

# Our Desired Future: What we heard from our community

Summary report (March 25, 2022)

## Introductory Context:

**Purpose:** The Phase 2 engagement survey was designed to look forward to our community's desired future. The collected data will be used in the development of the Equity Action Plan's Universal goals.

**Context:** The survey was live for about 6 weeks between February and mid-March 2022. It was advertised across various platforms and methods, including the EAP website, UVic social media accounts, and by word of mouth.

**Development:** The Reflection and Challenge Committee developed the questions as a collective group.

## Summary Statement:

In total, our phase two engagement survey garnered 409 responses. Of these responses, 104 surveys were incomplete in some fashion (e.g., providing demographic data, but skipping the open-ended questions). The open-ended questions averaged 265 responses each. Part 1 of the report details demographic data, while part 2 highlights the identified themes for questions 1 (equity), 2 (diversity), and 3 (belonging) of the survey. Please note that direct quotations may have been altered to maintain anonymity.

## PART 1: Self-identification demographic summary

### Q1 – Please indicate your relationship to the University of Victoria

QUESTION OPTIONS	RESPONSES – n (%)
Staff	105 (34.2%)
Faculty	82 (26.7%)
Sessional Instructor	14 (4.5%)
Undergraduate Student	76 (24.8%)
Graduate Student	39 (12.7%)
Alumni	40 (13.0%)
*My relationship to UVic is...	21 (6.8%)

\*My relationship to UVic... – answers included: external and grant-funded staff, volunteer, parent of student

### Q2 – Are you an international student?

\*Question only appeared for those who selected 'Undergraduate student' or 'Graduate Student' in Q1\*

QUESTION OPTIONS	RESPONSES – n (%)
Yes	14 (12.7%)
No	96 (87.3%)

### Q3 – Please select what gender you identify as:

QUESTION OPTIONS	RESPONSES – n (%)
Woman	197 (64.0%)
Man	70 (22.7%)
Non-Binary	12 (3.9%)
Two-Spirit	1 (0.32%)
Prefer not to say	19 (6.2%)
*My gender identity is...	9 (2.9%)

\*My gender identity is... – answers included: gender queer, gender fluid

### Q4 – Do you identify as transgender or as having trans experience?

QUESTION OPTIONS	RESPONSES – n (%)
Yes	20 (6.5%)
No	271 (88.0%)
Prefer not to say	17 (5.5%)



**Q5 – Do you identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, Two-Spirit, or another minority sexual orientation?**

<b>QUESTION OPTIONS</b>	<b>RESPONSES – n (%)</b>
Yes	77 (25.0%)
No	208 (67.5%)
Prefer not to say	23 (7.5%)

**Q6 – Do you identify as a person with a disability (invisible, visible, mental and/or physical)?**

<b>QUESTION OPTIONS</b>	<b>RESPONSES – n (%)</b>
Yes	93 (30.3%)
No	195 (63.5%)
Prefer not to say	19 (6.2%)

**Q7 – Do you identify as Indigenous?**

<b>QUESTION OPTIONS</b>	<b>RESPONSES – n (%)</b>
Yes	21 (6.8%)
No	272 (88.6%)
Prefer not to say	14 (4.6%)

**Q8 – Do you identify as an Indigenous person of North America? For the purpose of this survey, Indigenous peoples of North America are those who identify as First Nations (status, non-status, treaty or non-treaty), Metis, Inuit or Native American (US).**

\*Question only appeared for those that selected 'Yes' to Q7\*

<b>QUESTION OPTIONS</b>	<b>RESPONSES – n (%)</b>
Yes	19 (90.5%)
No	1 (4.8%)
Prefer not to say	1 (4.8%)

**Q9 – Do you identify as someone who is racialized or a person of colour?**

<b>QUESTION OPTIONS</b>	<b>RESPONSES – n (%)</b>
Yes	57 (19.0%)
No	225 (75.0%)
Prefer not to say	18 (6.0%)

**Q10 – Beyond the answers you've provided to the questions above, do you identify as belonging to an underrepresented, marginalized, or equity seeking group?**

<b>QUESTION OPTIONS</b>	<b>RESPONSES – n (%)</b>
Yes	121 (40.3%)
No	156 (51.7%)
Prefer not to say	24 (8.0%)

**Q11 – Other self-identification information provided:**

- Socioeconomic status; First generation student status; Immigrant/refugee status; Specific learning challenges (e.g., ADD); Religious and spiritual community members

## PART 2: Our desired future: Equity, diversity, and belonging – Identified themes

### Q1. What could equity look/feel like at UVic (approximately 150 words)?

*Equity is about each person getting what they need to thrive. This is different from equality where everyone receives the same amount of something (food, medicine, access, opportunity).*

#### HIGH LEVEL THEMES:

##### 1. ACKNOWLEDGING AND CONFRONTING SYSTEMIC INJUSTICES

→ **Priority:** Respondents indicated that equity at UVic must start with a clear acknowledgment of the systemic reality of oppression and injustice. Proactive policies, engaged education, and diverse supports were suggested as a means of confronting the dominant systems.

