Faculty of Fine Arts Equity Review – Executive Summary

Context:

The purpose of the Faculty of Fine Arts Equity Review process was to provide a systematic review of the successes, challenges, and gaps in addressing equity, diversity, and inclusion within the Faculty of Fine Arts and to provide initial insight into experiences of decolonization and Indigenization. The resulting report is structured to inform strategic planning, including types of activities for the next five-year period.

The review process–developed in conjunction with Equity and Human Rights–encompassed a comprehensive review survey which was distributed to all students, staff, and faculty (~1500 individuals) within the Faculty, as well as a self-study activity to review policies, procedures, and practices of the leadership group. In total, the survey garnered 241 responses, representing a 16% response rate. The depth and quality of responses has allowed for both qualitative and quantitative analysis and insight.

Moving in the right direction

When asked what the Faculty of Fine Arts was doing well regarding equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-oppression, survey responses reflected a sense that the Faculty and, in turn, the leadership, was moving in a positive direction in some areas. Specifically, responses suggested that efforts to embrace more inclusive content (e.g., lecture material, performance content, etc.), cultivate an inclusive culture, and allow opportunities for feedback are recognized and appreciated by community members.

Inclusive content (e.g., shows): Opportunities for engaging with inclusive content in the classroom, on the stage, in galleries, and in performances have been well received and recognized by the Faculty of Fine Arts community. Respondents praised intentional decisions by the Faculty and its instructors aimed at building a more inclusive curriculum and cultivating equity-centred pedagogy.

Inclusive culture and/or people: In a similar vein to that of the move towards inclusive content, several respondents highlighted their experiences with an inclusive culture and/or individuals within the Faculty of Fine Arts. Various initiatives, hires and/or appointments, and other Faculty decisions were brought forward as examples that can be built on as the Faculty continues its work towards equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Allowing opportunities to share feedback: The survey respondents also noted that the Faculty has provided opportunities for community members to share feedback about procedures, initiatives, and events. Generally speaking, respondents pointed to a willingness to listen and an intentional commitment to engaging the community. It should be stated that this willingness to listen does not extend to the complaint process (as is highlighted within the next major section), but instead encompasses opportunities for students, staff, and faculty to provide feedback on the general direction of the Faculty (e.g., the FFA Equity Review survey).

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Shortcomings and opportunities for improvement

Nearly 27% of all respondents indicated that they had experienced oppression, discrimination, and/or harassment within the Faculty of Fine Arts. Of these instances, the majority were related to gender identity (26%), race, ethnicity, and/or skin colour (19%), and disability (18%). Verbal, written, and/or digital (28%), microaggressions (26%), and differential treatment (20%) accounted for the most common types of oppression, discrimination, and harassment experienced.

While this review represents one of the first of its kind at the University of Victoria and, therefore, comparators are limited, these results indicate a significant burden on the experiences of some students, staff, and faculty within the Faculty. Importantly, of those who indicated they had experienced oppression, discrimination, and/or harassment (N=64), approximately 50% were either undergraduate or graduate students. Among these instances, power imbalances greatly influenced whether a student felt comfortable informing anyone within the Faculty or at the University of Victoria more broadly.

It's important to understand that the acute experiences of those respondents who indicated experiencing oppression, discrimination, and/or harassment contribute to a community which lacks trust and accountability. This context was reflected when respondents were asked what the Faculty was doing poorly regarding equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-oppression. Specifically, community members indicated concerning trends in the following key areas: (1) handling complaints; (2) lack of representation and diversity; (3) perceptions of a lack of action; and (4) harmful practices and policies.

Recommendations summary

Initial steps

- That the Faculty, building on the insight gained from this report and materials (e.g., the EAP) and other internal and external documents, research literature, and consultation with colleagues inside and outside of the university, establish a series of committees or working groups for the different areas of the report that will:
    o Study the recommendations in the report;
    o Correlate the observations and recommendations with existing plans and actions. Integrate the findings into the strategic planning process;
    o Develop a coherent series of statements—such as about the vision of the department, expected behaviours, and responses to discrimination—and actions—such as education, new policies, activities and structural changes—to address the concerns and recommendations.

Work to continue and expand:

- ***Building an inclusive culture:***
    o <u>Inclusive content:</u> Opportunities for engaging with inclusive content in the classroom, on the stage, in galleries, and in performances have been well received and recognized by the Faculty of Fine Arts community. Respondents praised intentional decisions by the Faculty and its instructors aimed at building a more inclusive curriculum and cultivating equity-centred pedagogy.

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- o <u>Inclusive culture and/or people:</u> Several respondents highlighted their experiences with an inclusive culture and/or individuals within the Faculty of Fine Arts. Various initiatives, hires and/or appointments, and other Faculty decisions were brought forward as examples that can be built off of as the Faculty continues its work towards equity, diversity, and inclusion.
- *Allowing opportunities to share feedback:*
  - o The Faculty of Fine Arts community recognizes and appreciates the opportunities that are provided for their voices to be heard. Various examples were shared – like the equity review survey – and pointed to as necessary steps in strategic planning, action, and evaluation. It is not only vitally important to continue providing opportunities for community feedback, but also to ensure that that engagement informs meaningful action and policy/procedural improvements. A willingness to listen and engage is the first step in working towards collective equity action but does not in and of itself provide the momentum, resources, or leadership to promote meaningful change.

