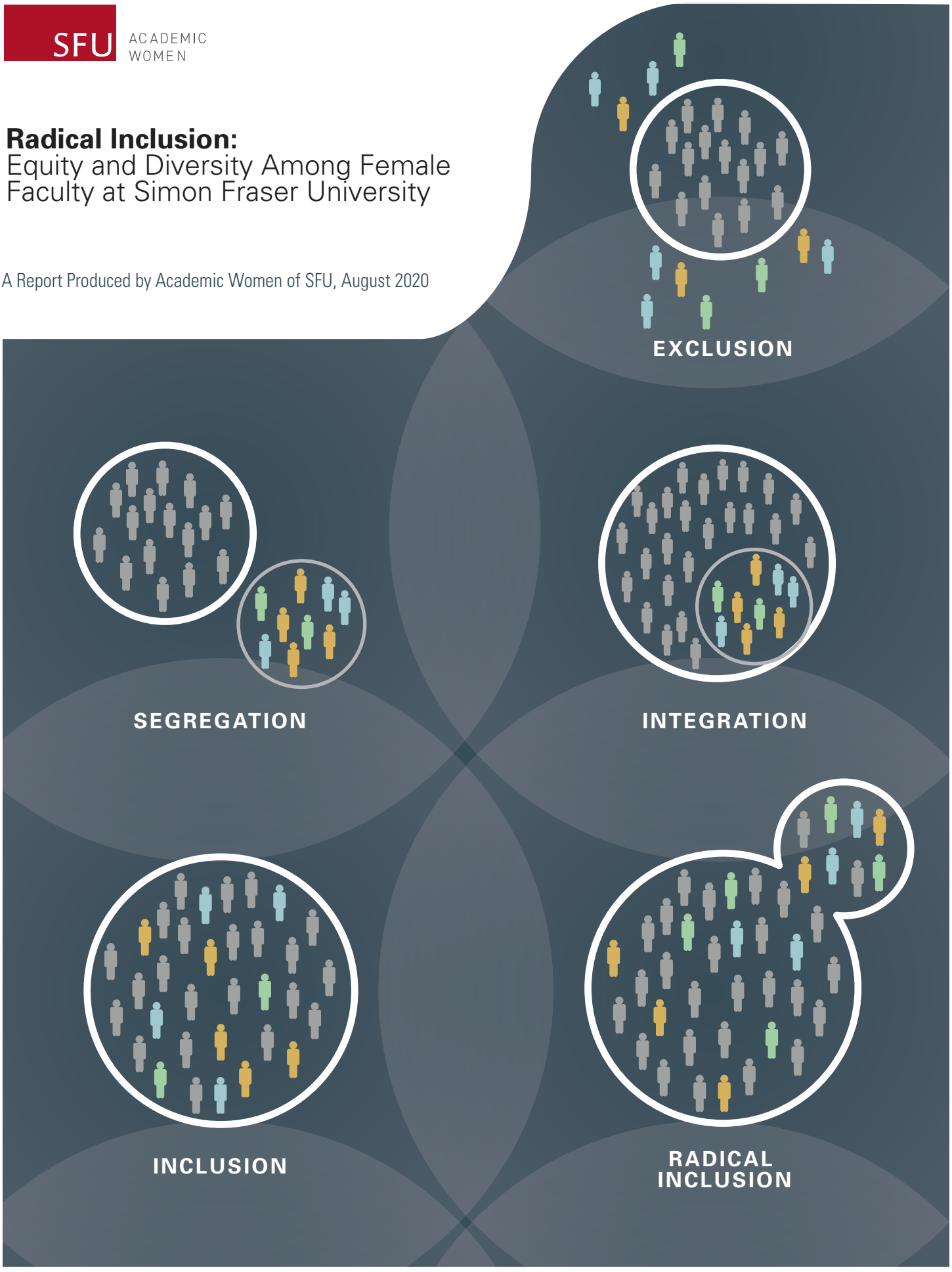
SFU ACADEMIC WOMEN

Radical Inclusion:
Equity and Diversity Among Female Faculty at Simon Fraser University

A Report Produced by Academic Women of SFU, August 2020



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Who We Are

Academic Women was founded in 1988. Its original purpose was to provide a network of support for female faculty. In more recent years, it has taken on a more activist role by advocating for equity, diversity, and inclusion across the university. It currently represents 427 female and gender non-binary faculty members.

Authorship

This report was authored by Ele Chenier, the current president of Academic Women. I am a White, gender non-binary queer person of mixed French settler and Métis (Menominee) heritage. I am also a professor in the Department of History and an associate professor in the Department of Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies.

Acknowledgements

The Simon Fraser University community exists on the unceded territories of the Tsleil-Waututh (səl̓ilw̓ətaʔɬ), Kwikwetlem (kʷikʷəƛ̓əm), Squamish (Sḵwx̱wú7mesh Úxwumixw) and Musqueam (xʷməθkʷəy̓əm) Nations who have occupied this land since time immemorial. I present this report with a keen awareness of the colonial context in which the university exists, and of the history of the university as a force of colonization. I also acknowledge our debt to the Aboriginal Reconciliation Council, whose report has laid out a path toward the deep work of reconciliation, something to which I hope this report positively contributes.

Academic Women is grateful for the financial support provided by the Office of the Vice President, Academic to make this research possible. The report, however, was written on my own time, and I am grateful to members of the Department of History's Tenure and Promotion Committee for whatever academic merit they deem this report deserves given that it was not subject to traditional peer review. I am also grateful for the support and wisdom of Nicki Khanamoui who organized and with whom I co-led the consultation, as well as our note-takers Andrea Eidinger and Jashail Athalia Pereira, editor Marguerite Pigeon, and graphic designer Tammi Hall of Hallographix. Most especially of all, I am deeply grateful to the female and gender non-binary faculty who took time and expended considerable emotional energy to participate in our consultations. Thank you!

Preamble

We ask that the reader acknowledge how much anxiety participating in this consultation has cost us. Most of us feel this is a futile exercise. It took a lot for us to even come here and have some faith in this process.

— Statement of participants in the consultation for Indigenous, racialized, and women of colour

In Place of An Executive Summary

The central argument of this report is that in order to become equitable, Simon Fraser University must become radically inclusive, and it can do so by adopting an ethic of care grounded in solidarity politics. If we take up this work, what needs to be done will become self-evident.

While reports of this nature typically present an executive summary with recommendations in the form of a checklist, the checklist approach to equity, diversity, and inclusion has been widely recognized as wholly insufficient, and even offensive. It can also serve to prop up the very forms of oppression that equity, diversity, and inclusion ostensibly seeks to dismantle.

In keeping with the principal argument we advance, and having learned from these critiques, this report respectfully declines to provide an executive summary or list of recommendations. This work necessitates that we establish good relations with each other, and that begins by sitting still and listening.

This report contains just some of our stories. We invite you to listen to what we have to tell you.

Background

Why We Undertook This Report

In the spring of 2018, SFU launched a campus-wide consultation on equity, diversity, and inclusion. Planning meetings began but were slowed by struggles to develop a shared understanding of what the terms *equity*, *diversity*, and *inclusion* mean. Faculty of colour with expertise on equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) were given a back seat to White men who were provided leadership roles. As 2018 came to a close, SFU had yet to announce the promised consultation process, so Academic Women (AW) decided to undertake its own consultation with its members. Our goal was to ensure a robust report based on an open and transparent consultation process guided by best practices in the EDI field. The consultation was supported by Dr. Kumari Beck in the Faculty of Education. Nicki Kahnamoui, a local consultant with more than ten years of experience working on EDI issues in university settings, government, and the corporate sector, worked with AW to develop and lead the consultation process, and assist with data analysis.

We approached the team leading the EDI consultation to propose our plan, which was received enthusiastically. Academic Women requested a course release for AW President Ele Chenier and additional funding from the Vice-President Academic (VPA). The VPA's office agreed to generous funding but declined the request for a course release. We used the funds to pay consultants' fees, minute-taker wages, editing, layout, and design costs, and the production of the short film "Reclaiming My Time."[1]

How We Undertook It

A total of 48 AW members participated in the consultation, representing 11% of members.

We engaged members in four ways:

1. **Consultations**. We held a series of consultations that members could attend either in person or via BlueJeans, SFU's video conferencing program.
2. **One-on-one meetings**. We met individually with members in person, via BlueJeans or Skype, or via telephone.
3. **Written submissions**. We accepted both signed and anonymous letter submissions.
4. **Email discussion**. We engaged members in a discussion about physical and mental health care needs and available benefits via the AW email list.

One of the ironies of undertaking this kind of consultation is that the very reason why the consultation is needed produces significant barriers to participation. Women are vulnerable, and those whose lives are lived at the intersection of other oppressions, including ableism, racialization, and marginalization related to Two Spirit, lesbian, bi, queer, trans and other identities, are significantly more vulnerable. Vulnerability is uniquely challenging in academic environments. As the authors of *The Slow Professor* point out, "Academic training includes induction into a culture of scholarly individualism and intellectual mastery; to admit to struggle undermines our professorial identity.... to talk about the body and emotion goes against the grain of an institution that privileges the mind and reason."[2] This is compounded by the discomfort many have with naming oppression directly and the willingness to police other people's language. Racialized women on campus have been told by White people to use "cultural conflict" instead of "racism."

1 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BtuJ86kSDew&feature=emb_logo

2 Maggie Berg and Barbara K. Seeber, *The Slow Professor: Challenging the Culture of Speed in the Academy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 2.

When a job candidate used the phrase "White supremacy," she was pulled aside after her talk and told "we don't use that language here."

Confidentiality was therefore critical to the process. We assured members that their participation was confidential, both in the invitation to participate and at the start of each consultation. Participants in group consultations verbally affirmed a commitment to preserve the confidentiality of fellow participants. We also provided participants with a copy of this report and an opportunity to review it in advance of its release so that they felt fully confident that they could not be identified.

Factors Impacting Participation

Participation in all manner of work-related activities is often low. While this can be disappointing, several reasons help explain this.

- SFU-specific factors. SFU is a commuter campus on a mountain. Just getting there can take anywhere from 20 minutes to an hour and a half. Faculty are also overworked, suffering from high levels of stress, depression, and burnout. While there is no ideal time in the year to hold an event, our consultations were held in the third month of a thirteen-week term, arguably the busiest period of the term. Finally, given SFU's geographic location, making video conferencing access available was important. It was not much used, however. Only two people participated in this manner. We did receive input by email.
- **Microaggression and microaggression fatigue**. One of the most common reasons members provided for declining to participate was cynicism about the value of doing so. SFU asserts that it is committed to EDI. Yet, the experiences of many female academics show that this is not the case. Persistent micro- and macroaggressions have increased already-high levels of fatigue, depression, cynicism, and burnout among a significant number of participants, most particularly women of colour and Indigenous women. Several participants expressed the desire to find work elsewhere for these reasons, and at least three did just that in the six months between the beginning of the consultation and the initial drafting of the report in August-September 2019.
- **Trauma**. Talking about these issues is also emotionally draining. Experiencing sexism, racism, ableism, and colonialism/White supremacy is traumatizing, making the cost of participating not just time but also mental wellness. We must consider these factors when analyzing participation in university consultations, including this one.
- **Departmental hierarchies**. AW excludes members at the level of associate dean and higher. One junior scholar expressed reservations about sharing their experience in front of senior scholars who may have influence over their career trajectories as either an internal or external evaluator of their tenure and promotion file, or as a member of a committee with influence over some other aspect of their professional career. Were we to run this consultation again, we would add a session just for pre-tenure faculty and for librarians with fewer than six years' employment.
- **Safety**. Tellingly, of all participants, only one was willing to have her name attributed to her input. She is retired. That virtually every participant requested anonymity demonstrates that, at SFU, it is unsafe to disclose experiences of sexual, racism, ableism, and so on. This raises important questions about the depth and breadth of the institution's purported commitment to EDI.

Consultation Structure

In March 2019, we held six sessions. Nicki Kahnamoui facilitated these events, and Andrea Eidinger and Jasheil Athalia Pereira took notes. The sessions were as follows:

- 1 for members with disabilities,
- 1 for members with parenting and other significant care-taking responsibilities,
- 1 for Two Spirit, lesbian, bi, and trans female faculty,
- 1 for racialized women, women of colour, and Indigenous women members,
- 2 for all members.

Session participation:
28 people attended sessions in person
2 people attended sessions via BlueJeans
31 people provided input via email
9 people provided input in a one-on-one meeting.

The analysis in this report also includes a discussion that occurred during the consultation period on AW's email list concerning our Pacific Blue Cross benefits plan.

It is interesting to note that we held more one-on-one sessions than group sessions. There may be two reasons for this: either these individuals were unable to attend a group session, or they felt at risk in talking about their experiences in front of others, even when those others were women of similar career status.

Overall, members reported that they were happy to have participated in the process. They indicated that, however reluctant or cynical they may have felt walking into the consultation, the conversation provided an important opportunity to share their experience in a supportive atmosphere. They noted that there is a general lack of opportunity to come together and talk about shared challenges and concerns.

Discussions were open-ended, with just a few prompts to guide participants in their input. In the analysis, we identified common themes from the minutes. We also undertook secondary source research (see Bibliography).

Analytical Framework

Our analysis draws on decades of feminist and anti-racist scholarship and takes up a concept called *radical inclusion*, introduced by Wendy Harbour, a speaker at SFU's EDI Speaker Series organized by Genevieve Fuji Johnson. Based on her expertise on disability in educational institutions, Harbour argues that inclusion is an insufficient model for creating true equality. For people with physical disabilities, for example, inclusion usually means retrofitting institutions to make them accessible to people who use mobility devices. As Jay Dolmage has argued, retrofitting and other forms of accommodation are

> *intended to simply temporarily even the playing field.... The aspiration here is not to empower students to achieve with disability, but to achieve around disability or against it, or in spite of it. The disablism built into that overarching desire for able-bodiedness and able-mindedness comes from the belief that disability should not and cannot be something that is positively claimed and lived-within.*[3]

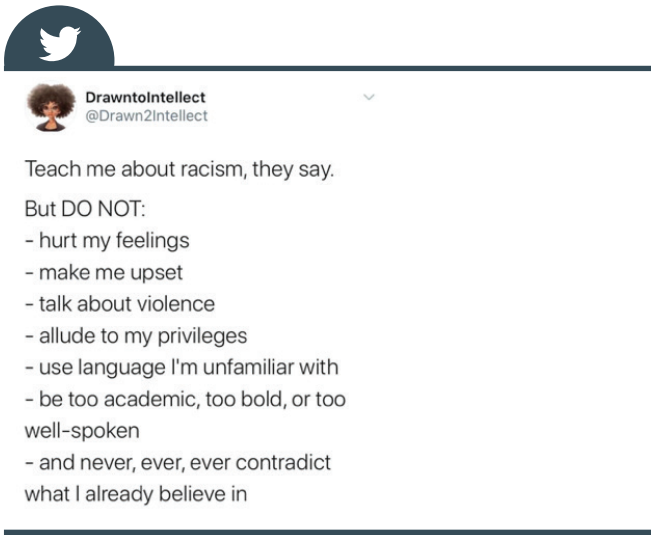
The solution, for Harbour, is radical inclusion. Simple inclusion leaves the structure that produced the inequality and exclusion intact; radical inclusion calls for a transformation of the structure itself.

Legal scholar Colleen Sheppard calls this approach inclusive equality. Formal equality, or equal treatment without regard to the social context of inequality, fails to address systemic discrimination, which occurs when "apparently neutral rules, standards, practices, or policies have disparate effects on different communities and groups in society." Inclusive equality, on the other hand, is based on substantive equality, which emphasizes unequal outcomes and effects.[4] It highlights how inequality:

> *is linked to both the substantive effects of discrimination (including social, psychological, physical, and economic harms) and the systemic and institutional practices and processes that reproduce it. These include procedural inequities such as failure to consult or investigate the possibility of accommodation, exclusion of historically disadvantaged groups from decision-making, lack of democracy, and absence of relationships of care.*[5]

Like Harbour, Sheppard argues that building a more inclusive society "requires a restructuring of the historical, structural, and systemic relations that produce, reproduce, and justify social, political, legal, and economic exclusion and inequality." This work incorporates "attentiveness to both substance and process" and "is necessarily systemic and relational." Our willingness and capacity "to reimagine and reinvent relationships, institutional cultures, and social governance practices will be central to whether, how, and when inclusive equality emerges."[6]

A second concept, advanced during the spring 2019 Equity Studies in Education lecture, is "white fragility." Coined by Robin DiAngelo, white fragility describes how White people are insulated from racial stress and "feel entitled to and deserving of [their] advantage" because they are rarely asked to think of themselves as White or in White terms.[7] White people have therefore become fragile in conversations about race. "We consider a challenge to our world views as a challenge to our very identities as good, moral people." White fragility also refers to the ways that White people reinstate White equilibrium and maintain our dominance within the system.[8] The solution to this problem is for White people to increase their "racial stamina," by which DiAngelo means their ability to look frankly at how their whiteness has shaped their life experience.[9]



3 Jay T. Dolmage, *Academic Ableism: Disability and Higher Education (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2017)*, 70.

4 Colleen Sheppard, *Inclusive Equality: The Relational Dimensions of Systemic Discrimination in Canada* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2010), 9, 146.

5 Sheppard, *Inclusive Equality,* 147.

6 Sheppard, *Inclusive Equality,* 9, 5.

7 Robin DiAngelo, *White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2018), xiv.

8 DiAngelo, *White Fragility,* 2.

9 DiAngelo argues that we can use our discomfort as a "door in" to examining White privilege by asking ourselves, "Why does this unsettle me? What would it mean for me if this were true? How does this lens change my understanding of racial dynamics? How can my unease help reveal the unexamined assumptions I have been making? Is it possible that because I am White, there are some racial dynamics I can't see?" (DiAngelo, *White Fragility,* 14).

Moving toward inclusive equality will be challenging for those who most benefit from the norms that structure our institution, the same people who hold the power to make—or not make—change. As Sheppard points out, we live in systems whereby those at the top of the hierarchy are perceived as more knowledgeable and meritorious.[10] We must therefore embrace the fact that radical inclusion requires many of us to get comfortable with discomfort.

