Dimensions Action Plan:

Inclusive excellence in scholarly, research and creative activities

Toronto Metropolitan University

Dimensions Construction

Dimensions Action Plan: Inclusive Excellence in Scholarly, Research and Creative Activities

Toronto Metropolitan University (TMU) was one of 17 Canadian post-secondary institutions that participated in the federal Dimensions: Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Canada Pilot Program from 2020–2022. Supported by all three federal research granting agencies, the program builds on the Government of Canada's Dimensions Charter and seeks to improve equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in scholarly, research and creative (SRC) activities. The program seeks to foster increased research excellence, innovation and creativity within the post-secondary sector across all disciplines through greater EDI. Program objectives include:

- Improving equitable access to funding opportunities.
- Improving research outcomes for members of equity-deserving groups.
- Fostering research cultures that prioritize inclusive excellence.
- Embedding EDI considerations into all stages of the research process.

In October 2022, TMU submitted an Application for Recognition to the federal Dimensions governing body based on the university's efforts to strategically integrate EDI into its research environment. The review panel awarded TMU a "Construction" designation, the second of four levels in the federal program's cycles of transformational change. This designation acknowledges that TMU has conducted an honest and thoughtful assessment of EDI in its research ecosystem and is strategically addressing EDI in a coordinated way.

This Action Plan identifies and responds to:

- Findings from the extensive consultations with, and the surveys administered to, TMU communities during the pilot by TMU's Dimensions Self-Assessment Team (SAT).
- Feedback provided during the application review process.
- Additional extensive consultations conducted by the interim Dimensions Director and the Dimensions Faculty Leads during the transitional year from "pilot to permanence" in 2023–2024 with SRC leaders and researchers in TMU Libraries, the Yeates School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (YSGPS) and the faculties.

This Action Plan also builds on the many EDI initiatives and policies that existed at TMU before the Dimensions pilot as well as those that developed alongside and after it. Members of TMU's SRC communities and EDI stakeholders are invited to provide additional feedback on the Action Plan's seven Objectives and 29 Actions. The Action Plan is a living document and will continue to be updated in response to feedback from community members.

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Executive summary

In 2019, Toronto Metropolitan University (TMU) became a signatory to the Dimensions Charter and was one of the 17 Canadian post-secondary institutions accepted into the two-year Dimensions Pilot Program. By endorsing the charter, TMU reiterated its deep commitment to embedding equity, diversity and inclusion principles into its policies, practices, action plans and culture.

This Dimensions Action Plan plays an important role in making good on this commitment and is aligned with TMU's Strategic Research Plan (2025-2030), Academic Plan (2025-2030), and the developing EDI Strategy and Action Plan. It is an updated version of the action plan that was prepared as part of TMU's Dimensions Application for Recognition and was developed with attention to how it complements and integrates with the university's antiracism, Black flourishing, and Indigenous reconciliation and resurgence initiatives and outcomes, and also with the Strategic Research Plan of individual faculties, TMU Libraries and the Yeates School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (YSGPS). The Dimensions Action Plan is unique among these other plans in that it focuses specifically on the equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and accessibility priorities of the university's scholars, researchers and creatives and for its research ecosystem.

There is a specific focus in the seven Dimensions objectives on accessibility and mental health as key markers for measuring inclusive excellence in SRC outcomes. The heightened focus on accessibility and mental health priorities and outcomes is not only in direct response to recommendations made by reviewers of the earlier version of the action plan in TMU's Dimensions Application for Recognition document, it also reflects TMU's investment in making accessibility and mental health a cornerstone of its EDI practice (through e.g., Access TMU, the Manager, Accessibility in the Office of the Vice-President, Equity and Community Inclusion and the new Community Wellbeing Unit). Expertise developed by researchers in the School of Disability Studies in the Faculty of Community Services is also an important resource for determining how

Focus of Dimensions at TMU in a nutshell

Promoting, facilitating and sustaining inclusive excellence in scholarly, research and creative activities for faculty, postdoctoral fellows, students and their community partners.

accessibility and mental health priorities for TMU researchers are best articulated and responded to.

[Dimensions at TMU](#) has benefitted from more than a decade of explicit and tangible EDI commitment and work across all sectors of the university. For example, TMU was the first Canadian university to develop the role and office of Vice-President, Equity and Community Inclusion; and, under the leadership of this office, the first to develop diversity self-ID data gathering from faculty, staff and students.

Given that a number of EDI-specific roles and units were already in existence prior to the start of the Dimensions Pilot and that TMU is a large, research-intensive university that is situated at the heart of Canada's most diverse city (and reflects the city's diverse demographics), the exclusive focus of Dimensions at TMU has been to foster inclusive excellence in SRC activities and in the research ecosystem. Although very specific in its purview, Dimensions at TMU has always acknowledged that:

- SRC activities do not occur in a social, cultural or institutional vacuum.

- The research ecosystem is impacted by individual and group biases and institutional "norms" that have disproportionately negative effects on members of equity-deserving groups (EDGs).

- EDG scholars, researchers and creatives in particular – as individuals and as groups – often encounter barriers as a consequence of their social identities and locations.

As such, the actions and success outcomes outlined in this action plan are linked, when relevant, to supports and services provided by roles that do not have SRC activities as a job requirement and units that are not directly part of the research ecosystem.

For the purposes of Dimensions at TMU and this action plan, SRC activities and research ecosystem refer not only to SRC projects and their immediate contexts, including associated relationships and collaborations. They also refer to:

- Admissions, recruitment, hiring, tenure, promotion and research team management policies and practices.

- The availability of award and funding opportunities.

- The existence of supports and services for personal and career development.

- Research support and administration services such as those provided by the Human Resources and Financial Services offices and by the Research Ethics Board.

In developing a model for Dimensions at TMU, the research community was understood to comprise the following three roles: 1) full-time faculty whose appointments specify SRC output as a job expectation, 2) graduate students and 3) postdoctoral fellows. Post-pilot, undergraduate student researchers and community research partners and collaborators were added. In addition, although the SRC experience of all scholars, researchers and creatives falls within the scope of Dimensions work, that of members of the following five EDGs has been prioritized: women, Black people, Indigenous people, persons with disabilities and 2SLGBTQ+ people. Aligned with the institution's overall EDI vision, the goal of Dimensions at TMU is to foster inclusive excellence in all aspects of SRC undertakings and in the research culture in order to create an environment free from barriers where everyone is treated fairly and able to thrive.

As The [Dimensions Charter](#) (Principle #4) points out, "When equity, diversity and inclusion considerations and practices are integral to research participation, to the research itself, and to research training and learning environments, research excellence, innovation and creativity are heightened across all disciplines, fields of study and stages of career development."
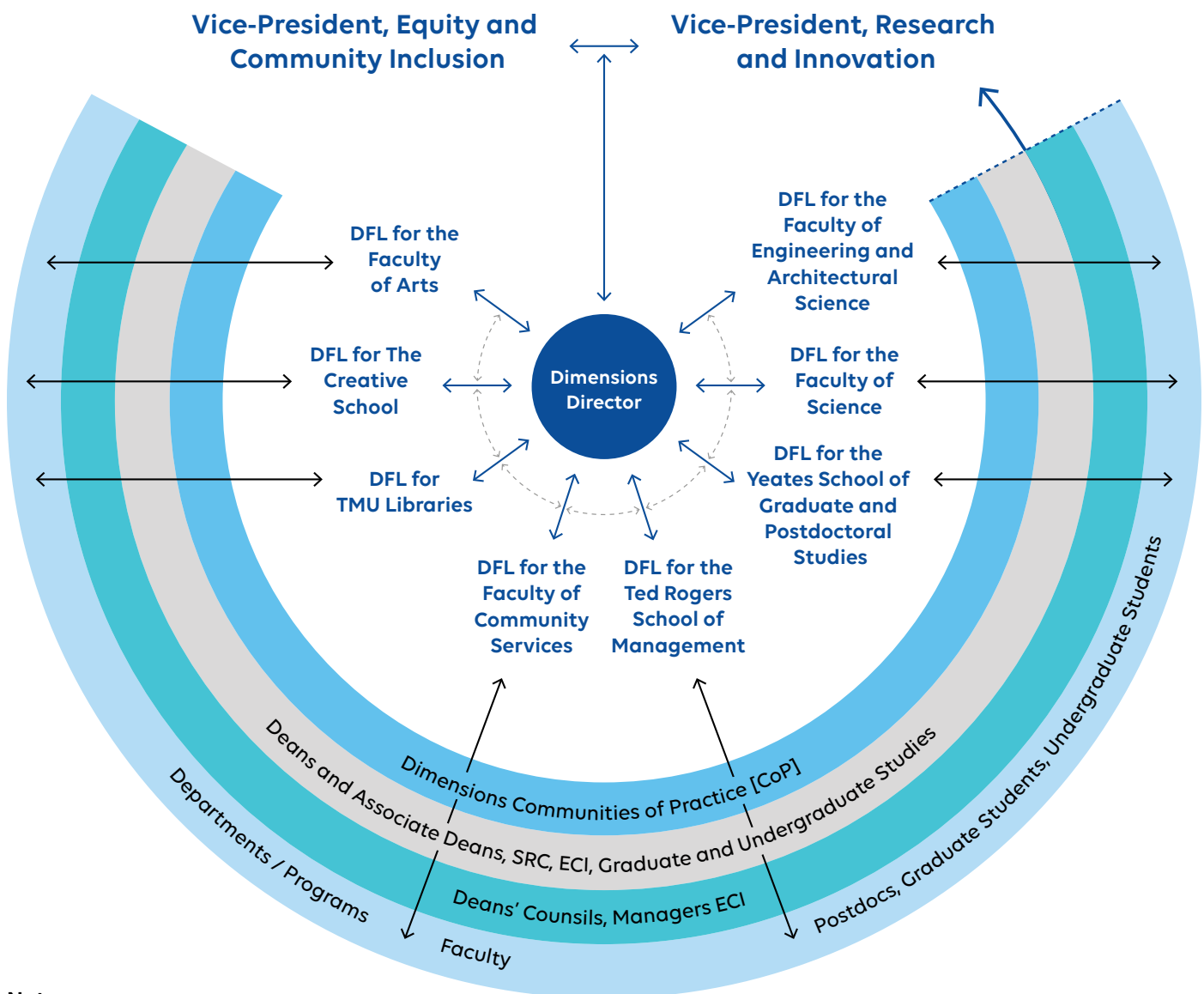
Dimensions at TMU is based on a peer-to-peer distributed model that is sensitive to the variety of SRC practices, disciplinary emphases, specialities and the uniqueness of local-area research cultures at the program and faculty/ school levels while recognizing that there are also common features across those local areas. At the centre of the model is the Dimensions team, which, during the Pilot, was led by the inaugural Dimensions Director (professor Art Blake from the Department of History, who also conceived the model) and comprised the Dimensions Faculty Chairs (now Dimensions Faculty Leads). Dimensions Faculty Leads (DFLs) are senior faculty researchers who have developed expertise on topics related to inclusive excellence in SRC. DFLs were supported by faculty research teams made up of graduate, undergraduate and postdoctoral research assistants.

