

TRSM FACULTY DIMENSIONS REPORT

2020-2021



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ABOUT THE TRSM DIMENSIONS TEAM

The TRSM Dimension team is chaired by Dr. Rupa Banerjee, Associate Professor of Human Resource Management and Organizational Behaviour. The student team consists of MScM student Talia Emanuel, and undergraduate student Cindy Chen. In the 2020-2021 academic year, the TRSM Dimensions team has undertaken the following activities:

- worked with the university-wide Dimensions team to design and implement the graduate student and post-doctoral fellow surveys
- presented the Dimensions Pilot Project to TRSM SRC committee
- visited departments and schools within TRSM to inform about the Dimensions Pilot Program and gather information about equity-related issues and concerns
- assisted in developing the EDI statement for the TRSM Strategic Research Plan
- designed and delivered workshops on equity, diversity and inclusion in research for faculty, graduate students and undergraduate students.

In this report, we summarize the key activities undertaken by the TRSM Dimensions team during the 2020-2021 academic year and discuss the main findings from these activities.

GRADUATE STUDENT AND POST-DOCTORAL FELLOW SURVEYS

Relatively few TRSM graduate students completed the Dimensions Graduate Student Survey. Of the 84 research-focused graduate students in TRSM (79 MScM and 5 PhD), 18 started the survey and only 12 completed the survey. Uptake was better among post-doctoral fellows - of the 10 post-doctoral fellows in TRSM, 5 completed the survey.

SRC COMMITTEE PRESENTATION

In January 2021, the TRSM Dimensions Team presented an overview of the Dimensions Pilot Project to the TRSM SRC Committee. The mandate of the SRC Committee is to provide guidance to the Associate Dean of Research and serve as a representative of their department for research-related issues. All departments within the faculty are required to nominate a member for this committee. After informing the committee about the Dimensions Pilot Program, the DFC invited them to provide their input on the most relevant equity related SRC issues within the TRSM in their view. The following are the main issues raised by SRC committee members:

- Lack of understanding of how equity applies to business research
 - many committee members wanted to become more knowledgeable about EDI but were unsure of whether EDI is even relevant for them.
- A general feeling that only certain types of research areas have a connection to EDI. Some committee members felt that their research was 'identity-blind' and therefore unaffected by equity considerations.
- Interest in developing strategies for improving diversity within HQP teams, but difficulties in identifying concrete steps that could be implemented; several committee members expressed a desire to get an 'equity toolbox' to help them navigate this.

DEPARTMENTAL MEETING PRESENTATIONS

In February and March 2021, the TRSM Dimensions team visited every department in the TRSM. In all, ten departmental visits were completed. The main objective of these meetings was to inform faculty members about the Dimensions Pilot Program and gauge the equity-related issues and concerns facing TRSM faculty members. All departments expressed support for the Dimensions Pilot Project and many faculty members indicated an interest in learning more about it. From these departmental visits, we gathered a number of insights, such as:

- There is lack of understanding of EDI and how it may relate to management research.
- There is interest in understanding how the Dimensions Pilot Program can help in research design and grant writing.
- There is confusion about the mandate of the Dimensions Pilot Program – there were questions about whether the program can offer financial support for EDI-related research.
- There is interest in accessing help in diversifying research teams and creating inclusive environments.
- Faculty colleagues were very interested in receiving the findings from the graduate student survey.
- Several faculty colleagues indicated interest in participating in future training workshops and other EDI-related events both for themselves and for their trainees.

FACULTY DIMENSIONS WORKSHOP – EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IN GRANT PROPOSALS

On May 6th 2021, the TRSM Dimensions Team delivered a virtual workshop for faculty colleagues. A total of 18 faculty colleagues attended the workshop, from a wide range of departments/schools including, Accounting and Finance, Information Technology Management (ITM), Global Management Studies (GMS), Marketing, Law and Business and Human Resource Management (HRM). This workshop introduced basic concepts of EDI and highlighted ways that EDI may be integrated into research design. The workshop also provided participants with strategies for drafting EDI statements for grant applications. The DFC utilized resources from several sources including the tri-council websites (e.g. https://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/about-au_sujet/publications/dp/2019-2020/gbap-eng.aspx) to highlight the ways in which EDI is now incorporated into the mandates of funding agencies. The workshop also provided a practical step-by-step guide to crafting an EDI statement, including examples of EDI statements. Participants had the opportunity to critique the examples as a group. Furthermore, the workshop included a guided group discussion activity using the following scenario:

You are lecturing a fourth-year undergraduate class. One of your students approaches you after class. He is interested in pursuing a research-focused career. However, he has noticed all the universities he is applying for include statements like “We welcome and encourage applications from members of marginalized groups”

"What does that mean for me? Am I not welcomed? I'm not a part of any under-represented group, does that mean my application will get overlooked? I totally support equality in research, and I think it's great that these career paths are open to everyone-but why can't we just focus on finding the best researchers, and not what 'group' they are in?"