Key needs and actions

- *Representation & community outreach:*
  - o <u>Representation in body</u> – Increase the representation throughout the Faculty in all ways (i.e., among staff, faculty, and students) and across all groups. To do so, recruitment strategies/initiatives need to be reviewed and updated. For faculty and staff, engage in limited and preferential hiring searches. For students, explore the possibility of creating alternative degree pathways. Diversity is desired at all levels of the Faculty, and all types of positions. While this includes short-term roles, the importance of diversity in permanent and influential positions—e.g., tenure track rather than sessional faculty—was also emphasized. In combination with these recruitment efforts, focus must also be given to retention and, therefore, support.
  - o <u>Representation in curriculum & content</u> – Leadership must support faculty in a critical review of their curriculum and instructional methods so as to diversify the curriculum. (As one respondent encouraged, we need to support faculty in *really thinking about what works are in the syllabus, what touchstone works are used as "everybody knows this", but it's like constantly white voices, white perspective).* Note that diversifying curriculum and content <u>must</u> be accompanied by diversifying representation throughout the community. Not coordinating these efforts ultimately results in an increased burden on under-represented populations.
  - o <u>Community outreach</u> – Recognizing the need for intentional work in this area, respondents called for the Faculty to build community both internally and externally. A key strategy cited was sponsoring shared social, artistic, and learning opportunities, across the Faculty as a whole and within specific interest groups (e.g., within departments; for faculty, staff, and students).
- *Complaints & education:*
  - o <u>Complaints</u> – The handling of complaints within the Faculty represents a significant issue brought forward by community members, particularly among undergraduate and graduate student respondents. From the perspective of the Faculty of Fine Arts community, the process by which complaints are made/heard and the culture surrounding these instances must be reformed. Faculty leadership must engage in a review of current processes to identify gaps/problem areas. The review process should

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be done in conjunction with EQHR to ensure that practices within the Faculty of Fine Arts align with institutional policy and process.

- o <u>Education</u> – Mainstreaming dialogue on equity in the Faculty was identified as essential to supporting change. When equity is normalized through regular discussions, clarity on Faculty and departmental goals, and dedicated learning time, it will start to become the expectation in more contexts. These discussions need to go beyond sharing information to deep learning and subsequent application of the concepts to policies, administration, and curriculum.

Guiding principles

- ***Accountability & Transparency:*** Clearly establish and communicate the prioritized actions set forward by the new strategic plan. Encompass guidelines for on-going evaluation and continued community engagement.
- ***Accessibility:*** Strive to create conditions where everyone can thrive and feel as though they belong as their true, authentic selves within the Faculty of Fine Arts. True accessibility involves physical and/or virtual space, educational environments, access to supports, and financial stability among other key factors.
- ***Mutual trust:*** Mutual trust is earned. The community has shared concerns surrounding a lack of action with the goal of optics rather than meaningful change. Therefore, building trust must form the foundation of the strategic plan and implementation moving forward.
- ***Respectful relationship building –*** Identify the communities who are impacted by systemic inequity and oppression. Through consultation, consistent engagement, and community governance, ensure that these communities remain active and engaged voices within the work.

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Context

The purpose of the Faculty of Fine Arts Equity Review process was to provide a systematic review of the successes, challenges, and gaps in addressing equity, diversity, and inclusion within the Faculty of Fine Arts and to provide initial insight into experiences of decolonization and Indigenization. The resulting report is structured to inform strategic planning, including types of activities for the next five-year period.

The review process–developed in conjunction with Equity and Human Rights–encompassed a comprehensive review survey which was distributed to all students, staff, and faculty (~1500 individuals) within the Faculty, as well as a self-study activity to review policies, procedures, and practices of the leadership group. In total, the survey garnered 241 responses, representing a 16% response rate. The depth and quality of responses has allowed for both qualitative and quantitative analysis and insight which form the bulk of the report below.

It's worth noting that the response rate is mentioned as a point of context for the review process and must not be used to discount the experiences shared in data presented throughout the report. Importantly, critiques based on validity or generalizability sidestep the reality that any experience of oppression, discrimination, and/or harassment is both valid and meaningful. By embarking on the review process, the Faculty of Fine Arts committed to uncovering such experiences as a means to inform and advance equity-related change moving forward. Given this purpose, the report highlights several areas of concern and shortcomings pertaining to experiences within the Faculty. Ultimately, a focus on negative experiences will drive positive changes in equity and anti-oppression work within the Faculty of Fine Arts from an informed strategic direction.

A note on 'equity-seeking group': For some of the analyses presented below, the following identities were grouped into the umbrella category of 'equity-seeking group' to ensure adequate weighted representation within the dataset and to maintain the highest levels of privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity:
- Two-Spirit, non-binary, or "I identify as…";
- Transgender or having trans experience;
- Marginalized sexual orientation (lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, Two-Spirit, or another minority sexual orientation);
- Persons living with a disability and/or disabled people;
- Indigenous identity;
- Racialized or a person of colour.

Faculty of Fine Arts self-study

As highlighted above, in addition to community engagement, the review process also drew on a self-study conducted by the Faculty's leadership group which features on-going equity, diversity, and inclusion work. The self-study depicts a community that places great value on equity-oriented work, but one that is also forced to balance such efforts with an ever-dwindling resource base. Despite these restrictions, the Faculty appears to have made the most of limited growth opportunities using limited and preferential hires as a means of increasing the representation within the employee cohort. Funding for arts events that address equity, diversity, inclusion and Indigenization is another notable focus.

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Additionally, the creation of dedicated funding opportunities—notably the Wurlitzer Visiting Professorship in Religious Art and Indigenous Sacred Art, the Chair in Indigenous Art Practices, and the Audain Professor in Contemporary At Practice of the Pacific Northwest— will create further avenues for future recruitment while diversifying the Faculty voice in the short-term.

At a departmental level, work to embed equity, diversity, and inclusion in classrooms, theatres, and performing halls is varied. Diversifying the curriculum and/or performance schedule is one of the more common approaches being taken by department chairs and individual faculty members. Notably, these efforts have not gone unnoticed within the community.

In conjunction with on-going efforts to diversify representation, content, and practice, the self-study also highlights a need to review and reform leadership's understanding of the complaint process within each department. Put in context with the findings of the review which emphasize frustration with the reporting process for a variety of concerning reasons, this must represent a key area focus for the Faculty moving forward and will serve as a significant experience-based evaluation indicator as the new strategic plan rolls out at the Faculty level.

While the self-study provides important context for the intentions of the Faculty and its leaders, the remaining sections of the review intentionally emphasize the experiences of the Faculty of Fine Arts community members, some of which appear in direct contrast to the on-going efforts highlighted in the self-study. Such opportunities for comparison between intention and experience highlight the need for on-going reflective practice by Faculty leadership in combination with continued community engagement and feedback. The importance of both of these practices is expressed in more detail through community voices in the sections that follow. The Faculty's stated intentions to develop plans and goals regarding EDI in its upcoming Strategic Plan—including building on current goals to increase diversity, EDI education, integrate TRC Calls to Action, DRIPA and the Scarborough Charter, address ableism, and engage in a number of other avenues of work to build a more inclusive Faculty—provide an opportunity to take the learning from this report into practice.