Sheppard also points out that securing greater equality requires more than, for example, a redistribution of income. It demands a restructuring of human relations. This fundamental insight was the foundation upon which the 2016 recommendations of SFU's Salary Equity Committee were made. A joint faculty-administration committee created in response to an AW study of gender-based salary inequities, the committee found that a gender salary gap "correction" in the early 2000s had, over time, re-grown to become even greater than it had been at the time of the initial correction. More than that, the committee discovered that male and female faculty who take parental and/or medical leaves face lower odds of promotion. SFU's own internal study makes clear that salary corrections are only temporary band-aids, a finding which led the committee to conclude that "salary inequities have developed and persist, in part, because the Equity portfolio is under-resourced at this University."[11] The Report called for the creation of the position of Vice President, Human Rights and Equity (VPHRE) with "a dotted line reporting relationship to the Board of Governors, similar to that enjoyed by the Internal Auditor and the University Secretary." Although they did not put it in these terms, they recognized that changing gender-based inequality requires a restructuring of human relations, which is what a VPHRE would lead, and why such a person must be given the level of autonomy, authority, and respect that a Vice-President position possesses.

Unfortunately, the administration rejected this recommendation. President Petter was frank about his opposition to creating an equity office at any level. He argued that equity should be woven into the work of already existing administrative offices[12] but never made his stance public. Consequently, it could not be subject to debate or discussion. The only tangible outcome of the 2016 joint faculty-administration study was to make salary equalization payments, but on this, the university had no choice. It is required by human rights legislation. Yet SFU senior administrators, including President Petter, continue to insist that SFU is not only a champion of EDI internally but an EDI leader on the national stage.

Even institutions that *have* taken steps toward addressing EDI often fail to make meaningful and lasting change. The problem is bureaucratic modes of organization.[13] Equity offices are essential to the organization, mobilization, and implementation of EDI, but even they, as part of the bureaucratic apparatus, can tend toward the objectification of human concerns as social problems:

> *"The personal, individual, human is extracted from what becomes conceptualized impersonally as a social problem. With the transformation of individual concerns into social problems comes the creation of objective, rationalized rules and procedures for addressing problems. It becomes more difficult to exercise the flexible, non-rule driven, and intuitive dimensions of caring. The rules are devised to respond to a problem as experienced by a "generalized other," not a "concrete other." They institutionalize and systematize discrimination against those "concrete others" who do not fit the mould of the "generalized other."*[14]

The hierarchical arrangement of institutional roles and the associated tasks within bureaucracies further exacerbate these problems. Advancement in the current bureaucratic structure demands a team-player approach, which encourages an "unquestioned, functionalist performance of one's role ... , thus providing a further disincentive to question bureaucratic roles or the division of labour." Consequently, bureaucratic objectives come to matter more than social or humanist objectives. While it is possible and indeed necessary for people with disabilities, Black people, Indigenous people, people of colour, and women to move up the bureaucratic hierarchy and assume positions of bureaucratic power, "for the vast majority, bureaucratic relations of permanent inequality mean ... continued servicing of the needs and interests of those with power and privilege within an institution."[15]

A commitment to EDI demands an ethics of care grounded in solidarity politics. Publicly, SFU is a champion of this approach. The President and Vice-President Academic frequently affirm the principle of "nothing about us without us," which was asserted by the Aboriginal Reconciliation Council (ARC-SFU), but unfortunately, SFU's use of this principle is little more than rhetoric. The same is true with respect to EDI. Institutional efforts to engage the community on EDI matters have been plagued by evasion, hostility, mismanagement, sexism, and White supremacy, thus revealing an incapacity and/or unwillingness to understand and meaningfully respond to

10 Sheppard, *Inclusive Equality,* 148.

11 Simon Fraser University Salary Equity Recommendation Committee, Final Report (Burnaby: SFU Salary Equity Recommendation Committee, 2016), http://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/vpacademic/files/vp_academic_docs/pdfs/Salary%20Equity%20Recommendation%20Ctte%20Final%20Report%2020160901.pdf

12 A plan for how this would be achieved was never developed.

13 Sheppard, *Inclusive Equality,* 72.

14 Sheppard, *Inclusive Equality,* 73–74.

15 Sheppard, *Inclusive Equality,* 117.

the very real struggles faculty face on a daily basis. Yet, for the most part, the administration carefully avoids engaging faculty.[16]

Care can only develop through meaningful connection. SFU's leadership must become, as Sheppard puts it, "informed about the concerns, harms, and apprehensions of others," and must "take action to respond."[17]

We invite all members of the university community, including especially the university administration whose members are responsible for the functioning of the institution, to use this report as their first step toward informing themselves about female faculty's experiences and concerns, and to take responsibility for the conditions that make it dangerous for us to speak about our experiences and have resulted in the lack of faith, particularly on the part of Black women, Indigenous women, and women of colour, in SFU's commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion.

We call on everyone who occupies a leadership role, including most especially the President, the Board of Governors, the Vice-Presidents, and Senate to step forward and take thoughtful, informed action. We argue that the action we need is radical inclusion, which must be guided by an ethics of care grounded in solidarity politics.

Radical inclusion is based on the work of disability expert Wendy Harbour. It holds that standard approaches to inclusion are insufficient. For real inclusion to occur, the structure itself—in this case, the university—must be transformed at its very root. Colleen Sheppard's deep analysis relations of equality as relational shows us *how* such a transformation can occur. Equality is possible only when an ethics of care guides social relationships and institutional dynamics, particularly across institutional power divisions.[18] To exist in relations of care is to "insist upon utilizing experiential knowledge of inequality" and to address "the quality and character of social relationships."[19] Equality must be built from below, thus "our willingness and capacity to re-imagine and re-invent relationships, institutional cultures, and social governance practices will be central to whether, how, and when inclusive equality emerges."[20] Inclusive equality requires that we "nurture solidarity across group-based differences." We can forge community identity across differences by "acting in solidarity with those whose fates we do not share." By acting in solidarity, we make possible that which we can never achieve alone, as individuals.

We recognize that change of this nature is both disruptive and, for some, painful, but if we exist in solidarity, it will become clear to those who currently do not see or experience what we describe in the pages that follow that disruption and pain is an everyday experience for marginalized people. If we develop relations of care, it will become painful *not* to take action.

A Note about Absences and Gaps

There are experiences and points of view that are underrepresented or not represented at all in this report. Readers are encouraged to reflect on those absences and gaps and their likely causes.

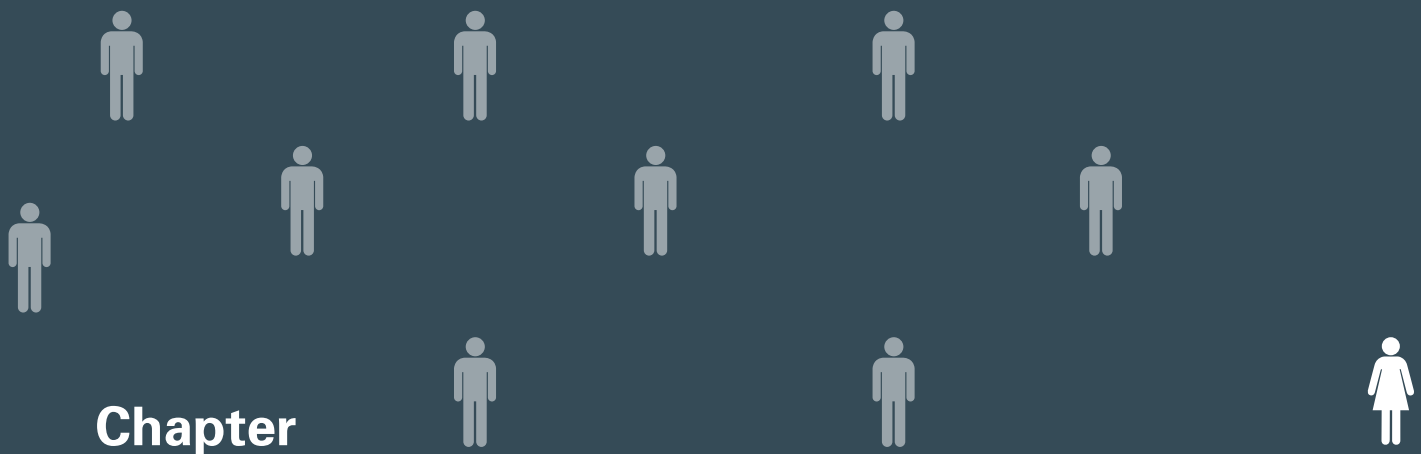
16 Faculty-administration engagement occurs at the Senate, an important body responsible for institutional governance. Senate, however, is not a space of compassionate inquiry and therefore does not provide opportunities for the development of relationships of care. Nor has it adopted an equity lens either formally or informally. An example that illustrates the institutionalization of the absence of care, as Sheppard calls it, can be found in the administration choosing to ignore widespread faculty concerns about the learning outcomes requirement imposed upon instructors when SFU became a member of the NWCCU (Northwest Consortium of Colleges and Universities). This condition of membership had no known benefits for students, staff, or faculty, and has had significant negative impacts on staff and faculty. Our concerns, based on our expertise as educators, were ignored. See, for example, Charles Bingham, "Learning Outcomes & Teaching Flexibility," https://www.tssu.ca/2013/03/13/learning-outcomes-teaching-flexibility/

17 Sheppard, *Inclusive Equality,* 18.

18 Sheppard's analysis draws on the work of Canadian Mohawk lawyer, activist, educator and author Patricia A. Monture. Sheppard, *Inclusive Equality,* 103

19 Sheppard, *Inclusive Equality*, 11.

20 Sheppard, *Inclusive Equality*, 4–5.



Chapter

1 Historical Background

Today's EDI policies have their origins in the 1980s, when feminists set out to combat sexual harassment on university campuses. These efforts soon expanded to include discrimination against female faculty in hiring and promotion.

As human rights law expanded—first provincially, then federally—and the courts established employer responsibility for ensuring a workplace free from sexual and gender-based harassment, universities created Human Rights Offices, which were responsible for ensuring compliance with human rights law. Human Rights Offices typically address issues of inequality on an individual, complaints-based basis, and are therefore limited in scope.

Another significant development was the creation of the Federal Contractors Program in 1986, which flowed from Judge Rosalie Silberman Abella's 1984 *Report of the Commission on Equality in Employment*. The Report argued that while equality in employment is typically interpreted to mean treating everyone the same as the White, non-disabled, heterosexual men[21] who dominate the workforce, in fact, people are not all the same. The report noted that, for example, many women have significant childcare responsibilities that men do not have. It went on to assert that places of work are typically built to serve the needs of able-bodied people, and that achieving equality in employment would mean creating workplaces that suit the diverse needs of all members of society. As early as 1984, then, it was clearly understood that:

> *ignoring differences and refusing to accommodate them is a denial of equal access and opportunity. It is discrimination. To reduce discrimination, we must create and maintain barrier-free environments so that individuals can have genuine access free from arbitrary obstructions to demonstrate and exercise fully their potential. This may mean treating some people differently by removing the obstacles to equality of opportunity they alone face for no demonstrably justifiable reason.... Not all disadvantages derive from discrimination [but] those that do demand their own particular policy responses.*[22]

In other words, there can be no single policy response, no one-size-fits-all approach. Moreover, "we have to systematically eradicate impediments to [employment] according to the actual needs of the different groups, not according to what we think their needs should be."[23] Employment equity is much more than treating everyone the same. It is "an exercise in redistributive justice."[24]

The purpose of the Federal Contractors Program, administered by Employment and Social Development Canada, an agency of the Canadian federal government, is to ensure that provincially regulated employers with one hundred or more employees bidding on federal contracts over $1,000,000 (originally $200,000) implement employment equity measures. As recipients of federal contracts, universities are obliged to adopt equality or equity policies covering the four designated groups: women, people with disabilities, racialized people, and Indigenous peoples.[25]

Some of Canada's mid-sized and large universities went even further and created an office dedicated to implementing equity for the broader university community through research, information, education, and services. By the 1990s, members of these offices sought to combine Human Rights and Equity Offices, as they felt that the separation was a barrier to their effectiveness.

Equity Initiatives at Simon Fraser University

In 1992, Patricia O'Hagan, co-founder of the Canadian Association Against Sexual Harassment in Higher Education,[26] was hired to direct SFU's newly-established Harassment Resolution Office (HRO).[27] The office characterized harassment as a manifestation of discrimination, thus placing it in the context of broader equity initiatives, even while its services were limited to the individual complaints-based model that characterizes a legalistic human rights approach. During her five years as harassment policy coordinator O'Hagan resolved an estimated five hundred cases, suggesting that the office was well-known and its staff trusted, and that harassment was a serious and persistent issue on campus. It was also in this era that SFU hired John Stubbs as President. Stubbs had a track record of supporting equity; among his accomplishments at Trent University was the construction of a campus daycare.

However, support for anti-discrimination measures was seriously challenged in 1997. The previous year an undergraduate student reported to the HRO that an SFU swim coach had sexually assaulted her during a date. An investigation was launched, and a disciplinary committee recommended that the coach be fired. President Stubbs accepted this recommendation. The coach, who had not participated in the investigation, then claimed that the student had harassed him and asked the university president to reconsider. When Stubbs upheld the committee's recommendation, the coach took his claims to the press. The *Vancouver Sun* reported his version of events as fact, and two SFU faculty members wrote op-eds supporting his claims of innocence (none of them had participated in the investigation). Journalists at the *Sun* described the complainant in stereotypically sexist terms. The story was picked up by multiple Canadian and American media outlets whose coverage contributed to the already hostile environment for people who experience sexual assault and violence.

21 The 1984 report refers to White, able-bodied men and does not mention sexual orientation. I include "heterosexual" here as we now understand sexuality to be part of the normative framework to which the Report refers.

22 Rosalie Silberman Abella (Commissioner), *Report of the Commission of Equality in Employment* (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1984), 3.

23 Abella, *Equality in Employment*, 4.

24 Abella, *Equality in Employment*, 4, 5.

25 The Commission used "visible minorities" and "native people." I have used contemporary language.

26 Marni Roberta Westerman, "Tempered Radicals and Porous Boundaries: The Challenges and Complexities of Anti-Harassment Work in Canadian Universities" (PhD diss., University of British Columbia, 2008), 66.

27 Elsewhere called the Harassment Policy Office.

As both the complainant and the Student Society's President had predicted, "informal complaints to the harassment office dropped by 50 per cent over the summer [of 1997] and by 80 per cent during this fall term."[28]

Several faculty members, including those responsible for revising the university's sexual harassment policy at that time, called for the resignation of both O'Hagan[29] and the University President. By 1998 both had vacated their positions. Lawyer Brenda Taylor assumed leadership of the Harassment Resolution Office and set out to restore confidence in its work. According to Taylor, the confidence that needed to be restored was not that of people who experienced sexual harassment or assault, but of those who believed that the HRO was biased in favour of victims. In her first annual report she wrote:

> *It is absolutely essential that the people who come to this office know that they will be dealt with in a professional, impartial manner that is free from an ideological agenda that predisposes a person to favour one of the parties in a harassment case.... The process we employ does not favour the rights of Complainants over Respondents. This approach does not sit well with all of the people who seek the services of the Harassment Resolution Office. One of the trends we observed throughout 1998 is a propensity on the part of Complainants to want support and advocacy when they come to this office to complain. They are sometimes unhappy when it does not materialize.... While that may have been the practice in the past, it is not the way the work is done today.*[30]

In 2001 Taylor oversaw the revision of the harassment policy. The new policy indicated that any persons found to have made "frivolous, vexatious, or malicious complaints of harassment" may be subject to disciplinary action.[31] Not a single formal harassment complaint has been heard at SFU since that time.

While other mid-sized and large Canadian universities were expanding their efforts to address equity, SFU was closing its down. The Harassment Resolution Office was the most significant step SFU took toward providing support and advocacy services for students, staff, and faculty who experienced discrimination. It closed in 1998, and nothing would take its place until 2018 when the university was forced by the provincial government to develop a stand-alone sexual harassment and violence policy. This is a major step forward, but it has not led to a broader shift in thinking about the institution as a place where gender inequalities, as well as other types of inequalities, occur and the need for proactive solutions. This, despite the fact that the problems are not only everywhere apparent, but have been documented in various official reports and have resulted in concrete recommendations to the administration. Instead, any steps SFU takes are driven by external forces. Because there is no oversight of those steps, there has been no meaningful change on the ground. Experiences of discrimination due to disability, race and/or ethnicity, sex and/or gender, and sexual orientation are commonplace. Those who experience them have no advocates on campus to assist them. There are no active, organized, campus-wide measures in place to explore and implement solutions. The issues are invisible to those who do not experience them first hand.

Currently, SFU is not meeting its basic obligations under the Federal Contractors Program. Salary inequality based on gender continues to characterize faculty association (SFUFA) members' paycheques, despite such discrimination being a violation of human rights law. But as Judge Abella argued in 1984, "it is not enough to be able to claim equal rights unless those rights are somehow enforceable. Unenforceable rights are no more satisfactory than unavailable ones. This is where we rely on employment equity—to ensure access without discrimination both to the available opportunities and to the possibility of their realization."[32] With neither leadership nor the infrastructure to support EDI, they are but words on a page.

"informal complaints to the harassment office dropped by 50 per cent over the summer [of 1997] and by 80 per cent during this fall term."[28]

28 "Sexual Harassment Poses Tough Questions," *Vancouver Sun*, October 28, 1997, 1.

29 Patricia O'Hagan, "The Marsden/Donnelly Case and Me," *Vancouver Sun*, October 18, 1997, A23.

30 Simon Fraser University Harassment Resolution Office, *Annual Report* (Burnaby: SFU Harassment Resolution Office, 1998), www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/humanrights/AnnualReports/1998-HRO-Annual-Report.pdf, 19.

31 This had more than just a chilling effect. On the 1998 revised policy: https://bulletin-archives.caut.ca/bulletin/articles/1998/05/the-real-story-of-harassment-at-sfu.

