

**FEAS Dimensions Faculty Chair's Year End Report (2020-2021)**

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Dimensions Faculty Chair (DFC),  
Faculty of Engineering and Architectural Science (FEAS)

May 27, 2021

This report outlines my activities undertaken as DFC for FEAS for the period of August, 2020 to May, 2021 inclusive. It contains the following sections as outlined in the Table of Contents Below:

Table of Contents:

<b>List and Description of Activities .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Meetings, Participation, and Providing Support .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Advertising, Interviewing, and Onboarding the FEAS Dimensions Team .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Departmental Visits .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>EDI in SRC Guide Document.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Town Halls.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Newsletter.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Social Media Presence.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Timeline .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Integration of the Dimensions Faculty Chair in the Faculty .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Allocation of Budget .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Listing the Dimensions Faculty Chair on the FEAS Contact Website.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>FEAS Strategic Doings Committee .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Initiating a Requirement for Undergraduate Research Assistants to Attend a Town Hall .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Acknowledgements .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Appendix A – EDI in SRC Guide Document .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Five Easy-to-Take Action Items to Support EDI in Your Research Group .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Background Information .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Supporting Equity .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Supporting Diversity .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Supporting Inclusion .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Sample EDI statement for a research website .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Sample Group Code of Conduct .....</b>	<b>14</b>
1. Philosophy .....	14
2. Code of Conduct.....	14
<b>Appendix B – Excerpts from Slides used in Town Halls .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Appendix C – FEAS Dimensions May 2021 Newsletter .....</b>	<b>19</b>

## List and Description of Activities

### Meetings, Participation, and Providing Support

In addition to participating in all DFC meetings, I led semi-weekly meetings with the FEAS Dimensions team. In these meetings we would brainstorm and plan events, discuss various documents that we were working on, rehearse Town Halls, and in general support the Dimensions mission and initiatives. At times we would increase our meeting frequency to weekly, for example, in April-May, 2021, when we were planning our Town Halls and creating our Newsletter. In advance of a Town Hall that has held for Postdoctoral Fellows in both FEAS and the Faculty of Science, FoS, I jointly held weekly planning meetings with Dr. Imogen Coe, DFC for FoS, and both the FEAS and FoS Dimensions teams.

### Advertising, Interviewing, and Onboarding the FEAS Dimensions Team

In September, 2020, I engaged in the process of filling three positions on the FEAS Dimensions team, one for an undergraduate researcher, one for a graduate student researcher, and one for a postdoctoral researcher. I drafted ads to be distributed among the eligible cohorts, took applications, conducted interviews, and selected the team members. For the 2020-2021 academic year, the team comprised Anika Shafi, Bachelor's student, Aerospace Engineering, Anum Khan, MASc. student, Civil Engineering, and Dr. Sylvie Antoun, Postdoctoral Fellow, Mechanical Engineering.

### Departmental Visits

I visited all six departments in FEAS, presenting at departmental meetings between February 18 and April 1, 2021. In each case, the Department Chair was very welcoming and gave a warm introduction. In each visit I gave a ~10 minute PowerPoint presentation explaining Dimensions, its goals, organizational structure, and upcoming initiatives. At each visit, my presentation was followed by a question and answer period. During these periods there was excellent engagement from the faculty with many pointed questions. Many of the questions related to tools and resources that could be provided to the faculty in aid of them supporting EDI in their SRC.

Overall, I characterize the response to these visits as positive, with many faculty connecting with me afterward to engage in deeper discussion. One of the objectives of these visits is to open the door for faculty who want to have personal discussions about barriers to participation in SRC that they have experienced or witnessed. As a result of these visits a number of faculty have reached out to me for assistance with grant writing, which I have been providing on an *ad-hoc* basis, and for anonymous discussions of EDI barriers to SRC witnessed or experienced.

Following the departmental visits, I had individual meetings and other correspondence with faculty, for a variety of reasons and to discuss different subjects related to EDI. Some of the discussions focused on barriers to that individual faculty member pursuing SRC, including overt discrimination faced by more senior members of the same

department. Other conversations focused with institutional barriers that inhibit recruitment and hiring in an equitable and inclusive manner. Further conversations discussed ways to support EDI in a research group, or ways to effectively write about EDI philosophy in a grant application.