Moving in the right direction

When asked what the Faculty of Fine Arts was doing well regarding equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-oppression, survey responses reflected a sense that the Faculty and, in turn, the leadership, was moving in a positive direction in some areas. Specifically, responses suggested that efforts to embrace more inclusive content (e.g., lecture material, performance content, etc.), cultivate an inclusive culture, and allow opportunities for feedback are recognized and appreciated by community members.

Inclusive content (e.g., shows)

Opportunities for engaging with inclusive content in the classroom, on the stage, in galleries, and in performances have been well received and recognized by the Faculty of Fine Arts community. Respondents praised intentional decisions by the Faculty and its instructors aimed at building a more inclusive curriculum and cultivating equity-centred pedagogy. Among those respondents who identified as belonging to an equity-seeking group, successes were highlighted in response to the question "What is the Faculty of Fine Arts doing well with respect to equity, diversity, and inclusion," related to community partnerships, improved relationality, and centring student voices.

These examples highlight the impact that intentional and transformative leadership can have on the experiences of students, staff, and faculty. Work like this, however, must be thought through critically

and made collectively to ensure the impact cultivates inclusivity, belonging, and trust. Indeed, one tension evident among responses reiterated that while embedding inclusive content is a necessary step in working towards equity within the Faculty, leadership must be careful to do so in a culturally appropriate, safe, and accountable manner. There is an on-going burden on underrepresented populations even in situations where the intended outcome is improving diversity and inclusivity of content; ultimately, this must be recognized in order for meaningful equity work to occur.

Inclusive culture and/or people

In a similar vein to that of the move towards inclusive content, several respondents highlighted their experiences with an inclusive culture and/or individuals within the Faculty of Fine Arts. Various initiatives, hires and/or appointments, and other Faculty decisions were brought forward as examples that can be built on as the Faculty continues its work towards equity, diversity, and inclusion. One example that was highlighted within responses was the Staging Equality initiative.

Examples like this were shared across the sampled population, including among students, staff, and faculty as well as among both those who identified as a member of an equity-seeking group and those who did not. Once again, thoughtful, equity-centred decision making has a very evident and practical impact on the experiences of community members within the Faculty.

Allowing opportunities to share feedback

The survey respondents also noted that the Faculty has provided opportunities for community members to share feedback about procedures, initiatives, and events. Respondents pointed to a willingness to listen and an intentional commitment to engaging the community. It should be stated that this willingness to listen does not extend to the complaint process (as is highlighted within the next major section), but instead encompasses opportunities for students, staff, and faculty to provide feedback on the general direction of the Faculty (e.g., the FFA Equity Review survey). Of note, a willingness to listen has also resulted in community members feeling like they have a voice.

It is not only vitally important to continue providing opportunities for community feedback, but also to ensure that engagement informs meaningful action and policy/procedural improvements. Simply put, a willingness to listen and engage is the first step in working towards collective equity action but does not in and of itself provide the momentum, resources, or leadership to promote meaningful change.

Shortcomings and opportunities for improvement

Nearly 27% of all respondents (overall N=241) indicated that they had experienced oppression, discrimination, and/or harassment within the Faculty of Fine Arts. Of these instances, the majority were related to gender identity (26%), race, ethnicity, and/or skin colour (19%), and disability (18%) [see *Figure 1*]. Verbal, written, and/or digital (28%), microaggressions (26%), and differential treatment (20%) accounted for the most common types of oppression, discrimination, and harassment experienced [see *Figure 2*].

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Figure 1: What grounds was this related to? Select all that apply: (N=58)
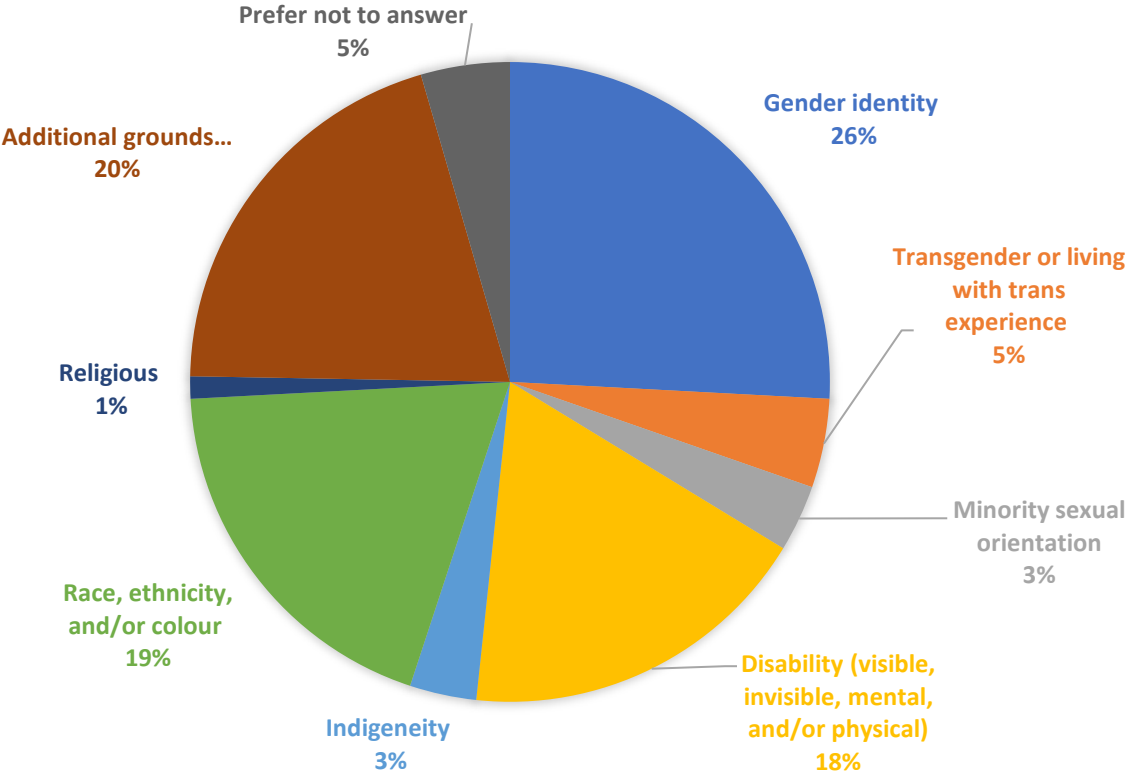

