2021 REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

JOINT BOARD-SENATE TASK FORCE ON EQUITY,

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

DECEMBER 2021

I. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge that the land on which Bishop's University sits and the place where we gather is the Traditional and Unceded Territory of the Abenaki People.

II. OVERVIEW

Since the presentation of our first report to the Senate and to the Board of Governors in December 2020, the Joint Board-Senate Task Force on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (hereafter the 'Task Force') has been working steadily. We continue to strive to meet the expectations of the Bishop's University community as we work to combat systemic racism, colonizing structures, and discrimination of all kinds, including discrimination on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, religious practice, and ability.

The Task Force has encountered significant challenges in the past year. Certainly, the continuation of COVID-19 restrictions has had an impact on our ability to gather, not only among ourselves, but with other members of the community. Further, our membership has suffered some attrition, most notably with the departure of our Indigenous student representatives in December 2020 and March 2021. Three of the faculty members on the original membership roster also left the committee, for various reasons, in January of 2021, leaving us with only two faculty representatives.

The Task Force has worked hard to adapt to these challenges, focusing on what we are able to accomplish responsibly with our current membership. In terms of Indigenous student representation, the call and the space remains open. In the absence of student representatives, however, we have invited Vicky Boldo, Special Advisor Indigenous Student Support, and Shawna

Chatterton-Jerome, Indigenous Student Support Assistant, to participate as valued guests until such time as Indigenous students feel safe and supported enough to return. We are grateful that they are willing to offer their time and expertise to the process. As for faculty representation, it is our hope that we will be joined by at least two new faculty members in the coming year, but until we have adequate representation, we have decided to suspend conversations and recommendations pertaining to Curriculum and Research.

In spite of these challenges, we are excited about a number of developments that have occurred in the past year as a direct result of our recommendations and consistent effort. First, we are very pleased that the University acted on our recommendation and has recruited and hired Amy Abe as EDI Special Advisor, and look forward to her arrival in January 2022. Second, the University has partnered with CCDI (the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion) to provide ongoing training open to all employees through webinars, conferences, and on-demand training opportunities. Third, the University became one of the originating signatories of the newly-released Scarborough Charter on Anti-Black Racism, on the unanimous recommendation of the Task Force membership.

The report that follows will outline the key recommendations from and activities of this year's five working groups, namely: Mission and Vision; Recruitment and Retention, Students; Recruitment and Retention, Employees; Policy Review and Communications. The report will also provide more information on activities of the group beyond these areas, including the signing of the Scarborough Charter and the development of Ally Space Training.

III. TASK FORCE MANDATE AND WORK PLAN

A) MANDATE

The Task Force is mandated to identify structural or systemic barriers, injustices and biases at the University and to make recommendations about any actions which it deems appropriate to dismantle these barriers and advance equity, diversity and inclusion at Bishop's. The Task Force is also charged with making recommendations as to what data should be collected, how it should be collected and communicated, and what metrics should be used to measure the University's progress.

The Task Force's mandate is to examine practices, policies, and barriers in the following areas:

1. Hiring, promotion and retention objectives and practices for faculty, research chairs, staff, librarians and management;

2. Training for faculty, research chairs, librarians, staff, managers, students and governors;

3. Governance;

4. The academic curriculum including research programs and activities;

5. The University's policies, procedures and guidelines.

The original mandate of the Task Force was extended from November 30, 2020 to July 1, 2022.

IV. TASK FORCE MEMBERSHIP

The membership of the Task Force is as follows, with the originating body of their election or appointment:

Jenn Cianca, Faculty Council (Co-Chair)

Sufia Langevin, Students' Representative Council (Co-Chair)

