



## **Educational Equity Policy Statement**

Approved by Senate April 19, 2001

Queen's University is committed to developing a climate of educational equity that includes acknowledging and eliminating direct, indirect and systemic discrimination. A culture of educational equity recognizes and respects the equal dignity and worth of all who seek to participate in the life, work and mission of the University. Such a culture is created and maintained by developing a university-wide commitment to educational equity, supported by policies, programs, curricula, practices and traditions that facilitate individuals' free, safe and full participation.

see also " Report of the [Educational Equity Committee](#) to Senate April 19, 2001



## **EDUCATIONAL EQUITY REPORT AND POLICY STATEMENT SENATE EDUCATIONAL EQUITY COMMITTEE**

### **Preamble**

A number of committees, offices, and individuals have worked and are working to ensure that equity exists for the Queen's community. Some examples include the Queen's

## **B. Definitions**

3. To ensure that all present and future employees have a fair and equitable opportunity to develop their abilities, realize their expectations and make the best contribution possible to the workplace.

### **Distinctions**

While there is overlap in the concepts of educational and employment equity, an important difference occurs where these programs can operate effectively to create constructive change. Employment equity's focus is limited to the workplace and the institutional structures and jurisprudence that govern it. Educational equity in the university context encompasses all parts of the institution involved in the process of teaching and learning and their associated systems of governance. The SEEC's focus is on educational equity.

There are important relationships between the concepts of employment and educational equity. The cornerstone of employment equity is equitable access to education and training programs for all. This access is required to enable individuals to reach their full potential. Employment equity, in turn, is fundamental to fully achieving educational equity because it is central to the creation of a welcoming and supportive educational environment. Universities, therefore, have a key role to play as change agents in the achievement of equity in society.

**iii. Curriculum:** Curriculum encompasses all learning, both formal and informal in the educational setting. Formal learning happens through institutional content and methodology (pedagogy) and through official policies governing admissions, evaluations, standards, and accreditation. Informal learning occurs through the social and environmental contexts in which the learners find themselves.

**Annotation:** Over the past century, curriculum has ranged broadly in definition from meaning a particular plan for a course to including all learning experiences provided by schools. In recent studies focusing on curriculum in postsecondary settings, curriculum has been defined as encompassing "all the sectors of the institution involved with the process of teaching and learning" (Toombs & Tierney, 1995, p. 341). Rudolph (1977) noted that "curriculum cannot be understood without paying attention to all the elements that give it life—students, knowledge, teachers, and the courses where everything falls together or falls apart" (p. 2). In this context, the Queen's "Broader Learning Environment" becomes a key component.

**iv. Diversity:** Educational equity recognizes groups who have not been able to fully and equitably participate in postsecondary institutions due to systemic barriers.

**Annotation:** A climate that exists in an equitable setting recognizing diversity includes those designated groups from the Employment Equity Legislation (women, Aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities, and visible minorities) as well as the groups designated in Human Rights legislation (including individuals belonging to various faiths, sexual orientations, and social classes) as well as those groups recognized in institutional agreements. (Equity seeking groups is the term this

document will use henceforth to include all these various groups.)

**v. Climate:** Climate includes the effects of explicit, formally institutionalized policies, as well as the effects of a range of informal practices and implicit policies that, despite their relative subtlety and variability, and the fact that they may not be intended as such, contribute

- ii. Demographic data analysis from various sources of equity seeking groups
- iii. Outreach and recruitment strategies that encourage and support diverse student applications
- iv. Admissions systems that ensure equitable access and acceptance
- v. Programs that provide equitable access for diverse applicants who are academically qualified.

## 2. Climate and Environment

### a. Primary Responsibility

- Principal, Vice Principals and Deans
- Departmental/Faculty Committees (graduate and undergraduate levels)
- Directors/Deans of Services, including Student Managers and Directors (Residence and Housing/Food Services, Athletics, Career Services, Health Counselling and Disability Services, Human Resources, Instructional Development Centre, Information Technology Services, Equity and Human Rights Departments)
- Directors/Managers responsible for Student-run services
- Physical Plant Services
- Campus Security

### b. Resources

- i. Internal reviews and reports (Internal Academic Reviews, yearly reports)
- ii. Regular reviews or reports made, based on a series of key points (where applicable) that have been identified by North American postsecondary institutions as contributing to the environment. Such reports can act as a system review and thus assist in formulating plans toward improving the environment for a diverse population. These key points include, but are not limited to:
  - 1. Faculty/administrators as role models (Employment equity monitoring)
  - 2. Critical mass re students. (Setting goals for student recruitment/presence)
  - 3. Academic support services within departments. (Programs for the retention of students for example: tutoring, mentoring programs, enrichment courses)
  - 4. Focused financial assistance and incentive programs
  - 5. Broadening of the curriculum. (Curriculum reviews)
  - 6. Clearly articulated academic requirements (Calendar descriptions)
  - 7. Physical accessibility of the location (Accessibility audits)
  - 8. Technological accessibility
  - 9. Broadening of pedagogical tools for both instructors and students
  - 10. The diversity of cultural perspective within University life (Orientation, social events, student activities and services, ceremonial events such as convocation, the scheduling of classes in consideration of religious holidays, etc.)
  - 11. The physical character of the environment.

Most of these points should be examined in the light of addressing common needs while taking into account the fact that some students/faculty/staff find themselves in a minority

situation.

### **3. Formal Curriculum**

#### **a. Primary Responsibility:**

- Faculty, faculty boards, faculty program committees, hiring/appointment committees, department heads, VP Academic and deans, Senate, Human Resources (Orientation seminars)

#### **b. Resources**

- i. Teaching Award Bodies (Alma Mater Society, Instructional Development Centre, etc.)
- ii. Internal Academic Review (IAR)
- iii. Instructional Development Centre (IDC)
- iv. Human Rights Office
- v. QUEST Evaluations
- vi. Specific actions utilizing above resources could include, but are not limited to the following:
  1. Equity knowledge as a requirement for new appointments
  2. Introduction to equity resources (e.g. IDC) in orientation process for new faculty
  3. IDC workshops for developing an equitable curriculum
  4. More resources for and emphasis on the IDC
  5. Equitable curriculum measures built into reporting template for professors (QUFA)
  6. IDC and AMS awards for professors whose curricula show a strong equity focus
  7. Specific equity audit measures in IAR and QUEST evaluations.

### **4. Research**

#### **a. Primary Responsibility**