### EDI in SRC Guide Document

I created the first Dimensions guide for FEAS, "Supporting Equity Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in your SRC Lab or Group Environment." It was reviewed by Nika Zolfaghari, Manager, Equity and Community Inclusion, FEAS, and Dr. Sri Krishnan, Associate Dean, Research and External Partnerships, FEAS. It was sent to all FEAS department chairs for distribution to their faculty. It is quite a detailed document, but has been strategically set up so that faculty can use it to whatever extent they see fit. For reference, the guide has been appended to this report.

### Town Halls

Key objectives of the Dimensions Pilot program are to engage the SRC community and learn about EDI barriers and obstacles that exist in the research ecosystem. To that end, a series of towns halls were organized and held, a joint FEAS/FoS town hall for postdoctoral fellows, two FEAS graduate student town halls, and an undergraduate research town hall. In each of these town halls, the Dimensions Pilot program was introduced and explained, participants were placed in breakout rooms which were moderated by Dimensions team members, there was a discussion of the concept of bias, and participants were given an opportunity to ask questions and discuss barriers to participation in SRC. Excerpts from the slides used in these town halls are appended to this report.

Participation met or exceeded expectations in all instances:

- 28 Postdoctoral Fellows attended the joint FEAS/FoS town hall on March 24, 2021
- 19 Graduate Students attended the Town Hall on May 17, 2020
- 15 Graduate Students attended the Town Hall on May 27, 2020
- 37 Undergraduate Researchers attended the Town Hall on May 25, 2020

Engagement and dialogue were very strong during these town halls, and informal, anonymous polling at the beginning and end of each town hall indicated that information about EDI barriers in SRC was being effectively conveyed. For example, the table below shows four poll questions that were asked at the start and the end of the town hall on May 17<sup>th</sup>, and the response rates. A couple of the largest changes in the responses are highlighted. Notwithstanding the small sample size, it can be seen that by the end of the town hall, 100% of respondents knew the purpose of Dimensions, knew what EDI is, and recognized the importance of EDI in SRC. Notably, the percentage of participants who responded that they had experienced or witnessed EDI

related barriers to Scholarly, Research and Creative activity, increased from 25% to 71%, indicating that the town hall experience made them aware of these barriers.

Question	Poll responses at the <b>start</b> of the town hall	Poll responses at the <b>end</b> of the town hall
I (now) understand the purposes of the Dimensions Pilot at Ryerson	<b>Yes: 30%</b> No: 20% I'm not sure: 50%	<b>Yes: 100%</b> No: 0% I'm not sure: 0%
I (now) know what EDI is	Yes: 65% No: 20% I'm not sure: 15%	Yes: 100% No: 0% I'm not sure: 0%
I (now) recognize the importance of EDI in Scholarly, Research and Creative activity (SRC)	Yes: 65% No: 10% I'm not sure: 25%	Yes: 100% No: 0% I'm not sure: 0%
I have experienced or witnessed EDI related barriers to Scholarly, Research and Creative activity	<b>Yes: 25%</b> No: 35% Maybe: 40%	<b>Yes: 71%</b> No: 14% I'm not sure: 14%

The town halls also featured a Jamboard discussion where participants were asked to anonymously write about bias and barriers to SRC that they had witnessed. A screen capture of a sample Jamboard is shown below. It can be seen from the image that a broad range bias and barriers are reported. It should also be noted that common themes in the Jamboard comments are sexism and gender-based discrimination, and cultural/language/immigration-based discrimination and harassment.

What examples of bias and barriers to SRC have you experienced or witnessed?



## Newsletter

The FEAS Dimensions team put together a newsletter that was distributed to all FEAS researchers on May 3, 2021. The newsletter gave a brief description of Dimensions, introduced the FEAS Dimensions team members, and provided links to various resources. For reference, the newsletter has been appended to this report.

## Social Media Presence

The FEAS Dimensions team created and launched a Facebook and Twitter account in April 2021. These accounts are used to publicize events, share articles, blog posts, or announcements of other opportunities or events that are in support of EDI in SRC.