32 Abella. *Equality in Employment*, 13.

Chapter 2 Disability

Disability is one of the least studied areas of EDI. Although 22% of Canadians have or have had a disability (StatsCan 2017), issues concerning disability and ability are largely invisible at SFU. There are no dedicated disability services provided for faculty and librarians. Yet, there are temporarily and permanently disabled people all around us. Indeed, one of the most celebrated SFU alumni is Terry Fox, whose Marathon of Hope raised money for cancer research. Fox had osteosarcoma and undertook his journey with a prosthetic leg. In addition to the statue of him on the grounds of the Academic Quadrangle, one of our main Burnaby campus buildings, the sports field is named after him. SFU holds an annual run in his honour, during which the annual Terry Fox Gold Medal Award is presented "to an SFU student who has demonstrated courage in the face of adversity and possesses qualities becoming of a role model." None of this, however, has translated into an increased awareness of disability issues, or a commitment to becoming more accessible. We do not know how many faculty and librarians have a disability because SFU has not taken steps toward the creation and administration of a census, despite requests from faculty to do so.[33]

33 In fall 2019, a change in leadership resulted in the administration responding to this pressure by contracting an external company to undertake this work.

Reprinted with the permission of the copyright holder Giangreco, M. F. (2002). Absurdities and realities of special education: The best of ants…, flying…, and logs… (Full color edition). Corwin.

According to Statistics Canada, 20% of Canadians aged 25 to 64 have at least one disability. The four most common disabilities are pain-related (15%), flexibility (10%), mobility (10%), and mental health-related (7%). People with disabilities are also under-employed in general (41% of Canadians with disabilities are unemployed compared to 20% of Canadians without disabilities).[34] If SFU's faculty reflects the Canadian population, 193 (20% of 967) have one or more disabilities. According to the Mental Health Commission of Canada, one in three workplace disability claims in Canada is related to mental illness. Recent research shows that mental health-related disabilities are high among academics as compared to other professions.[35]

A 2018 survey by Canadian firm RBC Insurance found that disability continues to be narrowly conceived as a noticeable physical impairment, catastrophic in nature and caused by one-time, traumatic events.[36] In fact, according to the World Health Organization, disability "is an umbrella term, covering impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions. An impairment is a problem in body function or structure; an activity limitation is a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or action; while a participation restriction is a problem experienced by an individual in involvement in life situations."[37] The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities describes persons with disabilities as those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments that, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.[38] Disability includes diverse phenomena, including anxiety, chronic fatigue syndrome, Crohn's disease, fibromyalgia, multiple sclerosis, post-traumatic stress disorder, and osteoarthritis.

Disabled people are also subject to ableism, a system that, according to Wendy Harbour, places value on people's bodies and minds based on societally constructed ideas of disability, normalcy, intelligence, and excellence that are rooted in racism, eugenics, classism, and other forms of oppression. Ableism is more than prejudice (prejudgement about another person based on the social groups to which they belong) or discrimination (an action based on prejudice); when a group's collective prejudice is backed by the power of legal authority and institutional control, it is transformed into ableism: "a far-reaching system that functions independently from the intentions or self-images of individual actors."[39]

Most people hold a medical model of disability in which the disabled individual is regarded as suffering from a problem that requires a solution. The response is to provide retrofits to existing environments. According to disability scholars, however,

> *retrofits are not designed for people to live and thrive with a disability, but rather to temporarily make the disability go away.... There is a structural ableism to the university: a way of repeatedly rewarding bodies and minds and forms of communication and sociality that are the right (constrained) shape. But there is also an explicit disablism that denigrates specific bodies and minds and forms of communication and sociality. The retrofit is one way in which we address structural ableism (for instance an inaccessible space) with means that simply highlight and accentuate and invite disablism—for instance, singling out the body that needs to ask for access.*[40]

Ideas about how the problem of disability should be addressed (which, it must be pointed out, starts from the assumption that disability poses a problem) are often filtered through moral judgements about whether or not the person is responsible for their disability, and whether or not conditions, either self-described or described in medical

34 Stuart Morris, Gail Fawcett, Laurent Brisebois, and Jeffrey Hughes, "Canadian Survey on Disability Reports: A Demographic, Employment and Income Profile of Canadians with Disabilities aged 15 Years and Over, 2017,"

35 Jill Collins, *Assembling the Pieces: An Implementation Guide to the National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace*, Mental Health Commission of Canada, 2014, https://mentalhealth.apec.org/sites/default/files/Assembling_the_Pieces_An_Implementation_Guide_to_the_National_Standard_for_Psychological_Health_and_Safety_in_the_Workplace.pdf.

36 RBC Insurance, "Mental Health is Less Likely to be Seen as a Disability" (RBC Insurance), September 25, 2018, http://www.rbc.com/newsroom/news/2018/20180925-rbcins-mental-health.html.

37 WHO, as cited in Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, *Federal Disability Reference Guide* (Ottawa: HRSDC), 2. https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/esdc-edsc/migration/documents/eng/disability/arc/reference_guide.pdf page 2.

38 Human Resources Canada, *Federal Disability Guide*, 16.

39 Here, I have adapted Robin DiAngelo's definition of racism. See DiAngelo, *White Fragility*, 20.

40 DoImage, *Academic Ablism*, 70.

documentation, are real or exaggerated. While human rights law requires Canadian workplaces to provide "reasonable" accommodation for employees, the disabled person has to request accommodations. The result is a built and social environment that remains unchanged by the reality of diverse abilities. If we create an accessible and flexible workplace where diverse needs can be met, we never have to resort to special accommodations that often have an isolating and stigmatizing effect.

The accessible approach is based on a social model of disability that sees the world—the built environment, ableist social, economic, and political structures, and everyday interactions—as the problem in need of solutions. As Margrit Shildrick argues in *Dangerous Discourses of Disability, Subjectivity and Sexuality*, disability

> *poses probing questions about the nature of societies, both in terms of their overt organization and their social imaginaries. The responsibility for inquiry and analysis falls, then, not on disabled people alone but on all those who participate in the relevant structures. Just as the scholarship of recent years has identified racism as a problem of whiteness, so too ableism must be addressed by those who are identified with normative standards and those who are excessive to them.*[41]

A social model produces radical inclusion, as described earlier. Typically, inclusion means that people who are traditionally excluded from or marginalized within existing systems will be provided with pathways to fuller participation. However, this form of inclusion leaves intact the existing system, literally. A recent study showed that building temperatures are set to meet the needs of the average male body, which is distinct from, for example, female bodies.[42] Radical inclusion means changing the structure itself so that it operates according to everyone's needs, not just those of the imagined "typical" employee.

A simple example of how this currently operates and how we can change the structure to create radical inclusion is in disclosure. As mentioned above, currently, people must disclose their needs in order to be accommodated. So while, technically, in Canada, people cannot be required to reveal what their disability or diagnosis is, in cases where the disability is invisible, they must "out" themselves by requesting the accommodation. Such requests are scrutinized; claims must be validated and approved. Additionally, because supervisors and co-workers come and go, and people's needs change, those with disabilities have to reveal this fact and deal with responses and reactions to these revelations repeatedly, to multiple people, on multiple occasions. Each coming out is "a complex calculus,"[43] a moment of vulnerability rife with tension since "disability disclosure is inevitably entangled with other identity markers, including race, gender, academic rank, and so forth."[44]

Disability at SFU

We gathered data about disability as follows:

4	participants shared information via open consultation (2 do not claim a disability but work in the area of disability studies; 2 have invisible disabilities)
1	in a one-on-one meeting
1	in a different consultation group meeting
3	via email
24	provided input through conversation related to our benefits plan via our closed group email list

Two faculty members described how sympathetic responses by their unit head to their request for accommodations were nevertheless paternalistic and ultimately disempowering. In both cases, their unit head reduced their teaching load without consulting with them; in one case, the chair then "deducted" the faculty member's accumulated course release, which she had been saving for an extended research leave. "I wanted a conversation and a choice about what and when I work.... She thought she was doing me a favour, but she cut me off socially and isolated me. I tried to fight against it, but didn't have the energy to go too far."

Requests for accommodation are sometimes challenged, ridiculed, and denied. SFU's Human Rights Office exists to ensure that the university complies with British Columbia's human rights law, but pursuing a complaint is never straightforward and indeed renders the complainant vulnerable. There is no guarantee that the outcome will be positive. Moreover, the psychological, emotional, and physical toll of laying a complaint and making one's way through mediation and investigation processes can compromise one's health and undermine one's overall well-being.

41 Margrit Shildrick, Dangerous *Discourses of Disability, Subjectivity and Sexuality* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), 15.

42 Boris Kingma and Wouter van Marken Lichtenbelt, "Energy Consumption in Buildings and Female Thermal Demand," *Nature Climate Change 5*, no. 12 (2015): 1054–56.

43 See Stephanie Kerschbaum, Laura T. Eisenman, and James M. Jones, eds., *Negotiating Disability: Disclosure and Higher Education* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2017), 2.

44 Margaret Price, Mark S. Salzer, Amber O'Shea, and Stephanie L. Kerschbaum, "Disclosure of Mental Disability by College and University Faculty: The Negotiation of Accommodations, Supports, and Barriers," *Disability Studies Quarterly* 37 no. 2 (2017). See also Kerschbaum, Eisenman, and Jones, *Negotiating Disability,* 1–12, and Alison Kafer, "Un/Safe Disclosures: Scenes of Disability and Trauma," *Journal of Literary and Cultural Disability Studies* 10 no. 1 (2016), 3.

Currently, it falls to the person in need of accommodation to do the work required to challenge the discrimination they experience at SFU. Placing the obligation on the shoulders of people with disabilities to seek remedies is widely regarded as a common-sense approach. What this fails to account for, however, is that people with disabilities are subject to ableism as well as sexism and racism.

As Shahd Alshammari, an academic with multiple sclerosis points out, the disabled body is viewed as a body that has suffered loss, such as loss of function. But the loss she experiences is not "the loss of a once complete or whole body," it is the loss of her basic humanity due to "discriminatory disablement by society's understandings of disability.... Different bodies are marked as deviant and are often excluded from communities," she explains.[45] A recent example of how this plays out is in SFU's decision to ban plastic straws, seen as progressive on the environmental front, but quite differently by people who rely on them to eat and drink:

According to student activists, students with disabilities were not consulted in advance of this measure.[46] Without a radically inclusive approach, we reproduce the able-bodied, heterosexual male as the norm.[47] This is not an isolated case. In 2018 the Office of the Registrar struck a Learning Space Design Committee. The committee did not include anyone with a disability, and accessibility was not an issue they were considering.[48] Although this oversight was pointed out in the fall of 2018, the committee has not since added a representative from the Centre for Accessible Learning.

Radical inclusion is about transformation from the inside out, not modification from the outside in. It involves creating an environment where accessibility and flexibility are so deeply embedded that special accommodations are rarely, if ever, needed, where the able-bodied person is no longer the normative standard, but one of a variety of types, and where the disabled person is no longer a problem in need of a solution, but a person whose lived experience and expertise open new ways of seeing and being for others.

Although she did not use the term "radical inclusion," one participant in the consultation spoke at length about what this might look like. First, she pointed out how conversations about disability draw on the language of deficit.[49] A disability is seen as a problem in need of accommodation. Instead, persons with disabilities should be seen as people who bring experiences and perspectives that are a "benefit for all. Difference has to be rewarded, not just accommodated. That's how you value it."

As a person with autism raised by a parent who was a leader in the universal design movement, she has unique insight into some of the problematic ways academia operates. First, we pay more attention to achievement than aptitude. The current

45 "Individuals living with disability or illness negotiate time differently. The view of time, energy conservation, minimizing pain and also confronting one's own mortality—these are all adjustments one has to make." From Shahd Alshammari, "On Survival and Education: An Academic's Perspective on Disability," *Canadian Journal of Disability Studies* 8 no. 4 (2018), 262. https://cjds.uwaterloo.ca/index.php/cjds/article/view/532/803.

46 Personal correspondence with Sanam Prasad, Social Media Executive for the SFU Disability and Neurodiversity Alliance, September 5, 2019.

47 Kingma and van Marken Lichtenbelt, "Energy Consumption," 1054–56.

48 Conversation with three committee members, Lesley and Gordon Diamond Family Auditorium, Burnaby Campus, *Open House*, Tuesday, September 25, 2018.

49 Dolmage, *Academic Ableism*, 31.

literature on autism shows that if a system is not set up to be accessible, people's mental health is negatively impacted. People with autism will "camouflage": "when you have a disability and no one around you does, you are motived to try to fit in, you try strategies that work in the short term, but have long-term negative impacts." Such people might "have a complete meltdown when [they] get home.... Exhaustion takes a toll over the years. The data shows that this really matters to people's lives," she said. But "you're seen as a pain in the arse for asking these kinds of questions. You are distracting from important work. It's a 'special' issue.'"

Participants in the consultation meeting argued that part of the solution must be strong leadership, accountability measures, and promoting and hiring people with disabilities into leadership roles. "Difference has to be rewarded institutionally," said one participant. "Otherwise, it doesn't persist." "There needs to be visibility," commented another person, and "the institution needs to show its commitment through accountability."

That said, the burden of the work must fall on everyone's shoulders, or we simply reinstitute existing dynamics in which those who are marginalized and oppressed are responsible for fixing the very system that produces their oppression. During the question-and-answer period of Wendy Harbour's talk at SFU, a graduate student pointed out that, "advocating for yourself is draining, you are expected to be cheerful about it, you are constantly having to do the work of educating, the burden falls on you." Harbour responded: "People should be able to access support, we should be doing the work for them.... We need people who can advocate for people, who can do the coordination work."

Speaker A By the point you get to grad school, you've learned that professors have no respect for disabilities.

Speaker B Rather sad if even a full professor can't speak [up].

Speaker A I could, but I don't want to deal with it.

Speaker C At what price?

Speaker D And why should individuals have to champion this instead of institutions? Otherwise, disabled people are having to do the work of undoing their own oppression and marginalization.

> **Sometimes the biggest struggle is to find support and not be demoralized.**

Most people, it was felt, simply go along to get along, leaving calls for change the responsibility of those who need it to function well.

Features of the Academy

Another problematic feature of academia is that it is a culture of hierarchical critique. "What is that doing to people?" one participant asked. "Who can thrive in that culture? It's violent, aggressive, horrible.... Scholars look at this when discussing diversity, and in what culture is the world like this? How is knowledge produced that way?" Her own department set out to change that culture, to prioritize supporting faculty in ways that would allow them to be successful, and to make their intellectual culture less aggressive. At the time of our consultation, these changes had been underway for two years and were, in her assessment "extremely successful in terms of changing the culture of the department," showing that culture change is possible when fully supported by strong leadership that is also able to gain buy-in from unit members.

Academe is also guided by many unwritten rules that neurodiverse people have difficulty intuiting.[50] Additionally, rigid and slow-moving administrative structures prohibit the kind of flexibility that accommodates neurodiversity. For example, faculty with autism would benefit from having something akin to a homeroom where all their classes were held, and from more variety in the way the university delivers courses:

> *If we stop teaching the way we teach now (cyclical), more people could participate and people would be more productive. Why can't you deliver 30 hours of teaching in 10 days, and then let people sit with the information? There is a greater capacity to participate. It's easier when a professor needs to be replaced (one week rather than whole semester). We need to ask the right questions about what teaching is about.*[51]

50 This point likely extends to people from different cultures as well.

51 Quest University in Squamish offers its courses in this manner.

The rigidity of university procedures, pointed out another participant, means that there is "no room for looking at the bigger picture. And this doesn't work for diversity. We have to think outside the box." Yet another participant felt that SFU was "really good with static conditions where the impairment is easily understood, but not when it is dynamic." What constitutes "reasonable accommodation" is hard to determine for people where the issues might recede and reappear, or "when you have a mental health condition that is relapsing, or a constellation of system that differs in each occurrence." It is "impossible to know when we really even the playing field. So this is more art than science, that evolves based on personal relationships and better collective understanding.... If systems are properly designed for the people we want to do the jobs, accommodation should be a last resort."

Another place where these shifts can occur is in how we think about the requirements of our jobs. Research has shown that we place much more emphasis on hiring people who look and act like the White normative majority. Creating an inclusive, equitable workplace means giving people the "opportunity to demonstrate [their] skill and expertise." Added another participant, "We have a rigid understanding about what it means to be part of the academy.... It is essential that we hire people in different ways, and change expectations about what they do once they arrive. Otherwise, we indoctrinate them into our own expectations. Either they fit, or they leave, because we don't value them.... People end up leaving quickly. It's not just a matter of education and experience, in terms of making someone great at a particular job."

Health Benefits

More input was provided during an email discussion about our current Pacific Blue Cross benefits plan. It revealed how health issues members have grappled with since they were hired impact their work, and how their work-related experiences impact their everyday life.

Some of the disabilities members are dealing with have been caused by the nature of our work. One member wrote:

> *I find myself sitting and being at the computer far too much—to a point where I am often in pain. During my study leave last year I was fortunate enough to be able to reduce the amount of time on the computer and experienced far less discomfort and pain. Because of this job and an aging body, I should be going to massage at least twice a month, as well as physio[therapy]. To do so requires a big financial commitment on my part because, for at least the first 12 visits of massage, I only get $20 back on every $100 that I spend. I can't afford to ... be proactive about my health. Instead, I only seek care when the pain gets bad because of the lack of coverage. This year I had to purchase two pairs of glasses (approximately $2000), one of which is solely for computer work.*

Another member who has specialized in educational computing since the 1980s wrote, "I can attest to the costs of dealing with the physical consequences, trying to recuperate and the fear of how to pay when I retire. We need a whole new set of benefits to deal with the very new realities of computer-intense academic work."

Change in the number of hours we spend in front of a computer is compounded by cuts to the number of support staff. "We are expected to do pretty much everything ourselves now," commented one member. "Physio[therapy] and massage are necessary for me to do my job." The negative health impacts of changes in staffing and expectations of faculty were documented as early as 1994,[52] yet the issues persist.

