The Office of Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

6-Month Progress Report

April 2022

Western
Equity, Diversity
& Inclusion

Acknowledgements

The Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion would like to thank the following:

- Office of the President
- Western Research
- Western Communications
- Provost team
- Western's faculties
- Human Resources
- Office of Indigenous Initiatives
- EDID Central Working Group
- University Advancement
- Western Affiliates (Huron University College, Brescia University College and King's University College)
- London community

Contents

Western Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

Introduction

The vision of the Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) is to create a community that instructs, directs, formalizes and implements four broad EDI commitments as outlined in Western's strategic plan, *Towards Western at 150*, and reflects the core values of equity, diversity, inclusion, excellence, innovation and citizenship.

This report is an update detailing the actions and plans in progress to address the six recommendations from the President's Anti-Racism Working Group (ARWG) Final Report.

Western's equity, diversity, inclusion and decolonization (EDID) approach aims to counter racism, discrimination and ableism in all its forms with the ultimate goal of creating a campus where all community members can learn, work, contribute, thrive and feel safe to participate in university life fully.

Beyond the recommendations referenced in the ARWG Final Report, it should be noted that there are numerous other initiatives underway at Western that also support EDI initiatives and the elimination of discrimination in our community.

Among these initiatives are commitments to EDID enshrined in Towards Western at 150 are to:

- Unite our community through a sense of belonging for all students, faculty, staff and alumni.
- Address structural and systemic barriers in support of a more inclusive environment.
- Continue our commitment to increasing Indigenous voices and presence across all levels of work, study and research.
- Create new bursaries for students from equity-deserving groups.
- Craft pathways with local and regional school boards and other community organizations to increase our opportunities to recruit students from equity-deserving groups.
- Strengthen the diversity of our Canada research chairs.
- Create learning opportunities for faculty and staff on important equity, diversity and inclusion practices.

