

Identifying Goals and Objectives: What we heard from our community

Summary report (June 11, 2022)

Introductory Context:

Purpose: The phase 4 engagement survey was designed to allow the UVic community an opportunity to review, critique, and provide suggestions for improvement on the draft Universal Equity Goals that resulted from previous phases of engagement. This survey also provided an opportunity for the community to identifying the specific barriers within each goal category that they would like to see prioritized. The collected data will inform the finalized drafting process of each Universal Equity Goal and, as such, will play a large role in the development of the Equity Action Plan.

Context: The survey was available for the month of April 2022. It was advertised across various platforms and methods, including the EAP website, UVic social media accounts, and by word of mouth. Select face-to-face engagement with campus groups/committees sessions were also conducted.

Development: The RCC drafted the universal equity goals and the survey questions in consultation with the EAP development team.

Summary Statement:

In total, our phase 4 engagement survey garnered 202 responses. Of these responses, 86 surveys were incomplete in some fashion (e.g., providing demographic data, but skipping the goal evaluation). Part 1 of the report details the self-identification demographic summary, while part 2 highlights the evaluation of the universal equity goals and the prioritization of identified barriers.

PART 1: Self-identification demographic summary

Q1 – Please indicate your relationship to the University of Victoria

QUESTION OPTIONS	RESPONSES – n (%)
Staff	87 (44.6%)
Faculty	36 (18.5%)
Sessional Instructor	5 (2.6%)
Undergraduate Student	49 (25.1%)
Graduate Student	18 (9.2%)
Alumni	29 (14.9%)
*My relationship to UVic is...	7 (3.6%)

*My relationship to UVic... – answers included: external and grant-funded staff, volunteer, incoming 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	13 (19.7%)
No	53 (80.3%)

Q3 – Please select what gender you identify as:

QUESTION OPTIONS	RESPONSES – n (%)
Woman	127 (64.8%)
Man	45 (23.0%)
Non-Binary	14 (7.1%)
Two-Spirit	0 (0.0%)
Prefer not to say	4 (2.0%)
*My gender identity is...	6 (3.1%)

*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	19 (9.5%)
No	168 (85.3%)
Prefer not to say	10 (5.1%)

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

QUESTION OPTIONS	RESPONSES – n (%)
Yes	55 (28.1%)
No	131 (66.8%)
Prefer not to say	10 (5.1%)

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

QUESTION OPTIONS	RESPONSES – n (%)
Yes	73 (37.1%)
No	117 (59.4%)
Prefer not to say	7 (3.6%)

Q7 – Do you identify as Indigenous?

QUESTION OPTIONS	RESPONSES – n (%)
Yes	10 (5.1%)
No	183 (92.9%)
Prefer not to say	4 (2.0%)

Q8 – Do you identify as an Indigenous person of North America?

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

QUESTION OPTIONS	RESPONSES – n (%)
Yes	8 (88.9%)
No	1 (11.1%)
Prefer not to say	0 (0.0%)

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

QUESTION OPTIONS	RESPONSES – n (%)
Yes	45 (23.3%)
No	141 (73.1%)
Prefer not to say	7 (3.6%)

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

QUESTION OPTIONS	RESPONSES – n (%)
Yes	82 (42.9%)
No	96 (50.3%)
Prefer not to say	13 (6.8%)

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; Visibly religious symbols; Jewish community members; Muslim community members



PART 2: Universal Equity Goal evaluation

For the climate assessment, respondents were asked to indicate whether they strongly agreed, agreed, neither agreed or disagreed, disagreed, or strong disagreed with the following statements:

Q1 – The five Universal Equity Goals will help UVic accomplish Strategy 1.2 of the current Strategic Plan.

QUESTION OPTIONS	RESPONSES – n (%)
<i>Strongly agree</i>	24 (15.7%)
<i>Agree</i>	83 (54.3%)
<i>Neither agree or disagree</i>	27 (17.7%)
<i>Disagree</i>	9 (5.9%)
<i>Strongly disagree</i>	9 (6.5%)

Q2 – The five Universal Equity Goals are ambitious, action-oriented, and set out a direction of advancing equity throughout UVic for the next 5 years.

QUESTION OPTIONS	RESPONSES – n (%)
<i>Strongly agree</i>	23 (14.7%)
<i>Agree</i>	73 (46.8%)
<i>Neither agree or disagree</i>	35 (22.4%)
<i>Disagree</i>	16 (10.3%)
<i>Strongly disagree</i>	9 (5.8%)

Q3 – After reviewing the Universal Equity Goals, is there a goal-area (e.g. Equity centred culture on campus) that is not captured? Explain.