> **My family had to pay out of pocket $4,600 this year without any 'exotic' expenses," explained a member. "I pay thousands of dollars per year in uncovered costs, and Blue Cross has become more limiting over the 18 years I have been on faculty.**

Our current medical plan provides minimal or no coverage for many of these medical services. Members expressed dismay that our plan does not cover orthotics, hearing aids, or glasses adequately. One member reported that her wheelchair cushions and bath-benches "wear out and require replacement regularly for I depend on them to function, and neither is covered."

52 Shirley Fisher, *Stress in Academic Life: The Mental Assembly Line* (Buckingham: SHRE and Open University Press, 1994).

Insufficient benefits are forcing faculty to sacrifice their well-being. One member described how her "hypermobility ... leads to frequent muscle and joint injuries that require physiotherapy and massage therapy.... I've delayed treatment for injuries because I couldn't afford paying out of pocket, which is functionally what we have to do for our first 12 sessions. Changing that aspect of our policy would have a significant, positive impact on my health, and I'm sure on the health of others."

The depth and breadth of coverage the university provides sends a clear message to its employees about its willingness to support our physical and mental health. One participant proposed that rather than have a set benefit package, we offer a health spending account. A health spending account would solve another barrier to inclusion two members raised: the lack of support for culturally appropriate, non-Western medical treatments.

Members also indicated a need for access to medical care on the Burnaby campus for non-students. Presently, medical services are available only for students.

Like other aspects of our lives, our experience of disability must be understood intersectionally. Our physical and mental experiences are shaped by our age, our gender and sexuality, our ethnicity, processes of racialization, and our sexual orientation. One member with severe osteoarthritis and nerve compression who has also had to take care of her aging father described how the limits on our health benefits plan mean she is unable to get the physical therapy treatment she needs to function reasonably well:

> *Once you reach a threshold of 12 visits in a year, you are covered, but if you are someone like me who benefits most from going every 2 weeks, then that means half of the visits a year are covered at a very low amount, so a lot comes out of pocket.... I have also been told that I could benefit from massage, but ... [it] is just simply too expensive. When I went on study leave [in 2018] at a 20% salary cut, which also coincided with multiple trips to the USA to help my father transition to a nursing home, I had to forego the physical therapy altogether.*

Some women are providing full-time care for disabled family members. One member described having to care for an adult child who has been chronically ill her entire life. Recently her child spent two weeks in ICU. When her child returned home, she had to manage scheduling thirteen different medical specialist appointments while also maintaining a demanding publication schedule. "It is a dance, a balancing act ... and takes not only physical time and physical energy, the emotional strain is almost unbearable. I feel overwhelmed." When asked if she had ever requested a decrease in teaching load or any other kind of consideration, she replied,

> *I am afraid to. I am old and have to work and don't want them thinking I am not capable of handling all my responsibilities—I have always felt like that ... as a single mother of a sick child, I need this job. I spend at least $1000.00 a month on health care that is not covered. And I try to give my [child] a quality life despite [their] health struggles. Whenever I go to give a paper, I take [them] with me and visit a museum or a theatre event and that fuels [their] life with interesting things to look forward to.*

Limitations on our access to medical treatment combined with the implicit and explicit expectations that one continues to work at the same level as a fully able-bodied person without caring responsibilities are compromising members' health. Virtually everyone who participated in the conversation called for better health-care coverage, and several women also recommended "a serious investment in a philosophy of prevention as well as treatment across the life course," which would include a designated campus-based service to support the physical and mental health of staff and faculty. "I have been asking for something like this for some time now within my department and within the faculty of science," commented one member. "So far, no success."

The depth and breadth of coverage the university provides sends a clear message to its employees about its willingness to support our physical and mental health.

Finally, many members observed that our current policy discriminates based on age. "Those under the age of 65 can get full coverage after 12 visits; those 65 and over have to pay for 15 visits before they get full coverage. It's a shame that our policy throws those who are, generally, more vulnerable at this life-stage under the bus."

Disability and Gender

There may be reason to believe that women are more negatively affected by our work conditions than men. In 2015 one member became so concerned about chronic and acute health problems in her unit that she compiled health-event data going back 10 years. She found that medical and stress leaves afflicted a full third of the female faculty. Male faculty were also experiencing significant health issues, although at a lower rate (12%). SFUFA confirmed that compared with other units, faculty members in her unit experience a higher rate of health problems. She presented her data to the Dean and Associate Deans in her unit and was commended for her concern and empathy for fellow faculty members. One administrator told her she was "the conscience of the faculty." Yet no steps were taken to address the problem.

Another case that disproportionately affected women involved black mould in the Education Building. According to information provided by members of the Faculty of Education, between 2008 and 2018, eight of twelve female faculty who worked in the affected area became ill. One developed a tumour on her pancreas, which her medical team reported was a result of exposure to black fungus in her office. Other women experienced headaches, dizziness, rashes, coughing and choking, and developed badly affected immune systems. Two died. When they finally told their Dean that they refused to work out of their offices, he convinced the administration to undertake an assessment. It confirmed that airborne mould spores were present in the offices. Occupants were immediately prohibited from entering their former workspace, confirming, it seems, that the environment was unsafe for human occupancy.[53] Mould remediation (removal of the mould) was finally scheduled. The cost of the delay was, according to faculty, enormous.

> *"I lost half of my pancreas ... luckily, not my life. But my health has never been the same. I am diabetic now as the pancreas gives insulin. I no longer have the great health and energy I had before the surgery.... I will never be the same. All eight of us ... have the same story. Two women had breasts removed. Two passed away. ... It is difficult to prove because black mould affects the immune system and folks respond in different ways. I was astonished because the university not only does not consider the long-term effects of serious disease, it refuses to consider responsibility in causing the disease.*

These events have likely had a negative impact on morale as well. Experiences like these lead some members to conclude that "the university only really cares about your research.... We're making ourselves sick."

The faculty union hired legal counsel but was unable to secure compensation for those who became ill. While it may not have been possible to prove a connection between the reported illnesses and the mould, thus relieving SFU of legal responsibility, SFU certainly had a moral and ethical duty to respond to faculty concerns about their work environment as soon as they were raised, to remediate the problem in a timely manner, and to acknowledge their failure to do so. This issue also raises questions about the role of compassionate versus court-ordered compensation in such cases.

While academics had overall positive organizational outcomes and good health, 30% were "less than satisfied" with their job

- **28%** felt a low affective commitment to their institutions
- **22%** reported experiencing "a substantial amount" of physical strain in the previous year
- **24%** reported experiencing "a substantial amount" of psychological strain in the previous year
- **26%** reported a decline in well-being in the past twelve months (246)
- **13%** reported high psychological stress
- **22%** elevated physical health symptoms, which is higher than in the general population.[55]

53 See http://www.ncceh.ca/sites/default/files/Mould_Assessment_May_2010.pdf.

Mental Health

Mental health, which includes diverse phenomena such as depression, anxiety, schizophrenia, obsessive-compulsive disorder, autism and Asperger's, also falls under the umbrella of disability. Although largely invisible and little discussed, mental health-related disabilities are on the rise. A recent RBC Insurance survey found that 30% of working Canadians who have taken time off for a disability did so because of mental illness.[54] Mental health issues are sometimes related to physical disabilities. For example, loss of mobility and even a concussion can cause stress and depression. Insufficient support, encounters with prejudicial attitudes, and workplace discrimination can also cause a person with one or more physical disabilities to experience mental health issues.

A recent RBC Insurance survey found that 30% of working Canadians who have taken time off for a disability did so because of mental illness.

Our jobs and workplaces can also cause mental disabilities like anxiety and depression or can trigger pre-existing conditions. Research undertaken on stress in academia shows that it is a growing area of concern. The first study of faculty stress levels among Canadian academics found that:

As well, while work-related stress typically declines as one moves into middle age, for faculty, it remained high at the associate professor rank, dropping off only after promotion to full professor.[56]

Researchers found that gender was the most consistent demographic predictor of work and health outcomes. They experienced more stress than men, particularly in Work Load, Work-Life Conflict, Unfairness-Administration, and Unfairness-Rewards.[57] Men expressed greater job satisfaction and affective commitment than women and reported fewer physical and psychological health issues than women.[58] The largest reported gender difference was on Work-Life Conflict, which the authors concluded likely reflects the fact that many female academics continue to carry a disproportionate level of domestic labour and childcare responsibility.

Women also reported lower job satisfaction and commitment and more psychological and physical strain than men. Again, this is likely the result of having to work at the same pace and be measured according to a standard and style based on a model of work established when the worker was male and most often supported by full-time domestic labour in the form of a spouse and household help. As will be discussed further in Chapter 5, workforce diversification has not resulted in many changes in workplace rhythms, logics, and expectations. Partnered women (and single parents of all genders) are under enormous pressure to keep the pace; the result is higher rates of illness and lower rates of job satisfaction.

Other likely factors include women's lower positions in the academic hierarchy due in part to both sexism in the evaluation of tenure and promotion files, and the additional service burdens they often bear (see Chapter 4), both of which delay career progress and create unfair and inequitable working conditions. The AW member who compiled ten years of data on the rates of illness in her unit also found that over ten years, eight tenure-track faculty members left the unit, which was about 20% of the unit, an illustration, perhaps, of the relationship Catano et al. found between job dissatisfaction in workload, unfairness in rewards and in the administration of units, and poor health.[59]

Presently, faculty and librarians can seek support for mental health issues and disabilities from the SFU Faculty Association, which represents members' interests, and Faculty Relations (FR), the unit that administers various faculty benefit plans and processes applications for sickness and disability leaves. The Human Rights Office serves members who are denied accommodation or whose accommodations do not meet their needs. It is not known how well these offices are serving members' needs. Only one participant discussed her experience with existing services, and she actually chose not to use them. She created a trusted circle of support among colleagues who felt that "there wasn't anyone at SFU (in either Human Resources or in Faculty Relations) who could

54 RBC Insurance, *Mental Health Issues*. See also the Bell Let's Talk campaign for mental health awareness, and Santa Ono's coming out about depression.

55 Vic Catano et al., "Occupational Stress in Canadian Universities," *International Journal of Stress Management*, 17 no. 3 (2010), 232.

56 The more junior, the higher the stress, co-related to workload and role conflict, but the numbers remain high at the associate professor/mid-life level, whereas in the general population, it declines. Catano et al., "Occupational Stress in Canadian Universities," 254.

57 Catano et al., "Occupational Stress in Canadian Universities," 244.

58 Catano et al., "Occupational Stress in Canadian Universities," 247.

59 Catano et al., "Occupational Stress in Canadian Universities," 232–58.

adeptly and sensitively handle the assistance that I needed." She believes that HR (which serves staff, not faculty or librarians) is currently developing greater capacity to understand and address the issues that concern her.

The first step SFU faculty and librarians with an illness or disability are instructed to take is to talk to their supervisor.[60] In this regard, a study on occupational stress found that 77% of Canadian academics were satisfied with their relationship with their departmental chair. Another 2017 study regarding disclosure of mental disability among American college and university faculty showed that 62.8% of those who disclosed to chairs felt that the disclosure was received positively.[61] However, several AW members disclosed traumatizing conversations that resulted from certain disclosures. One described how her heavy teaching load, combined with her commitment to meeting the mental health needs of her students has brought her to a mental and physical breaking point. During the term we met, she was responsible for teaching 300 students and supervising five TAs and one TM. As teaching faculty, she runs courses in all three terms, and because exams and grading keep her at her desk to the very end of each term, she is never able to take a proper vacation. "There is a real institutional push to take care of our students' mental health," she explains. To "make sure ... that they feel supported ... I am now more outward about that in my syllabus." She also uses harm reduction and resilience strategies in the classroom. As a consequence, students frequently disclose trauma and mental health issues, and even though she has actively sought out training in ways to support her students, she feels it is not enough. She is exhausted but "I can't shut it off because I care about my students ... "

Her chair and colleagues are generally unsympathetic. Colleagues have actually discouraged her from vocalizing how hard her work is. They "feel that I have somehow brought this all upon myself." When she told her chair about a student having been sexually assaulted by another student in her lecture course, "he said, 'I think you need some wine.'" He also joked about how many students report suicidal ideation to her. She feels he fails to appreciate either the seriousness of the situation or the toll it is taking on her. She also experiences the added discrimination that comes with pregnancy and parenting, a topic discussed in more detail later in this report (see Chapter 5). When she asked a senior male colleague how he was doing, he quipped, "At least I'm not pregnant," reinforcing the message that real scholars do not get pregnant and do not have children to worry about, and that pregnancy is undesirable. She expressed deep regret for having left a position at another institution to come to SFU. At the time we met, she was looking for work elsewhere. Another faculty member who experienced "extreme public bullying by a student" sought support from a crisis counsellor and physician. For both health and safety reasons, her doctor advised her to stay away from campus for two weeks. Her chair said that the medical order was

> *"proof I was "not able to do the work." He refused to acknowledge my physician's prescription. "Are you telling me you can't do your job?," he demanded. About the public bullying and threats, the Chair said "I'm glad this happened to you," and "you deserve it." ... It took years for me to receive partial remedy, to simply be able to do my work, the conditions that others take for granted.... It is very hard to remember all of this ... I know I should have left SFU in my first few months of employment, yet did not. I regret very much that I am still here.*

These accounts illustrate how sometimes people in positions of authority lack the compassion, sensitivity, and know-how to respond to the needs and experiences of faculty. And while the evidence suggests that the majority of US faculty who disclose a mental disability are received positively by department chairs, it also shows that their experiences are significantly better when disclosing at an Office of Disability Services, suggesting that trained experts provide better support to faculty and staff, and better serve the university's mission.[62]

It seems likely that the majority of SFU faculty who disclose mental illness are well served by their supervisors and other senior administrators. One AW member, however, explained that she suffered from crippling anxiety likely exacerbated by menopause. On many occasions, she considered applying for sick leave but feared the shame and stigma of colleagues knowing that she was on leave. Even though members are not required to disclose the nature of their illness (a fact that she did not know), gossip in the form of speculation was, she felt, inevitable, and her chair and department had a reputation for being indiscreet about confidential matters. She feared that her colleagues would never treat her with the same regard, and that she would close the door to a possible future in the administration. She recalled that in the first year on her job, several department members told her that one of their colleagues had taken a leave due to depression. It was expressed as a negative judgement, not as a statement of support. "The message was pretty clear," she said. "So I did what I could to keep going."

60 See https://www.sfu.ca/human-resources/rtw-dm/sick-leave/sick-leave-faq.html.

61 Price et al., "Disclosure of Mental Disability."

62 Price et al., "Disclosure of Mental Disability."

More Effort Needed

There are likely many stories of faculty and librarians who have enjoyed strong support from their colleagues, superiors, and the administration. It would be valuable to know what SFU is doing well so that we can build on our strengths. The EDI consultation, however, was premised on the widely acknowledged fact that universities, including our own, are falling short when it comes to EDI. Our job was to identify some of those shortcomings and propose measures that would lead to meaningful improvement. We found that members who experienced challenges due to health, well-being, and disability felt unsupported by the institution.

Studies show a direct correlation between procedural fairness, trust in department heads and senior management, and well-being.[63] When our workplaces fail to meet our needs, our well-being suffers.

SFU was long ago nicknamed the "radical campus." It makes sense that radical inclusion should be our practice then. This means something much more profound than remediation and accommodation. It means creating a flexible institution where diversity is the norm, and where accommodation requests need happen only rarely. It also means developing relations of care grounded in solidarity across group-based differences, of which ability/disability is one.

63 Catano et al., "Occupational Stress," 235.

Chapter

3 Indigenous Women, Racialized Women, and Women of Colour

On September 19, 2019, SFU announced the winners of its inaugural Distinguished SFU Professor award. Among them are four White women, three White men, and one racialized male.[64] The awardees' social location illustrates what experts of EDI have been saying for some time: White women have been the principal beneficiaries of equity policies. The awardees and the recent increase in the number of women occupying positions above the level of dean show that at SFU, White women are finally gaining recognition as outstanding scholars and worthy leaders. However, steps toward addressing the university's history as an instrument of colonization, and the structural racism that shapes the experiences and careers of everyone on campus, including both those advantaged and disadvantaged by it, have been tentative at best.

64 This data is based on the visual and textual information provided in the announcement and therefore may be inaccurate. See *http://www.sfu.ca/sfunews/stories/2019/09/simon-fraser-university-honours-our-inaugural-distinguished-sfu-.html?fbclid=IwAR3HxxmxlcBMhuYIN2tHT48rHmDt7LsehrWfWYo0F8WueGL11qFtFlYqmuk.*

In considering the critical insights offered by women of colour/racialized women and Indigenous AW members, this section brings forward two insights from the previous chapter on disability. First, inclusion must be radical. Retrofitting the existing structure typically means aiming for more racially and ethnically diverse people through hiring and promotion, but the values, ideals, and perspectives that produced a White-dominant institution remain intact. Second, while empowered, informed, and effective leadership matters, and policies are necessary tools for institutional change, including equity policies with respect to hiring and promotion, we must also address microclimates. Note, for example, that the terms of reference for the Distinguished Professor award committee include a clear mandate to follow equity principles.[65] If equity is well understood by the jury, such a policy can be a very useful tool in combatting systemic racism, sexism, ableism, and heterosexism. But if the microclimate for faculty means that the scholarship of people living at the intersection of these forms of oppression is undervalued, they will never make it to the nomination stage.[66]

On the same day that SFU announced the winners of the Distinguished Professors award, news broke that in 2001 Prime Minister Justin Trudeau attended a social event in brownface. The discussion that unfolded in the media illustrated that the majority of White Canadians have a shallow understanding of race, racism, and racialization. Scholar Robin DiAngelo sums up the problem succinctly: non-racialized people see racism as "discrete acts committed by individual people, rather than as a complex, interconnected system." Consequently, White people are unable to see ourselves as implicated in such a system, even if only through our conscious or unconscious complicity. Trudeau's actions are an example of unconscious complicity.[67] Although he had no ill intent, his actions were racist, as he himself acknowledges.