## Timeline

Dates	Activity
Sept., 2020	Advertising, interviewing, and forming the FEAS Dimensions team
Sept., 2020 – May, 2021	Leading the FEAS Dimensions team with weekly or semi-weekly meetings and regular correspondence
March 24, 2021	Joint FEAS/FoS Postdoctoral Fellow Town Hall
May 17, 2021	FEAS Graduate Town Halls
May 27, 2021	

May 25, 2021	FEAS Undergraduate Researcher Town Hall
Feb. 18 - April 1, 2021	Visiting all six FEAS departments to present and introduce Dimensions
March 1 – April 2, 2021	Creating and distributing the EDI in SRC Guide Document, "Supporting Equity Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in your SRC Lab or Group Environment."
April 1 – May 3, 2021	Creating and distributing the FEAS Dimensions Newsletter

### Integration of the Dimensions Faculty Chair in the Faculty

It is important to the future progress and success of the Dimensions program that it become deeply integrated into the faculties. Such integration will permit Dimensions personnel to have greater influence on faculty operations and initiatives. It will also help engrain the importance of Dimensions in the philosophies and portfolios of faculty leadership. One of my objectives was to ensure that current and future FEAS Deans and Associate Deans, Research and External Partnerships (AD-REP), viewed Dimensions as an integral part of the faculty leadership.

#### Allocation of Budget

I presented a request to the AD-REP for a budget allocation of \$3000 to FEAS Dimensions. This funding was requested to cover CCS and/or accessibility related costs (such as ASL interpretation) during Town Halls. The request was granted without hesitation.

#### Listing the Dimensions Faculty Chair on the FEAS Contact Website

In order to help demonstrate integration of Dimensions into FEAS operations, and show support from the Dean and the Associate Deans, I asked to have the contact for the DFC listed on the FEAS Contact Website. The request was granted, as shown below, listing the DFC under the "Research and Innovation Office".



Research and Innovation Office (RIO)			
For general inquiries, email <a href="mailto:rio@ryerson.ca">rio@ryerson.ca</a> .			
Name	Title	Email	Extension
Denis Arseneault	Research Accounts Support Officer - Aerospace, Mechanical and Industrial Engineering	<a href="mailto:denis.arseneault@ryerson.ca">denis.arseneault@ryerson.ca</a>	ext. 554637
Dr. Seth Dworkin	Dimensions Faculty Chair for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in Scholarly, Research and Creative Activity	<a href="mailto:seth.dworkin@ryerson.ca">seth.dworkin@ryerson.ca</a>	ext. 557311
Victoria Farmer	Research and Development Co-ordinator	<a href="mailto:vfarmer@ryerson.ca">vfarmer@ryerson.ca</a>	ext. 557910
Dr. Sri Krishnan	Associate Dean, Research and External Partnerships	<a href="mailto:krishnan@ryerson.ca">krishnan@ryerson.ca</a>	ext. 554931

Figure 1. image taken from <https://www.ryerson.ca/engineering-architectural-science/about/staff-contacts/>

In March, 2021, I engaged in a coordinated effort with the other DFCs to request course release from the various faculty dean's for the 2021-2022 academic year. The FEAS Dean approved the request with as a course released, then to be taught as overload as I already receive a course release associated with my Canada Research Chair (CRC).

### FEAS Strategic Doings Committee

The FEAS Strategic Doings Committee comprises staff and faculty leadership, including the Dean and Associate Dean, Teaching and Outreach. The purpose of the committee is to engage in a planning process to determine an action that the faculty can take in support of EDI, which will meet the criteria of being implementable with a high likelihood of success, and have high impact. As the FEAS DFC, I was asked to join the FEAS Strategic Doings Committee.

I attended three meetings of the Strategic Doings Committee where we brainstormed ideas for actions in support of EDI, and engaged in a process of action selection. Inspired by the [Ryerson Diversity Self ID](#) data that was recently released, the committee decided that each department in FEAS will be required to produce an EDI Action Plan, that should recognize and address equity and diversity shortcomings in their programs. The committee will give deep guidance and assistance in developing and executing these plans. To begin the process, I have created a draft of the guidelines that each department will need to follow in creating their EDI Action Plan. The FEAS Strategic Doings Committee will continue to meet and advance the process throughout the S2021 term.

