CONVERSATION CAFÉ GUIDE
Discrimination and Harassment Policy Review

We acknowledge and respect the Lək̓ʷəŋən (Songhees and Esquimalt) Peoples on whose territory the university stands, and the Lək̓ʷəŋən and WSÁNEĆ Peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

YOUR INPUT MATTERS!
You are invited to participate in the review of the University of Victoria’s Discrimination and Harassment Policy by hosting or participating in a Conversation Café. The feedback and suggestions generated in your conversations will help inform the revised policy. Find more ways to contribute your ideas at https://www.uvic.ca/equity/discrimination-harassment/review/

WHAT DOES THE DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT POLICY COVER?
In addition to defining various forms of prohibited behaviours at UVic, the Discrimination and Harassment Policy outlines options for addressing concerns and reports. The policy lays out how to report discrimination or harassment, what support someone who has experienced harm can expect and formal and informal options for addressing harm.

The policy also works to instill and cultivate institutional, collective, and individual responsibility to create an environment and culture free from discrimination and harassment. The Discrimination and Harassment Policy includes the University’s commitments to preventing discrimination and harassment through education and awareness.

WHAT DOES HOSTING A CONVERSATION CAFÉ INVOLVE?
Anyone can host a conversation and it can be as structured or open as you want. This Conversation Café Guide is designed to support you to host a consultation discussion with an existing group, unit or a group of friends, co-workers or classmates. This do-it-yourself framework provides a way for everyone to join UVic’s conversation about preventing and responding to discrimination and harassment and to have their voices and ideas heard.

HOW WILL YOUR INPUT INFORM THE RENEWED POLICY?
After hosting a Conversation Café, we invite you to share the topic(s) you discussed and a summary of your group’s ideas with us. Equity and Human Rights and the Policy Design Group will reflect on your input as we develop the new updated Discrimination and Harassment Policy.
WHAT SHOULD CONVERSATION CAFÉ PARTICIPANTS DISCUSS?
Below are the suggested topics for discussion. These are the major topics that emerged from the Learning and Advisory Committee’s initial policy review work but these topics may not resonate with your group. Feel free to use these questions to guide your discussion and/or to allow the conversation to take shape around different related topics of interest to your group.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

Educating on Microaggressions
Microaggressions are commonplace actions or words which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages or attitudes based on aspects of someone’s identity. Microaggressions are often the result of perceived otherness or of unconscious bias.

One of the most effective ways to prevent microaggressions is through education.

As UVic addresses microaggressions in the updated Discrimination and Harassment Policy, how would you like to see education and prevention carried out? What strategies might be most effective for different university groups (such as leaders, faculty, staff, students, etc.)?

Addressing Systemic Discrimination
The updated Discrimination and Harassment Policy will address systemic discrimination. Systemic discrimination refers to policies or practices that are part of the social or administrative structures of an organization that contribute to the exclusion of, or less favourable outcomes for, an individual or group based on their identity. Systemic discrimination can be the intentional or unintentional result of the way a policy or practice is carried out or designed.

The policy will include strategies for identifying proactive practices to limit systemic discrimination and a commitment to institutional learning from individual complaints and concerns. Equity and Human Rights (EQHR) currently tracks patterns related to discrimination and harassment disclosures to identify common issues. However, issues often are not brought to the attention of EQHR, instead they are disclosed to instructors, chairs, student advocacy groups, supervisors, managers, etc.

How should UVic identify and address systemic issues that are not brought to the attention of EQHR but instead to other individuals/groups across the institutions (e.g., issues brought to university leaders, student groups, etc.)?

Centring those Impacted
The Sexualized Violence Prevention and Response Policy defines survivor-centred as “prioritizing the safety and choices of survivors. Survivor-centred means to treat survivors with dignity and respect rather than blame, hostility, or suspicion and to respect their rights, interests and agency by allowing them to make decisions about whether to file a report and the extent of their participation.” Initial policy-related engagement has
highlighted the importance of taking a similar approach in the Discrimination and Harassment Policy to minimize re-traumatization for those impacted by discrimination and harassment.