Abel Bosum, Board of Governors

Tova White, Board of Governors

Layachi Bentabet, Association of Professors of Bishop's University

Dorcas Adebogun, Student Representative

Mikael-Benedict Worku, Student Representative

Sabrina-Binta Kone, Alumni Representative

Monika Mitchell, Staff Council

Theresa Gagnon, Managers' Council

Junior Sirivar, Bishop's Council

Heather Thomson, Bishop's Council

Nick Andrews, Executive Committee

Stine Linden-Andersen, Executive Committee

Denise Lauzière, Joint Board-Senate Task Force

Sonia Patenaude, Joint Board-Senate Task Force

Cherif Nicolas, Joint Board-Senate Task Force

Yolande James, Principal

Michael Goldbloom, *ex officio*

Vicky Boldo, Invited Guest

Shawna Chatterton-Jerome, Invited Guest

V.   SPECIAL PROJECTS

I.   SCARBOROUGH CHARTER ON ANTI-BLACK RACISM AND BLACK INCLUSION IN CANADIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

Bishop's University is one of more than 40 Canadian universities that has endorsed the Scarborough Charter on Anti-Black Racism and Black Inclusion in Canadian Higher Education: Principles, Actions and Accountabilities. The University has also signed on as a member of the Inter-Institutional Forum. The virtual launch of the initiative took place on Thursday, November 18, 2021.

This cross-institutional initiative came out of the October 2020 virtual National Dialogues and Action for Inclusive Higher Education and Communities.

We commend the members of the Inter-Institutional Advisory Committee for their dedication and commitment to addressing anti-Black racism and effecting positive change in the higher education sector.

The Scarborough Charter is a useful resource and tool to guide the work of the Task Force. The Charter's four overarching principles of Black flourishing, inclusive excellence, mutuality and accountability will inform future recommendations and will be integrated into the University's equity, diversity and inclusion action plan.

A copy of the Scarborough Charter can be downloaded here:
https://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/principal/scarborough-charter

II.   Ally Space Program

This fall, members of the Task Force met with stakeholders in the Students' Representative Council (SRC) and at Champlain Regional College, in order to implement Safe Space training for interested faculty and staff. The result of these meetings is the development of an Ally Space Program, to be made available to faculty and staff who wish to receive additional training on receiving disclosures, navigating LGBTQ2S+ concerns, sexual misconduct, and creating safer spaces for all under-represented groups. The training is in development and will hopefully be rolled out in early Spring 2022.

VI.   RECOMMENDATIONS BY WORKING GROUPS

EACH REPORT IS IN THE VOICE OF THE WORKING GROUP.

I.   MISSION AND VISION

The Mission and Vision Working Group has drafted a statement which we believe reflects the values and aspirations of the Bishop's University Community.

We ask for the endorsement of the Senate and the Board of Governors to adopt this statement, not only for our website, but as a set of guiding principles at all levels of the institution.

It is the hope of the Task Force that this statement will be adopted by the Senate Planning Committee as a complement to the preexisting mission statement of the University.

The proposed statement is as follows:

EQUITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND BELONGING: STATEMENT OF MISSION AND VISION

Bishop's University is located on the traditional and unceded territory of the Abenaki people. We acknowledge their original stewardship of this land and that we are all guests on this land. The names of many towns, lakes and rivers of the area are of Abenaki origin. Bishop's University was founded by the Anglican Church and has evolved into a secular institution which does not privilege any particular religion or creed.

We are committed to fostering an environment of belonging where individual differences are recognized, embraced, valued and integrated into an equitable institution of higher learning.

As a community of learning, the University has a responsibility not only to the intellectual development and academic support of its members, but also to the provision of a safe, equitable and compassionate environment for all those who populate it.

Bishop's University recognizes that systemic racism exists in our institution. Furthermore, we are not immune to modes of discrimination towards other equity-seeking groups, including discrimination on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, religious practice and ability.

Bishop's University aspires to be a community that instills curiosity, confidence, courage and a sense of responsibility in its students.

It is necessary for all members of the University community – from students to faculty to staff to administration to governors to alumni to community members – to participate actively in the creation and maintenance of an environment free from discrimination of all kinds.

As an institution of higher learning, we have the capacity and energy to push beyond the status quo and to lead the way towards a community of belonging. Indeed, as an institution of higher learning, it is our moral obligation to do so.