"Whether or not we continue to call the EDI-in-SRC work that we do at TMU 'Dimensions' to take advantage of the name-brand recognition doesn't matter. What matters is that, at TMU, we are committed to doing this work, which has inclusive excellence as its ultimate goal over the long term."

– Hyacinth Simpson, Interim Dimensions Director, 2023–2024

In the transitional year from "pilot to permanence" (2023–2024), the same model is being followed, and the Dimensions team is led by the interim Dimensions Director (professor Hyacinth Simpson of the Department of English and former DFL for the Faculty of Arts). The Dimensions team has continued to report jointly to the Vice-President, Research and Innovation, professor Steven N. Liss, and the Vice-President, Equity and Community Inclusion, Tanya (Toni) De Mello. The current organizational structure for Dimensions at TMU is shown in the diagram below.

TMU Dimensions Organizational Structure

Vice-President, Equity and Community Inclusion ↔ **Vice-President, Research and Innovation**

DFL for the Faculty of Arts

DFL for The Creative School

DFL for TMU Libraries

DFL for the Faculty of Community Services

DFL for the Ted Rogers School of Management

Dimensions Director

DFL for the Faculty of Engineering and Architectural Science

DFL for the Faculty of Science

DFL for the Yeates School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

Departments / Programs

Deans and Associate Deans, SRC, ECI, Graduate and Undergraduate Studies

Dimensions Communities of Practice [CoP]

Deans' Counsils, Managers ECI

Faculty

Postdocs, Graduate Students, Undergraduate Students

Note:

- DFL – Dimensions Faculty Lead
- Lincoln Alexander School of Law (Fall 2020) and School of Medicine (opens Fall 2025) not included in model as they were not in existence at the time of the *Dimensions Pilot Program.*

A model for achieving inclusive excellence in SRC: Dimensions Faculty Leads and Dimensions Communities of Practice

The unique model for Dimensions at TMU centres on the roles of the Dimensions Faculty Leads (DFLs) and the Dimensions Communities of Practice (CoPs).

This model emphasizes researcher-led, local-area-focused work. It takes into account disciplinary norms and the specifics of the SRC culture in academic units and allows for direct interaction with members of local SRC communities.

Each faculty, the Yeates School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (YSGPS) and TMU Libraries has a DFL. DFLs are tenured faculty and senior librarians who have a commitment to developing expertise in EDI-in-SRC topics and practices. They are actively involved in efforts to foster inclusive excellence and model inclusivity and equity in their own SRC undertakings.

DFLs work closely with their decanal and unit leadership teams. DFLs are appointed to a two-year term via an application and appointment process.

A Dimensions CoP is a formal group of faculty members who commit to developing expertise in EDI-in-SRC topics, particularly in relation to their disciplines.

They assist the DFL with actualizing the objectives in the Action Plan along lines specific to the EDI-in-SRC goals in their faculty.

Beginning in 2025, Dimensions undertakings will be centralized within the faculties (and TMU Libraries and YSGPS) and led by the Dimensions Faculty Leads, who will be supported by Dimensions Communities of Practice (CoPs) in their local areas. A Dimensions Community of Practice is a group of faculty members, with representatives from the postdoc and student communities, who commit to developing expertise in topics related to inclusive excellence in SRC and to disciplines represented in their faculty/school. Each CoP will assist their DFL with achieving the seven Objectives in the Dimensions Action Plan along lines specific to the faculty/school.

Led by the DFLs in collaboration with SRC leaders (and particularly with Associate Deans whose portfolios cover SRC activities and graduate and postdoctoral studies), Dimensions work will be fully integrated at and operate primarily from this level. Locating Dimensions work in this way will ensure that the peer-to-peer model works most effectively; is most responsive to local-area norms and needs; and that the actions and success indicators detailed in the Dimensions Action Plan complement (without creating overlaps or silos) the Strategic Research Plans of the faculties/schools, TMU Libraries and YSGPS.

This fully integrated approach will ensure that Dimensions at TMU will be sustained in the coming years regardless of what happens with the Dimensions Program at the federal level. In early 2024, a public announcement was made that the Dimensions Program, which is administered by the Tri-Agency, led by NSERC, was being sunsetted. But in October 2024, Dimensions cohort institutions and other

stakeholders were informed that NSERC will now be launching a new phase of the Dimensions Program. Whatever form this new phase takes, TMU is committed to doing the work, which has inclusive excellence as its ultimate goal over the long term.

The objectives, actions and success indicators detailed below will guide the work that accountable parties will do at TMU until 2028, after which a comprehensive performance review will be undertaken. Although the DFLs and their CoPs will take point where much of the work is concerned, all individuals and roles identified in the plan have an equal investment in the plan's longevity and success. The extensive consultations on details in this Dimensions Action Plan that the interim Dimensions Director undertook with decanal leaders, deans'/faculty councils, TMU executives and other stakeholders in Fall 2023 and Winter 2024 were done with this understanding in mind. Dimensions at TMU belongs to everyone. Dimensions work is everyone's responsibility. And everyone will benefit from the successful execution of this action plan.

"The role that Dimensions at TMU plays in fostering inclusivity and equity in the SRC ecosystem does not stand alone from, and is not merely an add-on to, long-standing initiatives and the tireless work undertaken by individuals and groups over the years to centre EDI and accessibility in all areas of endeavour at the university, and specifically in relation to SRC activities. Rather, Dimensions provides an opportunity for assessing and streamlining existing initiatives to make them more strategic, responsive and effective. Dimensions also offers centralized scaffolding for coordinating and optimizing this work across the university's EDI networks and directing them towards clearly identified SRC outcomes."

– Hyacinth Simpson, Interim Dimensions
   Director, 2023–2024

Message from the Vice-President, Research and Innovation

I am pleased to introduce TMU's Dimensions Action Plan, a reflection of our longstanding and deep commitment to embedding equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and accessibility across all aspects of our scholarly, research and creative (SRC) ecosystem.

Our participation in the Dimensions Pilot Program was a pivotal initiative, but it is just one part of our broader institutional commitment to EDI that goes beyond compliance. As you'll see in the Action Plan, TMU has developed unique initiatives that enable us to engage in critical self-reflection and foster meaningful dialogue. These efforts allow us to identify barriers and develop mechanisms to ensure EDI and accessibility in our SRC policies, practices and culture.

A key part of our efforts has been the leadership of our Dimensions Faculty Leads, who embody the spirit of researcher-to-researcher engagement and learning. Their efforts have helped break down silos as they have developed shared resources and cultivated a culture of learning that is enhancing SRC practices across the institution. Faculty and students alike are applying these shared insights to their specific areas of research, leading to more inclusive and impactful outcomes.

I believe strongly that our future success as a university community depends on identifying and removing barriers that exclude or discourage participation in knowledge production. TMU will continue to move forward with championing EDI, identifying and addressing systemic barriers, developing innovative programs and providing access and opportunities to underrepresented students, faculty and staff. I invite every member of our community to join us in driving intentional progress and ensuring that TMU remains a leader in inclusive, impactful SRC activities.

– Steven N. Liss, Vice-President, Research and Innovation

Inclusive excellence in SRC highlights from the Office of the Vice-President, Research and Innovation

- Supports researchers by:
  i. Providing advice and guidance on research grant proposal preparation.
  ii. Offering substantive/technical review of proposal drafts and applications.
  iii. Facilitating interdisciplinary collaborations and partnerships.
  iv. Assisting with budget development.
  v. Providing information on signature requirements for proposal submissions.

- Regularly showcases the SRC achievements of TMU scholars, researchers and creatives via the News and Events page and archive.

- Funds the Undergraduate Research Opportunities (URO) annual competition and hosts the URO Workshop and Showcase in collaboration with TMU Libraries.

- Recognizes outstanding SRC activities across TMU through the annual SRC Awards. (These awards are made alongside the Deans' SRC and the Sarwan Sahota Distinguished Scholar Awards, and nominations are expected to be based on principles foundational to equity, diversity, inclusion and access.)
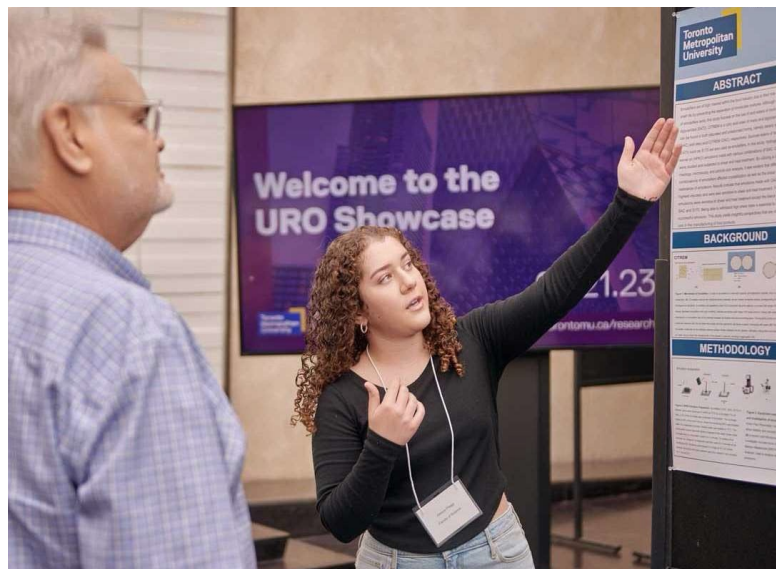
A participant in the Undergraduate Research Opportunities (URO) Showcase speaks about her project. **Photo credit**: Alyssa K. Faoro.