Most of us approach diversity work as a numbers problem. Our goal is usually to increase the number of non-White people, but as the authors of *The Equity Myth*, the first major study of racialized and Indigenous faculty in Canada, argue, we need to go much further than achieving numerical representation. Indeed, the lack of representation is often tied to other dimensions of discrimination, such as everyday experiences with racism, the ways in which institutions produce polished images of themselves as diverse, an expansive or narrow conception of what equity is, and the effectiveness of mechanisms to address inequalities.[68] Significantly, during our consultation, members barely mentioned hiring policies or representation. They focused overwhelmingly on the ways that their professional lives, personal well-being, and integrity are overtly and covertly undermined, thwarted, and oppressed by their majority-White colleagues and superiors, and by how SFU positions itself as a champion of EDI without doing the work required to make such a claim. Here, radical inclusion means rejecting a neoliberal view of diversity as located in the bodies of individuals and focusing instead on the structural dimensions of racism and sexism it masks.[69]

DiAngelo makes two additional points that White people may find especially useful when reading this section. White people "are taught not to think in racial terms, therefore to talk openly about race is to be biased."[70] In trying to be equitable and anti-racist, progressive White people acknowledge that racism exists but avoid acknowledging differences between themselves (ourselves, for this author and White colleagues) and others out of the mistaken belief that to do so validates deeply racist arguments about racial difference. For White people to act as if there are no differences between us, however, establishes the White norm as everyone's norm.[71] As Henry et al. point out:

> *"Taken-for-granted notions based on Whiteness [are a] universal norm [that] fuel the discourses, stereotypes, assumptions, and biases that develop in the collective psyche of members of institutions, become embedded in institutional cultures, reinforce unconscious biases, and justify the exclusion of racialized minorities from full participation in society and institutions."*[72]

65 https://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/policies/files/academic_policies/32_series/A32.03%20Advisory%20Committee%20Terms%20of%20Reference.pdf.

66 Until what counts as distinguished captures the different types of work and modes of work Indigenous people, racialized people, and people of colour often engage in, they will be less competitive for awards and other forms of prestige. Redefining distinguished therefore means valuing knowledge and professional practices along a radically inclusive scale. Furthermore, the expertise and authority of Indigenous people and people of colour is often treated as suspect or marginal by White settlers. For all of these reasons, Indigenous people and people of colour are less likely to be nominated. This illustrates how addressing EDI a) must always be intersectional, and b) requires a long-term, system-wide plan that operates at the macro and micro levels.

67 The point must be made that only a person who has White privilege could be unconscious of their complicity, and that in 2001 it was unacceptable that an educator, as Trudeau was at the time, would lack consciousness about the inherent racism of black or brownface.

68 Francis Henry, Enakshi Dua, Carl E. James et al. *The Equity Myth: Racialization and Indigeneity at Canadian Universities* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2017), 6.

69 Henry et al., *Equity Myth*, 11.

70 DiAngelo is referring to Americans, but this applies equally to Canadians. However, in Canada, this takes on different shapes due to the rhetoric of multiculturalism and the myth of racial equality. See Francis Henry and C. Tator, *The Color of Democracy: Racism in Canadian Society* (Toronto: Nelson, 2006).

71 DiAngelo, *White Fragility*, 11.

72 *The Equity Myth*, 14.

> **It is not only okay to acknowledge difference, it is necessary.**

Second, DiAngelo argues that the "racial status quo is comfortable for White people. Consequently, doing the work of addressing racism and the history of colonization will necessarily be uncomfortable."[73] White people have a choice: they can use their discomfort "as a door out [of the work], or a door in [by asking ourselves] why does this unsettle or annoy or anger me?" Non-racialized readers can therefore use this section as a tool for self-reflection on ways that our social and professional practices reinscribe existing racial hierarchies.

For people of colour/racialized people, this section aims to contribute to ongoing work that brings a critical race analysis to Canadian universities and provides empirical evidence and analysis that will serve to benefit those working to create institutional change.[74]

Racism at SFU

Five members who identify as either a woman of colour or as racialized participated in a session open to women of colour, racialized women, and Indigenous women[75]. This section also includes the input of two women of colour and one Indigenous woman who provided input via phone and email, and input from a recent immigrant who is White but a foreigner. Also included are several observations, concerns, and critiques of processes of White supremacy and privilege, processes of racialization, and racism made by White women at other consultation meetings.

While women of colour, Indigenous women, and White women share gender inequalities in workload, domestic and family responsibilities, and service and teaching load (see Chapter 5), their experiences of racism share no common ground. Indeed, White women uphold and perpetuate structural racism and are beneficiaries of White supremacist ideology.[76]

> *I have experienced discrimination at the micro-level, meaning that the behaviour is hard to document/pinpoint as sexist and/or racist. However, in a pattern familiar to strong WOC [women of colour], I have been called "outspoken," "difficult," "troublemaker," "crusader" and similar terms—sometimes to my face, and sometimes not; sometimes as a joke, sometimes not—indicating to me that the way I use my voice can make people uncomfortable/cause them to discount what I am saying.... It is frustrating to see the continuing lack of POC [people of colour] in the upper echelons of University administration, and in academic fields that seem persistently uninterested (and uninformed) about EDI issues—and I can't help but think about other women who have never made it there because of experiences like mine.*

This member's experience is shaped by what she deems her proximity to whiteness. Proximity to whiteness enables us to talk about experience and social structures with greater nuance because it acknowledges that the lighter-skinned and more northern European one looks, the more social, economic, and political privilege one enjoys. All people are racialized, including White people. The more one's appearance and social conduct align with the White norm, the more status and privilege one experiences.

It is likely because of her proximity to whiteness that the previous participant reports: "I don't believe my experience has as yet led to a real loss of opportunities, although I imagine that those in more powerful roles are less likely to nominate me for plum leadership opportunities and the like because of the 'discomfort' I apparently cause." On the flip side, because she has light skin, White people challenge her self-description as non-White and therefore delegitimize her claim that her experiences are inherently racialized, that she experiences racism, and that SFU is a racist institution.

Women of colour who are less proximate to whiteness can clearly identify "a real loss of opportunities." For example, a

73 DiAngelo, *White Fragility*, 14.

74 We received input from one Indigenous member. In the absence of more input, and because SFU's Aboriginal Reconciliation Report is based on extensive input from Indigenous members of the SFU community, we point readers to that important document for a detailed assessment and recommendations regarding issues that impact the lived experiences of Indigenous students, staff, faculty, and librarians, and ways to address the institution's role in colonization and genocide.

75 Regarding our methodology, in planning for this session, we asked Indigenous members if they would prefer to meet with women of colour or as a separate group. We did not receive any input on this question, so we held it as a joint session. We use here women of colour and racialized women as two separate terms since some women employ one, and some women the other. In this session, I absented myself because I believe that, even though I would be later reading the notes about their conversation, participants would be able to speak more freely and frankly in my absence. We also hired Jashmail, a recent graduate and woman of colour, to take notes instead of Andrea Eidinger, who is White and Jewish.

76 The one area where White racism is gendered concerns what is referred to as "White women's tears." See Mamta Motwani Accapadi, "When White Women Cry: How White Women's Tears Oppress Women of Color," *College Student Affairs Journal*, 26 no. 2 (Spr 2007): 208–15.

female faculty member of colour was awarded a major grant which required extensive travel, thus making it a challenge to balance regular teaching with the research project. Initially, the university celebrated the project as an ideal example of the kinds of innovative, socially responsible research SFU stands for. However, although her labour on the project was considered SFU's "in kind" contribution, her unit awarded her only a single course release. It was simply not possible to fulfil the terms of her research obligations and teach the number of courses she was assigned.

In contrast, a White male colleague who was quite junior to her and who had a grant worth 1/5th the amount of hers was provided with six course releases in the same period. "My grant is the largest that has ever been brought into ... my unit and it is erased. [This] is racist."

> *M: I have come to the point of view that this is a deeply troubled university. I was [for many years] on the Senate. Equity, starting with gender equity, was difficult initially but at least the administration was willing to talk about gender equity. I thought the principles of gender equity would translate in racial equity. However, while they were willing to consider gender equity they ran in the other direction at the very suggestion of racial equity. Whenever I brought it up, I was given a lecture that I was wrong, that I must have been misreading the situation and similar minimizing strategies.*

This member's assessment is in keeping with current scholarship, which finds that "African American women in leadership positions experience a profusion of race and gender stereotypes" that negatively affect their careers, according to one study, in which participants "reported experiences of being invisible, voiceless, discriminated, isolated, undermined, treated unfairly, oppressed, challenged and demoted."[77]

SFU's leaders seem unwilling or ill-prepared to deal with racism. This participant, whose experience on the University Senate provided her with ample opportunity to witness the way EDI issues have been addressed, said "the president is purposely ignorant; and it's pervasive in ways that are so undermining. I genuinely think that that is part of their dilemma." In her view, the Vice President Research and the President had a moral and ethical duty to intervene, but chose not to. "They should have been the ones protecting my interest. You should be creating a place where I thrive. I should not have to fight for it—writing letters, feeling anxious about it, etc., *you* should have been taking care of matters here." Instead, M has witnessed "erasure" and a "failure from the top to the bottom. Leadership matters," she said, and the failure to lead on this front means "my Dean feels impunity." Drawing attention to the structural racism that all but guarantees these kinds of inequalities, however, has only made her professional life more difficult. "They are afraid that every time I bring something up it will be an equity issue, and so they run."

Members who participated in the session for women of colour, racialized women, and Indigenous women shared critical assessments of SFU. Said one member employed more than two decades at SFU:

> **Speaker A**
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> Fundamentally this institution has been on fire for a very long time. Everything about this institution is problematic. It's all very White and patriarchal, from student services, administration offices, faculty, and so on. My experience as a student was affected by racism, my academic career here has been affected by this as well, this institution has been fundamentally racist.

This was echoed by a participant with the least number of years at SFU:

> **Speaker B**
>
> I think what I've experienced, at all levels of this organization is that people will not bring up issues of EDI. Right from the start ... my impression of the university, is that it is predominantly White male. This hasn't really changed very much, despite seeing a few POC professors, it's still the same: White male cis-gender ...

In fact, many members who have held positions at other Canadian and American universities remarked that they were surprised and alarmed at how behind SFU was on EDI issues in general.

Publicly, however, SFU affirms EDI as a priority. To uphold this image, "women of colour are used as tokens of achievements for the university" (B). The EDI consultation itself is seen as mere window dressing. It "will be used to say that they are doing something," which led participants to wonder if there was conscious awareness of this fact and intentionality among those in power. "Do they not know better [or] is this just part of their plan?"

It appears that White people are increasingly getting the message that EDI cannot be ignored, but implementation is poor. In a one-on-one consultation, K, a queer immigrant

77 From Deanna R. Davis and Cecilia Maldonado, "Shattering the Glass Ceiling: The Leadership Development of AA Women in Higher Education," *Advancing Women in Leadership* 35 (2015): 48–64.

member of faculty who has recently served on three hiring committees, described how a mid-career White male department chair would make comments like "'we need to put a woman on the short list so we don't have all dudes.' ... And even then, only gender is a consideration." This member added, "Other equity groups are not even considered. There is no serious understanding of how to talk about race, no understanding that not all women will advocate for women's/gender equity issues.... When a third White male was hired it was leaked that he was gay," so they could claim him as a diversity hire. "I see time and time again that we are excluding people of colour from our searches. There is a lack of leadership from above, a lack of understanding" of what EDI is and entails. The EDI training that SFU has been offering this past year is 'weak,' and "weak training does more harm because it enables people to say 'I've taken the training, I know what EDI is,'" when they clearly do not.

Claims that SFU is committed to EDI are disingenuous. B recounted how, for many years, she was invited to an annual SFU celebration of a major ethnic festival where she was seated with the most powerful members of the administration. "Every year, I am asked by some Dean, 'what do you think SFU can be doing better?' and every year I give them a serious list of what they could do better. I actually gave proper suggestions. But there's nothing, nothing done. It's so obvious it's hilarious."

Indigenous women, women of colour, and racialized women are consequently deeply cynical of the university's intentions, and disinclined to participate in processes like this consultation, which they see as a pointless endeavour:

Speaker C

I think it's futile. [EDI] can be used to legitimize the very problem itself. They can use it in their declaration. This is my hesitation to participate in this type of process.... Marginalized people themselves have been co-opted into these institutional structures. Overall, we do need representation, the more we have, the better our chances. But the power structure can select who it wants and incorporates some of us to [simply] use us.... In the past I was used. It is easy for people to use you as a representative for the opposite of what you stand for ...

She further pointed out that equity advances have thus far resulted in White women taking leadership positions, which simply shores up whiteness and further undercuts people of colour. Other women agreed:

Speaker B

"Most of us feel this is a futile exercise," said B. "It took a lot for us to even come here [to the AW consultation with women of colour and Indigenous women] and have some faith in this process."

Indeed, many chose not to participate.

Speaker A

"Many of my colleagues are like 'what's the point?'" said A. "They didn't even bother replying [to the call to participate]."

White women have contributed to the fatigue and demoralization racialized women feel. Participants discussed a 2018 AW event during which four attendees of a conference on women of colour in the academy shared their experiences. Both women of colour/racialized women and White women attended this open forum. The discussion that followed the presentations was dominated by White women who "were taking up space trying to make themselves feel like better White allies"

Speaker A

Women of colour felt far too vulnerable to divulge their own experiences to "quite frankly, people who can take my job away"

Speaker B

The dynamics of the discussion made women of colour feel more vulnerable and marginalized, not less.

Participants shared two specific stories that illustrate how EDI, when enacted by predominantly White people who lack experiential knowledge, and who are, as Robin DiAngelo points out, born and bred into cultural and social systems

that are racist, actually undermines the career advancement of women of colour. In the first instance, a woman of colour was nominated for an award that was ultimately given to a White male colleague who had accomplished much less in the area for which the award was granted. Moreover, SFU communications described the recipient as a champion of diversity, echoing a now established pattern on campus where White men are uplifted as EDI experts and leaders. To make matters worse, the recipient complained that everyone would say he won because he was white. The experience was enough to make D "almost quit my job."

A also considered quitting. She and two other women played a key role in the creation of a major initiative on campus. When a permanent position was created as a result of this initiative, all three women applied. The job was given to the White candidate who had significantly fewer accomplishments and much less experience than her two competitors. "We brought up our issues with the hiring committee, they just said our presentation was a problem and that she was a better fit. She matched the homosocial norms very well.... She eventually took her grants, spent it on her CV and quit her job. I am picking up after her slack."

Bringing up these issues is much harder to do than non-racialized people think.[78] D described how "we are not supposed to talk about what's true, there's so much put on us," so she avoids bringing up racism because "you don't want to fall into the stereotype of that brown lady." This silence is not for lack of desire to talk about it. Quite the contrary. "I wish for more conversations like this," she said in the consultation meeting with other women of colour.

Speaker D

I do find this helpful to be in an environment where no one has said please don't bring up race or gender.... I crave more opportunities where I am not complaining about racial and gender discrimination. I am not on the line. I just get to say and talk, and people get it. We don't do this often. These moments are so rare.

This sentiment is widespread among female and male Indigenous and racialized faculty. In their cross-Canada study, Henry et al. found that "many of the interviewees reported that the interview was the first time in their university career histories that they were able to freely and frankly discuss issues of racism."[79] They avoided the topic for fear of how they would be judged and for the potentially negative impact it might have on tenure and promotion or funding. "Some worried they would be further marginalized or that their experiences would not be understood."[80] As Henry et al. point out, if scholars cannot speak, or cannot be recognized or understood, there is "a policy impasse."

> *When their issues go unspoken, not only by themselves but by their colleagues and by administrators alike, they are easily dismissed. This situation refers to the "diversity trap," whereby race is e-raced as a mechanism of oppression and becomes simply a manifestation of difference. To encourage policy makers to recognize that the unspeakable issues are part of an overall culture of Whiteness is therefore extremely difficult. To get policy makers to actually understand such issues is even more difficult; to ask them to consider their own positionality in creating a culture of Whiteness—and indeed to consider a policy to destroy the culture of Whiteness—is daunting indeed.*[81]

Indeed, even when seeking to address EDI, SFU administrators reproduce patriarchy and White supremacy. When in 2016 SFU created a Director of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) position, they hired a white, cis-gender male for the job.[82] The EDI's Advisory Committee's first speaker was a White cis-gender male who explained to the gender and racially diverse committee members what EDI meant. When in 2019 the Department of Chemistry wanted to begin a conversation on EDI, they hired Dr. Paul Walton, a white, cis-gender male, to get the conversation started.

People's specific scholarship and the kinds of courses they teach also have negative repercussions. This is true for all faculty, but the more marginalized the scholar and the topics they teach or study, the less regard their work might engender.[83] First, such scholarship is likely to be seen as less valuable by one's colleagues and one's discipline. Consequently, publications by scholars studying marginalized populations are less likely to appear in a field's top-tier journals. They

78 Annemarie Vaccaro, "'Trying to Act like Racism Is Not There': Women of Color at a Predominantly White Women's College Challenging Dominant Ideologies by Exposing Racial Microaggressions," *NASPA Journal About Women in Higher Education*, 10 no. 3 (2017): 262–80. See also Cheryl Suzack, "How the Academic Institution Silences Indigenous Faculty: Top 10 Strategies," Second Annual Indigenous Women's Speakers' Series, Centre for Feminist Research, York University. https://www.facebook.com/notes/centre-for-feminist-research/how-the-academic-institution-silences-indigenous-faculty-top-10-strategies-by-dr/1787347554744539/.

79 Henry et al., *The Equity Myth*, 20.

80 Henry et al., *The Equity Myth*, 20.

81 Henry et al., *The Equity Myth*, 20.

82 https://www.sfu.ca/sfunews/stories/2017/12/sfu-launches-new-initiative-to-champion-equity-diversity.html.