The most common responses included:

- UVic needs to do more than ‘embrace’ and ‘acknowledge’ – these words do not represent the required action over the duration of the EAP;
- The goals do not highlight research or internal expertise as an important area/outcome of the EAP;
- Equity centered culture does not include the systemic nature or dominant system of patriarchal norms;
- Institutional accountability and evaluation does not centre on-going engagement with community members.

Q4 – Is there anything within the goal statements that is unclear or requires further explanation?

The most common responses included:

- The ‘how’ or ‘action’ is not explicitly stated within the goals;
- The goals do not describe key evaluation/assessment metrics – i.e., how will UVic assess if it is accomplishing the equity goals?;
- The specific resources/commitments from the institution should be highlighted within each goal;
- The use of the phrase “UVic will” works to ‘other’ systemically and historically marginalized populations;
- UVic cannot hold itself accountable to the outcomes of this plan – there must be a community-oriented accountability framework/structure.




The results:

***A note on Universal Goals*:** As the feedback from our community has highlighted, the steps to accomplish, evaluate, and assess the Universal Equity Goals are of utmost importance. The development team and the RCC recognize that the goals on their own do not provide a concrete direction for equity work at UVic. As such, it's important to note that each goal will be accompanied by a robust plan structure which will include resources, institutional commitments, prioritized action, and evaluation/accountability frameworks. For the purposes of goal evaluation, the goals were shared as stand-alone products to ensure our community felt like they were representative of each area of equity work that UVic must commit to for the duration of the Equity Action Plan and beyond.

Universal equity goals prior to Phase 4 engagement:

1. **Equity centred culture on campus:** UVic will create an educational environment which embraces diversity and acknowledges the systemic nature of colonization, historical trauma, and whiteness on campus.
2. **Recruiting, Hiring and Retaining Diverse Students, Staff, and Faculty:** UVic will strategically recruit, promote and retain students, staff, faculty, and senior leadership from systemically and historically marginalized communities
3. **Accessibility and supports:** UVic will create dynamic and holistic support structures that prioritize physical, cultural, financial, and cognitive accessibility.
4. **Institutional accountability and evaluation:** UVic will hold itself accountable to Strategy 1.2 of the strategic plan by carrying out consistent and transparent reviews and reporting on the outcomes of this action plan and related policies and processes.
5. **Relationality and belonging:** UVic will build relationships with systemically and historically marginalized communities and embrace diverse ways of knowing, being, and lived experience.

Universal equity goals following Phase 4 engagement:

1. **Equity centred culture:** Create an inclusive academic environment that values diversity and responds to the dominant systems of power which include colonization, patriarchal norms, historical trauma, and white supremacy on campus through research, teaching, policy, and practice.
 2. **Relationality and belonging:** Transform university systems and structures to demonstrate value for every lived experience and diverse ways of knowing to build connections and relationships across and beyond UVic.
 3. **Recruiting and retaining diverse students and employees:** Strategically recruit, advance, and retain students, staff, faculty, librarians and senior leadership from systemically and historically marginalized communities.
 4. **Accessibility and supports:** Create dynamic and holistic support structures that prioritize physical, cultural, financial, and cognitive accessibility.
 5. **Institutional accountability and evaluation:** Carry out consistent and transparent evaluations of the outcomes of this action plan, while providing continued opportunities for meaningful engagement and feedback with/from our community to inform the accountability process.
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PART 3: Barrier prioritization

In section 3 of the survey, respondents were asked to identify which barriers they wanted to see prioritized within the five Universal Equity Goal categories. Some barriers have also been reworded to ensure clarity. The results of the prioritization exercise are as follows:

Equity-centered culture on campus

- Priority barrier 1: There continues to be a hesitancy from senior academic and administrative leadership to acknowledge the oppressive and inequitable systems of power that UVic was built around (e.g., colonialism, whiteness, etc.). A lack of acknowledgement and commitment to addressing these dominant systems of power reproduces inequity.
- Priority barrier 2: Often, those making decisions that disproportionately impact equity-deserving groups do not share the lived experiences nor have they experienced systemic oppression or inequity. This results in potentially uninformed, non-specific work that reproduces barriers to equity.
- Priority barrier 3: Cultural literacy and safety are not prioritized or evaluated within individual units, departments, or faculties. Training is inconsistent and/or voluntary.
- Priority barrier 4: There is no collective understanding of UVic's core goals, values, and definitions relating to equity. As a result, equity work across campus can lack cohesion and collective action.