- Launched the [Supplemental Indigenous SRC and the Indigenous SRC Distinction](#) non-competitive funding programs to support Indigenous faculty members' SRC activities as well as research development and training for Indigenous students. The funding programs were established in response to the [Truth and Reconciliation Community Consultation Summary Report](#), the Next Chapter Action Plan and recommendations that emerged from consultations with Indigenous faculty members and staff at TMU.

- Allocated Research Support Funds toward EDI initiatives. For example, in 2024–2025, the OVPRI [invested $50,000 into implementing a tool to measure inclusion](#), and in 2023–2024 and 2022–2023, based on a commitment to faculty renewal, $50,000 and $60,000 respectively were invested in the creation of [an EDI evaluation framework to support data collection, analysis, assessment and performance evaluation](#) and for [enhancing and promoting EDI in SRC activities](#).

- Conducts several workshops annually to provide researchers with updates on funding agencies, funding and proposal development, etc.

- Publishes the [Innovation newsletter](#), which has showcased EDI-focused SRC work at TMU across a number of issues.

- Maintains a database of current external funding opportunities for TMU researchers and alerts researchers in advance of application due dates via the OVPRInet list.

Message from the Vice-President, Equity and Community Inclusion

I am excited about the future of academic research in Canada. At Toronto Metropolitan University, we are committed to engaging in research and learning that reflect diverse perspectives, and we support inclusion and equity in the recruitment and retention of equity-deserving researchers.

Through the Dimensions program, we are breaking down systemic barriers and supporting scholars, creatives and researchers from all backgrounds to foster innovative and impactful research. My team collaborates across the university to integrate equity, diversity and inclusion into every aspect of our work.

I have been heartened by the work of the Dimensions Faculty Leads (DFLs), who are designated faculty members in every area of research, working to embed EDI principles into their faculties' strategic plans, initiatives, programs and leadership representation. Not only is it the right thing to do, but it is also the most enriching, innovative and exciting path forward. I am eager to see how our collective efforts will transform Canada's academic landscape in the next generation.

– Tanya (Toni) De Mello, Vice-President, Equity and Community Inclusion

EDI highlights from the Office of the Vice-President, Equity and Community Inclusion

- Offering critical equity data and resources to identify systemic barriers impacting students, faculty and staff from TMU's six equity-deserving groups (EDGs) via the Diversity Self-ID program. 2024 marked five years of delivering insightful student diversity data, enhancing recruitment and impacting program design, decision-making and strategy development.

- Supporting the Office of the Vice-President, Research and Innovation, Human Resources and Faculty Department Hiring Committees in increasing representation from equity-deserving groups to strengthen TMU's research efforts and the university as a whole. Leveraging equity expertise to evaluate and advise on Canada Research Chair proposals and candidate selection to support an inclusive and equitable approach to faculty hiring.

- Celebrating 30 years of Gdoo-maawnjidimi Mompii Indigenous Student Services, which provides a culturally supportive environment for Indigenous students that blends traditional teachings with academic excellence.

- Fulfilling TMU's commitments to confronting anti-Black racism and cultivating Black flourishing through the Presidential Implementation Committee to Confront Anti-Black Racism (PICCABR).

- Spearheaded by the Accessibility Unit, securing a $148,000 grant for the Enabling Accessible Healthcare Delivery project undertaken in partnership with the School of Disability Studies.

- In collaboration with the Society of Arts, Social Sciences, and Humanities (SASSH), University Advancement and International Student Support, establishing a Refugee Student Award of $80,000.

In 2023, TMU ranked first on Forbes' list of Canada's Best Employers for Diversity.

Spotlight on Dimensions

This section highlights the implementation of the Dimensions program in the TMU Libraries, Yeates School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies and Faculty of Science.

These illustrative examples demonstrate how the program's peer-to-peer distributed framework fosters localized engagement and promotes inclusive excellence within diverse academic units.

Spotlighting these examples offers insight into how the Dimensions model adapts to and enhances the unique SRC cultures across the university, acknowledging that these are representative rather than exhaustive of the program's broader impact.

In March 2023, TMU received federal recognition ("Construction") for its commitment to EDI in research and fostering an inclusive research culture. **Photo credit**: Alyssa K. Faoro. **Story**: TorontoMet Today, July 20, 2023.

L-R: Tanya (Toni) De Mello, Vice-President, Equity and Community Inclusion; Alejandro Adem, President, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC); Kathryn Underwood, DFL for the Faculty of Community Services; Imogen Coe, inaugural Scholar-in-Residence, NSERC; Paul Moore, DFL for the Yeates School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (YSGPS); Art Blake, Dimensions Director; Hyacinth Simpson, DFL for the Faculty of Arts; Jenn McArthur, DFL for the Faculty of Engineering and Architectural Science; Seth Dworkin, Academic Lead, Postdoctoral Fellows, YSGPS; Ann Ludbrook, DFL for TMU Libraries; Steven N. Liss, Vice-President, Research and Innovation.

Spotlight on Dimensions in TMU Libraries

"Libraries, at their core, are about the ability to ask questions, seek answers and create new knowledge. I think of the library not as a repository, but as a dynamic engine of inquiry that is at the centre of our collective mission to create new possibilities for our society. That vision is only possible if we take seriously the challenge of ensuring a diversity of voices and perspectives so that our knowledge structures do not reinforce inequities but open up new narratives and pathways. The work of Dimensions is a natural fit with the essential mission of the Libraries."

– Mark Robertson, Dean of Libraries

During the Construction stage, TMU Libraries is contributing to Dimensions work in a number of ways, including creating a [repository for materials and resources on EDI-in-SRC](#) best practices and how-tos, scholarship, guides and commentaries on inclusive excellence, Tri-Agency EDI guides and links to funding opportunities.

Members of TMU's SRC communities are invited to contribute relevant items to the repository. The repository is a living archive and will be updated regularly to meet the needs of TMU scholars, creatives and researchers as much as possible.

The Dean of Libraries' Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility SRC Fund supports SRC activities that address pressing issues with respect to advancing EDI and accessibility or social justice initiatives. The Fund supports projects led by a BIPOC Librarian or projects that demonstrate an ethical and reciprocal research design with equity-deserving communities as co-producers of knowledge, show attentiveness to equitable and inclusive research methods, prioritize equity-deserving team membership and approaches to training and address a topic that relates to EDI.

Community members write and conduct research in TMU Libraries. **Photo credit**: J. Milns.

"It is in our mandate to foster inclusive excellence in SRC activities by breaking down barriers and setting clear intentions to support a diverse academic community. We recognize that everyone brings their own biases, which is why we take deliberate steps to layer inclusivity into every aspect of our professional activities. This approach ensures we're not just acknowledging bias but actively working to uncover and address it, creating a more welcoming and equitable environment for all."

– Lei Jin, Associate Dean of Libraries, Scholarly, Research and Creative Activities

Spotlight on Dimensions in the Yeates School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

"One of our key areas of focus in the Yeates School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies has been exploring how our graduate programs can continue to implement holistic admissions review processes. Our aim is to continue to work to minimize barriers to accessing graduate studies and to put supports in place to help set the conditions for success for successful applicants. Our obligations are not only to open doors to graduate school but also to help create spaces and communities that are welcoming and inclusive and that provide inspiration and a sense of belonging for all our graduate students and postdoctoral fellows. To that end, we are also focused on sustaining tailored programs of support, including, for example, our Black and Indigenous Graduate Student Scholarships, and creating opportunities, with partnerships across campus, for professional and personal development, for developing skills and competencies in equity, diversity and inclusion, and for our graduate students and postdoctoral fellows to have an opportunity to reflect upon the diverse lived and professional experiences they bring, that enrich our programs and, in turn, our scholarship, research and creative activities."

– Nancy Walton, Associate Dean, Student Affairs, Yeates School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

- The Indigenous Graduate Student Awards
- The Black Graduate Student Awards
- The Black Graduate Career Mentoring Program
- The TMU Postdoctoral Fellowships for Black Scholars
- The GRAD Peer Support Program
- The Student Integrated Health and Wellbeing (SHaW) Program.

Graduate students and postdocs at the YSGPS "EDI&A Knowledge and Competencies Needed for Academia" workshop. **Photo credit**: Andy Lee.

# Spotlight on Dimensions in the Faculty of Science

"As academics, we've spent a little bit too much time imagining everybody comes to us in the tower and then we can pontificate our understandings. But it's so important to connect with the community and get out there and understand where they're coming from, and that takes patience because we are not knowledgeable in it. So we have to allow time and space for that to take place.

Part of the way a dean's office can [provide] support is helping people tell [their] stories and connecting them to how their fields are advanced and balancing that, making sure that their voices are heard, and bringing things into the discussion."

– David Cramb, Dean, Faculty of Science

(See Dimensions Reports for the years 2020–2024 for additional information.)

- One-on-one peer advising and mentoring of primarily female-identifying members of the Faculty of Science (FoS) research community by the DFL (Imogen Coe) in 2020–2021.

- Townhalls for graduate students and postdocs to ascertain their level of EDI awareness and concerns in 2021.

- Preparation of the 11-page "A Practical Guide to Writing About Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in Grant Proposals" for FoS researchers in 2022.