As Bishop's University continues its trajectory of growth and development, the principles of

equity, diversity and inclusion are central to our commitment of fostering diversity, inclusion and belonging within the community.

We commit to being guided by these principles at all levels of governance. This commitment demands an ongoing examination of existing policies, as well as the development of new policies to govern the institution in accordance with these principles.

II.   RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION, STUDENTS

To dismantle systemic barriers in recruiting and retaining students from equity seeking groups, several areas have been identified for the University to address.

The Recruitment and Retention of Students Working Group has made specific recommendations with timelines and progress updates.

A summary of these recommendations can be found in Appendix A.

1)   RECRUITMENT PROCESS ITSELF

The group recommends that the recruitment team itself be representative of the student body we hope to attract. When hiring recruiters, we hope that the newly established guidelines on hiring processes through an equitable lens will be applied. The group also recommends that the recruitment team identify specific areas for recruitment such as Indigenous communities.

Progress: we have met with the Director of Recruitment and Retention and have discussed the goals laid out in this report.

2)   SELF-IDENTIFICATION

The group highlighted the importance of encouraging self-identification. The goal of self-identification of students is to ensure appropriate support and guidance and to support access to specific resources such as scholarships.

Progress: Theresa Gagnon, Manager of Counselling and Accessibility Services, has met with the Admissions teams several times and a draft identification form has been created. This form uses language from the World Health Organization and other universities.

3) SUPPORT FOR BIPOC STUDENTS

When arriving in our community, individuals from equity seeking groups face systemic barriers that hinder their success. To help guide them through our system and to help point out barriers to be removed, this group recommends a peer buddy system of support.

Progress: a student buddy mentor system has been created to support incoming students. The intention of this project is for students to opt-in and be matched with a mentor who can help them address and overcome barriers in our community. The buddy system will be implemented through BUnited, the peer support centre, with input from the Student Life team and BU International.

4) SCHOLARSHIPS

It is clear to the group that a revision of the current scholarship programs is needed. Such a review must both examine access for students living with disabilities as well as other systemic barriers.

Progress: As of yet, only limited progress has been made here. A scholarship program review is intended in the current Strategic Enrolment Management strategic planning process which is being led by the Vice-Principal Academic and Research and the Vice-Principal Finance and Administration.

5) HOLISTIC ADMISSION

Due to the risk of bias influencing any admissions process, this Working Group recommends a review of the holistic admissions with an aim of making explicit markers for admissions. In particular, we recommend that external expertise be engaged to train Admissions and scholarship staff.

III. RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION, EMPLOYEES

PREAMBLE

Bishop's University is subject to the Quebec Act Respecting Equal Access to Employment in Public Bodies. This Act intends to ensure equal representation of the groups that frequently encounter discrimination in the workforce.

One of the requirements of the law is to gather statistics in order to analyze our workforce and determine, for each type of occupation, the number of persons belonging to each of the target groups set by this Quebec law including women, aboriginal peoples, visible minorities, ethnic minorities and handicapped persons. The confidential self-declaration by employees is optional. As prescribed by the Act, the denominalized information is provided to the *Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse*.

In 2022, the University will also be required to submit data to the Federal government under the Federal Contractors Program (FCP) due to its increased research grants.

However, the Recruitment and Retention, Employees Working Group believes that the government data collection is not sufficient, as they do not take into consideration all equity-deserving groups at Bishops University.

DEVELOPMENTS

Since the last report submitted to Senate and the Board of Governors, the University has signed up for the job boards Indigenous Link and WORKInc., in an effort to diversify our recruitment processes.

The University also engaged a Partner and EDI Lead of a leading recruitment firm to create an Inclusive Hiring Guide, in which Academic Officers and Human Resources Representatives have been trained.

The Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion (CCDI) provides diversity and inclusion training and education for organizations and individuals. As an employer member, each month faculty

and staff are invited to participate in a number of different educational webinars which are free for all of our BU employees.

