Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

Why?

It is important that everyone feel welcome and included at events for them to be socially sustainable. Putting conscious effort into including voices of diverse populations into your events' content by including speakers, themes, and topics that represent McGill's many communities is a critical way to promote inclusivity at your event.

What?

McGill Sustainable Events recognizes the definitions for equity, diversity, and inclusion put forward by the McGill University Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Strategic Plan 2020-2025 developed by the equity team in the Office of the Provost & Vice-Principal (Academic) (page 3, emphasis ours):

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.

Diversity should be understood as uniting rather than dividing. ***The term calls upon us to appreciate both differences and interconnectedness, and to recognize and respond to systemic and institutionalized discrimination.***

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.***

How?

Consider the diversity of your team and seek out training

- Look for opportunities to embed diversity in your event's organizing team. If your team represents a narrow spectrum of voices on campus, consider bringing on consultants who may represent other perspectives and lived experiences.
- Compile resources around addressing unconscious bias, understanding diversity and inclusion, and eliminating barriers to participation. Use the information to inform your organizing team and any speakers or facilitators about how to create safe spaces at your event for diverse communities.
- Make equity training a mandatory part for participation on your event's organizing team.

Reflect on the topic of your event

- Consider who may be most affected by the event topic and why. Invite speakers, hosts, and panelists that may help remove barriers to certain groups of participants and address these inequalities in the content of your event where applicable.

Be inclusive in your event promotion

- Invite participants that represent different nationalities, races, Indigenous identities, gender identities or expressions, religious affiliations, and ages. You can also consider the diversity of your event by inviting members of different faculties, departments, clubs, and other social groups that exist on campus.
- The choices made in the design of marketing materials for an event may attract a narrow or diverse range of interest from participants. Be thoughtful about how the language and imagery used for your event promotions may be received by different members of the McGill community.

Pay attention to language

- Remember that systemic and institutionalized exclusion leads to underlying assumptions in the language we use. For example, avoid gender binaries by encouraging participants to share their preferred pronouns.
- Setting community ground rules at the start of your event helps promote mutual respect and identity-affirming interactions for all participants.