Initiating a Requirement for Undergraduate Research Assistants to Attend a Town Hall

FEAS supports Undergraduate Research Assistant (URA) positions in each summer semester. Approximately 50 such positions (known as the U50) are supported through the NSERC USRA program, funding for professors, and funding that goes directly to the student. These URAs are typically integrated into a graduate research group for the summer, and gain experience on a research project, either independently or in collaboration with other group members, under the supervision of a professor. In collaboration with the FEAS Research and Innovation Office, and the AD-REP, it was determined that participation in a Dimensions Town Hall would be a valuable learning and growth experience for these URAs. Therefore, upon being awarded an URA, the students have been informed that their Dimensions Town Hall participation was mandatory. A Dimensions Town Hall was held for them on May 25, 2021.

**Acknowledgements**

I would like to acknowledge Prof. Art Blake, Dimensions Director, for continuous guidance and support. I would also like to acknowledge the Dimensions Faculty Chairs, and the Dimensions Staff, for their coordination, dedication, and for continuously sharing their perspectives on EDI with me.

I would like to express my gratitude to the FEAS Dimensions team, Dr. Sylvie Antoun, Anum Khan, and Anika Shafi, for their excellent teamwork, leadership, and passion that they bring to Dimensions and EDI work.

I would like to thank members of the FEAS leadership for their support of Dimensions. Thank you to Dr. Tom Duever, Dr. Sri Krishnan, Dr. Miljana Horvat, and Nika Zolfaghari for their support, consultation and advice throughout this process.



### **Appendix A – EDI in SRC Guide Document**

## **Supporting Equity Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in your SRC Lab or Group Environment**

### Five Easy-to-Take Action Items to Support EDI in Your Research Group

This is by no means a comprehensive list, but rather a simplified and actionable way to get started. Further down in this document, in sections entitled “Supporting Equity,” “Supporting Diversity,” and “Supporting Inclusion,” there is a more detailed description, with explanations of steps and actions that you can take. Here are five easy steps you can take to support EDI in your research or lab group environment.

1. Implement a Research Group Code of Conduct – a brief document that each current and prospective group member is given. A Sample *Research Group Code of Conduct* is at the end of this document.
2. Make an unsolicited offer of flexibility with work location and time, to each group member, to accommodate those with varying personal and family responsibilities. Work to accommodate childcare, eldercare, community volunteering, and part-time employment, as it may pertain to students with varying socio-economic backgrounds.
3. Each winter, strongly encourage women undergraduates, and those who may identify as Black or Indigenous or from other equity-seeking groups, who you may teach or interact with to apply for URA and Masters positions. Ask your current group members to identify any candidates they may know through their social networks and TA/GA duties.
4. Put a statement about EDI on your research website, preferably in a section of it aimed at prospective students, so that applicants understand that you value diversity. A sample statement can be found at the end of this document.
5. Ask about and note any religious or cultural observance requirements, or family responsibilities of each group member, ask how they can be accommodated, and then intentionally accommodate them when planning group events, outings, or conference travel.

### Background Information

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) is a framework for creating an environment that is fair to all participants, welcoming to all individuals, merit-based, and able to thrive by permitting access to the largest possible talent pool. It recognizes obstacles and barriers that are experienced by members of equity seeking groups, and seeks to better identify talent and potential, and accommodate those with differing personal needs. Supporting EDI helps to reduce and eliminate its opposites, namely *inequality*,

*homogeneity* (and thus less diverse lens, experience, point of view, and creativity), and *exclusionary* practices (both overt and inadvertent). Therefore, EDI follows from a moral and ethical imperative.

As per the Tri-Agency Statement on EDI, the stated commitment to “*Increasing equitable and inclusive participation in the research system, including on research teams*” and specific initiatives to achieve that, are a primary focus of Ryerson University. Individual PIs do not always receive EDI training, and yet there is a growing expectation, especially from NSERC, to show EDI competencies in our labs, and on our grant applications. Below is a more detailed list of suggestions that individual PIs may consider for implementation in their lab/research group, with brief explanations.

