IPN EDI Knowledge Committee is to define and implement learner-focused, self-regulation-based education programs for IPN's internal and external stakeholders, including its students, supervisors, staff, and affiliate members (e.g., post-doctoral fellows in IPN labs). As a result, members within the IPN community will be informed about and educated, and will grow to understand EDI principles, their violations, and the paths to restitution.

IPN EDI Empowerment Committee

The purpose of the IPN EDI Empowerment Committee is projects-oriented; the committee will research and organize transformative programs and projects to highlight EDI principles within the IPN. These activities will be run by the committee members, with the help of IPN students, supervisors and staff, to empower minority members within the IPN and to enhance the recruitment of minority members outside of the IPN, so that the IPN demonstrably represents the principles of EDI.

In brief, while the IPN is designing three specific purpose-driven EDI committees, it is the collaborative efforts and interconnectedness of these three committees that will contribute to the successful becoming of IPN's EDI mandate.

IV. **Membership**

Each of the three committees will consist of 10 members:

- 1 Equity Advisor from the University's Equity Office
- 2 IPN supervisors
- 2 IPN M.Sc. students
- 2 IPN Ph.D. students
- 1 IPN staff member
- 1 Affiliate member in IPN labs (may include post-doctoral fellows, research assistants, research technicians, lab managers)
- 1 IPN alum (must have graduated within the last 3 years)

Recruitment of Committee Members

The IPN leadership will distribute an open call for committee members to its supervisors, students, staff, and recent graduates. The leadership will encourage IPN supervisors to inform their lab members (post-doctoral fellows, research assistants, research technicians, lab managers) of the opportunity. The leadership will also reach out to the University's Equity Office to recruit an Equity Advisor.

Applications will be processed and reviewed by the IPN leadership. Successful applicants will demonstrate diversity in their skills and expertise (e.g., policy advising, consultation, social entrepreneurship), their lived experiences, their passions and interests, and their identities (e.g., visible or non-visible minorities).

In brief, each of the three committees will feature an equal, inclusive, and diverse representation of expertise, experiences, and identities.

Recognition and Remuneration

The IPN recognizes that being an EDI committee member requires the investment of one's time and effort, and mental and emotional agility. Therefore, the IPN is committed to ensuring that its EDI committee members are wholly recognized and remunerated for their participation, efforts, and collaborations.

Committee members will be credited for their participation and to ensure there are no barriers to participation, they may be remunerated.

Committees will be recognized on IPN's communications platforms (website, social media, weekly e-newsletter) and at its events (Retreat, Town Halls). Additionally, depending on budget availability, the IPN will secure provisions for the committees' in-person meetings.

Term of Office

Committee members will serve for 1 year, renewable.

V.   Roles and Responsibilities

Each committee will have a Chair and a Secretary.

Committee members may self-nominate for these positions; they will be elected via a 2/3 supermajority vote cast by their own committee members, and will be approved and appointed by the IPN leader.

The Chair is responsible for the following:
- Ensuring that the committee's core purpose and objectives are constantly being worked on, thereby continuously contributing to the fulfilment of IPN's EDI mandate;
- Regularly reporting to the IPN leader with updates on the committee's work and progress, and relaying recommendations and suggestions;
- Scheduling regular meetings with its members, and if applicable, additional meetings with other IPN EDI committee(s);
- Sending meeting invitations to its members and the IPN leadership;
- Creating meeting agendas and distributing them to the members at least 1 day before scheduled meetings;
- Granting its members access to all meeting minutes, working documents, resources, member directory, and other relevant documents;
- Distributing meeting minutes and relevant documents to the IPN leader;
- Overseeing meetings by ensuring they are conducted according to Robert's Rules of Orders and that decisions are made according to either a majority vote or a supermajority vote (please refer to *Section VII*).

The Secretary is responsible for the following:
- Recording members' attendance at each meeting;
- Recording minutes at each meeting (including discussions, votes, and decisions);
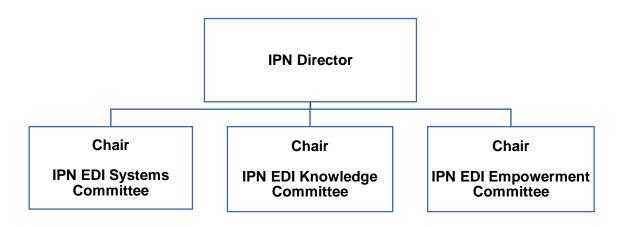
- Reviewing, finalizing and distributing the minutes to all members within 3 days;
- Providing support to the Chair when needed (scheduling meetings, distributing meeting agendas).