In addition, the Office of EDI continues to engage diverse Western communities to understand the challenges and barriers the community faces.
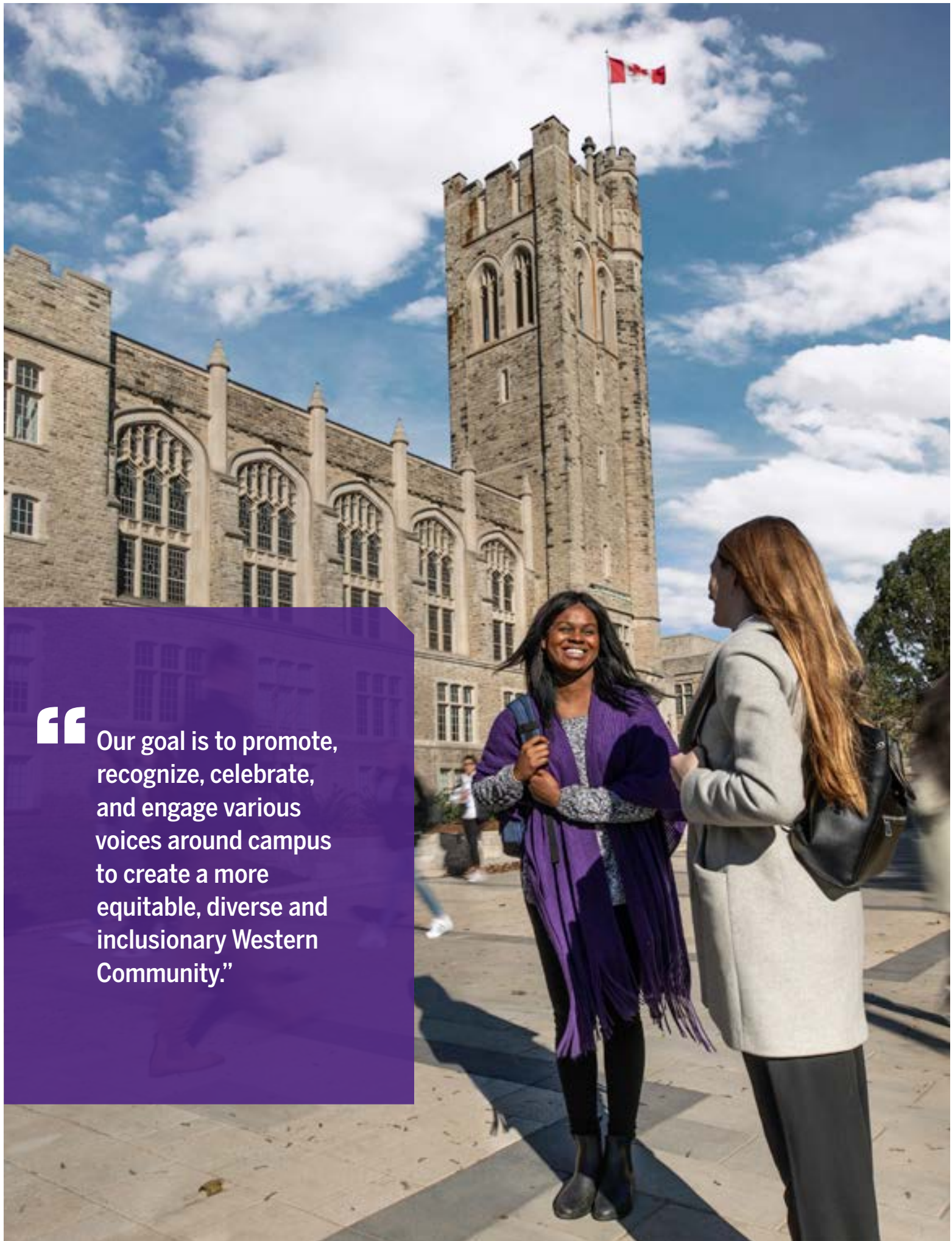
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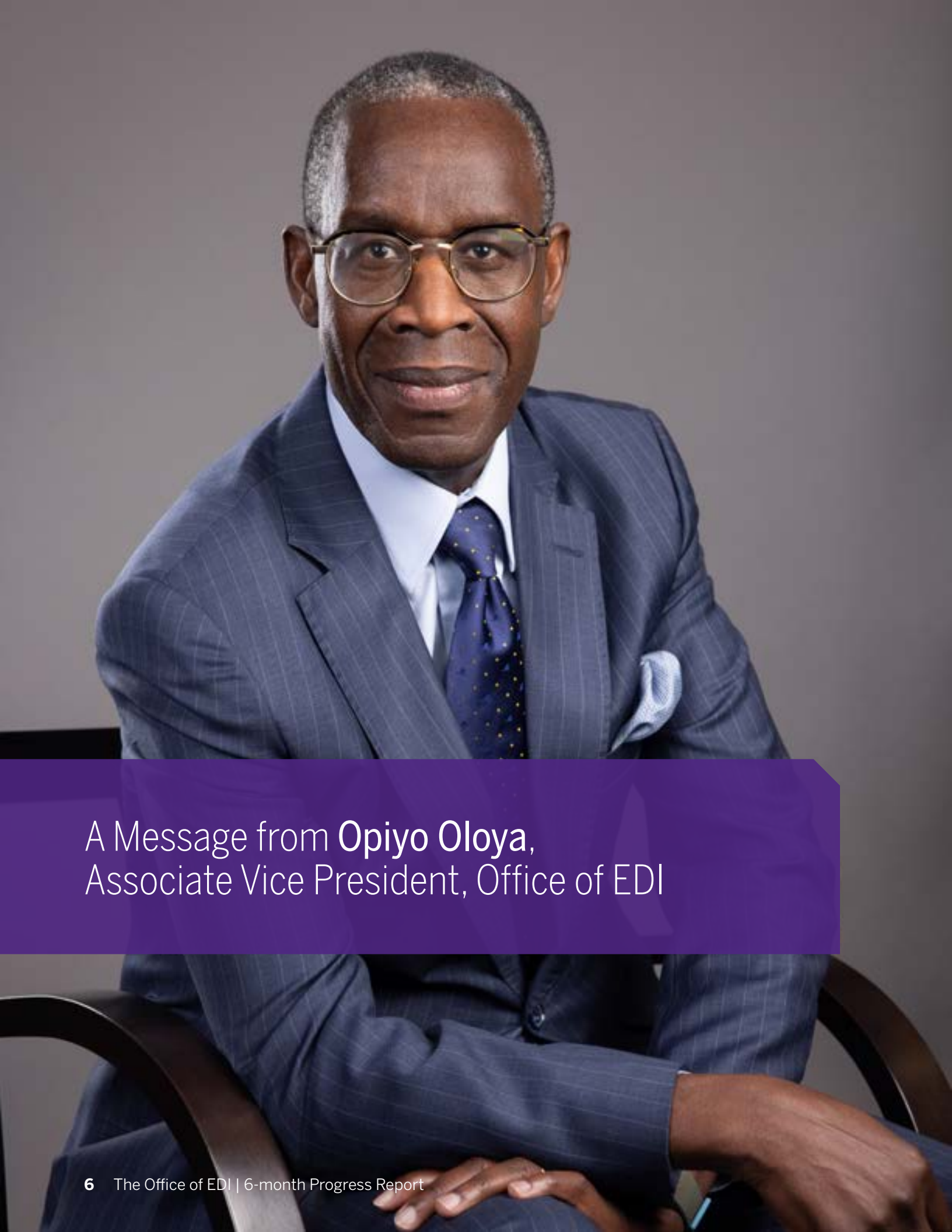
A Message from **Opiyo Oloya**,
Associate Vice President, Office of EDI