### Supporting Equity

- Implement a Research Group Code of Conduct. This should be a brief document that each current and prospective group member is given, and has a chance to discuss and ask questions about. The Code of Conduct should outline expectations of mutual respect, fair and collegial treatment, and policies towards harassment, aggression, and other types of misconduct. When giving the Code of Conduct to a new member, have a conversation about what *they* need in order to feel included, and how they can go about discussions and dealing with conflict should it arise. A sample Code of Conduct is included at the end of this document.
- In group meetings and discussions, ensure that women group members are always given equal speaking time and not interrupted. Studies have shown that in professional group settings men are far more likely to interrupt and/or talk over women than *vice versa*. However, it is very important, especially given the supervisor-trainee dynamic, that group members are encouraged to speak and be heard. In group discussions, be conscious of speaking time, and manage the flow of the conversation accordingly.
- In collaborative projects, ensure that administrative roles (note taking, sending reminders, organizing) are equitably distributed.
- When managing a group of multiple students, ensure that research projects are distributed in a fair and equitable way, with each eligible group member being considered and given a chance to express interest. Members of equity seeking groups may be less inclined to assert their preferences for certain research projects.
- Make an unsolicited offer of flexibility with work location and time to all current and prospective group members. Noting that family care responsibilities fall disproportionately upon women in our society, this flexibility can go a long way in enabling their further education. Furthermore, this type of policy also recognizes

the different levels of family and personal responsibilities associated with varying socio-economic background and privilege.

- Consider and discuss with your trainees potential applications of research in aid of historically marginalized or underrepresented communities. For example, are there applications of building science research that could be applied to benefit remote northern communities? Are there applications of digital communication technologies that could benefit persons with disabilities? These applications do not always exist depending on the field of study, but engaging in thoughtful discussion with trainees about them helps teach principles of equity in technology application.

## Supporting Diversity

- When a position for a research trainee (postdoc, grad student, or URA) becomes available in your group, craft an advertisement for wide distribution. Be sure to include a statement on the group's commitment to EDI and avoid using gendered language (proofing is available). Ensure that it gets widely distributed by sending it to colleagues, posting it in research organization websites or newsletters, and asking your current trainees to distribute it in their network and on social media if they are comfortable doing so. Consider distributing your posting via [Ryerson Women In Engineering](#), and the [National Society of Black Engineers](#). Provide an application deadline that is at least one month from the time of posting whenever possible.
- Strongly encourage women undergraduates who you may teach or interact with to apply for URA and Masters positions. Many women undergraduates report feeling put off from applying due to a lack of personal contact, women mentors, and encouragement.
- When reviewing an applicant's CV, take a moment to consider obstacles and barriers to accomplishment that could be masking a candidate's talent and potential. For example, it is well documented that journal manuscript reviews are harsher when the first author's first name is female. Therefore, a female applicant for a PhD position or postdoc may have fewer publications than a male counterpart with the same potential, talent and work ethic. There is no formula for how to consider these factors, but awareness of them can help you more acutely identify talent and potential. If there is any doubt, offer the candidate an interview (in person or video conference) and give them an opportunity to tell you about themselves and explain their journey.
- Put a statement about EDI on your research website, preferably in a section of it aimed at prospective students, so that applicants understand that you value diversity.

### Supporting Inclusion

- Ensuring that the physical space of the lab feels safe is an important aspect of inclusion. If some group members work into the evening, and especially if they may work alone, ensuring that the lab door locks, has a blue emergency button nearby, security cameras nearby, and possibly a video intercom system, can help make group members feel safer in the lab. In particular, current and prospective women trainees who may feel vulnerable when working alone can gain a better sense of inclusion from these measures. You may wish to discuss lab safety and security with your trainees, and with either Ryerson Security or Ryerson Facilities if changes are needed.
- Given the prevalence and benefit of social gatherings, you may wish to query and note any and all dietary restrictions of your group members (vegan, halal, etc.), and provide suggestions and/or coordination to ensure that food and catering has appealing options for each group member.
- Noting any religious or cultural observance requirements of each group member, and intentionally accommodating them, can also serve an atmosphere of inclusivity. If a group members observe a Sabbath, avoid scheduling social events that conflict with their observances. If a group member observes Ramadan, avoid scheduling events that may involve eating during that time. To create a culture of inclusivity, it's important that the PI query the group members as to these accommodations rather than wait for them to bring the information forward on their own.
- Make a conscious effort to seek out academic and industry collaborators who represent a broad cross section of society, including those from equity seeking groups, thereby providing additional inspiration and mentorship, and opportunities for allyship to your trainees. These efforts help foster an atmosphere of inclusion.
- Be reflective on and open to discussing privilege that you may have experienced along your academic journey. Showing this type of recognition and reflection indicates to your trainees that you are cognizant of the differing privilege that individuals enjoy, and supports an atmosphere of inclusivity.