Prefer not to answer 5%
Additional grounds… 20%
Religious 1%
Race, ethnicity, and/or colour 19%
Indigeneity 3%
Gender identity 26%
Transgender or living with trans experience 5%
Minority sexual orientation 3%
Disability (visible, invisible, mental, and/or physical) 18%

Figure 2: What type of oppression, discrimination, and/or harassment did you experience? Select all that apply: (N=62)

Additional type… 6%
Prefer not to answer 1%
Physical and/or material 5%
Threatened oppression, discrimination, and/or harassment 5%
Microaggression 26%
Differential treatment 20%
Verbal, written, and/or digital 28%
Policy-related 9%
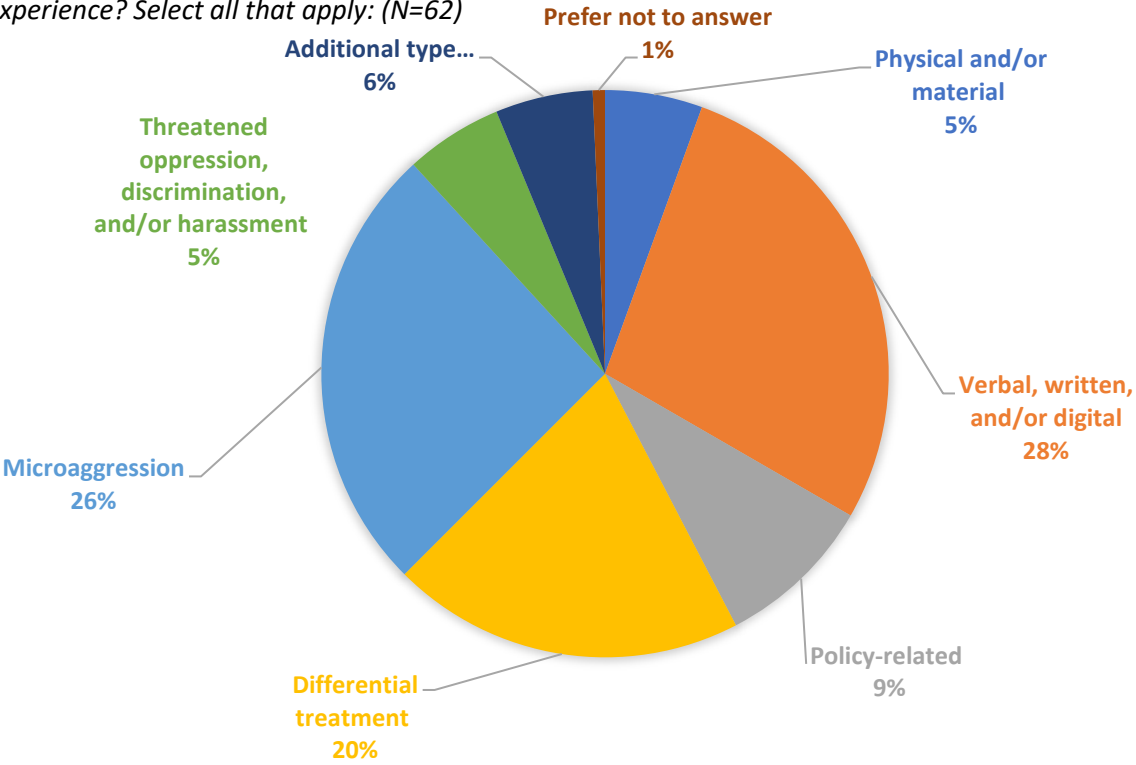
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While this review represents one of the first of its kind at the University of Victoria and, therefore, comparators are limited, these results indicate a significant burden on the experiences of some students, staff, and faculty within the Faculty. Importantly, of those who indicated they had experienced oppression, discrimination, and/or harassment (N=64), approximately 50% were either undergraduate or graduate students. Among these instances, power imbalances greatly influenced whether a student felt comfortable informing anyone within the Faculty or at the University of Victoria more broadly.

It's important to understand that the acute experiences of those respondents who indicated experiencing oppression, discrimination, and/or harassment contribute to a community which lacks trust and accountability. This context was reflected when respondents were asked what the Faculty was doing poorly regarding equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-oppression. Specifically, community members indicated concerning trends in the following key areas: (1) handling complaints; (2) lack of representation and diversity; (3) perceptions of a lack of action; and (4) harmful practices and policies.

Handling complaints

While it's important to note that the complaint process is guided by the overarching policies of the institution which ultimately inform the action taken (or not) and whether or not it can be shared publicly, many respondents reported concerns about how complaints were handled within the Faculty. Some complaints were ignored, or no action was taken to address problematic situations that were raised. Other complaints were not responded to with the seriousness they warranted, with respondents noting a lack of discipline meted out to those identified as causing harm (primarily faculty). Those in authority who declined to pursue disciplinary measures often defended the status quo and cited academic freedom as a reason they could not ask faculty to address, for example, racist language.

Some respondents described being treated poorly when they complained. Community members who are also members of underrepresented groups have been made uncomfortable and treated as the problem when they ask for change, or they are silenced or threatened.

The types complaints that were cited in the survey include microaggressions; violating consent and boundaries; racial slurs or racist comments; lack of representation and inclusion for people with disabilities; negative statements about members of sexual or gender minorities, including anti-trans bias; labelling students in sexist, gendered or racist ways; denying the existence of racism; selection of productions that are transphobic, misogynistic, racist, and/or lack diversity; discouraging students from going to EQHR about problems; and disparaging EDI work and/or workshops.

Lack of representation and diversity

Many respondents cited a lack of diversity and representation among faculty, staff and students as an area where the Faculty is doing poorly. Respondents didn't perceive enough hiring or recruiting for diversity, including insufficient financial support for Indigenous positions.