On behalf of Western University, I would like to welcome you to the Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. My role as the Associate Vice President of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion is to create a culture of being open to others. The best way forward, in my lived experience and knowledge, is to listen and see the common meeting place where we will achieve our goals together. It's to respect, and to build relationships.

This office's creation comes from the recommendations of the final report of the Anti-Racism Working Group (ARWG) which were accepted by Western in 2020.

Based on these recommendations, Western and this office are focused on working towards social justice, sustainability and combating structural inequities in society and in university education.

Our priority is to create a strategic plan that instructs, directs, formalizes and implements four broad EDI commitments that are outlined in *Towards Western at 150*. Through engaging both the Western community, and beyond, I believe this office and Western can create a safe, secure and open space for a multitude of diverse voices on Western University's campus and become a leader in EDI work in Canada.

I'm really happy to a part Western University and to use my skills and lived experience to bring people together as part of a really strong team working towards the common goal of EDI.

Best regards and blessings,

OO

Office of EDI Team

Meet the staff at the Office of EDI:

Lesley Oliver
EDI Specialist

Ana Boller
Digital Learning Specialist

Aarti Vyas
Project Coordinator

Andreen Jackson-Ellis
Administrative Coordinator

Maharus Noorani
Communications Specialist

Implementing EDI Strategic Priorities

A priority of the Office of EDI is to create a strategic plan that instructs, directs, formalizes and implements four broad EDI commitments outlined in Towards Western at 150.

1 CREATING A WELCOMING AND INCLUSIVE SPACE

We want to make Western a space that welcomes all voices and identities.

2 INCREASE DIVERSITY AND EQUITY IN WESTERN'S WORKFORCE AND STUDENT POPULATION

Introducing culturally safe, ethical and transparent data-collection systems to allow the University to track and respond to trends related to EDI.

3 INVEST TO COMBAT RACISM AND ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION

Hire more support services to help faculty integrate anti-racist content and pedagogies and implement universal design for learning best practices.

4 ENGAGE DIVERSE WESTERN COMMUNITIES

Creating and strengthening relationships within Western and surrounding community.

1 Creating a Welcoming and Inclusive Space

The main goal is to create an anti-racism strategic action plan that formalizes institutional commitments to making Western a safer, more respectful, more inclusive place to live, work and study.

Engaged Western leadership in a conversation toward achieving EDI goals.

Through working with various faculties, departments and organizations, our office is moving towards creating a Western EDI Strategic plan that will guide various topics involving EDI such as recruitment, scholarship, training and education.