83 The fact that some disciplines and some departments hold such work in high regard, and others in low regard, supports the thesis that in addition to policies and procedures, we must also find ways to address how microclimates function, and how they can change.

may find their most welcoming home in interdisciplinary journals, which more conservative disciplines hold in low regard. In M's experience, SFU pays "lip service" to her work,

> **Speaker M**
>
> and I realized that because I do work in [marginalized communities], this is not [seen as] real work, not a legitimate pursuit; [in my unit] it does not carry the value, or the weight [because] "It's not what we do, it's not our core issue." My work was erased ... [and yet] so much of what I do overlaps with the university's mission [to be community-engaged].

Meanwhile,

> **Speaker L**
>
> experienced group grand-standing bravado against my work in social justice causes, especially regarding Indigenous rights, and the rights of all living beings. My comments, for example, based upon research and on-the-ground work, were dismissed as "Indian stuff," while denigration of my opinions were labelled "academic freedom."

The tension in M's unit became impossible for her to bear. The Chair proposed that, as a solution, she "find a support person to bring to all upcoming meetings." The message she was repeatedly sent was that "someone like me [is] 'out of step' with that department, and I was incompetent to fulfil expectations placed upon me." "This university runs on the backs of a lot of women and scholars of colour," observed one White participant. "They are doing a lot of extra labour ... course releases have to be built in to the job descriptions of people of colour, or, it has to be factored in to their workload." Members also felt that SFU needed to make a "real commitment to decolonization. It should be uncomfortable on a daily basis." We should be changing the name of the institution and the name of our sports team, the Clan. Public dollars support the institution, argued one person, thus "the institution needs to support everyone."

We asked participants to propose steps to address the issues they raised. "You start by acknowledging the reality of what you have done and what you have failed to do," said M. To "crack the racism nut, we need a VP Equity" to provide leadership and accountability, but ultimately, "everyone has to be responsible for these issues." A added that we need someone "who is qualified and has just as much power as the President's office, someone that can overrule and veto everyone else, but we also need equity people embedded at all levels, and we need student, staff and faculty representatives for equity." This was echoed by B, who said that EDI has to have strong leadership with deep knowledge of EDI principles, but that EDI has to go from the top all the way down "to the ground level."

> **"Leaders at every level must have a comprehensive understanding of EDI, and we must take an inside-out approach to integrated EDI issues into all planning and decision-making. This means starting from a place of equity rather than taking on or 'retrofitting' EDI to traditional practices and procedures. To do our work from an EDI-informed place starts by transforming how we do the work."**

For example, EDI must be woven into our thinking and planning at every stage, including research priority setting. We also need to provide education about why targeted searches and quotas work, and why they are advantageous versus restrictive.

> **Speaker K**
>
> We need to shift the conversation away from restriction of academic and intellectual freedom to an understanding about how our traditional practices actually limit us. The way we create positions now is to identify gaps in our program based on our own perceptions of what's needed, but a better way to go about it is to find out what BIPOC people are studying, and create positions based on that.

Reflecting on hiring processes, D said "We never got training on how not to be racist or sexist during hiring processes. But there are all these soft ways people advance or don't advance in hiring. There is no protocol. There are no rules. My nice colleagues have said 'don't bring up race or gender again.' [I feel] it's my job [to do so], but it's exhausting. I don't want to be that shrill lady."

Currently, because of the absence of support people as one might find in the proposed Office of the Vice-President, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, there is no evidence that anyone has ever brought a complaint to the university, therefore claims of racial inequality are dismissed as baseless when the fact is, even naming the problem is a challenge. Raising issues about, for example, racist hiring practices can cause a whole host of problems. Said K: "It's really taxing" to bring these issues up, it "paints a target on my back, and there is a history of

retributions in my department." Moreover, as another member pointed out, doing so is "emotionally taxing and physically exhausting:

Speaker K

My god these senior and mid-career women, it's like they have been through a war, they have PTSD and I'm not kidding, they are not okay physically and health-wise ... they are not able to be my ally because they are exhausted and they've been driven apart from each other.

Why?

Speaker K

... they were constantly blocked [by male department chairs] from opportunities for research time and space, for example. They [eventually] lost confidence.

Another member pointed out that "Men do not like being called out on reproducing male culture. When I pointed out after the last round of hires that we were now back to the male/female ratio of a few years previous, the next shortlist was 100% women, but the men took credit for embracing EDI." White people taking and receiving credit for doing EDI work contributes to the toxicity of the institutional environment and is deeply demoralizing, disempowering, and enervating.

What about beyond academic units? SFU does not provide support or advocacy for librarians and faculty who are Indigenous or racialized. At the time this study was undertaken, AW felt that neither Faculty Relations nor the SFUFA is equipped to provide long-term support and advocacy that would lead to radical inclusion.

Everyone agreed that our leaders need to have a comprehensive understanding of EDI at every level and at every stage, including research priority setting. We also need to provide education about why targeted searches and quotas work, and why they are advantageous versus restrictive. These comments came in part out of what members perceived to be the failure of EDI training for SFU hiring committees. Members found that the "one-time training" was both insufficient in delivery, content, and impact.

Chapter

4 Heterosexism and LBTQ Experience

Universities have long served as a launching pad for lesbian and gay rights and social justice organizing. Indeed, some of Canada's earliest lesbian and gay rights groups were founded on campuses. Lesbian and gay, and later queer and trans studies, also took root in universities, creating new spaces for gender and sexual minority students, faculty, and librarians.

Still, it took many decades for faculty and librarians to feel comfortable coming out on the job. Over the past three decades, broad culture change has occurred in Canada. Today, same-sex attracted people enjoy equal rights and benefits, and gender expression and identity are protected from discrimination by our provincial human rights code. In 2019, two of SFU's top administrators were out as lesbian or gay.

Our consultation with members who identify as lesbian, bisexual, trans, queer, and Two Spirit attracted three participants. Each reported that they did not encounter overt homophobic or transphobic comments from their immediate colleagues. In fact, two experienced very high levels of support with respect to their status as LBTQ people (no self-identified Two Spirit people participated). One felt that her hiring was an indication of support for her scholarship, but that her points of view and perspectives are undervalued by some members of her department. For example, when a survey of LGBT faculty at SFU was attempted some years ago, her chair refused to distribute it to the department, even after consulting her about it and her recommending that the department participate.

Two of the three participants reported that among non-LGBTQ support staff in Faculty Relations and Human Resources, there is a shallow understanding of how heterosexism and homo- and transphobia impact LGBTQ people and how their lived experience presents unique workplace challenges.

> **"It does not occur to many people that some folks on campus feel vulnerable," said one participant. "There needs to be a base-level understanding of these issues."**

While all three were happy with their careers at SFU, one had actively looked for work elsewhere due to their dis-ease with colleagues' attitudes and the absence of a queer faculty community of support. For reasons related to their identity-based experiences, another has occasionally considered pursuing positions elsewhere. This evidence is consistent with the findings of a 2010 US campus climate study, which found that personal and professional development and subsequent retention and productivity are negatively influenced by a non-affirming campus climate.[84] The study also found that 42% of LGBT faculty and 32% of LGBT college staff considered leaving an academic institution because of the campus climate.[85]

While Canada differs significantly from the US in that our Constitution enshrines equality rights of lesbian and gay people, there are people living and working on Canadian university campuses who continue to hold negative views of LGBTQ and Two Spirit people, or who simply do not feel at ease in their company. For some, difference also marks people as unsuitable for leadership. In a one-on-one consultation, a heterosexual faculty member described how, in a discussion among several people in her unit following a presentation by a highly qualified candidate for a deanship, some unit members freely exchanged negative remarks about the candidate's sexual orientation. The candidate was not hired.

This reveals that, while supportive and affirming policies are vital, they have limited reach. A 2012 ethnographic study[86] at a midsized US university by Annemarie Vaccaro found that inclusive policies aimed at staff and faculty "did not necessarily make the climate warm … 'There is an awful [reality]—even if people can't fire you for being gay, they can make your life difficult in less tangible ways'"[87] said one of Vaccaro's informants. A 2009 study of LGBT science and engineering faculty showed that they experienced overt hostility, feelings of invisibility, and pressures to hide their sexual orientation.[88] This echoes the findings of the 2010 US national study, which found that, while campus life has improved considerably for LGBT people, negative experiences ranging from subtle to extreme forms of discrimination persist.[89] Interestingly, LGBT faculty respondents (60%) were significantly more likely than LGBT students (54%) and staff (54%) respondents to observe harassment. They were also (76%) significantly less likely than LGBT staff respondents (83%) to feel very comfortable or comfortable with their department/work unit climate. "Respondents of Color" were slightly less likely to feel very comfortable or comfortable with their department/work unit climate (75% than their White counterparts (78%).[90]

The study also found that LGBT, transmasculine, transfeminine, and gender non-conforming (GNC) respondents were

> *most likely to disagree with their institution's policies, procedures, programs and curriculum, and were less likely to agree that the University/College provides adequate resources on LGBTQQ [Queer and Questioning] issues and concerns, positively responds to incidents of LGBTQQ harassment, provides adequate support to LGBTQQ employees and their partners, and provides adequate resources on LGBTQQ issues and concerns. Both LGBTQQ students and faculty respondents were less likely to agree that their general education requirements and departmental curriculum represent the contributions of people who are LGBT.*[91]

84 Susan Rankin, W. J. Blumenfeld, G. N. Weber, and Somjen Frazer, *State of Higher Education for LGBT People* (Charlotte, NC: Campus Pride, 2010), 11.

85 Rankin et al., *State of Higher Education*, 128. This study also found that 9% of LGBT faculty and LGBT staff have feared for their physical safety.

86 Annemarie Vaccaro, "Campus Microclimates for LGBT Faculty, Staff, and Students: An Exploration of the Intersections of Social Identity and Campus Roles," *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice* 49, no. 4 (2012): 429–46. Interview participants included faculty (n = 11) and staff (n = 14).

87 Vaccaro, "Campus Microclimates for LGBT Faculty, Staff, and Students," 439.

88 Diana Bilimoria and Abigail J. Stewart, "'Don't Ask, Don't Tell': The Academic Climate for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Faculty in Science and Engineering," *NWSA Journal* 21, no. 2 (2009): 85–103.

89 Rankin et al., *State of Higher Education*, 8.

90 Rankin et al., *State of Higher Education*, 14.

91 Rankin et al., *State of Higher Education*, 15. See also American Federation of Teachers Higher Education. C*reating a Positive Work Environment for LGBT Faculty: What Higher Education Unions Can Do (AFT Higher Education*, 2013). Available from: https://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/wysiwyg/genderdiversity_lgbt0413.pdf

Vaccaro concludes that when it comes to heterosexism, homophobia, genderism, and transphobia, campus climate is a complex phenomenon:

> *intersections of social identity membership and campus role shaped LGBT people's climate experiences and perceptions. To create welcoming and affirming campus climates for LGBT people, higher education professionals must attend to both organizational-level climates for undergraduates and microclimates for faculty, staff, and graduate students.*[92]

Participants in AW's study felt that staff training must be used to develop a "deep understanding" of these issues, and it must be intersectional and anti-colonial. This supports the findings of a 2013 study by the American Federation of Teachers, which found that discrimination is intersectional. This means that, for example, experiences of LGBTQ people of colour and LGBTQ and Two Spirit people with disabilities cannot be understood through any single lens.[93] A separate study of LGBT physicists illustrates this point; it found that women experienced exclusionary behaviour at three times the rate of men.[94] According to the three participants, in addition to better training, diverse staff should occupy positions of power, authority, and influence. Students stand also to be beneficiaries; the deeper the understanding of LGBTQ issues across all campus sectors, the better experience students have.[95]

Another issue that uniquely impacts LGBTQ and Two Spirit faculty is whether or not to disclose their sexual orientation to students in their classrooms. All three AW participants were out in the classroom (clearly those who are not out are less likely to participate in a consultation that would, in effect, "out" them), but research suggests that not everyone is willing to take the risks involved. The 2010 national US study found that 32% of LGB faculty and 30% of LGB staff feared intimidation, while 35% of faculty and 32% of staff feared negative consequences.[96]

A 2014 qualitative study of non-heterosexual faculty in the US found that many struggled with the decision to come out. They felt they were "between a rock and a hard place." Teaching "from within the classroom closet can lead to feeling inauthentic, disingenuous, dishonest, encumbered, and stressed."[97] Disclosing, however, is risky. One might receive lower teaching evaluations, reduced student enrolments, and heightened responsibilities, scrutiny, and critique associated with being a token out LGBTQ faculty member. Some study participants feared that coming out could result in promotion denial, termination, or pigeonholing. The ability to be out if one chooses to, however, improves well-being and job satisfaction for non-heterosexual, non-gender normative, and trans people.[98]

twitter.com/imperialcollege/status/1146795807275798529

92 Vaccaro, "Campus Microclimates," 439.

93 American Federation of Teachers Higher Education, *Creating a Positive Work Environment*, 11.

94 American Physical Society. *LGBT Climate in Physics: Building an Inclusive Community* (College Park, MD: American Physical Society, 2016), 7.

95 Jason C. Garvey, Allison Brckalorenz, Keely Latopolski and Sarah S. Hurtado. "High-Impact Practices and Student–Faculty Interactions for Students Across Sexual Orientations," *Journal of College Student Development* 59 no. 2 (2018): 210-226.

96 Susan Rankin, W. J. Blumenfeld, G. N. Weber, and Somjen Frazer. State of Higher Education for LGBT people. Charlotte, NC: Campus Pride, 2010,

97 Janice Orlov, and Katherine R. Allen. "Being Who I Am: Effective Teaching, Learning, Student Support, and Societal Change through LGBQ Faculty Freedom," *Journal of Homosexuality* 61, no. 7 (2014): 1025–52. See also T. L. Russ, C. J. Simonds, and S. K. Hunt. "Coming Out in the Classroom … An Occupational Hazard? The Influence of Sexual Orientation on Teacher Credibility and Perceived Student Learning," Communication Education, 51 (2002): 311–24; and Vaccaro, Campus Microclimates, 183.

98 John E. Pachankis, "The Psychological Implications of Concealing a Stigma: A Cognitive–Affective–Behavioral Model," *Psychological Bulletin* 133 (2007): 328–45. See also B. R. Ragins, R. Singh, and J. M. Cornwell, "Making the Invisible Visible: Fear and Disclosure of Sexual Orientation at Work," Journal of Applied Psychology, 92 (2007): 1103–18.

There may be some variation according to discipline as well, which is perhaps why there has recently been a focus on Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). A 2013 study of 1,907 LGBTQA faculty in STEM (175 from mostly English-speaking countries including Canada, Great Britain, and Australia, the rest from the US) had some interesting findings in this regard:[99]

54% of respondents were open about their identities in personal contexts

29% reported an openness rating of 1 or lower with colleagues when ranking their experiences on a scale of 0 (I am not out to anyone in this group) to 5 (As far as I'm aware, everyone in this group could know)

30% had ratings of 1 or lower with students in this same ranking

43% of survey participants rated their openness to colleagues as 0 (no one in this group knows), 1 (a few people in this group know), or 2 (less than half of people in this group know)

Faculty faculty members in in Earth sciences, engineering, mathematics, and psychology reported being less out to colleagues than those in the life sciences, physical sciences, and social sciences.[99]

Their findings support those described above, showing that policies alone are not enough for faculty and staff to feel safe to exist as a Two Spirit, trans, bisexual, lesbian, or gay person. Disclosure is easier when LGBTQ faculty perceived coworker support for their identities and employer willingness to enforce policies in support of them.[100]

Although the number of faculty who provided input is modest, their reported experiences are in keeping with the broader experiences documented in these studies.

99 Jeremy B. Yoder and Allison Mattheis, "Queer in STEM: Workplace Experiences Reported in a National Survey of LGBTQA Individuals in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Careers," *Journal of Homosexuality* 63, no. 1 (2016), 16.

100 Vaccaro, "Campus Microclimates, 439.

Chapter

5 Caring about Care

The Institutionalization of the Absence of Caring

In its early years, SFU was known as "Berkeley North." Students and faculty alike explored radical ideas, among them women's liberation. Margaret "Maggie" Benston was arguably one of the leading intellectuals at SFU. An accomplished chemist, she is also well known for her scholarship on the economics of women's labour. Her 1969 analysis of the economic basis of women's inequality was grounded in an assessment of how care work exists outside the money economy. The work women do to "satisfy our emotional needs: the needs [sic] for closeness, community, and warm secure relationships" is "not worth money and is therefore valueless, and therefore not even real work."[101] Her ideas influenced feminist theory and grass-roots strategies around the world.[102] What former students remember most is how brilliantly she created community despite SFU's isolated mountaintop location. Benston valued collective ways of being and doing. She taught with, not to, her students. She opened her home to everyone eager to discuss women's liberation. By practising an ethics of care grounded in solidarity politics, Benston epitomized the engaged university SFU aspires to be today.

101 Margaret Benston, "The Political Economy of Women's Liberation," *Monthly Review* 71, no. 4 (09, 2019): 1–11. doi:http://dx.doi.org.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/10.14452/MR-071-04-2019-08_1. http://proxy.lib.sfu.ca/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/docview/2296125550?accountid=13800.

102 Benston was also a co-founding member of the Department of Women's Studies and champion of interdisciplinarity. In the 1980s, she also developed expertise in the emerging field of computer science.

Much has changed since Benston published "Political Economy of Women's Liberation." Women now make up 54.45% of the undergraduate student body[103] and occupy important leadership positions at all levels across campus.[104] But these numbers hide an unsettling truth: women continue to grapple with many of the same issues Benston's generation identified half a century ago. They do more community-engaged research, caretaking of students and colleagues, and administrative service work, all under- or devalued forms of labour. They also encounter sexism (as well as racism, ableism, and heterosexism) in the evaluation of their teaching and scholarship.[105] Multiple structural barriers discourage women from speaking out about these issues, including backlash from our colleagues, department heads, and deans, male and female. Female faculty who attempt to address these issues often do so alone, without help from their colleagues or superiors, or advocates to support them.[106] Care for those who engage in care is largely absent.[107]

According to legal scholar Colleen Sheppard, the devaluation of caring in workplace cultures plays a significant role in producing relations of inequality. Conversely, caring by a person with greater power promotes "human flourishing that creates, recreates, sustains, and nurtures relations of equality." In other words, when it comes to building relations of equality, caring is "a way of strength."[108]

An example of how an ethics of care leads to human flourishing that creates, recreates, sustains, and nurtures relations of equality was evident in 2018 when SFU's Vice-President Academic Jon Driver oversaw the development of a stand-alone sexual harassment policy. External consultant Kim Hart led a months-long community consultation process, and Driver was provided with notes taken at the events. During the final few weeks of the process, however, Driver was able to attend the remaining gatherings and heard participants' testimony firsthand. Listening to those who are negatively impacted by sexual harassment and violence, which is a caring activity, changed Driver's perception of the problem and ultimately led to full administrative support for a comprehensive sexual violence education and prevention centre.[109]

While all people are negatively impacted by the devaluation of care,[110] women experience it more keenly for the simple fact that women are more engaged with caring than are men. They shoulder more of the caring burden in their personal lives, and they either willingly assume and/or are more often asked to take on service and other types of care work in their working lives.