Though increasing diversity was widely cited, it was noted that this needed to be done in a good way, including valuing new colleagues and students for what they have to offer rather than simply focusing on their identity, and creating *safe spaces for marginalized folx* within the Faculty.

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Table 1: Continuing faculty and staff within the Faculty of Fine Arts (2017-2022)

	Indigenous (n)	Persons with Disabilities (n)	Members of Visible Minorities (n)	Women (n)
FFA (Total N=91) - 09/15/17	<1% (NS*)	5.5% (5)	<2.5% (NS)	53% (48)
FFA (Total N=90) - 09/15/18	<1% (NS)	5.6% (5)	<2.5% (NS)	54% (49)
FFA (Total N=91) - 09/15/19	<1% (NS)	5.5% (5)	<2.5% (NS)	54% (49)
FFA (Total N=93) - 09/15/20	<1% (NS)	5.4% (5)	<2.5% (NS)	54% (50)
FFA (Total N=92) - 09/15/21	<1% (NS)	5.4% (5)	<3.5% (NS)	57% (52)
FFA (Total N=91) - 09/15/22	<1% (NS)	<4.5% (NS)	<3.5% (NS)	58% (53)

*NS = Number suppressed; numbers are suppressed in situations where cells have values of less than 5 to maintain anonymity and confidentiality. In these cases, approximate percentage values are provided.

In addition to insufficient representation, respondents noted insufficient inclusion, support, and education regarding a wide range of diversity including race, disability and mental health awareness, gender and gender identity, sexuality, and territory acknowledgments. Lack of representation and diversity is seen to give rise to negative experiences, including tokenization, stereotyping, and overwork of underrepresented faculty and students.

Curriculum is one key area where a lack of diversity is felt, in spite (or perhaps, because) of the above-noted positive changes in curriculum. The curriculum is seen to have *a Western European focus* and otherwise lack diversity in the identity groups and geographic regions covered by the content. Relatedly, respondents see a deficit in content about issues related to equity, diversity, and inclusion. The lack of both of these key knowledge areas was seen to limit learning. Within all this, appreciation was shown by name for Karla Point's[1] work on Indigenous resurgence. Areas where more content is desired include cultural diversity; racism, racist stereotypes and racial inequality in the arts; colonialism; gender diversity; sexuality; mental health awareness; Indigenous questions and topics, including regional Indigenous art and culture; cultural appropriation; and foundations of equity, diversity and inclusion.

Perceptions of a lack of action

While the Faculty has stated goals to support EDI, survey responses indicated that when violations of expected behaviours were brought up, the response has been inadequate, leading to a perception of hypocrisy among those who claim to care about EDI values.

Table 2: Disclosure descriptives

Among those who have experience oppression, discrimination, and/or harassment…	Yes	No	Prefer not to answer
(1) *Did you inform anyone in within the FFA or at UVic? (N=61)*	38% (23)	49% (30)	13% (8)
(2) *Was their response effective and/or appropriate in your experience? (N=23)*	17% (4)	70% (16)	13% (3)

Respondents expressed concerns about the following areas:

- Not addressing concerns. In the data, there were repeated mentions that little action is taken in response to issues.

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[1] Karla was mentioned by name many times throughout the survey responses. We have sought permission from Karla to use her name directly within the report.

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- – Inadequate responses to concerns that are raised, whether through denial that a particular behaviour is problematic; asking students to deal with issues themselves; harassing, bullying or treating in a condescending manner those who bring up concerns; and justifying the behaviour under the label of academic freedom or because of a university policy.
- – Not building a diverse, inclusive culture, including insufficient outreach for hiring and student recruitment and low participation in EDI events.
- – Lack of work on the most important issues to create long-term, systemic change. This includes not making these issues central at faculty meetings and giving insufficient time and attention to team building activities. In other words, actual initiatives to advance EDI are not visible despite these being stated goals.

Overall, the perceived inadequacy in response to complaints and the lack of visible EDI initiatives creates a sense that EDI claims by the Faculty are insincere.

Interestingly, assessment of the faculty's progress (or lack there of) on these issues was associated with whether or not a respondent identified as belonging to an equity-seeking group. As indicated within *Table 3,* those that identified as a member of an equity-seeking group were consistent in their appraisal of Faculty progress and, on average, expressed a more negative perception across all seven equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-oppression statements when compared with community members who did not identify as a member of one or more of the equity-seeking groups.

The difference in experience/perception of progress demonstrated within this equity review aligns with research findings on experiences of gender-diverse, racialized or persons of colour, Indigenous peoples, and persons with disabilities on Canadian post-secondary campuses (Henry et al., 2018; Smith 2019). The implication of this reality is that the gap between meaningful and performative action grows, as too does the burden on equity-seeking populations.

Table 3: Equity, diversity, inclusion and anti-oppression: slider scale comparisons

Indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements (0-100 sliding scale – strongly disagree [0] to strongly agree [100])	Average slider – No self-ID in ESG (N=189)	Average slider – Self-ID in ESG (N=94)
(1) The Faculty of Fine Arts is anti-oppressive in policy and practice.	61	54
(2) The Faculty of Fine Arts is equitable in policy and practice.	60	55
(3) The Faculty of Fine Arts is sufficiently diverse.	45	41
(4) I feel a sense of belonging in the Faculty of Fine Arts and my individual unit.	63	57
(5) Faculty of Fine Arts instructors understand and effectively apply approaches to anti-oppression, equity, diversity, and inclusion in classrooms.	57	53
(6) The leadership of my unit (i.e., school or department) within the Faculty of Fine Arts is committed to anti-oppression, equity, diversity, and inclusion.	68	61

(7) The leadership of the Faculty of Fine Arts is committed to anti-oppression, equity, diversity, and inclusion.	65	58

Harmful practices and/or policies

Problematic behaviours, usually by people in power, were identified by a number of respondents. Many of these centered on a lack of support for mental health or emotional well-being, including frequent microaggressions towards IBPOC students; asking students to be representatives for their underrepresented identities in the classroom; not taking student concerns seriously; asking for feedback in public ways that require emotional labour; and using dismissive or problematic (sexist, racist) terminology, and limiting categorizations (e.g., the gender binary) to talk about the students.