*What respondents said: "It would be leaning on rigorous analysis of systemic inequity and would be implemented by proactive politics of support (minority, BIPOC, Indigenous, Women, LGBTQ+...)."*

*What respondents said: "To actually name racism and that it exists and creates harm. That there is a system of harms that privilege some and exclude others. That UVic is built upon systemic, structural and organization racism."*

##### 2. REDEFINING ACADEMIC 'SUCCESS'

→ **Priority:** Respondents suggested that equity at UVic would look and feel like a broader definition of what success looks like. This would involve diverse assessment tools, challenging academic tradition, and an embrace of alternative knowledges and pathways.

*What respondents said: "Moving away from the colonial narrow definitions of what is 'excellence' or 'success' in academics, and respecting diverse approaches to gathering and sharing knowledge. A greater variety of teaching and assessment methods. More spaces for creative and collaborative knowledge production. More connection with nature, regeneration of traditional ecosystems."*

##### 3. SAFETY THROUGH RESPECT

→ **Priority:** Respondents indicated that equity looks and feels like safety, earned through mutual respect, accountability, shared values, and collective action.

*What respondents said: "I think a focus should be on creating safer spaces—we need to acknowledge that forms of violence and marginalization continue in our classrooms and across our university... Just acknowledging equity does not make people's experiences safe or positive."*

##### 4. SUPPORTS

→ **Priority:** Respondents emphasized that equity looks and feels like diverse support. Scholarships and funding, accessibility supports, and mental health services should be developed to address historically ingrained inequities.

*What respondents said: "Recognizing that people will need diverse supports to thrive, and doing what is realistically possible to providing people the supports they need to thrive. Specific supports for underrepresented folks in Universities historically."*

## Q2. What could diversity look/feel like at UVic (approximately 150 words)?

*Diversity is the measurable representation of difference. Usually we refer to demographic or identity diversity but we can also think about education, perspectives, opinions, disciplines, etc.*

### HIGH LEVEL THEMES:

#### 1. DECENTERING WHITENESS AND DIVERSITY OF CULTURE

→ **Priority:** Respondents proposed that in order to experience true diversity at UVic, the community must decenter the dominant systems of power (i.e., whiteness) by embracing diversity of culture. Diversity of culture could look like diversity in access to food, campus supports, non-traditional academic spaces, etc.

*What respondents said: "That diversity is not the goal. It is about dismantling the centering of whiteness, power, and privilege, to make actual change. Diversity should not just be spoken of by mostly cis/white/neuro-typical/etc. professors, but that diverse individuals themselves should be able to tell their own stories."*

*What respondents said: "It looks like predominantly white spaces listening to, acting on and respecting minority voices. The University's stance on change being necessary, that actually needs to be reinforced somehow - otherwise it's just rhetoric."*

#### 2. DIVERSE WAYS OF KNOWING

→ **Priority:** Respondents expressed a desire to see UVic push beyond the traditional boundaries of academic knowledge and embrace different worldviews, epistemologies, and ontologies. By diversifying the way in which knowledge is viewed within the institution, new collective priorities, relationships, and values will emerge.

*What respondents said: "Priorities are placed on hiring and retaining people with varying perspectives, opinions, levels of education and disciplines. This will be facilitated by hiring practices that don't discriminate based on demographic or identity differences. UVic, as many other universities do, places too much emphasis on educational levels and it creates a hierarchy within the university environment."*

#### 3. DIVERSITY IN REPRESENTATION

→ **Priority:** Respondents reiterated that representation across the institution – including in positions of power and/or authority – must be a central priority in UVic's ideal diverse future. Support services must also be representative of the communities they serve. Therefore, it is not enough to fill 'quota' positions, without providing the necessary supports to allow individuals to thrive.