Created a strong partnership with the Office of Indigenous Initiatives (OII).

The Office of EDI AVP and OII VP/AVP have co-chaired the EDI-D Central Working Group to share knowledge and wise practices across Western's faculties, administrative units and student organizations to promote equity, anti-racism and accountability towards decolonization and Indigenization at the University.

Created meaningful and working relationships with student groups and Western communities.

We have established many relationships within our Western and London community to engage in meaningful discussions and initiatives to focus on lived experiences through communication and collaboration.

Utilized and sought regular feedback from members of the eight-member EDI Advisory Council.

Accomplishments

The Office of EDI is currently working on a strategic plan to guide the EDID work at Western.

The Office of EDI has sent out a request for proposal (RFP) to various experts to help guide the development of the EDI strategic plan at Western.

Next Steps: Once an RFP has been approved, we will begin the process of scheduling consultations and engagements with various communities to begin understanding the strategic commitments we must focus on related to EDID.

Hiring for a new Director, Knowledge Mobilization and EDID position and continued search for a Manager of EDID in Research.

These positions will work collaboratively with multiple groups across campus – including the Office of Human Research Ethics, the Health Science Research Ethics Board and the Non-Medical Research Ethics Board, the EDI Advisory Council, Black Alumni at Western , the UWO Faculty Association, Office of Indigenous Initiatives – to develop a framework for identifying organizations that promote hate and racist ideologies.

Once the position of Director, Knowledge, Mobilization and EDID has been filled, the search for Manager of EDID in Research will proceed.

Next Steps: Our office wants to consult more in discussions related to hiring of EDID specific positions within the faculties, departments, and associations at Western. This would include the hiring of Western special constables.

Signing the Scarborough Charter to help foster Black Excellence in Education

With the support of EDI Office, Western signed the Scarborough Charter fostering Black Excellence in education. On November 18, 2021, 46 universities and colleges across Canada signed the charter pledging to fight anti-Black racism and to promote Black inclusion. It signified a historic move from discussions that began in October 2020 at the National Dialogues and Action for Inclusive Higher Education and Communities, to concrete action in addressing anti-Black racism and promoting Black inclusion. Created with input and collaboration from students, faculty, staff, relevant organizations and Black political leaders, the Scarborough Charter serves as a recognition of the realities of anti-Black racism and provides a concrete framework toward a more inclusive future.

Next Steps: Our goal is to uphold the charter's mandates towards educating on anti-Black racism through modules, workshops and academics and promoting Black inclusion in scholarship, recruitment, retention and data collection.

EDID Central Working Group

The EDID Central Working Group has been formed to provide advice to the AVP-EDI and VP/AVP-OII and share knowledge and wise practices across Western's faculties, administrative units and student organizations to promote equity, anti-racism and accountability. At the same time, the EDI Office established a respectful working relationship with OII and Dr. Christy Brissette.

The Working Group is responsible for:

- Creating opportunities to share information and EDID initiatives across the University.

- Reviewing anti-racism, anti-oppression, accessibility and EDID work in progress.

- Reviewing wise practices across campus as well as from other institutions.

- As needed, helping facilitate the engagement of others on campus, including subject matter experts, individuals with lived experience, etc.

- Managing or delegating management of working sub-groups, if needed.

- Making recommendations on implementing EDID and equity, diversity, inclusion and Indigeneity (EDII) initiatives more broadly across the University with a focus on actions/initiatives for achieving greater equity, diversity, accessibility and inclusion in the University's faculty, staff and student populations.

Next Steps: The Office of EDI and OII are working on building frameworks in understanding the roles and differences of EDID and Indigenization as well as collecting data on the initiatives and needs of Western leaders around campus.

Establish Meaningful Relationships in the Community

The Office of EDI has established and maintained a strong ongoing partnership and consultation with campus groups including Black Student Association (BSA), Muslim Student Association (MSA) and Western Hillel, PSAC, UWOFA, USC and UWOSA. Through coordination of these groups and various offices within Western, it helped in the creation of a multi-faith prayer center in Middlesex College. Moreover, we have strengthened community partnerships between Western and London's Black, Muslim and Indigenous communities.