Other behaviours witnessed or experienced performed by those in positions of power were identified as bullying, included delaying payments to IBPOC visiting artists and elders; providing overly critical faculty feedback to students; and faculty inappropriately crossing boundaries in talking with students about personal topics. Several respondents also identified instructional methods that silenced underrepresented voices and cultures, including the Iowa workshop approach and One Magical Item rule. Others described unhealthy cultural elements including a scarcity mentality and a culture of overworking, with negative impacts on mental health and risk for injuries.

A number of behaviours were cited that either ignore or perpetuate systems of oppression (e.g., transphobia, misogyny, homophobia, racism). This includes actions such as choosing theatre productions that contain these oppressions; denial of past problems in the department (e.g., past racism); lack of safe places for members of marginalized groups and lack of *consideration and inclusion of important issues* from members of those groups; and a lack of accommodations provided for students by faculty.

Other problems cited had systemic dimensions, including a lack of safeguards to prevent spread of COVID; lack of all-gender bathrooms; buildings/classrooms not suitable for those with disabilities; and low pay and lack of equity for sessional instructors, underrepresented genders, staff, and others outside tenure-track research positions. While these problems lie largely outside the jurisdiction of the Faculty, they are areas that leadership could bring to those higher in the administration.

Finally, some respondents identified more generalized cultural challenges. These include the presence of internalized biases even among those who aim to be allies and a cultural perception that there is a hierarchy within the Faculty and an in-group at the centre of the work and learning.

Assessing steps towards decolonization and Indigenization

In addition to allowing for an in-depth review of equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-oppression within the Faculty of Fine Arts, the survey also provided an opportunity to assess the faculty's steps towards decolonization and Indigenization. The questions and definitions provided within this section of the survey were developed in consultation with the Faculty's Indigenous Resurgence Coordinator and EQHR's Indigenous Rights and Anti-Racism Officer.

While the number of Indigenous responses was limited (N=9), there was a notable difference in interpretation of progress on these issues between Indigenous respondents and non-Indigenous respondents. As highlighted in *Table 4,* Indigenous community members perceive the Faculty's progress concerning decolonization and Indigenization to be lacking. The gap between average responses among

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Indigenous and non-Indigenous identities demonstrated the reality that Indigenous voices must be at the centre of conversations surrounding decolonization and Indigenization practices as well as the on-going assessment of progress to date.

Table 4: Decolonization and indigenization – slider scale comparisons

Indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements (0-100 sliding scale – strongly disagree [0] to strongly agree [100])	Average Slider (N=140)	Average Slider – Indigenous (N=9)
(1) The Faculty of Fine Arts is effective in practicing Indigenous inclusion.	60	45
(2) The Faculty of Fine Arts is effective in practicing Indigenization.	56	37
(3) The Faculty of Fine Arts is effective in practicing decolonialization.	53	42
(4) The Faculty of Fine Arts is effective at using Indigenization and decolonization as tools to work towards reconciliation.	52	34

When given the opportunity to expand upon these selections in open-ended questions, the community identified three key areas to consider when assessing decolonization and Indigenization in the context of the Faculty of Fine Arts: (1) Decentring Western art and content; (2) Performative acknowledgment; and (3) Lack of Indigenous representation.

Decentring Western art and content

In a similar fashion to the feedback concerning a lack of diversity and representation highlighted earlier in the report, respondents indicated how the continued centring of a Western or Eurocentric curriculum counteracts efforts towards decolonization and Indigenization specifically. Throughout the responses, a specific emphasis was placed on the importance of Indigenous voices, art, music, and performances to the faculty's efforts. In essence, respondents highlighted a need for a fundamental shift in what is currently understood and held up as the standard for what students must and should learn within a degree in the Faculty. Only then can work surrounding decolonization and Indigenization begin to make meaningful progress by informing policies, practices, and knowledge production. Other examples reiterated the prioritization of Western or Eurocentric learning as accepted practice within the Faculty.

Acknowledgement for land, peoples, and treaties

As acknowledgement for land, peoples, and treaties have become a common practice within academic and non-academic settings, conversations surrounding gaps between performance and meaningful action have followed. Responses within the survey reflect this tension by drawing into question the sincerity of the faculty's efforts/intentions surrounding both decolonization and indigenization.

In order to move beyond concerns of performativity, intentional actions must be undertaken by the Faculty and its leadership to build trust with community members, centre Indigenous voices, and ultimately reshape the relationship between the land, the people, and our colonial history and legacy. These actions must include the Indigenization of the curriculum (as is highlighted within the first sub-section) and the intentional recruitment, retention, and advancement of Indigenous peoples at the student, staff, and faculty levels.

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Lack of Indigenous representation

The final area that respondents highlighted as needing immediate action in order progress decolonization and Indigenization within the faculty is the lack of Indigenous representation at all levels. Community members noted that while some efforts have been made to incorporate Indigenous voices into the everyday functioning of the faculty, the fact that it remains decidedly white represents a barrier to meaningful action and progress. Hiring at the faculty level and creating alternative degree paths were consistently noted as representing opportunities to begin to address the lack of representation.

Notably, Karla Point was mentioned by name once again, as some respondents used her work as an example of the impact and importance of Indigenous voices within the Faculty of Fine Arts environment. Providing opportunities for further engagement concerning topics like colonization (and, therefore, decolonization and Indigenization) remains a priority for the community; there is a sense and recognition, however, that these initiatives will be more effective, meaningful, and grounded if addressing the lack of representation of Indigenous voices within the Faculty becomes an utmost priority.

Suggested actions for strategic planning (I.e., Recommendations)

The following suggested actions to advance EDI in the Faculty of Fine Arts are drawn from a review of the findings of the survey, along with a self-study by the Faculty of Fine Arts of its equity activities and challenges.

To provide support in implementing these recommendations into your upcoming strategic planning, we have contextualized the suggested actions within broader EDI work across UVic, identifying ways to address major concerns raised and maximize institutional support for this work. By aligning with other initiatives, the Faculty will be able to leverage expertise and resources from a broader pool, supporting deeper and more transformative changes.