### **Contact Information**

Prof. Seth Dworkin, PhD, PEng, FCSME (*He/Him*)  
Dimensions Faculty Chair  
Faculty of Engineering and Architectural Science  
Email: [seth.dworkin@ryerson.ca](mailto:seth.dworkin@ryerson.ca)

Nika Zolfaghari, BEng, MAsC (*She/Her*)  
Manager, Equity and Community Inclusion

Faculty of Engineering and Architectural Science

Email: nika.zolfaghari@ryerson.ca

Sample EDI statement for a research website

(adapted from <https://dworkin.blog.ryerson.ca/graduate-studies>)

Statement on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)

The XXXXX Group is strongly committed to upholding the values of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI). Consistent with the [Tri-Agency Statement on EDI](#), and the [Dimensions Pilot Program at Ryerson](#), the XXXXX group will foster an environment in which all will feel comfortable, safe, supported, and free to speak their minds and pursue their research interests. The XXXXX group recognizes that engineering culture can feel exclusionary to traditionally underrepresented groups in STEM fields (those who identify as women, racialized, LGBTQ2S+, Indigenous, and/or people with disabilities). By acknowledging the EDI issues that exist in our field, we aim to validate the challenges faced by each group member, and continually strive to improve our group's culture for all members.

Sample Group Code of Conduct

**Group Philosophy and Code of Conduct**

*Performing Research with Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)*

**1. Philosophy**

We adopt a philosophy of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI). This stems from the belief that increasing the intersections of identity in research can lead to wider understanding. To focus on EDI is to take a step in the direction of more human-centered engineering, where the quality of teams and inclusion of teammates is a key factor. This group will foster an environment in which all will feel comfortable, supported and free to speak their minds. One of the steps we are taking towards better diversity is the creation of this code of conduct which sets clear boundaries for all teammates - and is made in the awareness that engineering culture can feel exclusionary to traditionally underrepresented groups in STEM fields (women, racialized groups, 2SLGBTQ++, Indigenous people, persons with disabilities). By acknowledging the EDI issues that exist in our field, we aim to validate the challenges faced by each group member, and to intentionally take steps to improve our group's culture for all members.

**2. Code of Conduct**

The code of conduct comprises the following points:

1. Group members shall respect each individual's ideas, ideologies, religions, culture, heritage, languages, and identity.
2. Group members shall advocate for each other (not being bystanders).

3. Multiple types of team bonding events are expected in this group (for differently abled people etc.) - mix of social, sporting, and others so that no one feels excluded from the group if they don't feel comfortable with a particular activity.
4. All group members shall strive to have clear communication with each other about expectations and conflicts - respecting each other and avoiding assumptions.
5. Group members shall ask if someone wants help before giving it, and remember that we all have things to learn from - and teach to each other.
6. Personal contact information that may be shared for research purposes will not be used for social purposes unless the team members give explicit consent.
7. Group members shall aim to maintain friendly professionalism.
8. Group members should actively learn about each others' experiences, using curiosity - not judgment - to be inclusive of the identities and backgrounds of others.
9. All discussions and conversation in the group should be in English, so everyone can participate.
10. All forms of misconduct and harassment (including but not limited to sexual, physical, verbal, emotional, psychological, and prejudice) are not tolerated in the group, and they will be reported to the appropriate authority at Ryerson.

The Code of Conduct should contain information on the resources that are available to students on campus in support of EDI, including the [Office of the Vice President – Equity and Community Inclusion](#), the [Office of the Manager of Equity and Community Inclusion in FEAS](#), the [Ryerson Consent Comes First Office](#), [Ryerson Human Rights Services](#), and [Ryerson Counselling](#).