Next Steps: We want to continue building, strengthening and collaborating with the community on all our initiatives.

2 Increase Diversity and Equity in Western's Workforce and Student Population

The main goal is to use institutional data collection, reporting and use of demographic/benchmarking data on faculty, staff and students to strategically support the recruitment and retention of more racialized students, faculty and staff.

Introduced a culturally safe, ethical and transparent data collection system to allow the University to track and respond to trends related to EDI.

Our office, in collaboration with Western Human Resources, has created a method to voluntary self-identify which is being implemented for new employee hires and applicants to Western.

Initiated EDID census survey for students, staff and faculty.

Beginning in October 2021, the university launched the Western Equity Census, the first comprehensive demographic survey for all staff, students and faculty, to help us to understand the demographics of the University and enhance the diversity and equity of our community.

Recruited actuarial and data experts to analyze the census data.

Our office and the EDI-D Data working group consulted with BIPOC Executive Search to analyze and write the census report.

Created and initiated voluntary collection of demographic information of job applicants to ensure equity-deserving applicants – Indigenous, Black, persons of color, racialized, women, LGBTQ2+ and persons with disabilities – are considered for employment.

Through the Western Cluster hiring initiative and Western Career Launch, the Office of EDI has focused on hiring from equity-deserving groups, mainly from Black and Indigenous communities.

Accomplishments

Accountability through voluntary self-identification

We are working with various faculties and Human Resources on a survey model that allows applicants to self-identify. This will provide much needed data and feedback on whether Western is reaching candidates from equity-deserving groups, and whether they are being hired.

Next Steps: Our goal is to normalize self-identification and use this data in a safe, responsible and ethical way to understand issues that equity deserving communities have when applying for jobs, scholarship grants and acceptance for studies at Western.

WESTERN
EQUITY CENSUS

Western's first comprehensive demographic survey for all staff, students and faculty was launched October 6, 2021.

It will help us understand the demographics of the university and enhance the diversity and equity of our community. This census was informed by the EDID-focused working group that developed the EDID Data Governance Policy.

Next Steps: The census report is scheduled to be released in May and we want to move towards continuing the census every year. We plan to do another report in the future to see how this data compares to the current findings.

Cluster hire initiatives

As part of Western's continuing commitment to supporting equity, diversity, inclusion and Indigenization, the Office of EDI and Western Human Resources have launched two cluster hires, supported through the Provost's Academic Renewal Fund, to support the recruitment of five Black and four Indigenous tenure track/tenured faculty members.

Next Steps: We want to create and promote more employment opportunities for equity-deserving groups, particularly for our Black and Indigenous candidates.

Western Career Launch

The Office of EDI and Western Human Resources have collaborated to create this pilot that will create new staff positions for new graduates – positions that come with full-time hours and competitive salaries and benefits, for twenty-two months beginning in June 2022. This program has resulted in several Indigenous and Black graduates being hired.

Next Steps: Our Office has hired two students through this initiative and will continue to push for recruitment from equity-deserving communities for employment at Western.

3 Invest to Combat Racism and all Forms of Discrimination

A priority for the Office of EDI is combatting racism and all forms of discrimination by supporting faculty in integrating anti-racist content and pedagogies into their teaching as well as supporting the implementation of Universal Design in Learning (UDL), and addressing concerns raised by students with disabilities.

Created easily accessible EDI website

The Office of EDI website officially launched in early 2022 to provide insight and information about Office of EDI's staff, initiatives and programming as well as provide resources to members of the Western community on supports available.

Collaborated with Centre for Teaching & Learning (CTL) to create resources for faculty.

We have established a working relationship with the CTL to develop training and workshops to support the faculties across campus. Additionally, our digital learning specialist, Dr. Ana Boller, is working closely with Aisha Haque, associate director at the CTL, to develop the EDI pathways initiative.

Created mandatory interactive/ experiential training for all faculty, staff and students.