UVic's Equity Action Plan (EAP) is a high-level plan which provides direction and support for advancing EDI. Launched in fall 2022 and based on over a year of extensive consultation with the campus community, this plan has five high-level goals to provide "strategic direction to advance equity, diversity and inclusion, and to create the conditions in which everyone feels a sense of belonging: as connected and respected parts of the university community." Its five goals represent a wide range of important work to advance equity: *Equity-Centred Culture; Relationality & belonging; Recruitment & retention; Access & support; and Institutional accountability*. In this section, we have identified some of the places where survey findings support and align with the committed actions within the EAP.

Significantly, by sponsoring this equity review, the Faculty of Fine Arts is helping to fulfil the EAP Goal *Institutional Accountability*, Action #4: Develop, implement, and report on regular equity reviews to assess and guide initiatives to build an inclusive campus that is responsive to the needs of systemically and historically marginalized groups.

Equity work is also embedded in the soon-to-be-released updated **Indigenous Plan** and **Strategic Plan**. Time spent aligning with these plans once they are released will help maximize the impact of your work.

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Across survey responses, several major areas of recommendations were identified: community outreach and engagement; education and accountability; increasing representation; and reforming the complaint process. Below, we share respondents' recommendations in more detail.

Community outreach and engagement

Recognizing the need for intentional work in this area, respondents called for the Faculty to build community internally. A key strategy cited was sponsoring shared social, artistic and learning opportunities, across the Faculty as a whole and within specific interest groups (e.g., within departments; for faculty, staff and students).

One element of community development is seeking feedback from members of the Faculty through frequent meetings that include a diversity of members from different groups. Respondents had many thoughts on the importance of community and how to build it, including introducing fun into efforts concerning community engagement, scheduling more events, and reflecting on the leadership role the Faculty plays in the broader community.

Engaging with community beyond UVic was also mentioned (supports EAP goal *Relationality and Belonging*, Action #12). One specific element of community engagement that was recommended was inviting high school students to see productions and exhibits on campus, thus seeding greater diversity in the next generation of students and faculty (supports EAP goal *Recruitment and Retention*, Action #4).

Education and accountability

Mainstreaming dialogue on equity in the Faculty was identified as essential to supporting change. When equity is normalized through regular discussions, clarity on Faculty and departmental goals, and dedicated learning time, it will start to become the expectation in more contexts. These discussions need to go beyond sharing information to deep learning and subsequent application of the concepts to policies, administration, and curriculum (supports EAP Goal *Relationality and Belonging*, Action #4).

Education for faculty was a top recommendation, with the following topics emphasized: microaggressions, biases, power and positionality, oppressive and non-oppressive teaching styles, student-centred learning, accommodations and working with the Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL), intersectionality, various aspects of diversity including disability anti-harassment, and creating a welcoming and emotionally connected environment for students. The identified topics reflect damaging or problematic experiences respondents have gone through or witnessed within the Faculty; education is seen as a vehicle for positive change (supports EAP Goal *Equity-Centred Culture*, Actions #5, 6 and 8). Similar education for students was also seen as valuable, with spaces to share and learn about making an inclusive environment.

Another stage of work is supporting faculty in a critical review of their curriculum and instructional methods so as to diversify the curriculum. We need to support faculty in making decisions about what is included in their syllabi, including critically assessing more seminal works and their role in reproducing a White-centred perspective.

Aspects to explore include analysis of what works are included from intersectional and non-Eurocentric lenses; how to bring in and talk about diversity of creators; and considering historical biases within their disciplines (supports EAP Goal *Relationality and Belonging*, Action #8).

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The need to insist on accountability for actions was another aspect of building a better Faculty. Respondents saw that this accountability could come about through education and its application into changes in behaviour, curriculum and instruction—as described in the previous paragraphs—or through discipline (supports EAP Goal *Recruitment and retention*, Action #8; *Institutional Accountability*, Action #11).

Making clearer what the expectations for behaviour are, and improving the response when violations of expectations occur, is foundational to any meaningful change. If those who engage in harm are not required to change, it will be very hard to create an inclusive climate. For example, racist microaggressions need to be met with a clear requirement for change.

Respondents also identified problems with lack of access to accountability with the existing system, where faculty and staff positions are seen to be unshakeable however problematic their actions. While challenging tenure rules lies beyond the jurisdiction of the Faculty, this type of comment reflects the depths of the problems that community members have experienced, deficits in the resolution process, and the significant need for changes—through education, accountability and more—so that these instances are avoided in the future.

Increase representation

Increasing representation of underrepresented groups within the student body, faculty, and staff is a clear and top priority identified in the survey (supports a wide range of actions under EAP Goal *Recruitment and Retention*).

Diversity is desired at all levels of the Faculty, and all types of positions. While this includes short-term roles, the importance of diversity in permanent and influential positions—e.g., tenure track rather than sessional faculty—was also emphasized. In addition to previously listed aspects of diversity, particular mentions were made of older students and those with underlying disabilities. Diversity is seen to offer a wider range of approaches to learning as well as a better experience for the community.

Specific strategies identified to increase diversity included population-specific scholarships, preferential and limited hires, and expanded admissions pathways.

Retention is as important as bringing in members of marginalized groups in the first place, rather than falling into the toxic spiral of increasing diversity and then seeing people leave because of a harassing, unwelcoming climate. Strategies to improve retention include:

- Diversify the curriculum (discussed in previous section on "Education and accountability" in more detail).
- Listen and respond to the experiences and needs of marginalized people who are brought into the Faculty.
- Expand pedagogical delivery to ensure accessibility across distinct student populations.
- Expand supports to accommodate faculty and staff experiencing burnout.

Additional powerful recommendations addressed specific, important aspects of diversity and representation, including representation of the local Indigenous nations and pay equity for sessional professors.

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Reform the complaint process

As has been highlighted throughout the report, the handling of complaints within the Faculty represents a significant issue brought forward by community members, particularly among undergraduate and graduate student respondents. From an institutional perspective, addressing this shortcoming falls under the scope of our Equity Action Plan; most notably, *Institutional Accountability,* Action #5: "Review and revise dispute resolution policies and procedures, including disciplinary measures and protections against retaliation. Revisions should improve responsiveness to redress racism and oppression and promote inclusion and belonging" (Leads: VP Academic & Provost, VP Finance & Operations, University Secretary). From the perspective of the Faculty of Fine Arts community, in order to do so, the process by which complaints are made/heard and the culture surrounding these instances must be reformed.