- Creation of a Dimensions Community of Practice (CoP) in 2023 to help promote awareness of scholarship, and identity and facilitate best practices for EDI-in-SRC for Science researchers. (The CoP organizes monthly workshops on specific topics with the aim of responding effectively to EDI concerns within the research community.)
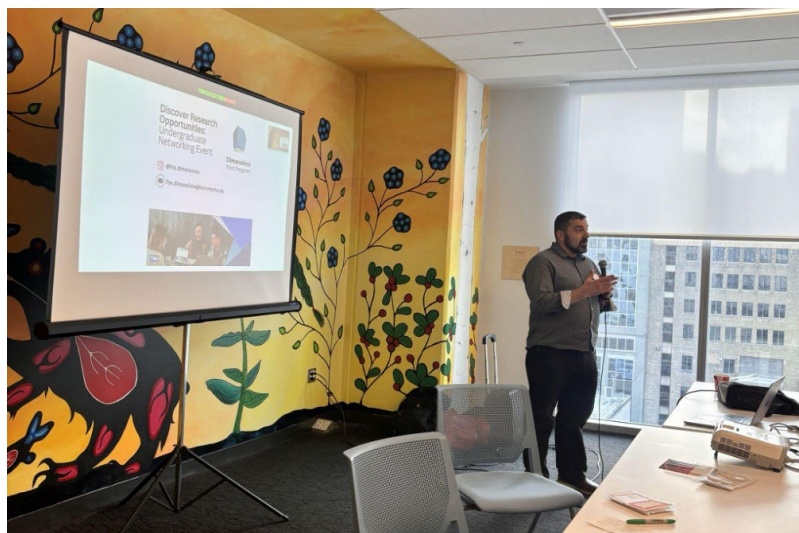
Costin Antonescu, Dimensions Faculty Lead for the Faculty of Science (2022–2024), addresses undergraduate students and participating faculty at a Dimensions event held in January 2024. **Photo credit**: Ayshin Mehrabi, undergraduate member of the Dimensions team in the Faculty of Science.

- Development in 2023 of a Statement and Guiding Principles document to support more inclusive recognition of research contributions.

- Implementation of several initiatives to promote accessibility and equity for undergraduate research opportunities.

- Various workshops over the years for faculty and student researchers on the topic of inclusive research design and grant writing with an EDI perspective.

- Creation and administration of comprehensive EDI-in-SRC survey in 2024 to all members of the FoS research community to identify priorities to be actioned in tandem with Dimensions Action Plan objectives and the FoS Strategic Research Plan until 2028.

The Dimensions event, which focused on reducing barriers to undergraduate students' participation in SRC opportunities, was attended by 160 students and 15 faculty. **Photo credit**: Ayshin Mehrabi.

"Mentorship is a powerful catalyst that can unlock one's potential for discovery, curiosity and participation in science and enhance the training environment where that potential is fostered. Mentorship that is rooted in inclusive excellence, which recognizes the importance of various aspects of trainees' identity and is implemented through data-driven approaches tailored to our institutional challenges and needs, can engage and develop the talent of a broader range of students, support their potential for discovery and participation in science, create spaces in which trainees can hone their skills and explore pathways into science fields, and improve the overall educational and professional environment."

– Stefania Impellizzeri, incoming (January 2025) Dimensions Faculty Lead for the Faculty of Science and Jet Ice Research Chair in Sustainable Materials Chemistry

Dimensions Action Plan objectives

How the Action Plan prioritizes actions

1. Will fill gaps in current data related to EDI considerations for SRC activities and utilize such data to cultivate cultures of inclusive excellence in which members of equity-deserving groups (EDGs) can thrive.

2. Build upon and expand existing institutional commitments to EDI and bolster equitable and caring SRC ecosystems.

3. Address EDI-in-SRC issues that were identified during the Dimensions Pilot and in the consultation activities that took place over the 2023–2024 transition year that are not in other TMU action plans.

4. Adapt to changing circumstances and respond to lessons learned.

5. Can be reasonably achieved within a four-year period from 2023–2027.

The 2027–2028 academic year will be dedicated to a second self-assessment exercise centred on outcomes from the Dimensions Action Plan.

Objective 1

Consolidate formal structures, processes and roles – Dimensions Faculty Leads (DFLs) and Community of Practice members (CoPs) – at the faculty level for coordinating, evaluating and streamlining past and current inclusive excellence in SRC initiatives and for identifying priorities, goals and actions for the duration of the Construction period.

Rationale for objective 1

The focus of Dimensions at TMU is making inclusive excellence foundational to all aspects of SRC activities and improving the rates of participation and success for members of equity-deserving groups (EDGs) in particular. With SRC activities undertaken largely at the faculty level, and as each faculty has its own unique research culture and discipline-specific needs, the work of facilitating inclusive excellence is best done in the faculties.

DFLs are integral to this work. These tenured faculty members and senior librarians:

a. Be the point person for consulting with faculty, students, postdocs and members of their faculty's/unit's CoP to identify inclusive excellence gaps and priorities from those directly affected.

b. Collaborate with decanal leaders and the chief and associate chief librarians to determine the best ways to address these needs and priorities.

c. Lead the coordination and evaluation of existing EDI-in-SRC actions and initiatives with the goal of making them more strategic and effective.

Appointed via an application and interview process led by the decanal team and EDI leaders in each local area, the DFLs are responsible for ensuring that EDI-in-SRC goals in their local areas are met in a timely manner and that the work of making inclusive excellence foundational to SRC activities fully integrates relevant resources, training opportunities, programming, information, mentorship and support networks that already exist in each faculty, YSGPS, TMU Libraries and across the university.

Action 1.1

- Confirm the role and responsibilities of the DFLs for the duration of the Construction stage and extend current commitments and other forms of support to aid the DFLs' work over this period.

- Finalize a Dimensions Action Plan that sets out clear actions, timelines and measurable outcomes for EDI in SRC priorities for TMU stakeholders for the duration of the Construction period.

Timeline:

2023–2024

Accountable Parties:

- (O)VPRI
- (O)VPECI
- Interim Dimensions Director
- Dean and Associate Dean (SRC) of TMU Libraries
- Decanal teams in the faculties and YSGPS

Success Indicators:

- Consultations with, and agreement from, deans' councils and other leaders regarding formalizing and supporting the roles and responsibilities of DFLs throughout the Construction stage.

- Confirmation of support at the University and Faculty levels for Dimensions work and for the DFLs.

- The publication of a Dimensions Action Plan that incorporates the input of SRC stakeholders at TMU and maps out initiatives to be undertaken by members of the University's SRC communities.

Action 1.2

- Create Dimensions CoPs in each faculty and in TMU Libraries and clarify the role and responsibilities of members. CoP members will assist the DFLs with achieving the seven objectives in the Dimensions Action Plan along the lines and according to priorities specific to their research communities and mandates.

Timeline:

2023–2024

Accountable Parties:

- DFLs
- Decanal teams in the faculties
- Dean and Associate Dean (SRC) of TMU Libraries

Success Indicators:

- The existence of CoPs in each faculty, TMU Libraries and YSGPS. In the faculties, CoP members represent all or most programs/departments/schools.

- The work of CoP members (and DFLs) is formally recognized as both service and research contributions (per NSERC guidelines) for annual reports and for SRC and tenure and promotion evaluation.

- Each CoP identifies clear inclusive excellence in SRC priorities and goals that integrate Dimensions Action Plan objectives with local-area SRC priorities. Members work with the DFLs to outline plans for achieving these objectives and measuring their outcomes.

- Establishing formal and functioning reporting, feedback, and accountability channels between researchers, DFLs, CoPs and decanal teams.

Action 1.3

- Conduct an environmental scan of existing inclusive excellence in SRC resources and training materials, programming and event structures, information dissemination and communications models, and mentorship and support networks across the university to fully integrate them with Dimensions objectives in the faculties and vice versa.

Timeline:
2024–2025

Accountable Parties:

- DFLs
- Dimensions CoPs

Success Indicators:

- Better collaboration between Dimensions and other groups and units at TMU that are involved with inclusive excellence in SRC work.
- Coordination of Dimensions environmental scanning activities with EDI data collection/analytics being led by the Office of the Vice-President, Equity and Community Inclusion (OVPECI)/OVPRI (Incremental Project Grant funds).

Action 1.4

- Collaborate with relevant units and offices across TMU to create and archive both general and discipline-specific resources on inclusive excellence-in-SRC across a range of topics, including research design, research team management, research application preparation, knowledge dissemination, collaborating with community partners and accessibility and mental health.

Timeline:
2024–2027

Accountable Parties:

- TMU Libraries
- DFLs
- Dimensions CoPs
- Office of the Vice-Provost, Faculty Affairs (OVPFA)
- YSGPS

Success Indicators:

- Construction of an ever-growing, centralized and readily accessible online repository of materials (in various formats) and tools to help researchers and research teams build EDI-in-SRC knowledge and competencies.

Action 1.5

- Build on existing programming at TMU– for example, the Office of the Vice-President, Academic (OVPA)'s Let's Talk series and YSGPS's GradCafe – to improve researchers'/ scholars'/ creatives' understanding and practice of EDI in their undertakings.

Timeline:
2024–2027

Accountable Parties:

- DFLs
- Dimensions CoPs
- OVPFA
- YSGPS

Success Indicators:

- Creation of an annual schedule of EDI-in-SRC programming that is repeated and refined over the years and is widely advertised and subscribed to by members.

Objective 2

Establish frameworks for enhanced data collection on EDI barriers in SRC across disciplines, demographics and a broad range of roles, using a human rights-centred approach. This includes developing a set of reusable qualitative and quantitative data collection and data analysis tools and using these tools to gather information to help understand the experiences of those engaged in SRC activities, identify key barriers and measure progress on removing these barriers.

(A human rights-centred approach involves co-creation of the framework and tools with respondents to identify issues and determine whether improvements have led to better outcomes and experiences. The framework and tools are to be informed by the Ontario Human Rights Commission guidelines and the BC Human Rights Commission report on collecting and using disaggregated demographic data.)

Rationale for objective 2

Data collection and analysis are important to achieving EDI goals in higher education. Existing literature on the subject provides significant and compelling evidence on EDI (less so on accessibility) barriers experienced by scholars/researchers/creatives in universities and colleges around the world and identifies strategies for eliminating these barriers. While there are commonalities and distinct patterns, the unique cultures of individual countries and institutions necessitate context-specific data generation activities to better understand and respond to such barriers, including those experienced in SRC settings.