Dr. Ana Boller has been working on creating a mandatory anti-racism module for the Western community which will be distributed in the upcoming fall semester.

Encouraged and invited diverse voices by creating and maintaining a database of presenters and speakers from the Black and racialized community, LGBTQ2+, persons with disabilities, Jewish and Muslim community leaders who are available to present, speak or consult on various EDID related topics, and made the database available to all faculties, schools and departments.

Our office has been successful in creating and maintaining relationships with many presenters and speakers from equity-deserving communities. We have created a database on speakers in consultation from Alidad Mafinezam, Ph.D., and the West Asia Council.

Introduced specific bursaries and scholarships for Indigenous and racialized students to make it more accessible for them to attend Western and to help ensure they do not experience financial hardship while they are attending.

Western has introduced 75 new entrance scholarships for Black and Indigenous students starting in the 2022 school year. Additionally, the office is also creating an opportunity for Black students to lead in the community called Western B.L.U.E.

Associate director Aisha Haque leads the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) in creating and delivering EDI Pathways Program initiative:

Accomplishments

This program will enhance instructors' skills across three domains of inclusive education foundational, pedagogical and curricular — to equip them with the knowledge, resources and confidence to implement programmatic change.

Next Steps:

- Annual EDI-focused workshop series for all instructors.
- EDI toolkit of discipline-specific course resources for all instructors.
- Redesign program.
- Two $5,000 course-level and two $20,000 program-level grants incentivizing inclusive curricular change and measure-associated outcomes on student learning.
- Contribution to scholarly literature on EDI through scholarship of teaching and learning projects to share Western's innovative approaches on a national scale.

Accessibility

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act Report:

In December 2021, the EDI Office successfully submitted Western's AODA report indicating our compliance with Ontario's accessibility laws. A review was conducted by the government of our accessibility policies, multi-year accessibility plans, annual status reports and training. It should be noted that the goal is not to meet the minimum standards as established under the AODA, but rather to create a fully accessible and inclusive campus for all.

Participation in the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) Implementation Committee:

In 2021, Student Experience engaged in a comprehensive review of the Accessible Education, Academic Support and Engagement, and the Learning Development & Success units. The purpose of these reviews was to promote continuous improvement and excellence in program delivery. The CAS establishes the practices for the review process and a report was issued along with several recommendations. An overview of the process, executive summary and recommendations can be read in detail at: www.studentexperience.uwo.ca/student_experience/external_reviews/ase-cas-review.html.

A representative from the Office of EDI participated in the Implementation Committee bi-weekly meetings along with campus stakeholders, including individuals with lived experience and students with disabilities. This committee reviewed and assessed all recommendations based on their impact, priority and complexity of implementation and a report was submitted in the spring of 2022 with a prioritized list of actions. We hope to have feedback to share with the community by the fall.

Proposed post-secondary education standards

Our office has received the Final Recommendations Report from the Government of Ontario outlining the priorities for the new educational standard. We will be reviewing the recommendations and barrier areas and creating an implementation committee with stakeholders, students and employees with disabilities.

Faculty of Art & Humanities and Faculty of Social Sciences have established a working committee to draft new program for multi-disciplinary major in Black Studies and a diploma certificate in decolonization.

The Office of EDI is leading and supporting various faculties in the creation of a major in Black Studies. Furthermore, the Faculty of Arts and Humanities is working with the Office of EDI to create a diploma certificate in decolonization.

The Black Studies major and minor are proposed to be housed in the Department of Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies (GSWS) within the Faculty of Arts and Humanities. The program will examine the rich histories and cultures of diasporic Black people, especially Black Canadians, and will equip students to understand complex issues related, but not limited to, climate change, globalization, gender inequality, poverty, technology, health, creativity, etc., through the principles and practices of a Black Studies discipline.

Additionally, a fellowship for eight Black graduate students is being established under the leadership of Office of EDI.

Next Steps: Western hopes to launch Black Studies major in the fall of 2023 and launch of diploma certificate & minor in Black Studies in the fall of 2022.