How can the Discrimination and Harassment Policy centre the needs of the individual who has disclosed that they have experienced harm while also ensuring fair and unbiased processes? What supports, tools, and/or resources are required for an individual to feel that their needs are being centred in a process?

Responding to UNDRIP and DRIPA
The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the British Columbia Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA) suggest a distinctions-based approach is needed to advance reconciliation. A distinction-based approach means acknowledging the specific rights, interests, priorities, and concerns of Indigenous communities, while respecting and acknowledging their distinct cultures, histories, rights, laws, and governments. To apply this approach to the UVic Discrimination and Harassment Policy, we are developing a Standard of Practice. This standard will be a set of guidelines that set out specific considerations for policy interpretation when addressing anti-Indigenous racism and/or supporting Indigenous complainants and respondents.

A consultation strategy is being developed to engage with both on and off campus Indigenous community members. What concerns, feedback or insights do you have as we begin the process of developing this Standard of Practice?

POST-DISCUSSION, PLEASE SEND US YOUR COMMENTS AND IDEAS!
Tell us what you talked about and share your conversation and outcomes. We will reflect on your input, aggregate your ideas with other groups and engagement processes and share the information back with the university community.

Please send a summary of your discussion to policyreview@uvic.ca as soon as possible after your Conversation Café. This consultation phase ends on October 15th, 2023.
TIPS FOR HOSTING A CONVERSATION CAFÉ

Key Considerations

Planning Your Event
The goal is to create a space where people feel comfortable to listen to others, but also to share their own ideas and insights that stem from their lived experiences and knowledge.

Place & Time
These conversations can take place anywhere - in a quiet room, in a coffee house, over a shared meal, in an online space. There is no time limit, but you might want to put aside at least an hour. If you are meeting on Zoom or using some other electronic platform, you will want to consider ways to make that space comfortable for participants.

Participants
As you are inviting participants, think about the number of people involved and the amount of time needed for a thoughtful discussion. These dialogues work best in groups where everyone present feels comfortable voicing their thoughts and opinions. Invite people who are open to communicating and have a willingness to hear and consider diverse views and ideas.

Promotion
If you would like to open your conversation café to a broader audience, EQHR can help you promote your event. When you’ve decided on a date, time and location contact policyreview@uvic.ca

Facilitating & Notetaking
As a host, you may wish to take on the role of the facilitator and note-taker. If not, ask if someone can volunteer or maybe share the responsibility among more than one member of the group. Consult the Conversation Café Guidelines for Respectful Dialogue.

Confidentiality
To respect privacy and maintain confidentiality, it is important that individuals not be identified in the notes provided to EQHR. With that being said, we would like you to identify your group in some way. If you are part of an existing group or unit, let us know who you are. If you are an ad hoc group, consider if there is a description that fits your group (e.g., ‘group of undergraduate Gender Studies students,’ ‘group of Black faculty members’).
Checklist For Hosts

- Decide on a date and time. If you are meeting in person, consider picking a comfortable location or sharing a coffee or a meal. If you are meeting by Zoom, consider whether there are ways to replicate the feeling of being together in-person. For example, invite everyone to bring their favourite cup of tea or coffee or snacks or to introduce their pets to the group.
- Invite your guests. Tell the group what you are interested in talking about and explain why it is important to you. You might find it useful to share the Conversation Café Guidelines for Respectful Dialogue in advance and to review them as a group prior to beginning your conversation.
- Gather together. Let the group decide how structured or open they would like the conversation to be. For example, you could ask participants to take turns speaking by going around in a circle and in ‘popcorn style.’
- Try to create a welcoming and accepting space. Some participants might wish to access support during or after your conversation so share the Support Resources sheet.
- Designate a note-taker to help the group remember what was discussed and the ideas and suggestions that were shared.
- Give everyone a chance to speak if they wish. Remember the group does not need to reach a consensus or agreement. Multiple ideas or viewpoints can be included in your summary discussion notes.
- Remind participants that the personal information shared in the Conversation Café is not to be shared with others, without expressed permission.
- Summarize your group’s discussion and confirm what input and recommendations will be included in your submission to EQHR. This can be done at the end of your Conversation Café or afterwards by email.

Thank you for joining the conversation about the UVic Discrimination and Harassment Policy. Your input matters!