This activity generated significant discussion and debate. Participants recounted similar incidents with their students. Colleagues brainstormed various strategies for responding and noted the pros and cons of each strategy. This workshop resulted in a number of important insights:

- Faculty are interested in learning how to incorporate EDI principles into their research design. In particular, there were concerns about equitable collaboration with community partners.
- Faculty are interested in expanding their EDI expertise in terms of recruiting and hiring trainees. However, there was a debate about the role of quotas in promoting EDI.
- Faculty are interested in future workshops specifically about equitable hiring and management practices; there is interest in learning hands-on strategies for these topics.
- Faculty are interested in more workshops on EDI in grant applicants, with tri-council representatives or OVPRI representatives to provide detailed recommendations on how to word the section appropriately.
- A few faculty expressed interest in participating in data gathering interviews in the upcoming months.

GRADUATE STUDENT DIMENSIONS WORKSHOP

On May 5th, 2021 the TRSM Dimensions team delivered a workshop for research focused graduate students and post-doctoral fellows. A total of 24 participants registered for the workshop. The student members of the TRSM Dimensions team, and the graduate student representative in particular, took the lead in running this workshop. The focus of the workshop was threefold: (1) introduce principles of EDI in research; (2) introduce the Dimensions Pilot Project; (3) highlight strategies for integrating EDI into grant and job applications. In addition to providing practical strategies for understanding and integrating EDI into research, the workshop provided a step-by-step guide for developing an EDI statement. We also discussed “do’s and don’ts” of EDI statements. Finally, the workshop included an experiential activity which required participants to apply the concepts in an interview role-play. There were a number of interview questions used in the role-play such as:

Our Department believes that innovation, professionalism, and excellence in research stems from leaders who value diversity and equity. How have you demonstrated commitment to these values in your previous research or service experience?

This role-play activity allowed participants to try to articulate their EDI philosophies and experiences. Most students found this to be a difficult challenge, however, several participants offered ideas of how they would approach this question. A number of students

acknowledged that they needed to spend some time to contemplate their position on this topic in order to address such questions. The main takeaways from this workshop were the following:

- Graduate students are very interested in embracing EDI considerations in their research; numerous students discussed how their research tied into the topic of EDI.
- Students were very forthcoming about previous experiences of discrimination/inequity. However, none referred to systemic barriers or experiences of discrimination as graduate students.
- Several students felt that this workshop should have been provided earlier in their training so that they could integrate it into their research from the beginning.
- The students expressed interest in attending future workshops on other EDI-related topics such as unconscious bias.

UNDERGRADUATE DIMENSIONS

WORKSHOP

On May 21st 2021 the TRSM Dimensions team presented a workshop for all research oriented undergraduate students at TRSM. This workshop was made mandatory for students who received a summer undergraduate research assistantship award (about 8 students received this award). Moreover, the workshop was integrated into a newly developed undergraduate research methods course (with about 16 registrants). Finally, the workshop was advertised widely to any TRSM undergraduate student who was interested in EDI within the research context. Overall a total of 88 students took part in the workshop.

The main objective was to introduce concepts related to EDI and highlight ways to include EDI principles into job and graduate school applications and well as scholarship applications. In addition to providing terms and definitions and discussing a number of EDI concepts, practical strategies for articulating EDI philosophies and experiences were introduced. Finally, the workshop included an experiential activity to help the students apply the concepts in a realistic scenario. The student members of the TRSM Dimensions team, and the undergraduate student representative in particular, took the lead in running the experiential activity. Given the large number of participants, the activity was conducted with small discussion within breakout rooms. For the experiential exercise, the students were given the requirements of the Alan Shepard Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Award scholarship, and asked the following question:

Imagine you are applying to this scholarship. How would you demonstrate your commitment to EDI in your application?

Although some students found it difficult to express their ideologies within such a short timeframe, many participants did share their EDI experiences and what they learned from them. The main learning points from this workshop were the following:

- Undergraduate students at TRSM are keenly interested in issues related to EDI and are quite knowledgeable about terms and definitions.
- Students want practical advice on how to incorporate EDI into cover letters and job applications.
- Many students have significant extra-curricular experiences related to EDI and want to ensure that they can leverage those experiences for academic and career development.

OVERALL REFLECTIONS

The activities undertaken by the TRSM Dimensions team in the 2020-2021 academic year were meant to introduce the Dimensions Pilot Project to both students and faculty and gauge the main EDI issues within the TRSM. Overall, these objectives have been met, although with a few limitations. First, student participation in the survey was lower than targeted. Second, although students and faculty indicated general support for the Dimensions Pilot Program, there was limited dialogue, particularly from faculty, on experiences of discrimination or barriers. In order to address these limitations, we offer a number of recommendations:

- Integrate Dimensions workshops into new faculty orientation programs
- Integrate Dimensions workshop into graduate student orientation programs and/or courses
- Ensure that the Dimensions Program and the DFC are promoted widely by academic leaders within TRSM so that stakeholders are aware of this initiative and the associated resources provided by the DFC
- Develop a data collection strategy for faculty and graduate students which involves targeting recruitment and detailed semi-structured interviews
- Ensure that all data collected is analyzed and results are shared widely so that stakeholders see the impact of the data gathering
- Brainstorm innovative events and activities to address sensitive topics such as bias and discrimination
- Use events as formal data gathering opportunities (such as focus groups)