**Appendix B – Excerpts from Slides used in Town Halls**

## What is Dimensions Canada?

The **Dimensions Pilot Program** is a

- federal initiative supported by NSERC, SSHRC and CIHR
- support post-secondary institutions seeking to **increase equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI)** in **scholarly, research and creative (SRC)** activities

### Objectives

- **identify and eliminate obstacles and inequities to research in academia** especially for those from under-represented, historically excluded groups (women, visible minorities, people with disabilities, Indigenous peoples, & members of the LGBTQ2S+ community)
- improve equitable access to funding opportunities, increase equitable and inclusive participation, and embed EDI-related considerations into research design and practices

Jointly administered by



9

## Why do we need Dimensions?

- **We know** there are **barriers** to access and inclusion in research activities.
- **We know** there are **biases** that underlie racism, sexism, homophobia, ableism and other types of exclusionary behaviours in STEM (and all disciplines in the university).
- These barriers limit the ability of diverse people to contribute, and they **create unwelcoming environments**. They limit both individual and group success.



## Breakout Activity #1: Conscious (explicit) and Unconscious (implicit) bias

- Biases: Shortcuts our brains take to form an opinion or characterization based on upbringing, stereotypes, culture, media, etc.
- Because of biases, we make automatic associations about people that are often incorrect.
- Biases can be **conscious**, where we observe a trait, and then think about how a characteristic would be associated with that trait, or **unconscious**, where we automatically assume a characteristic based on an observable trait that we don't even consciously consider

**Dimensions**  
Pilot Program

## How you can engage with the Dimensions Pilot at Ryerson?

- **Connect with your Dimensions Faculty Chair (DFC)** or team members to further this discussion
- If you are experiencing or witnessing EDI related barriers, feel free to **inform, discuss, dialogue, or ask questions**. All discussions can be kept private and confidential
- Connect with us on social media via [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#)
- Help engage our campus and raise awareness! e.g. link to our Ryerson Dimensions website from your email or social media:  
<https://www.ryerson.ca/dimensions/>

**Appendix C – FEAS Dimensions May 2021 Newsletter**

# Dimensions

## Pilot Program

### **DIMENSIONS NEWSLETTER FOR WINTER, 2021**

#### **Faculty of Engineering and Architectural Science**

### **Dimensions at Ryerson: Fostering EDI in SRC Cultures**

The Dimensions Pilot Program is a federal initiative supported by all three federal research granting agencies (NSERC, CIHR, SSHRC) to support post-secondary institutions seeking to increase Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) in Scholarly Research and Creative (SRC) activities. Ryerson is one of 17 Canadian educational institutions participating in the two-year pilot phase.

### **Meet the Team**

#### **Dr. Sylvie Antoun** **Postdoctoral Fellow, Mechanical Engineering**



Sylvie is a postdoctoral fellow in Mechanical Engineering and thrives to curb the inequities existing in research and technology faced by our science and engineering worlds. At the core of all her work is impact within the community. Impact is what drives her to tackle the biggest challenges of marginalized communities, like the climate crisis and its injustices. Impact also drives her to nurture her leadership and teaching methods, by telling stories and sharing experiences — both of her own and others. She has a passion for taking on initiatives that impart her knowledge and ability to help underrepresented communities, while at the same time reinforcing a sense of engineering responsibility for professional practices and collaborative work.

#### **Anum Khan** **Masters Student, Civil Engineering**

Anum is a Master's student in Civil Engineering and seeks to shed light on inequities faced in career advancement as a member of the BIPOC community. She has a passion for taking on leadership opportunities within and outside of the University and wishes to help other members of the engineering community build the confidence to do so as well.



#### **Anika Shafi** **Undergraduate Student, Aerospace Engineering**



Anika is an undergraduate student in Aerospace Engineering. Her early life experiences formed the framework for her belief that when it comes to inequity in any form — inaction is complicity. Thus, through involvement in Dimensions, she is determined to play her part in creating ethical and culturally safe spaces where difficult conversations and social change pertaining to EDI can be explored.