The devaluation of care leads to compromised mental and physical health, professional dissatisfaction and demoralization, and professional and social isolation. Some faculty have sought opportunities elsewhere, some are forced to take extended disability leaves, and some leave academe altogether. When women experience the institution as sexist, racist, homo- or transphobic, and/or ableist, it negatively impacts our productivity and self-worth. This undermines departmental cohesion and weakens the university as a whole.

Our consultation uncovered six key areas where care is most lacking. They are:

- **excessive service demands** and the devaluation of service work;
- **institutional inability or unwillingness to recognize caregiving** as a normal part of human life, which should not negatively impact career progress;
- **generalized sexism** (for some women, this intersects with and cannot always be differentiated from hetero-sexist, ableist, and White supremacist/settler colonial attitudes and ways of knowing, being, and doing);
- **bias against research methods and topics more commonly used by women**, such as qualitative, community-based, reflexive research and research with and about women;
- **lack of a sense of community** and of institutional support, including health care; and
- **lack of services** on campus.

103 https://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/irp/students/documents/UG_Headcount_Stdnt_Lvl_Gender_All_Stdnts_Fall.pdf.

104 These benefits have flowed almost exclusively to White women; women of colour are under-represented at all levels, especially in upper administration (above dean level), which has never had a woman of colour among its ranks. Genevieve Fuji Johnson and Robert Howsam, "Whiteness, Power and the Politics of Demographics in the Governance of the Canadian Academy," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* (2020): 1–19. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0008423920000207.

105 This is the perception of many participants, and while there is no data to support it, the literature is unequivocal. See Cassandra M. Guarino and Victor M. H. Borden, "Faculty Service Loads and Gender: Are Women Taking Care of the Academic Family?" *Research in Higher Education* 58, no. 6 (Sept 2017): 672–94; and Bruce Macfarlane and Damon Burg, "Women Professors and the Academic Housework Trap," *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 41, no. 3 (2019): 262–74.

106 Anecdotally, I have heard and experienced instances of colleagues—female and male—supporting female faculty in addressing such matters, but because our consultation sought to uncover where problems exist, and how they impact members' professional and personal lives, the data does not capture positive experiences. We feel it is important to acknowledge that there are many such examples.

107 In fall 2019, the Vice-President Academic and Provost informed members of Senate that members of the SFU community who were angered, alienated, and distressed by the fact that SFU was hosting an anti-trans speaker could access support by seeking out therapy or counselling through Pacific Blue Cross. This is a good example of the need for an ethics of care grounded in solidarity politics. Had administrators reached out to the trans community to discuss the dilemma that confronted them, and worked with the community to find a solution, how might that have strengthened rather than shredded the fabric of our community?

108 Sheppard, *Inclusive Equality*, 61.

109 Jon Driver, interview with the author, September 28, 2018.

110 Sheppard, *Inclusive Equality*, 114.

These experiences were common to a wide range of women across social differences and are magnified for women who are Indigenous, and/or racialized, and/or disabled, and/or non-normative in their sexual orientation or gender identity or presentation.[111]

We examine these diverse issues under the heading "care" not to describe the crisis of care our members have noted, but to show that the solution to the problems and issues addressed here is for the institution to become a place that values, rewards, promotes, and amplifies care. The institution would then craft its practices and policies around, and measure its success according to its capacity to provide an ethics of care grounded in solidarity politics.

Community-Based Research

SFU markets itself as "Canada's engaged university," but several AW members who undertake community-based research report that this work is undervalued and that they face significant challenges during tenure promotion and review. They have also had difficulty gaining the support of the administration. Our collective agreement includes clear provisions for the recognition of scholarly work that does take the form of a published article (see Articles 28.18-28.22), but as one member put it, "the acknowledgement of the blurring of boundaries of [teaching, research, and service] does not seem to be translated in the review process." Her tenure file received positive external reviews, but her unit voted against her application for promotion and tenure based on a page count of peer reviewed journal articles. None of her other work, much of which is community-based, counted. Another member argued that "scholarship that is program intensive is not seen as scholarship." Several women felt that if they were White men, their work would be perceived as innovative and/or groundbreaking, but instead, it was seen as outside of the norm and therefore devalued.

One faculty member described in detail how she and a colleague built a special sexual safety workshop course to address reports within their unit that female students were experiencing sexual assault while in placement programs.

> *We volunteered our time for these Saturday sessions, but in the end, the dean would not support the workshop course and it was not offered, despite hours of preparation and the obvious imperative to improve student safety. I don't know what's happening with this now. The dean discouraged reporting on it by the program heads, and I was too tired and vulnerable from the fight to continue to press for annual reports.*

Another member explained that because of the academic hierarchy, some programs are considered less academic. Faculty members who are drawn to these programs struggle because their work is not valued as highly. Some have faced a split decision on their tenure. Several other members described experiences that fit this characterization. One commented that the "community engaged university is lip service."

Participants argued that members of tenure and promotion committees need to be explicitly trained on, and given examples of what counts as community-engaged or traditional scholarship. One unit is currently developing guidelines for how to evaluate scholarship that appears in something other than a peer review publication, "but you still need people who a) understand it and b) put it into practice. People who sit on TPC should have people with expertise in this area serve on the committee."

Devaluation of Service Work Combined with Excessive Service Demands

During virtually every consultation, members had lengthy discussions about the constant pressure to take on additional service. Many described their love or enjoyment of service work, but resent that it counts for "nothing" in the tenure and review processes. People who engage in care-oriented activities are sometimes viewed by colleagues as lesser scholars. These experiences are the result of the inherent sexism that marks care work as without academic value or merit. Yet no institution could function without it.

There are "gendered assumptions about who does caring work and who does emotional work. It's okay to say no, and you'll still have a job, but who we are willing to hear 'no' from? Although we have gender equity [in our unit], when you look at who is in senior leadership and who is doing the grunt work, there is such

111 Because the EDI Committee was undertaking a survey of all SFU employees, we chose not to use this research tool and therefore cannot provide comparative measures of the experiences of different SFU groups. However, the research data on this is rich and supported by anecdotal evidence: Indigenous and racialized women engage in not only more service work, but more taxing work due to racist and colonial/White supremacist attitudes and beliefs.

a gender skew." Another member observed: "my Indigenous colleagues get asked to be on every committee, they do a lot of support work with students."

Senior male faculty are not doing their fair share of service, observed more than one member. "Women faculty carry a heavy service load, and senior male faculty are like Teflon, either not doing service, or doing service with the lightest touch possible." Moreover, women in units where they are in the minority are frequently asked to serve on committees to create gender parity. Thus, one of SFU's solutions to the problem of sexism actually furthers the exploitation of women.

Women are keenly aware of gendered dynamics in the workplace and struggle to find ways to balance their desire to do service work with the prospect of burnout. Indeed, many members reported high levels of enjoyment of the service they do, but they are then made to pay a price for it. It is not always easy to parse the exploitation of their care from discrimination against their research:

Speaker A I had problems with my tenure, I think that was because I was female directly and indirectly. The being set up to fail ...

Nicki Kahnamoui: So, in the tenure process, you were criticized for ... ?

Speaker A All of the service was taking away from research, and my research wasn't as valued.

Nicki Kahnamoui: Why not?

Speaker A I think that's disciplinary bias rather than me being female [yet] I feel like it wouldn't have been as much of a question if I had been a White male.... I know the university has that whole analysis about pay discrepancy for women. I wonder if they can do workload discrepancy. I think [women] do more work, but I think we need some research.

When asked why women do so much service work, one member said: "Because we are willing to do it. And men know we will say yes."[112] This is not true for everyone, of course, but it was a very common observation.

Universities are also political environments where people can sometimes get caught in troubling circumstances that leave them vulnerable. For example, one member explained that she was "doing community-based research and leaning more toward teaching, so I could see that I would have trouble with tenure because I was not doing the kinds of things you get tenure for." When she had children, she was no longer willing to travel to conferences. Like all women, she understood that the professional standard against which she would be evaluated was not neutral. That standard is based on a post-WWII White male norm, and, in this sense, violates our human rights by discriminating against people who care for children—predominantly women.

Universities are also hierarchical institutions, which can be another complicating factor for women facing review, tenure, and promotion. This same member did not have a normal home department. Their application for tenure ended up becoming a political football between the Vice-President Academic who wanted to see their tenure case move forward, and a dean who tried to leverage the "favour" of processing her tenure through their faculty. "The Dean was asking me to do more, what I was doing was never enough, so I finally withdrew from the negotiation process," she said. Looking back, she can see that she was exhausted. She had no support, was alone in the negotiations, and "did not know how to manage the process." The experience has left her deeply dissatisfied and frustrated.

Priorities for a VP in EDI

We asked our participants: if we had a VP Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion starting Monday, what should be their first three priorities? They said:

- **"Scoping or environmental mapping** of what actually is going on service wise in different faculties, keeping in mind not just gender but also race, indigeneity, marginalization ... It could require that each department and faculty report on service load and come up with a plan for how to address uneven loads, and there would be resources to support that so it would not be more work for everyone. This could be in some ways like the salary gender report, creating an explicit recognition of the hidden work and emotional labour.... Measure for rank as well."
- **"These [new] structures [must] have teeth**: faculties must report on the distribution of service load, and must develop a plan to address inequities. People will need coaching on how to address these inequities."
- **"We need an administration that is open** to this kind of deep surveying for experiences, gathering and tracking data.... Data acknowledges invisible work."

112 This conversation led us to hold a workshop on how to say "no" and to create a short public-service announcement in the form of a video, "Reclaiming My Time."

Caregiving

As Margaret Benston pointed out in 1969, emotional and material support is essential to our very survival. More than half a century later, women continue to be its principal providers. Because the institution's work performance expectations are based on a discriminatory norm (White heteronormative male experience), women who have significant caring responsibilities outside of work regularly confront professional obstacles. They report slower career progress and increased stress, anxiety, and fatigue, sometimes resulting in chronic and debilitating health problems.[113] Currently, SFU provides no support or advocacy to address either the sexism inherent in the system or the consequences of that sexism.

Retired professor Veronica Dahl, the only participant willing to be identified in this report, successfully challenged NSERC's policy to refuse to cover childcare costs as a conference travel-related expense. It was a long and difficult struggle for which she received little institutional support. The victory was modest. NSERC agreed to the expense only for nursing mothers, which means that they ask grantees if they are nursing, "which I find offensive." SFU, however, "has not changed its stance, which is that childcare expenses are not an eligible expense. I was told by an administration that it is a choice to reproduce, and I replied that it was a choice to breathe." Dahl was proud of what she accomplished with NSERC and "kept the resolution in my office ... many women approached me and asked 'how do you do it?' SFU continued to block women who did not know they had a right. There is a lot of misinformation, disinformation, institutional uncaring."

The next time Dahl was asked to be a female role model for high school students at a weekend event, she requested reimbursement for childcare costs, and her department agreed. "I hoped that this would set a precedent but no, I was told this was a one-time deal." A progressive female colleague told her that she would never have thought to ask to be reimbursed for childcare costs; even scholars who have trained in feminist methods and theories have internalized heteropatriarchal norms.

Members also reported that SFU's institutional culture is hostile toward their lives as parents and caregivers, and that their professional identity is compromised as a result. One described how faculty are welcome to bring their dogs to campus but when one brought her child, she was told it was "not appropriate." Several discussed how one dean in particular presses women to make decisions about maternity leave that violate "both the law and our contract."

Speaker A

Most of the EDI issues I've seen are not policy, but informal and discretionary norms with chairs. We are young in union culture here at SFU, but some of the discrimination we have seen around childcare have been due to misinterpretation of our collective agreement. I wonder if enforcing the collective agreement and supportive policies could happen at a training level. At other institutions, if you have bereavement, you check a box, and the administration passes it on. Here at SFU, you have to sometimes beg for accommodation.

In general, women feel that they must do everything in their power to maintain a separation between their work life and their life as parents and caregivers. Indeed, as one member with approximately fifteen years of work history at SFU reported, "seeing the consult for women with caregiving responsibility/parenting was the first time I felt seen at SFU."

Our members offered the following suggestions to radically refigure the devaluation of care in the workplace to make it non-exploitative:

- formal recognition of caregiving as a legitimate reason to lower workload
- flexibility in our systems
- course releases and deferrals
- employment of contract teachers or substitute teachers to support or temporarily replace faculty who have caring responsibilities
- clear rules around workload, support, and advocacy
- active monitoring of how these issues are being dealt with

The demands on women's caring responsibilities extend beyond childcare and include partner care and parental care. One member whose partner has been living with a terminal illness for a long time described the "emotional wear and tear" of the inherent bias against care:

> *You want to let on that you can't cope.... During different periods I thought I wanted to quit and go home to my sisters so they can take care of us.... There is a constant expectation of you, as you become more senior in your career.... But some of us golden oldies need some TLC. We are enjoying a life-stage where we and our spouses are getting older. It's devastating when thinking about end of life issues with your spouse, helping them through this. We don't pay attention enough to this kind of issue.*

113 See Rodica Lisnic, Anna Zajicek, and Brinck Kerr, "Work–Family Balance and Tenure Reasonableness: Gender Differences in Faculty Assessment," *Sociological Spectrum* 39, no. 5 (2019): 340–58.

Members agreed that formal recognition of caregiving as a legitimate reason for a lower workload is needed, "like medical reasons. We've had people here who have had [to], temporarily or long term, take care of family members who were very sick. There is nothing in place to help them" alleviate their workload or get more time.

Female faculty are also managing care for parents, some of whom live great distances away.

Speaker A

I am not the primary caregiver to my parents, but they are in Pennsylvania. There is a lot of travel. My dad is now in a nursing home, have to go down and pack up and sell the house. Mother and brother have passed away. Trying to do this from a distance, lots of time and money. Becoming equivalent to being a caretaker.... I am able to juggle this, and my chairs have been really good about this. It also hasn't affected my teaching too much, but it has my research. Thank goodness it was after I got tenure. It feels like in that sort of situation, SFU could be helping those who fall into the sandwich generation.

Another member who is a new mother and has caring responsibilities for her parent who recently became very ill said:

Speaker E

I think I work in a flexible and warm department [but] definitions of family and dependence, and who was is responsible, is quite conventional. [We need to learn how to] accommodate a colleague who has a responsibility towards her parent, and might be required to bring [them] to social occasions where most people bring only a partner. So, my department represents a microcosm of discomfort about what my family looks like. There is no language available, no headspace for this configuration.

Similarly, D is responsible for a parent who has early-onset Alzheimer's and a sibling with mental illness. "But I can't ask for care provisions because they are one degree away." She describes her situation as "chronic and long term," resulting in "all kinds of time and financial considerations." Within two years both her husband and her other parent died. The bereavement support she received was insufficient, and she ended up taking a leave in the middle of a teaching term. She also recalled serving on a TPC where a faculty member was denied tenure "because she had multiple problems happen around her. How do we do account for cumulative impact, re: tenure clock?" she asked.

> *"These issues are chronic and cumulative, and they impact children, they can be the cause of early childhood traumas. We don't have ways of support kids in our care package who have intensified needs, [such as] special schools. We don't have holistic packages [that help us] deal with these complex family scenarios. They go invisible or have to stay invisible if we want to perform academia well, and then we don't really have support for unorthodox dependents or with unorthodox needs.*

And for caregiving of elder parents, "there is nothing," said E. She used our health plan package to seek support and was referred to an elder care specialist based in Montreal who had "no idea what's available in BC," and who was "only equipped to train you to have conversations with parents who are resistant to moving to assisted living. I asked if there was anything that they could help with. He said, I could search for some physiotherapists in your area. And since *I* can use a search engine ... "

The nuclear family model obscures how much care happens even when people don't live together. Kendra Strauss, an associate professor and Director of the Labour Studies Program and the SFU Morgan Centre for Labour Research, recently published research that quantifies unpaid caring. The study found that 30% or more Canadians have caring responsibilities not to a dependent child.[114] "Most of us will be caring for someone who is not a child at some point," said Strauss. "We need to recognize caregiving responsibilities not relating to cohabiting as well as different kinds of families."

That begins with training administrators to recognize care work as an equity issue, not a personal problem. When E approached the benefits and payroll office in Human Resources to ask about support for her dependent parent, she was told to arrange for private care for him, or "send him on holiday. I am not asking for life coaching," she said. "I am asking about my rights here. I am not looking for someone to do me a favour." It is "especially strange that there is no flexibility outside of atomized notion of a family," she pointed out, "since universities celebrate diversity in our students and faculty. But culture isn't just a skin tone. There are lots of things about how culture plays out, including caregiving responsibilities. There is no embedded culture of supporting these differences." F agrees: "We need to recognize caregiving responsibilities not relating to cohabiting."

At present, some women end up using their research terms to deal with care and estate issues, highlighting again how our heteropatriarchal White norm exploits women by devaluing their care work and forcing them to compete against people who do fewer care activities, while the norm also depends on these very activities. Women explained that they "fall

114 A. Maddrell, K. Strauss, N. J. Thomas, & S. Wyse, "Mind the Gap: Gender Disparities Still to Be Addressed in UK Higher Education Geography," *Area* 48, no. 1 (2016): 48–56. https://doi.org/10.1111/area.12223

behind on their research agenda," but behind is relative to the heteronormative White male standard. Members suggested "holistic packages when we are dealing with these complex family scenarios" as a partial solution to female faculty's immediate needs. However, the culture needs to change too. Currently women involved in care activities "become invisible, or have to stay invisible, if we want to perform academia well, and then we don't really have support for unorthodox dependents or with unorthodox needs."