In order to do so, Faculty leadership should engage in a review of current practices to identify gaps/problem areas within the complaint process. Then, in coordination with EQHR, the Faculty must build an accountable, trauma-informed approach that aligns with institutional guidelines and polices, while prioritizing effective and transparent communication about complaint options and available supports. Of particular concern are numerous examples shared by respondents where the power dynamics at play resulted in an unsatisfactory/unacceptable action following disclosure. Therefore, training regarding the reformed complaint process should by prioritized for all faculty and staff, as well as for Faculty leadership. Leveraging existing policies (i.e., the [Discrimination and Harassment Policy](#) and the [Sexualized Violence and Response Policy](#)) as well as training opportunities (e.g., [Tools for Preventing Sexualized Violence](#)) is strongly encouraged.

A sustainable plan for change

It's not uncommon for the scope of equity-centred work to feel both daunting and difficult. For these reasons, it's vitally important to develop a sustainable plan for change that will balance 'quick wins', key needs, and long-term progress. The process for identifying these areas should encompass a review of key survey findings as highlighted within this report, Faculty resources/allocation needs, and institutional direction concerning equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-oppression (i.e., the EAP). Ultimately, the strategic planning process should be centred on identifying the actions that need to be prioritized while also developing an implementation strategy over both short and long-term impact periods. To aid in this process, we have prepared a summary of the key needs/suggested actions based on the community's priorities as highlighted within the survey responses. Where possible, we have leveraged our institutional knowledge to provide further context to the required steps.

Overall recommendations

- **Initial steps**
  - That the Faculty, building on the insight gained from this report and materials (e.g., [the EAP](#)) and other internal and external documents, research literature, and consultation with colleagues inside and outside of the university, establish a series of committees or working groups for the different areas of the report that will:
    - Study the recommendations in this report;
    - Correlate the observations and recommendations with existing plans and actions. Integrate the findings into the strategic planning process;

- Develop a coherent series of statements—such as about the vision of the department, expected behaviours, and responses to discrimination—and actions—such as education, new policies, activities and structural changes—to address the concerns and recommendations.
- **Work to continue and expand**
    - ○ ***Building an inclusive culture:***
        - Inclusive content: Opportunities for engaging with inclusive content in the classroom, on the stage, in galleries, and in performances have been well received and recognized by the Faculty of Fine Arts community. Respondents praised intentional decisions by the Faculty and its instructors aimed at building a more inclusive curriculum and cultivating equity-centred pedagogy.
        - Inclusive culture and/or people: Several respondents highlighted their experiences with an inclusive culture and/or individuals within the Faculty of Fine Arts. Various initiatives, hires and/or appointments, and other Faculty decisions were brought forward as examples that can be built off of as the Faculty continues its work towards equity, diversity, and inclusion.
    - ○ ***Allowing opportunities to share feedback:***
        - The Faculty of Fine Arts community recognizes and appreciates the opportunities that are provided for their voices to be heard. Various examples were shared – like the equity review survey – and pointed to as necessary steps in strategic planning, action, and evaluation. It is not only vitally important to continue providing opportunities for community feedback, but also to ensure that that engagement informs meaningful action and policy/procedural improvements. A willingness to listen and engage is the first step in working towards collective equity action but does not in and of itself provide the momentum, resources, or leadership to promote meaningful change.
- **Key needs and actions**
    - ○ ***Representation & community outreach:***
        - Representation in body – Increase the representation throughout the Faculty in all ways (i.e., among staff, faculty, and students) and across all groups. To do so, recruitment strategies/initiatives need to be reviewed and updated. For faculty and staff, engage in limited and preferential hiring searches. For students, explore the possibility of creating alternative degree pathways. Diversity is desired at all levels of the Faculty, and all types of positions. While this includes short-term roles, the importance of diversity in permanent and influential positions—e.g., tenure track rather than sessional faculty—was also emphasized. In combination with these recruitment efforts, focus must also be given to retention and, therefore, support.
        - Representation in curriculum & content – Leadership must support faculty in a critical review of their curriculum and instructional methods so as to diversify the curriculum. Note that diversifying curriculum and content must be accompanied by diversifying representation throughout the community. Not coordinating these efforts ultimately results in an increased burden on under-represented populations.

- **Community outreach** – Recognizing the need for intentional work in this area, respondents called for the Faculty to build community both internally and externally. A key strategy cited was sponsoring shared social, artistic, and learning opportunities, across the Faculty as a whole and within specific interest groups (e.g., within departments; for faculty, staff and students).
    - o ***Complaints & education:***
        - **Complaints** – The handling of complaints within the Faculty represents a significant issue brought forward by community members, particularly among undergraduate and graduate student respondents. From the perspective of the Faculty of Fine Arts community, the process by which complaints are made/heard and the culture surrounding these instances must be reformed. Faculty leadership must engage in a review of current processes to identify gaps/problem areas. The review process should be done in conjunction with EQHR to ensure that practices within the Faculty of Fine Arts align with institutional policy and process.
        - **Education** – Mainstreaming dialogue on equity in the Faculty was identified as essential to supporting change. When equity is normalized through regular discussions, clarity on Faculty and departmental goals, and dedicated learning time, it will start to become the expectation in more contexts. These discussions need to go beyond sharing information to deep learning and subsequent application of the concepts to policies, administration, and curriculum.
- **Guiding principles**
    - o ***Accountability & Transparency:*** Clearly establish and communicate the prioritized actions set forward by the new strategic plan. Encompass guidelines for on-going evaluation and continued community engagement.
    - o ***Accessibility:*** Strive to create conditions where everyone can thrive and feel as though they belong as their true, authentic selves within the Faculty of Fine Arts. True accessibility involves physical and/or virtual space, educational environments, access to supports, and financial stability among other key factors.
    - o ***Mutual trust:*** Mutual trust is earned. The community has shared concerns surrounding a lack of action with the goal of optics rather than meaningful change. Therefore, building trust must form the foundation of the strategic plan and implementation moving forward.
    - o ***Respectful relationship building –*** Identify the communities who are impacted by systemic inequity and oppression. Through consultation, consistent engagement, and community governance, ensure that these communities remain active and engaged voices within the work.