Significant efforts have been made at TMU to collect and analyze EDI data as it relates to various university activities and priorities. Led by the OVPECI, a number of EDI Self-ID surveys have been conducted that have provizded important insight into the identities represented within the TMU community. This includes a Student Diversity Self-ID Report in 2019 and an Employee Diversity Self-ID Report in 2020, which had a response rate of 96% and 91%, respectively. The availability of this information in accessible online data visualization tools in a centralized [Diversity Self-ID online platform](#) provides significant benefit to members of the community. TMU's data generation undertakings have set models for other post-secondary institutions.

Additional data generation activities have centred on highlighting the experiences of specific groups within the TMU community. This includes the work that led to the [Anti-Black Racism Campus Climate Review Report](#) and the [Standing Strong Task Force Report and Recommendations](#). These reports represent a significant

commitment by the university and members of its community to understanding the needs of members of EDGs. Actions based on the recommendations in these reports are important priorities for TMU.

The data collection work undertaken by Dimensions will:

i. Generate information on inclusive excellence and EDI-in-SRC priorities and gaps and the experience and needs of scholars, researchers and creatives from EDGs.

ii. Inform EDI-in-SRC best strategies.

iii. Draw on the data expertise, methodologies and tools developed at TMU over the years.

This work will be undertaken in, and led by the faculties in order to generate deep data in local areas and at discipline-specific levels. Dimensions data collection and analytics will also be coordinated with the collection/analytics being done as part of other EDI-in-SRC initiatives (e.g., Canada Research Chair and Incremental Project Grant funding) at TMU.

In the winter 2024 semester, the Faculty of Science and the Ted Rogers School of Management established models for future Dimensions data collection and analysis. These initial undertakings took the form of climate surveys that gathered qualitative data on the experience of scholars and researchers through an EDI lens. The two surveys sought responses from across all

roles (graduate students, faculty members, postdoctoral researchers, undergraduate students and community partners), and survey questions generated deep data from EDI self-ID information to responses relating to key parameters that EDI scholarship has identified as contributing to SRC barriers and inequities. Among other things, respondents commented on their:

iv. Perceptions of belonging within their department, field or SRC community.

v. Mental health and well-being.

vi. Experiences of harassment and biased and/or unwelcome behaviour.

vii. Experiences of support and access to mentors and career champions.

viii. Perceptions of safety.

ix. Perceptions of access to EDI training and resources.

The surveys were created by the DFLs and their Dimensions teams (postdoc, graduate students and CoP members) in consultation with key EDI roles (such as the Associate Dean, Engagement and Inclusion in TRSM), the deans'/faculty councils and members of their research communities. The DFLs and their Dimension teams take charge of the data analysis and reporting that will inform EDI initiatives in the faculties.

Action 2.1

- Create survey tools in individual faculties to gather qualitative and quantitative data from all roles engaged in SRC activities as regards inclusive excellence needs and priorities such as:
  - Capacity building, education and training.
  - Structures and processes.
  - Information about EDI barriers, including feedback from members of EDGs.

Timeline:

2024–2026

Accountable Parties:

- DFLs
- Dimensions CoPs

Success Indicators:

- Coordination of Dimensions data-collection activities with EDI data-collection/analytics being led by the OVPECI/OVPRI.
- Creation of these tools within specified timeframes in the faculties.
- Consistently high rates of response to these surveys.

Action 2.2

- Complement the data gathering done via survey tools with one-on-one and (focus) group interviews to diversify and give depth to data sets.

Timeline:

2024–2026

Accountable Parties:

- DFLs
- Dimensions CoP

Success Indicators:

- High level of engagement with the interview process within SRC communities.
- Integration of data from surveys and interviews done during the Pilot and via previous initiatives in faculties.

Action 2.3

- Disaggregation and analysis of data and data sets in faculties.

Timeline:

2024–2026

Accountable Parties:

- DFLs
- Dimensions CoPs

Success Indicators:

- Deep data generation.

Action 2.4

- Adapt, expand and use existing surveying and reporting tools to measure progress on inclusive excellence and identify EDI barriers in relation to recruitment, representation and retention of faculty from equity-seeking groups in individual faculties.

Timeline:

2025–2027

Accountable Parties:

- DFLs
- Dimensions CoPs

Success Indicators:

- Timely generation of reports from data and clear evidence of the use of reports to improve cultures, ecosystems, processes and policies at the faculty level.

Action 2.5

- Establish regular schedules for reporting and monitoring progress on survey and interview results at the faculty level and establish feedback mechanisms that allow SRC communities to report on the level of satisfaction with responsive action and when they observe changes in their experience (e.g., with EDI-in-SRC barriers).

Timeline:

2025–2027

Accountable Parties:

- DFLs
- Dimensions CoPs
- Associate Deans, SRC
- Associate Deans, Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies in the faculties

Success Indicators:

- Regular feedback to respondents and SRC communities with respect to results of the surveys and responsive actions.
- Creation of channels/forums via which SRC communities can comment on the effectiveness of, and level of satisfaction with, actions taken.

Objective 3

Spotlight accessibility and mental health as key markers for inclusive excellence in SRC participation and application and develop institutional capacities to improve outcomes in these categories.

Rationale for objective 3

Accessibility is an important pillar of inclusivity and equity. TMU is committed to actively seeking and supporting the full participation of all community members with disabilities. The university's accessibility framework is informed by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), which requires the provision of barrier-free environments supporting dignity, independence and equal opportunity for all persons with disabilities following the *Ontario Human Rights Code*. A foundational principle of Access TMU is that "Disability is diversity, not deficit," and the slogan "Nothing about us, without us" has been adopted to speak to the "importance of consultation and participation of persons with disabilities in any decision making that affects them."

Accessibility work at TMU has focused, to a large extent, on responding to students' diverse learning needs and making adaptations to physical space. The recent expansion of mental health and well-being services at the university signals a growing awareness of the need to incorporate mental health and well-being into consideration of the performance and success of community members.

Objective 3 is intended to help TMU stakeholders take a further step towards inclusivity by recognizing that inequities around accessibility and mental health are underserved EDI areas of concern, particularly in SRC environments. Indeed, Dimensions proposes categorizing mental health concerns that have an impact on community members' SRC experience as a form of disability and that they should be treated as such.

The actions below are informed by this more complete understanding of disabilities and identify accessibility responses that will cultivate inclusive and caring SRC cultures and practices that allow all researchers, scholars and creatives to fulfill their potential and contribute to knowledge creation and the wider society.

Action 3.1

- Appraise and develop a plan to respond to existing barriers experienced by members of the SRC community with visible and invisible disability, including inaccessible research environments, inhospitable disciplinary cultures, limits to accessing SRC resources and hidden biases in SRC evaluation and other metrics.

Timeline:

2025–2026

Accountable Parties:

- Dimensions Accessibility and Mental Health in SRC Working Group

Success Indicators:

- Development of climate review tools.
- Solutions-oriented use of information derived from climate reviews at a granular level.

Action 3.2

- Broaden institutional awareness about disabilities and accessibility beyond physical barrier restrictions and workspace and academic accommodations so that parties involved in all aspects of SRC undertakings (funding, supervision, investigation, evaluation, etc.) can better understand the unique needs of researchers with permanent and temporary, visible and invisible disabilities and respond in appropriate and equitable ways.

Timeline:

2025–2026

Accountable Parties:

- Dimensions Accessibility and Mental Health in SRC Working Group
- OVPECI

Success Indicators:

- A clearly developed, coordinated and fully executed plan for information dissemination and an awareness-building campaign aimed at correcting misperceptions and reducing stigmas about the viability of persons with disabilities and mental health diagnoses as active and productive scholars/researchers/creatives.

Action 3.3

- Add provisions and incentives across existing funding opportunities to encourage and reward accessibility and mental health foci in SRC undertakings.

Timeline:

2025–2026

Accountable Parties:

- OVPRI
- Associate Deans, SRC

Success Indicators:

- Expansion of EDI language and expectations in current and future internal funding opportunities to include accessibility and mental health.

Action 3.4

- Improve the communication and dissemination of research results using methods and tools that are free of accessibility barriers.

Timeline:

2025–2026

Accountable Parties:

- Consultation and potential collaboration between the Manager, Accessibility in the OVPECI, TMU Libraries and the communications team in the OVPRI

Success Indicators:

- Development of clear accessibility guidelines for the dissemination and archiving of SRC outcomes.

Objective 4

Address EDI-in-SRC concerns raised by Black and Indigenous scholars, researchers and creatives across all roles in tandem with priorities outlined in The Next Chapter and by the Presidential Implementation Committee to Confront Anti-Black Racism.

Rationale for objective 4

Over the past several years there have been calls for action from TMU's Black and Indigenous communities, which are summarized in the Anti-Black Racism Campus Climate Review Report (14 recommendations) and The Standing Strong Task Force Report and Recommendations (22 recommendations), respectively. The actions outlined below for Objective 4 will be pursued by Dimensions and identified accountable parties within the context of these recommendations. Dimensions actions will be faculty-based, with attention to integrating these actions and their outcomes into existing structures beyond the faculties.

For example, for Black-identified graduate students, action 4.1 will leverage the role of the Black Student Success Facilitator and the Black Graduate Career Mentoring, Race Forward and Faculty of Science Mentorship programs offered through the Tri-Mentoring Program under Student Life and Learning Support. Here, the focus will be on centring SRC mentorship to increase the SRC output of, and number of internal and external grants received by, Black graduate students.

As another example, action 4.4 will build on a number of recent initiatives and funding opportunities at the university and faculty levels aimed at supporting the SRC undertakings of Indigenous and Black faculty and students, including the Yeates School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies Black Graduate Student Awards, the Faculty of Engineering and Architectural Science's partnership with the Canada-wide Indigenous and Black Engineering and Technology (IBET) Momentum Fellowship, the TMU Postdoctoral Fellowships for Black Scholars and the Indigenous SRC Distinction Fund and the Supplemental Indigenous SRC Fund created by the OVPRI.

All actions will be undertaken in direct response to the university's commitment to Black flourishing and Indigenous Resurgence.