Legal scholar Colleen Sheppard argues that non-dominant groups are coerced into servicing the needs and interests of dominant group(s). To promote human flourishing, she says, we must "create the conditions under which individual and group development can occur as defined by the individual and group." Rather than eliminating difference, which invariably means retaining a white, heterosexual, and male norm, equity requires that people from subordinated groups can "realize their potential" while "protecting the integrity of their differences."[115]

The expectation that adults, particularly women, provide intensive caring for parents may be more likely to define relationships in non-white, non-Western families, but statistically at least, it is increasingly becoming a normative experience. As a member whose research concerns caring work pointed out, "the nuclear family also obscures how much care happens [between people who] don't live together.."

Our working environments are built on a twentieth-century model that subsumes difference under an imagined homogeneity or common identity, argues Sheppard. According to AW members, an essential step toward protecting the integrity of our differences is to recognize and value the role of caring in our personal lives. Once we do this, it will be an easy transition to building more flexibility into our workflows and structures. Specifically, members of the SFU community with caring responsibilities would benefit from stronger policies and practices around course release and deferrals that extend beyond the nuclear family. In the case of an emergency, all unit leaders should be required to take responsibility for arranging for classes to be covered, which could be done by developing collegial systems of support to facilitate stand-in teaching on short notice. They also called for support and advocacy on these issues across the institution, and they believe that SFUFA could play a more proactive role on this front.

Absence of Institutional Support

One of the major themes that emerged in conversations with members about the conflict between work, professional advancement, and caring is the silence about these issues. Silence erases a person's experience and leads to feelings of invisibility and isolation. Indeed, perhaps because this consultation was for many women the first time they had had a discussion about the challenge of balancing home life and work demands, some were flooded with feelings of grief, sadness, frustration, and despair.

Expressing care for the health and wellness of a faculty unit can be another problem area. In 2018 H, who has herself experienced sexual harassment in her professional life, approached her department chair about a male faculty member who was sexually harassing female graduate students. The chair "responded quite aggressively and dismissively when I went to speak with him, asking for the names of the complainants and clearly wanting to protect his colleague. This colleague eventually got promoted."

In fact, sexual harassment is a chronic problem in her unit. In 2017 she and another female department member created a committee for the sole purpose of dealing with it. The committee quickly found itself ill-equipped to deal with the complex psychological issues that arise in chronically toxic spaces such as this, and the department chair declined requests for increased support. Indeed, most of the male-dominated department members appear uninterested in addressing the problem. A training they organized on handling instances of sexual harassment was poorly attended.

H refused to give up. She sent in writing a detailed account of events to the Dean. It documented how female students had reported the harassment to their male supervisors, but "the supervisors committed multiple procedural errors that placed the survivors in a worse situation than they were before." One of the students had "already spent a lot of time reporting, even in writing, and it was all 'a waste of time' (her words), as she was not protected by her supervisor from [the male student's] verbal abuse and threats. The Human Rights officer humiliated her by not taking the case seriously and making her shake hands with [the male student]." H argued that "male colleagues perceive these situations as much less serious than what they actually are. They are well-intentioned, but do not realize that they are making things worse by trying to make up their own solution or by even being dismissive, instead of seeking professional advice and assistance."

115 Sheppard, *Inclusive Equality,* 114.

Two of the women received support from the Sexual Violence Support and Prevention Office where they reviewed their options. Neither chose to pursue a formal complaint since "they both depend on the supervisor who has already expressed annoyance at their repeated complaints."

"So, as far as I know, these incidents were mostly swept under the rug and the perpetrators have 'gotten away' with these things. The Dean was very concerned about the behavior of the faculty member when I spoke with him about this, so some kind of warning may have gone to that person." H raised these issues in our consultation to highlight the chronic and systemic nature of sexual harassment for female graduate students in her unit. It highlights what Colleen Sheppard calls the institutionalization of the absence of caring. It also raises vital questions about how the well-being of female faculty. What level of career satisfaction can one achieve in such an environment? What impact does it have on faculty productivity, and by extension, career progress? What are the short and long-term health consequences of having to endure both harassment and indifference to harassment?

Another AW member started tracking sickness and stress leaves in her department and found that a full third (seven) of the female tenured and tenure-track faculty had either left SFU employment or taken medical leaves over the previous five years. She reported that when she brought this to the attention of the chair, and, then later, associate deans, she was congratulated by one "for being so ethical" and said that he thought of her as the "conscience of the faculty". But he did nothing to support changes to what she describes as a toxic work environment for women committed to social justice issues. She experienced this as a paternalistic "pat on the head." Another administrator, while sitting across the table from her, refused to look at the data in the spreadsheets she had prepared, and told her that she was "making it up." Two years later, this member too ended up taking a medical leave.

In other cases, however, talking about stressors was a welcome experience. Several participants mentioned that AW provides an important source of support and connection that helps to overcome the silos in which most of us work. One described it as a "safe supportive space ... where you can talk, and share what you are going through." Another said:

> *"I do my research, I get the rewards, and the perks, I am privileged class-wise, but there is not much pleasure for me as a queer person on campus. I have not found a sense of queer community, or even feminist community. This is why Academic Women is so important to me.*

Participants attributed the lack of support and connection to the fact that many of us face long commutes. "We all rush off in different communities. At the end of the day, you're not inclined to go off and have supper, and you want to go home, and you have an hour, hour and half of drive." Another said, "it's hard to create ties. One thing I did, for intellectual and personal community, I started [a feminist] reading group with people I know and like ... that's been really good. I hosted parties and organized [some outdoor activities], but I stopped after I became a parent, and no one else took it on."

Speaker F

I rarely get to meet people outside of FASS. Outside of chairs and directors meetings, I don't get to interact [with other faculty]. There is not a lot of leadership around nurturing relationships across departments and fields. We need to be able to talk across the university.... But we are all tired. There needs to be deeper work around collaboration to make it meaningful. I don't know what it would look like. There are lots of good things here [at SFU] that are not being utilized to their full potential.

Several participants who had begun their careers at another institution were surprised to see how poorly SFU performed on these markers.

Speaker G

[My previous university] was very different. What made a difference is that the human element was there, we were celebrating each other. We were cohesive as a department, going out for lunch together. We talked about having a bad day, about the pressures. I felt comfortable. You knew that you or your job performance wouldn't be judged. It was a different culture. And when I arrived [here], I wanted to bring that with me. I wanted to move it into here. I hosted parties at my home. Nothing came back. The department recognized that we need to do something social. We have a BBQ. I don't even show up anymore. We can't just do a once a year thing. The human element is missing."

The Simon Fraser University Faculty Association works with faculty to help resolve the kinds of issues described in this report. However, we have no quantitative sense of how well this mechanism works to address systemic inequities. We do know that it is complaints driven, and according to member input, female faculty do not always have the energy to seek help from SFUFA, or they do not anticipate a successful outcome based on past experience. Some also fear retribution from their superiors. More research needs to be done on this. Certainly, SFUFA could do more to communicate to their members their right to a non-exploitative environment, and their willingness and capacity to support members who experience racism, sexism, ableism, and heterosexism. That said, we include here a few examples that members provided of

interventions intended to be supportive in the face of discrimination. Veronica Dahl described how the sexism in her department was so intolerable that she

Veronica Dahl: ... ended up taking refuge in my lab and with outside researchers; I had to make a world for myself and shut off the rest.

Question: How did that affect you?

Veronica Dahl: It's easier to get isolated, to get out of the news, of things you need to know, miss out of opportunities, it's easy to be discounted, invisibilized.

At one point, the VP Academic told Dahl's chair to find another supervisor for her (all faculty are supervised by the department chair). He recognized that the chair was antagonizing her and prohibited the chair from having any decision making power over her. However, her efforts failed when she tried to advocate for tuition relief for a female grad student who had a complicated pregnancy and gave birth to twins.

Sometimes efforts to help actually hinder. One member suggested that laws intended to prevent sexism by making it a violation of human rights to discuss an interviewee's pregnancy interfered with her ability to openly address her very advanced pregnancy at her job interview. Another member described how her chair took a "paternalistic approach" and made unilateral decisions for her:

Speaker G: She really didn't like it when I talked about my experiences, [she simply] said that I will not be working [because of my parenting responsibilities].

Clearly, good intentions are not enough. Members called for equitable policies and practices, and well-trained administrators, from chairs upward, to enact and oversee them.

Some members were concerned that care for the SFU community stops with faculty, students, and employees, which is out of alignment with our "engaged university" motto. Despite having two campuses in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, SFU "is not doing anything related to the opioid crisis.... A White student will overdose, a scholarship will happen, there will be some education. We will be told some things are happening. But some populations are more vulnerable ... we should be training people to work in their communities, but we only care about people living on campus." Another added that our downtown campus "keep[s] out the most vulnerable people. Security asking a woman hijabi why she was there. We drive out homeless people from both downtown campuses, and hide the comfortable furniture to discourage folks" from entering our spaces. A third described our actions toward community members as "unconscionable. There is not a lot of valu[ing] of a lot of people's lives."

> *When I talk to folks in harm-reduction—it's not rocket science—there are simple things that make a real difference in the world. It's not a lot of work. We should be putting posters. But I worry it means we'll just have a conference to show that we care, which this is lip service, rather than acknowledging that we service vulnerable folks. I think in Surrey, like 100 people overdosed in an hour. It doesn't make sense to me.*

Another way participants felt that the university should provide support, advocacy, and policies grounded in an ethics of care is through the provision of on-campus mental and physical health services. One participant described how she had to take her child off campus to treat a case of pink eye discovered while they were at the on-campus daycare.

> *Considering how difficult it is to find a GP in Vancouver (I'm lucky to have a great one!), I'm wondering if we could get a walk-in medical clinic, or mixed GP practice/walk in for the Cornerstone/ University neighbourhood? That way SFU health service can specialize in certain urgent care functions, but that folks on campus have access to broader health services?*

Some members explained that they had been advocating for such services for years, without success.

In her 1969 article, Margaret Benston said about women's care work: "We are not merely discriminated against, we are exploited."[116] The experiences described by members of AW indicate that, despite major gains, this remains a reality for many, if not most, female faculty.

The forms of discrimination described herein are systemic in nature, which has been defined in Canadian law as:

> *practices or attitudes that have, whether by design or impact, the effect of limiting an individual's or a group's right to the opportunities generally available because of attributed rather than actual characteristics. [The] mix of rules or practices... may not seem discriminatory when looked at individually, [but] together result[] in discrimination. The law is clear that intention to discriminate is not required to prove that discrimination occurred. Therefore systemic discrimination often refers to an indirect*

116 Benston, "The Political Economy of Women's Liberation," 10.

or unintended negative effect or impact of certain standards, policies, or behaviour.[117]

As countless studies have shown, Indigenous people, people of colour, and women do more caring work on campus, which includes diversity work since it is intended to enhance the well-being of marginalized peoples and does not advance one's own career or salary. Perhaps the most concerning finding of this study has been the deep cynicism female faculty expressed about SFU's approach to EDI, which they view as nothing more than box-ticking.

Members had very clear ideas of what a caring institution would look like. First, it would approach all things holistically, including the fact that staff and faculty are more than the labour we do for the university. On-campus services for our individual health care needs and increased daycare spaces are the most basic and also essential services, and yet are still not met. A holistic approach would recognize and value diverse forms of care work we engage in. It would also recognize and support the care work we do beyond the nuclear family, for example for parents, extended family members, and chosen family members. Support must be proactive, not reactive. For example, taking compassionate leave should be made a simple process that does not require negotiations or reliance on the goodwill of department chairs or deans, or result in the loss of course credits/releases or research terms. When all members of the community are fully seen and heard, if we strive to exist in good relation to each other, our individual and collective needs, as well as each person's potential to contribute to the advancement of the community, will be obvious and clear, making a proactive stance not only easy, but necessary.

Taking Responsibility

Equity is built from below, but responsibility for equity rests at the top. If SFU is to live up to its commitment to EDI, its leadership must "assume significant responsibility for creating conditions that enhance equality," taking into account how institutional policies, procedures, and cultures "intersect with individual and collective agency, informal [practices, and] private power." Affirming the responsibility of university administrators to act to prevent and remedy inequality "is simply another way of speaking about our collective responsibilities to ensure fairness and inclusion."[118] According to AW members, SFU must publicly acknowledge where and how inequities exist, and develop specific, measurable commitments to equity. These commitments must flow from genuine, meaningful, and non-hierarchical conversations with members of the community. Members of the administration must be required to show real progress on these fronts. Advancing EDI must be included in annual performance evaluations. Faculty and staff most affected by the inequities described in this report must have a formal role in evaluating the institution's progress. To be in good relation, the administration must recognize with humility its responsibility not just for us, but to us.

AW members expressed strong support for the 2016 joint administration-faculty recommendation for a Vice-President, Equity. They argued that nothing will change without responsibility and accountability, and the only way to achieve either is by empowering a well-resourced office with autonomy and authority. We conclude that such an office is an essential first step toward assuming significant responsibility for creating conditions that enhance equality, but such a step must be taken in the knowledge that, as decades of evidence has shown, no single person or office can change an entire institution. *This is not a justification for not creating such an office.* This is recognition of, as one member put it, the need for "champions at multiple levels across the university, perhaps in the form of an action group per faculty who then.... The VP plays a strong co-ordinating and resourcing role." As Colleen Sheppard put it, formal oversight is essential in securing enforcement of equality rights, and in evaluating and monitoring inclusive processes, "equitable inclusion needs to become an objective embedded in the multiple processes of decision making throughout [the institution]. It needs to be taken into account as a positive good in the institutional cultures of our everyday lives."[119]

117 Canadian National Railway Co. v. Canada. Canadian Human Rights Commission, 1987, 1 S.C.R. 1114 at p. 1138. See http://www.manitobahumanrights.ca/v1/education-resources/resources/policies-pages/policies-1-3.html. See also http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/racism-and-racial-discrimination-systemic-discrimination-fact-sheet.

118 Sheppard, *Inclusive Equality*, 137.

119 Sheppard, *Inclusive Equality,* 146.

Conclusion

SFU has everything it needs to become a radically inclusive community grounded in solidarity politics. Our radical past is part of our institutional identity. SFU's original commitment to building non-hierarchical relations and interdisciplinary ways of knowing was unfortunately stifled by the administration, but this vision persists in pockets and programs across our campuses. Maggie Benston and Terry Fox, two celebrated figures on and off campus, embodied radical solidarity in how they lived their lives, and Maggie Benston taught us how to transform our procedures and processes to ensure equity, a task that simultaneously built community and solidarity. We have incredible student organizations like the SFSS Women's Centre, which was forged in the heat of late 1960s commitments to collectivism and anti-oppression. We have outstanding teaching and research programs, and communities of practice that put solidarity-based caring into effect every day. It is all here. We don't need to go outside ourselves to look for it. But we do have to cultivate it. We have to centre it, we have to hold ourselves accountable for building and sustaining it, and we have to undertake widespread systems change to enact, support, and sustain it. You, reader, have already started down this road. By reading this report and listening to our experiences, you have all the tools you need to shift your orientation toward an ethic of care grounded in solidarity across difference.

The idea of the caring university could easily become just another platitude. Care is not a sentiment, it is an action. We know we are cared for not only by what others say, but by what they do. Of course, people cannot be commanded to care. Nor can they be made to nurture solidarity across group-based differences. SFU's leaders can, however, take decisive and measurable steps to embed care in the culture of the SFU community, and they can hold people, including first of all themselves, accountable when they fail to meet the needs of the community they have been hired to serve.

Given that we are currently in the throes of a global pandemic, some readers may wonder if these issues should not be set aside, at least for the moment. Precisely the opposite is true. As we have seen, the rhetoric that "we are all in this together" was quickly retracted in light of overwhelming evidence that one's social and economic position has a massive impact on the degree to which one is impacted by the pandemic,[120] making it clear that EDI is not an extra, an add-on, or a luxury. And if we don't address these inequities now, we re-entrench them into everything we do from here on out. The conditions created by the pandemic provide a perfect opportunity to thread and weave EDI into the very fabric of our everyday life.

120 Canadian Union of Public Employees, "COVID-19 Hits Equity-Seeking Workers Hardest," April 29, 2020. https://cupe.ca/covid-19-hits-equity-seeking-workers-hardest.

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Appendix A

3/1/2019 11:35 AM

AW Asks: Is SFUs Blue Cross plan sufficient for your needs?

Dear colleagues,

Yesterday's AW consultation on EDI and disability, which I learned must be thought of in much broader terms than simply "accommodations," made me aware of how our Blue Cross plan is a practical and concrete way our institution can be "inclusive" with regards to our physical and psychological/neural diversity.

Does the current Pacific Blue Cross plan support your physical and psychological/neural needs? If not, what would such a plan look like?

It also made me aware of the fact that there has never been at SFU a place for support and advocacy on behalf of faculty, librarians, and other staff provided by people with specific expertise in the area of physical and mental health, well being, and diversity. Should there be?

While members may want to discuss these issue on the list, please also email me directly with your own experiences, thoughts, and expert insights on these matters for the purpose of informing our EDI report (your name will not be used unless you request it). You can provide anonymous input by sending me an unsigned note through campus mail. I am in the History Department.

Personally, while I can better afford some of the costs not covered by our plan than can most British Columbians, I wonder if equity, inclusion, and diversity is about more than the financial benefit (although that is, of course, important), that "EDI" involves creating structures of support that signal very clearly and concretely that the institution is committed to creating a workplace where each of us are provided with a range of supports that will facilitate our ability to have our needs met, and even to succeed?

Have a wonderful weekend,

Elise

Radical Inclusion:
Equity and Diversity Among
Female Faculty at
Simon Fraser University

A Report Produced by Academic Women
of SFU, August 2020

www.sfu.ca/academicwomen.html