## Message from FEAS Dimensions Faculty Chair

**Prof. Seth Dworkin**  
**Professor and Canada Research Chair,**  
**Mechanical and Industrial Engineering,**  
**Dimensions Faculty Chair,**  
**Faculty of Engineering and Architectural Science**



The FEAS Dimensions team members are passionate about supporting Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) in our Scholarly Research and Creative (SRC) activity ecosystem. I want to start by commending the Dimensions team, Sylvie, Anum, and Anika, for their excellent work and devotion to the pilot program. I want to acknowledge Dr. Art Blake, Ryerson's Dimensions director for his leadership, and the Ryerson Dimensions Faculty Chairs group for their ongoing work. Thank you also to Dr. Tom Duever, Dr. Sri Krishnan, Dr. Miljana Horvat, and Nika Zolfaghari for their support, consultation and advice throughout this process.

Dimensions work will continue on throughout the upcoming summer and the 2021-2022 academic year. So far, we have been planning and holding departmental meeting visits and town halls, where we introduce Dimensions, engage with researchers, and foster dialogue. This work will continue with Graduate Researcher and Undergraduate Research (virtual) Town Halls scheduled for May, participation in new faculty orientation activities, and grant writing workshops.

The main objective of the Dimensions Pilot Program is for us to learn about EDI related barriers and obstacles to participation in research. We want to hear from you, the researchers. If you have witnessed or encountered any barriers to participation in SRC, you should feel encouraged to contact any one of the Dimensions team. Your information will be kept private and anonymous. Many faculty and students have already availed themselves of this type of discussion, and it has provided a very valuable learning experience for us, which is helping to inform new initiatives, and exact positive change.

Other Dimensions goals are to support EDI in SRC any way we can. We have been providing documentation to faculty on how to support EDI in the research lab or group environment. We have been aiding faculty in the writing of EDI sections of grant proposals. Anyone should feel free to engage with the Dimensions team to discuss EDI in SRC, in any way that you might find helpful. Are you an undergraduate researcher with questions or concerns about EDI? Are you a graduate student who has witnessed a confusing dynamic between two researchers and you would like to talk about it? Are you a postdoc who is writing an EDI statement for a job application? Contact us and let us be a resource for you.

Thank you to everyone who has engaged with Dimensions. Through our dialogue, engagement, and collective efforts, we will drive continued cultural change towards an ever-more equitable, diverse, and inclusive SRC environment in FEAS.





## Upcoming Virtual Town Halls

FEAS Dimensions will be hosting four town halls in May for Undergraduate and Graduate Researchers. These town halls will introduce Dimensions and provide a forum to discuss barriers to participation in SRC. Please register and attend. We would love to hear from you.

Dimensions Virtual Town Hall Series - FEAS Graduate Town Hall

Date: May 17, 2021

Time: 2:00 PM EDT - 3:00 PM EDT

[Registration link](#)

Dimensions Virtual Town Hall Series - FEAS Graduate Town Hall

Date: May 19, 2021

Time: 10:00 AM EDT - 11:00 AM EDT

[Registration link](#)

Dimensions Virtual Town Hall Series - FEAS Undergraduate Town Hall

Date: May 25, 2021

Time: 10:00 AM EDT - 11:00 AM EDT

[Registration link](#)

Dimensions Virtual Town Hall Series - FEAS Graduate Town Hall

Date: May 27, 2021

Time: 3:00 PM EDT - 4:00 PM EDT

[Registration link](#)

## Useful Links

[Ryerson Dimensions Website](#) - The official website for Dimensions at Ryerson with more information on Faculty Chairs, Advisory Board, Research Teams and upcoming events.

[NSERC Dimensions Website](#) - To learn more about the Dimensions Pilot Project.

[Dimensions Postdoctoral Fellows Survey Link](#) - A survey to gather information about postdoctoral fellows' experiences participating in research activities at Ryerson.

[A practical Guide to Mentoring Across Institutions](#) - Guideline on mentoring that is mindful of students' STEM identities.

[Rethinking Research Assessment](#) - A discussion on myths of research evaluation and design principles that can allow institutions to develop better research assessment practices.

## Connect with us on social media

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