Action 4.1

- Facilitate the participation of Indigenous and Black faculty, postdocs and students in new and existing mentoring programs and networks with specific emphasis on supports for improving SRC participation and outcomes and educating participants about Indigenous and Black SRC best practices.

- Create opportunities (e.g., grant application workshops, one-on-one and group support) for Black and Indigenous researchers, scholars and creatives to learn about grant and award opportunities earmarked for these communities and improve their grant writing skills.

Timeline:

2024–2027

Accountable Parties:

- DFLs
- Dimensions CoPs
- Associate Deans, SRC
- Associate Deans, Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
- YSGPS
- Tri-Mentoring

Success Indicators:

- Notable increase in the number of Indigenous and Black faculty, postdocs and students actively involved in group and peer-to-peer mentorship circles and programs.

- Extent and nature (positive) of qualitative feedback from Black and Indigenous researchers about feeling supported and having a sense of community.

- Notable increase in the number of Black and Indigenous faculty and graduate students successfully applying for and receiving internal and external funding and awards.

Action 4.2

- Collaborate with the OVPFA, Department Hiring Committees (DHCs), Departmental Evaluation Committees (DECs) and Faculty Promotion Committees (FPCs) to:

  a. Create workshops/events and resources centred on inclusive excellence hiring and SRC evaluation practices.

  b. Provide committee members with information, strategies and tools that enable equitable assessment of the SRC contributions of Indigenous and Black faculty and job candidates, with assessments fully informed by Indigenous and Black SRC epistemologies and practices.

Timeline:

2025–2027

Accountable Parties:

- DFLs
- Dimensions CoPs
- Decanal teams in the faculties
- Dean and Associate Dean (SRC), TMU Libraries
- OVPFA

Success Indicators:

- Events/forums are held and optimized in each faculty and, where relevant, in cross-faculty forums, such as the Let's Talk Series, with a high rate of participation and engagement from relevant parties.

- Clear evidence of improved retention rates for Indigenous and Black faculty.

- Feedback from Indigenous and Black faculty about positive change in support for, and understanding and appropriate evaluation of, their SRC undertakings.

Action 4.3

- Integrate the work of any special advisors and staff positions that support Black and Indigenous faculty and students (where they exist) into the inclusive excellence in SRC activities outlined in the Dimensions Action Plan.

Timeline:

2024–2027

Accountable Parties:

- Decanal leaders in the faculties/schools.

Success Indicators:

- Clear descriptions of the role these advisors and staff will play and the outcomes they will be responsible for.

- Annual reports from advisors and support staff detailing the impact of their work and programming on positive SRC outcomes for Indigenous and Black faculty and students.

Action 4.4

- Conduct a scan of existing internal SRC funding and award opportunities for Black and Indigenous faculty and undergraduate/graduate students with an eye to closing any gaps in the existence and accessibility of such opportunities at the faculty and university levels.

Timeline:

2024–2027

Accountable Parties:

- PICCABR (Student and Faculty Working Groups)

Success Indicators:

- Discussion convened among the various stakeholders responsible for creating funding and award opportunities about possibilities for establishing new grants where they are most needed.

Action 4.5

- Active and regular promotion and showcasing of Black and Indigenous SRC undertakings and researchers.

Timeline:

2024–2027

Accountable Parties:

- The Black Scholarship Institute
- The Yellowhead Institute
- Faculty and TMU Communications Teams
- TorontoMet Today

Success Indicators:

- Regular coverage of Indigenous and Black SRC work at TMU in faculty newsletters, TorontoMet Today and other university-wide vehicles and platforms.

- Facilitation by TMU's communications teams of coverage and publication of such SRC work in external media outlets.

Objective 5

Expand the focus on cultivating inclusive excellence in SRC beyond the three roles identified during the pilot (faculty members, postdoctoral fellows and graduate students) to include two additional roles: undergraduate students and community research partners.

Rationale for objective 5

Expanding the scope of Dimensions work at TMU to encompass undergraduate student researchers and community-based research partners is a necessary and strategic move that acknowledges the importance of these roles in the larger SRC ecosystem and allows the university to build capacity internally and externally. This expansion integrates Dimensions objectives with long-standing funding, provisions, processes and structures created by the OVPRI to foster and promote undergraduate research at TMU and strengthen the institution's commitment to community engagement and partnerships, knowledge translation and real-world transformation as set out in the Strategic Research Plan and the EDI Strategy and Action Plan.

Cultivating undergraduate researchers strengthens the university's academic mission to facilitate experiential and engaged learning and positions TMU as a leader in training the next generation of researchers from the ground up. Undergraduate students constitute the largest segment of the university community, and their consistent and structured involvement in SRC activities can profoundly impact the diversity of perspectives, ideas and experiences brought to the table. By integrating undergraduates into research projects, TMU not only enhances the academic richness of its endeavours but also nurtures a pipeline of diverse talent, thereby preparing students for future careers in research while simultaneously infusing fresh insights into ongoing projects.

Dimensions actions aimed at undergraduate students focus on:

a. Training undergraduate researchers and their supervisors in all aspects of inclusive excellence.

b. Addressing EDI-in-SRC concerns specific to undergraduate students' engagement.

c. Enhancing students' research skill sets, knowledge and contributions to SRC outcomes.

These goals are pursued across the range of SRC and SRC-related opportunities available to undergraduates (including paid and voluntary SRC project participation, course-based research, independent student research projects such as theses and individualized capstone projects, co-op placements and lab assistantships) and on the foundation of existing funding opportunities (such as the Tri-Agency-funded [Undergraduate Student Research Awards (USRAs)](#) and the OVPRI-funded [Undergraduate Research Opportunities (URO) and Showcase](#)).

The inclusion of community-based research partners in TMU's commitment to inclusive excellence serves to bridge the gap between SRC undertakings pursued in an academic environment and the real-world challenges and needs of the broader community. Collaboration with community-based partners ensures that the outcomes of SRC activities are relevant, applicable and responsive to the concerns and priorities of those directly affected by them. It also positions TMU to be responsive to the needs of underserved communities and to amplify their voices through the production of knowledge. This collaborative approach fosters trust, mutual understanding and shared ownership of SRC endeavours, thus laying the groundwork for sustainable, impactful and socially responsible SRC practices.

Action 5.1

- Leverage existing opportunities, such as the URO Showcase, and partner with stakeholders with expertise in research skills development to program workshops and other events for undergraduate research assistants (RAs) and their supervisors.

Timeline:

2025–2027

Accountable Parties:

- OVPRI
- TMU Libraries (including Subject Librarians)
- Student Success Facilitators

Success Indicators:

- Development of a formal program of workshops and capacity building (SRC) events at the faculty level for undergraduate RAs and their supervisors that feed into the URO showcase and benefit from URO Workshop professional skills development resources.
- Creation (via collaboration between TMU Libraries' Subject Librarians and supervisors) of discipline- and project-type-specific professional and skills-development materials and resources for undergraduate RAs, which will be archived at the TMU Libraries Dimensions portal (see 1.4).

Action 5.2

- Using information from surveys and interviews described in 2.1 and 2.2, implement best strategies for increasing the engagement of undergraduate students from EDGs in the research culture of each faculty and facilitating their participation in the various research opportunities available in their disciplines.

Timeline:

2025–2027

Accountable Parties:

- DFLs
- Dimensions CoPs
- Associate Deans, Undergraduate Studies

Success Indicators:

- Notable increase in the number of undergraduate students from EDGs successfully accessing research opportunities and completing research undertakings in each faculty.
- Availability of EDI guidelines and best practice documents to improve research supervisors' and research opportunities coordinators' mentoring of undergraduate RAs from EDGs.

Action 5.3

- Assess the viability of existing communications channels at TMU and social media for increasing undergraduate students' engagement with SRC activities and keeping them informed of RA opportunities and funding.

Timeline:

2025–2027

Accountable Parties:

- Communications Directors in the Faculties
- TMU's Central Communications
- Associate Deans, Undergraduate Studies

Success Indicators:

- Development of a cohesive communications plan to keep undergraduate students informed of SRC opportunities, etc., and measure students' level of engagement with this information.

Action 5.4

- Create opportunities in each faculty to bring together TMU researchers and their community-based partners for "listen and learn" sessions to better understand how to strengthen these partnerships, especially with community-based partners from Indigenous and Black communities.

Timeline:

2025–2027

Accountable Parties:

- DFLs
- Dimensions CoPs
- Associate Deans, SRC

Success Indicators:

- Full documentation of lessons learned from each of these sessions and implementation of these lessons in relationships with external partners and the administration of these relationships.

Objective 6

Engage with SRC administrators and support staff (in HR, Finance, Communications, etc.) to identify potential barriers and administrative burdens as regards facilitating SRC activities and inclusion. The aim of such engagement is to improve policies and practices within SRC systems, with attention to best practices for improving EDI outcomes for equity-seeking groups and for community-engaged research involving equity-seeking groups.

Rationale for objective 6

Community-based and community-engaged research are cornerstones of the way in which TMU has positioned itself as a research-intensive university that is responsive to the needs and concerns of surrounding communities. As such, community partners play an important role in research and the institution's extended research ecosystem. It is therefore important that community partners – especially those belonging to Indigenous, Black, racialized, 2SLGBTQ+ and disabled communities – are able to contribute to research alongside members of the academic community in equitable, ethical and relational ways.

The actions indicated below will ensure that research partnerships are mutually beneficial rather than transactional and that individual partners, their resources and knowledges are treated fairly and respectfully. Ultimately, reviewing the administrative load and processes for research can lead to more responsive environments, research excellence and greater breadth in research activities.

The extensive administrative and governance infrastructure, as well as the range of roles within the scope of the OVPRI – from research security, integrity and ethics to support for research planning, finance and administration – provide an existing framework for undertaking the actions and achieving the success indicators outlined below. A plan of engagement will be discussed with OVPRI leaders and staff, the SRC Representatives Group that assists the OVPRI in identifying and developing research-related priorities and policies, as well as the SRC Activity Standing Committee of the Senate.