The Canadian Research Counsel has developed an online training called **Bias in Peer Review – A Training Module**. Although they refer to "peer review" the content is relevant to our recruitment process and covers important information including:

- understanding what unconscious bias is;

- understanding how unconscious bias can impact the recruitment;

- ways to integrate methods for mitigating the influence of unconscious bias

All managers and selection committee members are required to complete this training and provide proof of their completion certificate before leading/serving on a recruitment committee.

KEY OBJECTIVES

The Recruitment and Retention, Employees Working Group has identified the following objectives as guiding principles for our proposed recommendations:

- -to attract and retain a workforce that is reflective of our stakeholders/users (aka students)

- -to remove barriers for applicants and employees who are underrepresented

- -to increase representation in all sectors of the university workforce, with particular focus on the increase of Visible Minorities and Persons Living with Disabilities

- -to maintain areas where progress has already been made (e.g. employment of women)

This group has identified the following key areas in which to make recommendations for recruitment and retention of a diversified body of employees:

a) For Immediate Action;

b) Hiring Practices and Procedures;

c) Retention/Inclusion/Belonging.

The Recruitment and Retention Working Group has determined that many of the recommendations offered below are contingent on the acquisition of baseline data, outlining the current population and demographics of the institution's work force. We therefore recommend that the University in 2022 recruit and fund an external firm to run a Workforce Belonging survey to gather essential workforce data. The goal will be to collect data on a regular basis and publish the results.

B. HIRING PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES

1. All departments should meet with the EDI Special Advisor to determine long-term vision and plans with an EDI lens. 'Departments' in this instance refers to academic departments and programs (e.g. Classical Studies), staff departments (e.g. Buildings & Grounds); including management and senior administration groups.

2. All members of hiring committees should take unconscious bias training before any hiring procedure is initiated.

3. All hiring managers (in the case of non-academic hiring, this would be the HR Rep; in the case of Faculty hiring, this would be the requisite Dean) should be trained not only in unconscious bias training, but in EDI Hiring Practices.

4. A commitment to the objectives stated above should be clearly stated in the Collective Agreements of Faculty and Staff, as well as the Statutes of the university, and any other applicable procedures, policies, and relevant decision-making bodies of the institution.

5.. An EDI-specific interview form or template should be drafted and circulated to all hiring committees to ensure inclusive interviewing practices.

6. A reporting form should be required to be filed with Human Resources after each successful hiring. This form must be mandatory and should include: data on long- and short-listed candidates and justification for hiring if the successful candidate is not a member of an underrepresented group. This report should be made to the respective Dean (in the case of faculty hiring) and to HR (in the case of non-academic hiring, including casual contracts), and the

data should be kept by the office of the EDI Special Advisor. This reporting should be ongoing and will need to be negotiated by/with the APBU, especially in terms of how this data will or ought to be used.

C. RETENTION AND INCLUSION PRACTICES

1. There are already orientation practices for new employees. We recommend that EDI and mentoring be reviewed and added in a more organized process across the University

2. This group recommends a Workforce Belonging Survey on an annual basis to be administered by HR and/or the Office of EDI.

3. At present, there is no dedicated mediation or conflict resolution process that is not also tied to the legal office or discipline processes. It would be beneficial if mediation could be offered separately, perhaps by an external mediator who is hired on retainer by the University. Ideally, this mediation process would provide an alternate route to the traditional harassment claims, grievances, and legal action.

IV.   POLICY REVIEW

The Policy Review Working Group was formed to address the reality that many of the University's policies are in need of an update, in terms of both language and structure, to meet the equity, diversity, and inclusion goals of the institution.

KEY OBJECTIVE To support the review of Bishop's University policies according to EDI best practices.

The Policy Review Working Group has identified four lenses to examine the policies:

- Gendered language

- More solid commitment to anti-racism practices

- Information about available support for students

- Inclusion of commitment to equity statements in all policies.

The Policy Review group will create a template / a framework to share with stakeholders to help them review their respective policies. The guide will include a nomenclature as proposed by the Task Force.

PROCEDURES:

The members have categorized the policies according to departments or entities.

Entities and / or stakeholders will be encouraged to review their respective policies using the four lenses that have been identified policy review. The EDI Task Force or the Special Advisor, EDI will be available to provide feedback.