*What respondents said: "Diversity would look like no more white male presidents. Our senior leadership teams are predominantly white and cis-het and in a socio-economic class wildly outside of most staff and students they are making decisions for. Include more diverse voices at decision making tables that can advocate for and speak to the actual issues the majority of students and staff are dealing with (aka the housing crisis has a MAJOR impact on mental, physical and spiritual well-being)."*

### Q3. What could belonging look/feel like at UVic (approximately 150 words)?

*Belonging can be experienced when university community members are a connected and respected part of UVic. It is similar to inclusion, where people can be who they are and have opportunities to succeed.*

#### HIGH LEVEL THEMES:

##### 1. COLLECTIVE AMBITION AND COMMUNITY VALUES

→ **Priority:** Respondents emphasized the importance of feeling like they were a part something larger than themselves. Throughout responses, belonging was reflected through shared values, community action, ambition, and energy. Within these broader processes, the individual (and their experience) is valued and celebrated.

*What respondents said: “Belonging is a part of being valued for who we are as individuals and what we can contribute in a unique way. Belonging is also a part of psychologically and socially being supported and feeling we are an equal member of a group, we identify as a member of a cohesive and respectful group. Belonging could mean I am valued and respected for who I am as a person not necessarily for how much I publish or what my grades are in a class. Belonging means my community cares about me, connects with me, supports me and I feel like I am a valued member of that community.”*

##### 2. RECOGNITION, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND ACTIVE LISTENING

→ **Priority:** Respondents suggested that a future of belonging at UVic must look and feel like a clear recognition of historical traumas, consistent accountability and transparency from the institution, and a continued emphasis on listening to community members at every opportunity.

*What respondents said: “I think this has to be participatory in nature, so designing communities and connections have to work for the individual. I have seen too many initiatives to build community flop because they did not do the consultation first of how people wanted to be engaged, reached, connected etc.”*

*What respondents said: “For a university - or any institution - to create a sense of belonging, it needs to be transparent. Universities are not examples of transparency these days. Complete financial transparency is a good place to start. How are budgets allocated? How are these decisions made?”*

##### 3. SAFETY TO BE ONE’S TRUE SELF

→ **Priority:** Belonging, for respondents, ultimately meant feeling safe and able to be and act as one’s true self. Our community emphasized not having to hide or conceal aspects of themselves that may be outside the norm. With that freedom, respondents suggested UVic’s community would begin to thrive.

*What respondents said: “I care most about safety. I want students, staff and faculty to feel safe and cared for within the institution—this includes everything from interpersonal experiences with peers/colleagues to higher level resource investments in diverse faculty recruitment and institutional policies and processes for addressing violence (related to race, gender, sexuality, physical ability, religion) in a trauma informed way when it happens.”*

## APPENDIX A: Survey Questions

### What could equity look/feel like at UVic? (Open ended – 150 word limit)

Different from equality, in which everyone has the same amount of something (food, medicine, access, opportunity) despite their existing needs or assets, *equity* is about each person getting what they need to thrive.

### What could belonging look/feel like at UVic? (Open ended – 150 word limit)

Like inclusion, where people can be who they are and have opportunities to achieve, belonging is when all university community members are a connected and respected part of UVic.

### What could diversity look/feel like at UVic? (Open ended – 150 word limit)

Diversity is the measurable representation of difference. Usually we refer to demographic or identity diversity but we can also think about education, perspectives, opinions, disciplines, etc.

### Voluntary Self-Identification

Through the development of UVic's Equity Action Plan, we hope to use an equity-centered design approach to reduce barriers to participation and centre the lived experiences of marginalized communities within the University. With this goal in mind, we ask survey respondents to provide voluntary self-identification details.

### Please indicate your relationship to the University of Victoria:

- Staff
- Faculty
- Sessional instructor
- Undergraduate student
- Graduate student
- Alumni
- My relationship to UVic is \_\_\_\_\_

### (branched question – if either student option is picked) Are you an international student?

- Yes
- No

### Please select what gender you identify as:

- Woman
- Man
- Two-Spirit
- Non-binary
- My gender is \_\_\_\_\_
- Prefer not to say

### Do you identify as transgender or as having trans experience?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say



**Do you identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, Two-Spirit or another minority sexual orientation?**

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

**Do you identify as a person with a disability (invisible, visible, mental and/or physical)?**

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

**Do you identify as Indigenous?**

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

**(branched question – if yes) Do you identify as an Indigenous person of North America?**

For the purpose of this survey, Indigenous peoples of North America are those who identify as First Nations (status, non-status, treaty or non-treaty), Metis, Inuit or Native American (US).

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

**Do you identify as someone who is racialized or a person of colour?**

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

**Beyond the answers you've provided to the questions above, do you identify as belonging to an underrepresented, marginalized or equity seeking group?**

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

**Acknowledging the limits of demographic surveys and the complexities of intersecting identities and experience, we ask that you share any additional self-identification information with us that will help shape the EAP. Some examples include being an immigrant or refugee, a member of a religious or spiritual minority, or from a lower socioeconomic background. I identify as... (Open ended – 150 word limit)**