Create and develop equity, diversity and inclusive training modules to be shared across campus.

The Office of EDI has hired Dr. Ana Boller as its digital learning specialist to lead the creation of anti-racist mandatory training modules for fall implementation for senior administration, faculty, staff and students in the following areas: anti-semitism, islamophobia, anti-Black racism, homophobia/transphobia.

Additional online and in-person training modules and certificates are being developed to be offered to all members of the Western community to provide educational opportunities to advance equity, diversity and inclusion in the institution. The main goals of these learning experiences are:

- To empower Western community members with the skills and knowledge needed to implement inclusionary practices to increase their sense of belonging.
- To cultivate an environment where differences are appreciated and people are willing to do the work to remove systemic barriers.
- To maximize the opportunities for the implementation of anti-racist approaches at work in units and departments, and in the academic learning setting.

Next Steps: The mandatory module for anti-racism is scheduled to launch in the fall semester of 2022 while subsequent modules are due to follow. These modules will begin to be towards getting a certificate on anti-racism foundation.

Establishment of multi-level scholarships for incoming Black students starting in 2022-2023 academic year.

The establishment of a robust first-generation curriculum for Black students with resources and networks to support students through the university experience and beyond.

All recipients must maintain full-time status (3.5 credits) and an 80% average.

National scholarship

Awarded annually to an outstanding international or domestic secondary school student who self-identifies as Black and is entering first year at Western University (90% average).

Value: five at $20,000 in first year, $10,000 annually for second through fourth years, for a total value of $50,000 over four years.

Bursary

Available to full-time and part-time domestic students in any year of an undergraduate program on Western's main campus who are in financial need and self-identify as Black. No average requirement.

Value: Number and value will vary and decided by Office of the Registrar.

Continuing admission: Excellence & Distinction

Awarded to new full-time first-year domestic or international students applying for admission directly from secondary school (or equivalent), based on a competitive admission average as calculated by Western.

Value of Excellence: 30 at $6,000 for up to four years, plus $2,000 for optional study abroad experience.

Value of Distinction: 10 at $2,500 for up to four years, plus $2,000 for optional study abroad experience.

Western Black Leadership University Experience (B.L.U.E.)

This is an opportunity to encourage and support Black students who demonstrate an interest in leading community initiatives from concept and creation to implementation. Furthermore, this program will build and strengthen connections between Western and the surrounding London community empowering Black students to become ambassadors. The program's key objectives include:

- To demonstrate the passion, talent and knowledge of Black student leaders in the community and instill a spirit of community giving across campus.

- To help Black students develop transferable skills through work-integrated learning and community partnerships.

- Create income-earning opportunities for Black students.

- Develop a strong network of Black student leaders who can offer guidance and mentorship to future program participants.

4 Engage Diverse Western Communities

The goal is to bridge the schism created between Western and diverse communities by the scientific racism propagated under the guise of psychological research conducted by Philippe Rushton at The University of Western Ontario in the 1980s and 1990s. Opening communication with Black community is an urgent action.

- Open respectful dialogue with Black Alumni at Western (BAWA) about the way forward.
- Develop strong relationship and partnerships with larger London community, particularly the Black, Muslim, Jewish and Indigenous communities.

The Office of EDI provided strong, focused and meaningful outreach, collaboration and engagement with community groups and organizations – including W.E.A.N (Where We Are Now) Community Center, Muslim Resource Center and the Ontario Hillel Society through Western Hillel Society. Most recently, our office, in collaboration with Western faculties and Western Communications, hosted the inaugural Black History Month Speaker Series. The Office also facilitated community discussion on a pathway for admitting Black students into the Schulich School of Medicine and Dentistry. The most significant progress made was in engaging BAWA in a positive and collaborative relationship with Western through institutional communication.

Accomplishments

Institutional Communications

Western Communications continues to showcase the diversity of our campus, London and the alumni community.

More diverse representation in marketing and alumni communications to highlight the achievements of alumni from equity-deserving groups around the world.