V.   COMMUNICATIONS

The Communications Working Group was formed to address ongoing concerns that, while the University already has many structures and services in place for its students and employees, access to these structures and services are not always easily obtained.

Thus, the Working Group has identified the following objectives and recommendations.

KEY OBJECTIVE: to centralize essential information for all University community members and stakeholders, in order to increase accessibility to and evaluation of available services.

To meet this key objective, the Communications Working Group makes the following three recommendations:

1. That there be an app geared towards students and accessible for download from the main page of the University. This app should contain infographics and links to essential services. We have identified the following services and areas of interest for students (to be expanded according to necessity):

- Accommodations (Student Accessibility and Accommodation Services)
- Awards & Bursaries
- Sexual Health & Reporting
- Office of the Ombudsperson
- Security
- Accessibility maps for campus
- SRC and associated services
- Health Services (clinic, counselling services, sports medicine, etc.).

2. That there be a main page on the site which gathers together essential information for all University stakeholders, including students, staff, faculty, managers, and administration. This main page will include links to relevant information including, but not limited to:

- o   an infographic/org chart of employees at the institution and relevant responsibilities
- o   key committees and their responsibilities (e.g. Senate, Board of Governors)
- o   Chair's Guide (including timelines for pre-registration, registration, timetabling, hiring guides, and other responsibilities)
- o   Dean's pages with relevant info for faculty and students in their Divisions/Schools

- list and explanation of key acronyms used at the institution (e.g. SAAS, SRC, BOG, WP, ASAP, APBU, etc.)
- list of academic processes and pathways for their successful execution (e.g. how to add/drop; how to withdraw from a course; how to request a deferral for a course; when to consult a Chair or Dean and how to make an appointment; when to consult the Ombudsperson; how to make a complaint concerning a grade, etc.)
- relevant information from the Registrar's Office (separate category for students and for faculty)
- links to the Collective Agreements.

3. That there be a Bishop's-branded Welcome Package for all new faculty and staff members with maps, resources, community information, and essential links (as above). Faculty orientation is more consistent than staff orientation (due to the timing of academic hiring being linked to the academic year), so this is especially key for new staff hires. It is our belief that this kind of information package will be beneficial for retention of employees.

PROCESS & TIMELINE

Many stakeholders are involved in the gathering, streamlining, and dissemination of the information outlined above. Thus, our Working Group plans to gather a list of our "hopes & dreams" for the app and website, and tackle the work of consultation with each group of stakeholders, including: Student Services, Health & Safety, Health Services, Recruitment, Academic Divisions and Deans, Senate, Board of Governors, the Office of the Ombudsperson, Communications, and the Office of the Principal, among others.

At present, members of this Working Group are exploring options for apps that might serve the purpose outlined above, including Ready and Guidebook.

VII NEXT STEPS

Each working group has not only made considerable progress, but has also identified key areas for ongoing attention. Each group will continue to work according to the priorities articulated in their recommendations and reports.

The members of the Task Force are looking forward to welcoming EDI Special Advisor Amy Abe to their ranks in January, and each group will be looking to her leadership as we continue to work towards the implementation of our recommendations.

It is the request of the Task Force that Senate and the Board of Governors endorse the report as submitted and support the continued work of the Task Force to advance equity, diversity and inclusion at Bishop's.

Appendix A   RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION STUDENTS

Immediate measures: can be implemented relatively quickly and without major barriers

Short term measures: will require some planning and address some barriers

Long term measures: will require addressing significant barriers and involve multiple levels of
structures to implement

In progress or completed

Time frame	Recruitment	Retention	Student Awards
Immediate	• Self-identification at admission process		• Ensure representation among Chancellors' Scholars
Short term	• Recruit from specific environment • Ensure BIPOC representation among recruiters	• Set up student centred buddy system to support incoming students from equity seeking groups • Have campus wide support for incoming BIPOC students	
Long term			• Build specific scholarships to support students from equity seeking groups by acknowledging systemic racism faced by students