Action 6.1

- Review current evaluation metrics for SRC activities in each faculty to ensure that they acknowledge and reward community-engaged research (CEnR) and community-based participatory research (CBPR) projects and outcomes and reflect an understanding of how Indigenous and Black knowledges and research practices impact the nature of SRC work undertaken by Indigenous and Black researchers, and with Indigenous and Black community partners.

Timeline:

2025–2027

Accountable Parties:

- Dimensions CoPs
- Decanal leaders in the faculties

Success Indicators:

- Preparation of recommendations by accountable parties that guide programs and disciplines in explicitly naming the terms by which CEnR and CBPR projects, outcomes and dissemination models are to be recognized and evaluated as SRC activities.

Action 6.2

- Solicit feedback from past and current community collaborators and participants from EDGs who are involved with a wide cross-section of TMU SRC undertakings to better understand the EDI barriers they encounter when engaging with SRC administration systems at TMU.

Timeline:

2025–2027

Accountable Parties:

- SRC Representatives Group
- Dimensions CoPs
- Faculty members whose SRC projects have community partners

Success Indicators:

- Generation of a comprehensive report on the feedback provided by community collaborators and participants from EDGs and the use of this report as the foundation for information-raising and training sessions on best practices for relevant parties.

Action 6.3

- Assess and refine TMU's SRC administration systems to ensure that research contract processes for hiring and paying research staff and assistants from external communities respond appropriately to the needs of individual projects/partners and to community contexts.

Timeline:

2025–2027

Accountable Parties:

- OVPRI
- SRC Representatives Group
- SRC Activity Standing Committee of the Senate

Success Indicators:

- Clear evidence that CEnR and CBPR undertakings have the benefit of EDI-infused financial services and human resources oversight/management, which operates with the required degree of flexibility that allows for adapting to the needs of individual communities and partnerships.

Action 6.4

- Improve clarity about intellectual property issues and ownership of research with community partners at the point of hiring and streamline ethics approval processes to respond in a timelier and appropriate manner to SRC undertakings that are framed by non-traditional, non-Western methods and epistemologies, including Indigenous and Black knowledges and practices.

Timeline:

2025–2027

Accountable Parties:

- OVPRI
- SRC Representatives Group
- SRC Activity Standing Committee of the Senate

Success Indicators:

- Creation of an intellectual property statement to guide relationships with partners and ensure equity in the dissemination of knowledge from CEnR and CBPR undertakings.
- Training of Research Ethics Board members in assessing projects that foreground Indigenous and Black knowledges and practices.

Objective 7

Create and enhance existing opportunities for faculty, postdoctoral and student SRC leaders and participants from equity-seeking groups to provide and receive mentorship and training towards SRC success.

Rationale for objective 7

One aspect of Dimensions success has been the establishment of Dimensions Communities of Practice (CoPs) in the faculties. These CoPs can help facilitate the building of supportive networks beyond the faculties, where scholars, researchers and creatives across all roles can forge connections and a sense of belonging and access additional resources, all of which are crucial to sustaining their professional and SRC success over the long term. The extensive network of groups, units and resources under the umbrella of the OVPECI can assist in this regard. These include:

- The Positive Space Faculty and Staff Network

- The Black Faculty and Staff Community Network

- The Employees with Disability Community Network

- The First Nations, Metis and Inuit Community Group

- The Immigrant Employees Community Network

- The Jewish Employee Community Network

- The Muslim Employee Community Network

- The Latinx Employee Community Network

- The Parent Network

- The BIPOC Student Collective and the Student Access Collective (two of five existing Equity Service Centres for students at TMU)

Action 7.1

- Coordinate with existing units and groups at the faculty and university level to serve members from EDGs by incorporating SRC-specific emphases and supports in their programming.

Timeline:

2024–2027

Accountable Parties:

- Unit leaders for groups and networks that serve members of EDGs
- OVPECI as liaison

Success Indicators:

- Notable increase in faculty participation in these groups.
- Events and programming coordinated by and within these networks and groups to support their members who engage in SRC activities.

Action 7.2

- Encourage the inclusion of EDG-specific activities (e.g., roundtables and luncheons) in orientation activities to facilitate networking among new and older faculty members.

Timeline:

2024–2027

Accountable Parties:

- OVPECI
- OVPFA
- Deans

Success Indicators:

- The number of such events facilitated.
- Feedback from participants on their effectiveness in achieving the stated objective.

Summary of Dimensions objectives

Objective 1: Consolidate formal structures, processes and roles – Dimensions Faculty Leads (DFLs) and Community of Practice members (CoPs) – at the faculty level for coordinating, evaluating and streamlining past and current inclusive excellence in SRC initiatives, and for identifying priorities, goals and actions for the duration of the Construction period.

Objective 2: Establish frameworks for enhanced data collection on EDI barriers in SRC across disciplines, demographics and a broad range of roles, using a human rights-centred approach. This includes developing a set of re-usable qualitative and quantitative data collection and data analysis tools and using these tools to gather information to help understand the experiences of those engaged in SRC activities, identify key barriers and measure progress on removing these barriers.

(A human rights-centred approach involves co-creation of the framework and tools with respondents to identify issues and determine whether improvements have led to better outcomes and experiences. The framework and tools are to be informed by the Ontario Human Rights Commission guidelines and the BC Human Rights Commission report on collecting and using disaggregated demographic data.)

Objective 3: Spotlight accessibility and mental health as key markers for inclusive excellence in SRC participation and application and develop institutional capacities to improve outcomes in these categories.

Objective 4: Address EDI-in-SRC concerns raised by Black and Indigenous scholars, researchers and creatives across all roles in tandem with priorities outlined in The Next Chapter and by the Presidential Implementation Committee to Confront Anti-Black Racism.

Objective 5: Expand the focus on cultivating inclusive excellence in SRC beyond the three roles identified during the pilot (faculty members, postdoctoral fellows and graduate students) to include two additional roles: undergraduate students and community research partners.

Objective 6: Engage with SRC administrators and support staff (in HR, Finance, Communications, etc.) to identify potential barriers and administrative burdens as regards facilitating SRC activities and inclusion. The aim of such engagement is to improve policies and practices within SRC systems, with attention to best practices for improving EDI outcomes for equity-seeking groups and for community-engaged research involving equity-seeking groups.

Objective 7: Create and enhance existing opportunities for faculty, postdoctoral and student SRC leaders and participants from equity-seeking groups to provide and receive mentorship and training towards SRC success.

EDI glossary

Ableism

A "system of negative attitudes, stereotypes and stigma towards persons with disabilities that devalue and limit them from fully participating in society and their potential as persons with disabilities" (Ontario Human Rights Commission). Ableism may be conscious or unconscious and may be embedded in institutions, systems or the broader culture of a society. Because attitudes and stereotypes may take different forms with different disabilities, ableism may manifest differently with respect to different types of disabilities, such as physical, mental or sensory disabilities.

Accessibility

A general term for the degree of ease that something (e.g., devices, services, physical environments and information, opportunities) can be accessed. It refers to a combination of factors that influence a person's ability to participate completely, safely and comfortably within an environment. More specifically, accessibility is the foundational principle underpinning the removal of barriers to equitable participation in all aspects of university life by people living with diverse visual, motor, auditory, learning and cognitive abilities. It requires designing environments, programs, services and products from the outset so they are accessible to people living with various abilities. Accessibility is grounded in the recognition that what constitutes a disability barrier varies across visible and invisible disabilities. As an approach, it enables equitable access to and success

within the university for persons living with disabilities, as well as for low-income people and first-generation students. As an ameliorative measure, it requires proactive assessments, resources and the adoption of concrete measures to identify and remove visible and invisible barriers that impede access to full participation by everyone in the university community. Reasonable accommodation ensures access to and success within the university and is enabled by providing the resources and tools necessary to reduce isolation, eliminate obstacles and stigma, and combat discrimination that impedes equitable opportunities for persons with disabilities.

(**Sources**: Ontario Human Rights Commission, University of Calgary Dimensions EDI in Research Action Plan)

Barriers

"Barriers are those things that prevent movement, or make access to a service more difficult for certain groups and individuals. Barriers exist at different levels, and may be personal, cultural, institutional and structural." In the case of systemic barriers, these are not one-time challenges but rather are built into and supported by broader systems. Barriers may be visible and tangible, for example, in the case of a physically inaccessible building, or they may be invisible and intangible, for example, in the case of stigma preventing someone from accessing mental health services.

(**Source**: Government of Canada's Gender-based Analysis (GBA) Plus glossary)

Bias

A conscious (explicit) or unconscious (implicit) opinion, preference, prejudice or inclination formed without reasonable justification that prevents a balanced or even-handed judgement. Biases (particularly implicit biases) are built into and perpetuated by societal structures. These biases might be based on someone's or a group's race, gender, weight, disability, sexuality, skin tone, age, culture or religion.

(**Source**: Government of Canada's "Guide to Courageous Conversations On Racism and Discrimination")

Decolonizing/Decolonization

Decolonization requires non-Indigenous Canadians to recognize and accept the reality of Canada's colonial history, accept how that history impacts Indigenous Peoples, and how it continues to subjugate Indigenous Peoples (past and existing). An analysis of this impact should include the ways in which this is connected to transnational systems and structures of colonization and foster an appreciation of the richness of Indigenous cultures to create space for the restoration of Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing.

Note: The term "decolonizing" is preferred over "decolonization" or "decolonized" to demonstrate that the process is ongoing.

Disabilities

Disability refers to a broad range of medical conditions an individual can have from birth, due to an accident or developed over time, which impact an individual's ability to function. Disability can also be described as a broad range of functional or social limitations that impact an individual's ability to perform an

activity. These two definitions reflect two perspectives on disability: the medical model and the social model. Disabilities can be visible or invisible, permanent, temporary or episodic, and can include, but are not limited to:

- Addiction (e.g., alcohol, drugs, gambling)
- Developmental disability (e.g., autism, ADHD, Down syndrome)
- Health disability/chronic conditions (e.g., diabetes, cancer, asthma)
- Learning disability (e.g., dyslexia, dysnomia)
- Mental health condition/mental illness (e.g., schizophrenia, depression, anxiety disorder)
- Physical disability (e.g., cerebral palsy, spinal cord injury, amputation)
- Sensory disability (e.g., hearing or vision loss)

Note: Disability is an evolving concept, and people may choose to self-identify with disability at different times in their lives in different ways. There is disagreement over the use of "identity-first language" (e.g., "a disabled person") and "person-first language" (e.g., "a person with a disability").