In brief, the Chair and the Secretary are responsible for simply ensuring that logistical processes, such as committee meetings, proceed in an efficient manner.

VI. **Accountability and Reporting Structures**

Each of the three IPN EDI committees is responsible for reporting to the IPN Director. More specifically, the Chair of each committee must directly provide the IPN Director and Associate Director with regular updates on their work, progress, and members, along with recommendations and suggestions. The Chairs must also grant the IPN Director access to all its meeting minutes and relevant working documents.

The following organizational chart succinctly illustrates the reporting structure of the three IPN EDI committees:

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                        │    IPN Director     │
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┌─────────┴─────────┐   ┌──────────┴──────────┐   ┌──────────┴──────────┐
│      Chair        │   │       Chair         │   │       Chair         │
│                   │   │                     │   │                     │
│ IPN EDI Systems   │   │ IPN EDI Knowledge   │   │ IPN EDI Empowerment │
│   Committee       │   │    Committee        │   │     Committee       │
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VII.   **Processes**

Committee Meetings

Each committee and its members must meet on a regular basis, at least once every month. These meetings are referred to as 'intra-committee meetings.'

Committees may also host additional meetings with other IPN EDI committee(s) to discuss their work and further collaborate to pursue their goals. These meetings are referred to as 'inter-committee meetings.'

The Chair of each committee is responsible for scheduling regular meetings with its members, and if applicable, additional meetings with other IPN EDI committee(s).

All committee members must attend all scheduled meetings. In the event that this is not possible, the Chair must at least ensure that there is quorum at each scheduled meeting; this entails the Chair confirming that at least 2/3 of its membership will be present at each of its scheduled meetings. Meetings will not be conducted if there is no quorum.

The Chair is responsible for creating meeting agendas and distributing them to its members at least 1 day before scheduled meetings.

Meetings may be conducted via web conferencing platforms.

Meetings must be conducted according to [Robert's Rules of Order](#).

The Secretary of each committee is responsible for recording members' attendance at each meeting. The Secretary must also record the minutes at each meeting (including discussions, votes, and decisions), and must distribute them to their committee members within 3 days.

The Chair must ensure that all its committee members have access to all meeting minutes, working documents, resources, member directory, and other relevant documents.

Voting and Decision-Making

It is expected that a large component of committee meetings will be allocated towards decision-making. In order to warrant order and fairness during meetings,

committees must make decisions according to the following two-fold decision-making mechanism:

- Basic motions and decisions require a majority vote (i.e., 50% +1 of membership consent)

- Motions and decisions related to and involving systems, policies, processes, and significant executive changes require a 2/3 vote (i.e., supermajority vote)

Voting members include the IPN supervisors, IPN M.Sc. students, IPN Ph.D. students, and the IPN staff members.

Corresponding members (i.e., those who do not vote, but will collaborate and contribute to the committee's purpose) include the Equity Advisors, affiliate members in IPN labs, and IPN alum.

Votes can only be cast by the committee's voting members. In the case of a tie, the Chair can make a casting vote so that a final decision is made

VIII.   <u>Resources</u>

The fruition of the IPN EDI mandate is heavily dependent on the collective potential, efforts, and directions of the three IPN EDI committees. As such, the IPN is determined to provide its EDI committees and their members with basic training, support, and resources, so that they are fully equipped to carry out their strategic plans and initiatives.

Basic training and support will center around training on Robert's Rules of Order, effective communication, and social entrepreneurship. The IPN will help the committees liaise with relevant units within the University, including Teaching & Learning Services (TLS), the Equity Office, First Peoples' House, and Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD), to build University-wide relations and collaborations.

In terms of resources, the IPN leadership will allocate a specific budget for its EDI committees in order to further aid them in fulfilling their purposes, and ultimately, the IPN EDI mandate.

IX. Final Provisions

Confidentiality

Committee members have the due diligence of ensuring confidentiality of all their deliberations. They should not discuss the details of their committee meetings and proceedings with non-committee members, with the exception of the IPN leadership.

Grievance Procedure

The IPN strongly and unwaveringly believes that the success of its three EDI committees will stem from mutual trust, respect, and fair treatment amongst its members. Therefore, every committee member has the right to contact the IPN leadership in the event that they believe they or their fellow committee member(s) are treated unfairly, disrespected, threatened, or violated. Such issues and concerns must be addressed immediately to the IPN leadership, who will then ensure proper resolution.

X. Review of Terms of Reference

The IPN EDI Terms of Reference may be reviewed every 1 year.

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