Since June 2020, when Western released its official response to the Anti-Racism Working Group final report, Western News has published 37 stories profiling Black alumni, students, staff and faculty or highlighting progress on combatting anti-Black racism at Western.

New articles (June 16, 2021, onward)

Elevating the conversation on race, equity and systemic change, (Western News, February 16, 2022)

Originally published by Alumni Gazette: Speaking truth: Elevating the conversation about race, equity and the quest for systemic change featuring Tracy Moore, MA'00, Enid Lee, BA'74 and Chris George, BA'01, as interviewed by Idil Mussa, MA'13 (cover story, Fall 2021)

Oral history project aims to tell stories from London's Black community, (Western News, February 2, 2022)

Western faculty take part in restoring piece of Black history, (Western News, February 1, 2022)

Western research takes aim at medical racism, (Western News, December 9, 2021)

Western signs national charter to fight anti-Black racism in higher ed, (Western News, November 18, 2021

Black History Month Speaker Series

In February 2022, Western was pleased to host its inaugural virtual speaker series celebrating Black excellence. The purpose of this speaker series was to celebrate and recognize Black history, but to also highlight current Black excellence in Canada. The speakers were Christina Lord, Dr. Andrew B. Campbell, Andrea Thompson, Greg Frankson, Robert Small and Marisa Rosa Grant.

Invite scholars/speakers/ experts to highlight study of and scholarship by equity-deserving groups

This programming would feature events and activities that promote diversity throughout the year and highlight the voice and excellence of racialized groups.

Looking Forward

There is so much good happening at Western, but there is also still much to be done. For the remainder of 2022 into 2023, the Office of EDI continues its goal to promote, recognize, celebrate and engage various voices around campus to build an equitable, inclusionary and diverse Western community. Looking at the next six months, towards our first anniversary, there are specific actions and initiatives we hope to accomplish.
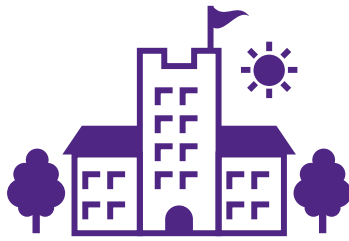
Create a welcoming and inclusive campus community

- Establish an Anti-Racism Task Force to ensure that the work now begun by ARWG continues and supports the implementation of the recommendations outlined in this report. The Task Force should be closely aligned with the Office of Indigenous Initiatives to strengthen efforts in decolonizing curriculum, policies and practices.

- Examine existing policies, processes and structures for responding to complaints of racism, and improve or overhaul them.

- Improve the communication and dissemination of existing and newly developed policy/procedure information.

- Increase and enhance the support available on-campus to help community members impacted by racism.

Engage diverse Western communities

- Create highly visible educational awareness campaigns that raise the profile of anti-racism on campus.

- Enhance communication and outreach programs that aim to increase access for racialized students and encourage them to consider studying at Western.

- Liaise and partner with EDI officers in other institutions of learning [Scarborough Charter, Black North, etc.).

Increase diversity and equity in Western's workforce and student population

- Develop the EDID Strategic Action Plan that instructs, directs, formalizes and implements four broad EDI commitments outlined in *Towards Western at 150*.

- Create and initiate voluntary collection of demographic information of students at all points of entry at Western to ensure access for equity-deserving applicants and to measure progress.

- Encourage and incentivize the hiring, recruitment and retention of more racialized people into staff and faculty positions in accordance with EDI principles and practices.

- Invest to combat racism and all forms of discrimination.

- Support and advocate for courses and programs focused on the study of and scholarship by racialized groups (e.g., Black Studies, Jewish Studies, Islamic Studies, etc.).

- Push for emphasis on hiring academics who study race-related subject areas and can provide more opportunities for students to study race and decolonization.

- Ensure racialized students are better informed about financial support (i.e., scholarships and bursaries).

- Create Western Black and Racialized Students Leadership Work Program—including outreach to secondary schools in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) and Southwestern Ontario.

- Create a graduate fellowship especially for advancing anti-racism, equity and inclusion and intersectional analysis in research across disciplines.

Western
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