Disaggregated data

Data broken down into specific factors, such as gender, race, disability status, sexual orientation and Indigenous identity. Disaggregated data can be used to support a more intersectional analysis by allowing the data analyst to better understand the differences in experiences between, for example, a cisgender, able-bodied woman and a disabled trans woman. However, it can also be used to mask inequities within groups. Data disaggregated only by race, for instance, might show good representation of racialized individuals in the natural sciences while

masking the underrepresentation of Black scientists in particular. Disaggregated should not be confused with siloed and should be one piece in the EDI-in-SRC narrative.

Discrimination

Discrimination is the intentional or unintentional denial of equal treatment, civil liberties and opportunities for individuals or groups with respect to education, housing, health care, employment and access to services, goods and facilities. It can occur based on ancestry, place of origin, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, record of offences, race, colour, nationality, sex, age, religion, gender identity, gender expression, political affiliation, marital or family status, sexual orientation and disability.

Individual discrimination: The unequal and prejudiced treatment of individuals based on their identity or membership to a particular group.

Systemic/institutional discrimination: Systemic discrimination is institutionalized. It is embedded and practiced in social institutions such as government, policies, religion, education and organizations. It results in the exclusion and stereotyping of the targeted groups.

Diversity

Difference or variety is a characteristic of nature, human society and the academic world. Efforts to increase representational or numerical diversity are enabled by the institutional commitment to EDI. Fundamental to education and employment equity is the cultivation of an institutional environment in which those who have been historically

disadvantaged and are currently underrepresented can gain access to and flourish within the university. Representational diversity is an outcome of proactive measures to correct systemic disadvantage and to create equitable opportunity structures and pathways for a critical mass of those who are historically disadvantaged and underrepresented. In the university, diversity may also refer to philosophical or perspectival differences, institutional types, disciplinary fields, ways of knowing, theoretical and methodological variations, as well as the roles and ranks of students, staff, faculty, administrators, senior leadership and alumni. Identity diversity shapes and is shaped by voice, representation, experiences in the workplace and research and teaching ecosystems, international experiences, and service and community engagement.

We value and respect diversity of knowledge, worldviews and experiences that come from membership in different groups and the contribution that diversity makes to the learning, teaching, research and work environment.

(**Source**: Recruiting and Hiring Diverse Faculty Guidelines)

Equality

Equal treatment that brings about an equality of results, and that may, in some instances, require different treatment. Sometimes, equality means treating people the same despite their differences, and sometimes, it means treating them as equals by accommodating their differences. Formerly, it was thought that equality only meant sameness and that treating persons as equals meant treating everyone the same.

We now know that to treat everyone the same may operate counter to equality. Ignoring differences may mean ignoring legitimate needs.

Equity

A foundational value that underwrites institutional actions taken to ensure the fair treatment of all members of the university community. As a principle, condition, process and outcome, equity is rooted in human rights and the inviolability of human dignity. It is integral to the legal principle of justice and the ethical principle and practice of fairness. As a practice, it requires identifying patterns of inequities and making changes to systems, cultures and processes that obstruct members of the university community from achieving their full potential. It underwrites proactive efforts to cultivate a research, teaching, learning and working environment in which people of diverse identities, backgrounds, knowledge systems and ways of knowing can flourish. As a remedy based on human and legal rights, equity enables proactive measures and reasonable accommodation necessary to:

- Identify structural, systemic and cultural barriers.

- Ameliorate discrimination, unfairness and disadvantage.

- Ensure equitable pathways and opportunity structures for women, Indigenous peoples, visible/racialized minorities, persons with disabilities and 2SLGBTQ+ in all spheres of academic life.

We value the fair and just treatment of all community members through the creation of opportunities and the removal of barriers to

address historic and current disadvantages for under-represented and marginalized groups. (**Source**: Recruiting and Hiring Diverse Faculty Guidelines)

Equity-Deserving Groups (EDGs)

This refers to access and opportunity, unrelated to ability, that require proactive ameliorative measures. EDGs are identified in the federal Employment Equity Act as Federally Designated Groups (FDGs). A concept that is used interchangeably with "federally designated groups" and "equity groups," EDGs have come to replace "equity-seeking groups" by placing an emphasis on equity as deserved. EDGs include but are not limited to women, visible/racialized minorities, Indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities and 2SLGBTQ+ persons who are recognized as groups of people marginalized or constrained by existing systems, structures, policies, processes and practices and who are made to feel they do not belong or do not deserve equity as a right. They should not bear the undue burden of "seeking equity," and they should not be made to feel that they experience it as a privilege from the generosity of those who have the power to recognize it and hence the power to deny it (equity-denied groups).

TMU tracks the representation, recruitment and retention of the following six EDGs:

- Women

- Racialized people

- Black people

- First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples

- Persons with disabilities

- 2SLGBTQ+ people

These are groups that have been historically and persistently under-represented, disadvantaged and discriminated against in education and work environments in specific types of fields or occupations.

(**Source**: Diversity Self-ID)

Inclusion

Refers to the intentional and ongoing practice of fostering a safe, supportive, diverse and respectful environment. A space can easily be diverse without being inclusive. Practices that are framed as inclusive but continue to centre the experiences of those with power and privilege as the "norm" from which space can be carved out for the accommodation of other experiences are not genuinely inclusive. Inclusion is not only the practice of ensuring a seat at the table for everyone but also dismantling the structures that determine whose table will be used.

Inclusion encompasses norms, practices and intentional actions to promote participation, engagement, empowerment and a sense of belonging for members of EDGs who are underrepresented and historically disadvantaged in university life. Inclusion is a mindset and skillset necessary for the cultivation and promotion of an institutional culture and set of practices to ensure all members of the campus community can experience it as welcoming and as a space of fairness, dignity and human flourishing. Where diversity may focus on quantitative representation, inclusion focuses on the qualitative experience of belonging. Where diversity may exist with inequity, isolation and marginality, social inclusion focuses on culture and practices that deepen participation and engagement. Inclusion requires institutions to

design spaces of leadership and governance, teaching and learning, research, scholarship, artistic inquiry and community engagement so that there are no impediments to full participation by women, visible/racialized minorities, Indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities and 2SLGBTQ+ people. Inclusion requires proactive measures to transform cultures and relations.

We value the equitable, intentional and ongoing engagement of diversity within every facet of university life. It is the shared responsibility of all community members to foster a welcoming, supportive and respectful learning, teaching, research and work environment.

(**Source**: Recruiting and Hiring Diverse Faculty Guidelines)

Inclusive excellence

True excellence in an institution is unattainable without inclusion, and, in fact, diversity and inclusion are fundamental to excellence. Inclusive excellence moves away from historical approaches to diversity that focus on numbers and representation and, instead, helps us think about the institution as a vibrant community that can create excellence by embedding diversity throughout all its operations and relations. Inclusive excellence is the individual and institutional pursuit of excellence, quality or merit and is best achieved in equitable, diverse, inclusive and decolonizing conditions in which everyone can thrive. While the human pursuit of excellence is an inclusive one, how it is socially and institutionally defined, operationalized and recognized historically has often been exclusionary of, among other things, diverse ways of knowing, knowledges, methodologies and perspectives. Recognizing the integral relationship between equity-as-

fairness and inclusive excellence is necessary to mitigate how access to and success within scholarly associations, universities and colleges have been shaped by histories of discriminatory ideas, attitudes, processes and practices.

Inclusive excellence affirms how diversity can deepen learning, enhance critical thinking and problem-solving, and fuel creativity and innovation in teaching and learning, research and artistic enquiry, professional service and community engagement in academia. At TMU, this involves proactively applying and incorporating acquired knowledge and understanding of EDI and anti-racism into policies, processes, practices and behaviours to promote a culture where all members of our community (students, faculty and staff) feel a greater sense of belonging, are supported, are valued for their differences and encouraged to participate. Inclusive excellence also calls for the intentional evaluation of inclusion efforts (qualitatively and quantitatively).

Intersectionality

Refers to the way in which people's lives are shaped by their multiple and overlapping identities and social locations, such as race, class, sexual orientation and gender, which, together, can produce a unique and distinct experience for that individual or group. The term was coined in 1989 by Dr. Kimberlé Crenshaw and was built upon by other Black feminist scholars to not only acknowledge the ways in which people's experiences are shaped by their multiple and overlapping identities and social locations but also to account for the ways in which these experiences are shaped differently by processes of discrimination,

oppression, power and privilege. As such, the term accounts for the complex contextual dynamics of social inequality, power, relationality and systemic disadvantage.

Invisible disabilities

A range of hidden mental and physical attributes that are not immediately apparent but may cause a disadvantage or have an impact on an individual's personal well-being. This includes chronic pain or fatigue, amnesia, autoimmune disease (e.g., various forms of arthritis, multiple sclerosis), brain injuries, anxiety, mental illness, sight or hearing impairments, neurological disorders, learning differences and cognitive dysfunctions, among others.

Marginalization

Marginalization is a long-term, structural process of systemic discrimination that creates a class of disadvantaged peoples or puts an individual at a disadvantage. To be marginalized/made marginal is to be relegated to an unimportant or powerless position within a society. The concept of marginalization acknowledges that marginalized people or groups are not innately at the margins of society; rather, they are relegated to these positions as a consequence of structural forms of oppression, discrimination and inequity.

Research ecosystem

The term references the people, policies and practices that are implicated in developing, undertaking and disseminating research in academic institutions. This is inclusive of students (undergraduate and graduate), post-docs, faculty, part-time/contract faculty, research and teaching staff, administrative staff, research participants and external communities.

Systemic barrier

A barrier embedded in the social or administrative structures of the institution, including its level of physical accessibility, organizational policies, practices and decision-making processes and its culture.