Relationality and belonging

- Priority barrier 1: Increasing tuition prices in combination with the housing crisis prevents the inclusion of people with lower socioeconomic status. The lack of commitment to building relationships with this community reinforces barriers to their inclusion on campus.
- Priority barrier 2: The siloed and divided nature of UVic – not only across students, staff, faculty, librarians, and leadership populations but also across positions, units, offices, and faculties – impacts individuals' sense of belonging and their ability to feel like a valued part of UVic's community.
- Priority barrier 3: By prioritizing colonial academic knowledge in our assessments and evaluations of students and employees, we are reproducing the dominant structures of power and limiting the accessibility and meaningful involvement of equity-deserving groups in higher education.
- Priority barrier 4: The strict and narrow measures of academic knowledge and/or success creates spaces that suppress creativity and non-colonial, diverse forms of knowledge and experience. As a result, traditional notions of who belongs at UVic and who doesn't are reproduced.
- Priority barrier 5: UVic's lack of engagement and connection across and beyond the campus community means that students, staff, faculty and librarian recruitment efforts are narrow, repetitive and reinforce inequitable ideas about who is included and welcomed within the campus environment.

Recruiting and retaining diverse students and employees

- Priority barrier 1: Hiring (and promotion for faculty and librarians) practices do not adequately account for inherent biases of individuals in positions of power (e.g., department chairs) or the power dynamics of the committee structure. As a result, policies concerning equitable hiring processes can be (and have been) undermined.
- Priority barrier 2: Employment practices do not adequately consider retention of faculty, librarians, and/or staff from equity seeking groups (e.g., Indigenous Peoples, Persons with Disabilities, Members of Visible Minorities). As a result, UVic is not representative of the wider community.
- Priority barrier 3: The lack of available affordable housing for students/staff/faculty/librarians is inhibiting recruitment and retention efforts. As a

result, the success of strategies such as targeted student recruitment or limited/preferential hiring searches may be limited.

- Priority barrier 4: Job descriptions for staff hires are generally inaccessible and inconsistent in the details provided; this limits who may be deemed 'qualified' for the position.
- Priority barrier 5: Faculty position descriptions continue to prioritize the traditional (and colonial) academic curriculum vitae (e.g., publications, conference presentations, grants, etc.); this limits who may be deemed qualified for the position.
- Priority barrier 6: Inconsistent or non-existent follow-up with unsuccessful applicants to provide feedback reproduces expectations of the ideal professional fit and limits their opportunities for future applications/success.

Accessibility and support

- Priority barrier 1: Financial barriers to student success within higher education re/produce inequities across campus (e.g., having to work a full-time job in order to afford tuition/rent/living expenses).
- Priority barrier 2: Physical, mental, and academic supports for students, staff, faculty, and librarians with disabilities are inconsistent, not specific to individual needs, and leave members of the community feeling like they don't belong.
- Priority barrier 3: Cultural safety is not consistently integrated within the support systems across campus, leaving some students feeling like they cannot access available services. For example, students from equity-deserving communities may not have access to counselors who share or understand their experiences.
- Priority barrier 4: UVic's lack of commitment to providing hybrid learning and flexible work opportunities on a consistent basis creates an educational environment that is inaccessible to some.
- Priority barrier 5: The availability of mental health supports – including accommodations, leave options, and/or counseling – for students/staff/faculty/librarians is inconsistent, inaccessible, non-representative, and unreliable. As a result, members of the UVic community may not feel as though they can thrive on/off campus.
- Priority barrier 6: Mature students and students with children are not adequately supported and their responsibilities beyond academia are not respected or acknowledged. As a result, they may face inequitable barriers to success on campus.
- Priority barrier 7: The availability of gender-neutral washrooms is inconsistent and/or poorly advertised. As a result, some members of the UVic community are forced to plan their day around accessing these facilities.
- Priority barrier 8: The availability of and access to support services for students participating in experiential learning (i.e., co-ops, field schools or placements) is inconsistent. As a result, students requiring additional support (e.g., students with disabilities) face inequitable challenges participating in experience-based learning.

Institutional accountability and evaluation

- Priority barrier 1: The hierarchical and complex nature of the institutional power structures makes true accountability related to equity initiatives difficult to achieve.
- Priority barrier 2: The collection, management, and use of equity data (e.g., data on racialization, ability, disability, gender, or sexual orientation) lacks organization and consistency. As a result, the data is not necessarily being used in an effective or efficient manner.

- Priority barrier 3: Past evaluation of equity initiatives efforts have been perceived as performative and not sincere. As a result, there isn't the required mutual trust from across the community, especially throughout equity deserving populations.
- Priority barrier 4: A lack of clarity and transparency concerning the outcomes of reporting procedures/processes (e.g., reporting instances of discrimination) erodes trust in the accountability systems.
- Priority barrier 5: Institutional equity plans being housed and controlled within individual units presents a potential conflict of interest surrounding responsibility, transparency, and accountability.

