Highlights of October 4th to November 21st

- We reflected on all the community input around EDI values and vision to note themes, common threads, and ideas that seemed the most important to all those who took the survey and participated in the EDI Strategy engagement session.
- Based on community input, we decided to write an Aspiration Statement instead of a Vision Statement. Vision statements are usually very short, and many felt that a Vision Statement would be too akin to a branding message or would not be able to convey the fullness of our vision and convictions. Some worried that a simple Vision Statement would be too much like "propaganda" rather than a meaningful and purposeful aspiration. York University took a similar approach in their EDI Strategy and also have an Aspiration Statement rather than a Vision Statement. You may notice that in addition to weaving our values together in this statement, we have woven in core values from our University Strategic Plan and other commitments such as sustainability and Reconciliation. We invite your feedback around the decision to write an Aspiration Statement.
- In October, we turned the focus of our EDI engagement sessions to Core Values and Areas of Focus. These have been very lively, rich, and sometimes intense conversations. Based on community input, a proposed 'structure' for our EDI Strategy has been created and awaits your feedback.
- In early November, we continued discussions around the areas of focus, while adding conversations around action-items adapted from the Scarborough Charter.

Next Steps

- gathering feedback and applying edits/feedback to the Vision Statement, Values, and Areas of Focus for our EDI Strategy
- community-wide inclusion benchmarking and dialogues using action-items adapted from the Scarborough Charter
- there will be a meeting between the seven different areas of the university who are also writing their own Strategies, e.g., Sustainability, Experiential Learning, etc., to ensure we are communicating, collaborating, and ensure there is a relationship/symbiosis with the work the University is undertaking and the strategic documents we produce

This document contains…

- The Aspiration Statement and Areas of Focus for your review and feedback
- The core values the Bishop's University community identified as at the heart of our EDI work, ready for your review and further input
- Ways that the proposed values align with existing documents and value statements at Bishop's
- Areas of focus that will help form the architecture/organization of our EDI Strategy and how we came to determine these areas of focus
- An appendix containing a comparison of some Canadian Universities' and Colleges' EDI Strategy values and areas of focus

THE BISHOP'S ASPIRATION (Draft)

We aspire to grow together as a community of care. We are called to create and nurture networks of individuals and communities who work together to build an inclusive, respectful, collaborative, and sustainable ecosystem.

Bishop's University is located at the confluence of the St. Francis and Massawippi rivers. Where rivers meet are sites of creation, biodiversity, and unique ecosystems. This cannot happen without the commotion and disruption at the meeting of the waters. Bishop's University has always been a site for the confluence of ideas and of peoples. Thus, we are a community with profound potential.

We are located on the traditional ~~unceded~~ territory of the Abenaki people, who have been stewards of these lands and waters since time immemorial. The concept of *unceded* land is rooted in the colonial idea that land can be owned, given, or stolen. Discussing the use of the word *unceded* reflects the learning journey we commit to and aspire to. We acknowledge this land was settled without treaty, which is a sacred commitment of how to live together in a good way. We commit to good relationships with the land, with those who have come before us, those who are here now, and with the people yet to come.

The presence of the University on this land is a form of unresolved conflict at a site of confluence. We acknowledge and embrace the role of conflict and discomfort as integral to our learning, growth, and ability to advance inclusion, equity, and flourishing at Bishop's University and beyond. This means we will explore and address the influences of our emotions, biases, individual and collective identities, and relationships to power in our journey to create and nurture this inclusive and sustainable ecosystem.

We aspire to be a community of difference-makers. We are called to nurture a university ecosystem where there is no tolerance for marginalization, inequity, injustice, or oppression. This will be a university where there is open space for expansive, world-inspired learning that broadens disciplinary canons to include diverse forms of expertise, knowledges, and ways of knowing and doing.

We are called to recognize and address the many systems and habits of harm so that our community feels connected, and that each individual is part of our ecosystem in a meaningful way. We envision a university community where we sustain critical questioning and continuous improvement *as our tradition*. We aspire to become good ancestors.

Inclusivity means that people feel a sense of belonging within our structures and social spaces. It means there is space to share different perspectives on how to advance our shared goals. What we do will be responsive to each context and each issue. Diverse viewpoints and diverse ways of learning, knowing, and doing are valued and pursued. We are called to hold space for difference, ambiguity, empathy, and accountability.

We are all on a journey of un-learning and new learning. We will help our community persevere and sustain this journey. As such, we are called to create communities of reciprocity. We will honour the knowledge and gifts that each person brings. We are all teachers *and* learners.

Individuals and communities at Bishop's University are called to take responsibility for our learning and understanding of different experiences so as not to sustain existing oppressions or to create new ones. We will take ownership of our missteps and take steps to redress harms and heal or transform relationships.

In our understanding, equity is a dynamic and responsive interrelationship of practices and processes that are always evolving. We are called to learn and practice ways of understanding, relating, and doing that acknowledge, disrupt, and redress the inequities of oppressive cultures and habits that we have inherited and may take for granted as 'normal'. When we 'know better', we will do better.

The context in which we advance equity is constantly changing. Identities are dynamic, intersectional, and change across contexts and over time. We are called to nurture an inclusive and collaborative ecosystem that fosters individual and collective flourishing. 'Achieving equity' is not our destination. It is a fluid journey deserving of our ongoing attention and care.

Our EDI Values (Draft)

community
care

inclusive
excellence

allyship

flourishing

entrepreneurial
spirit
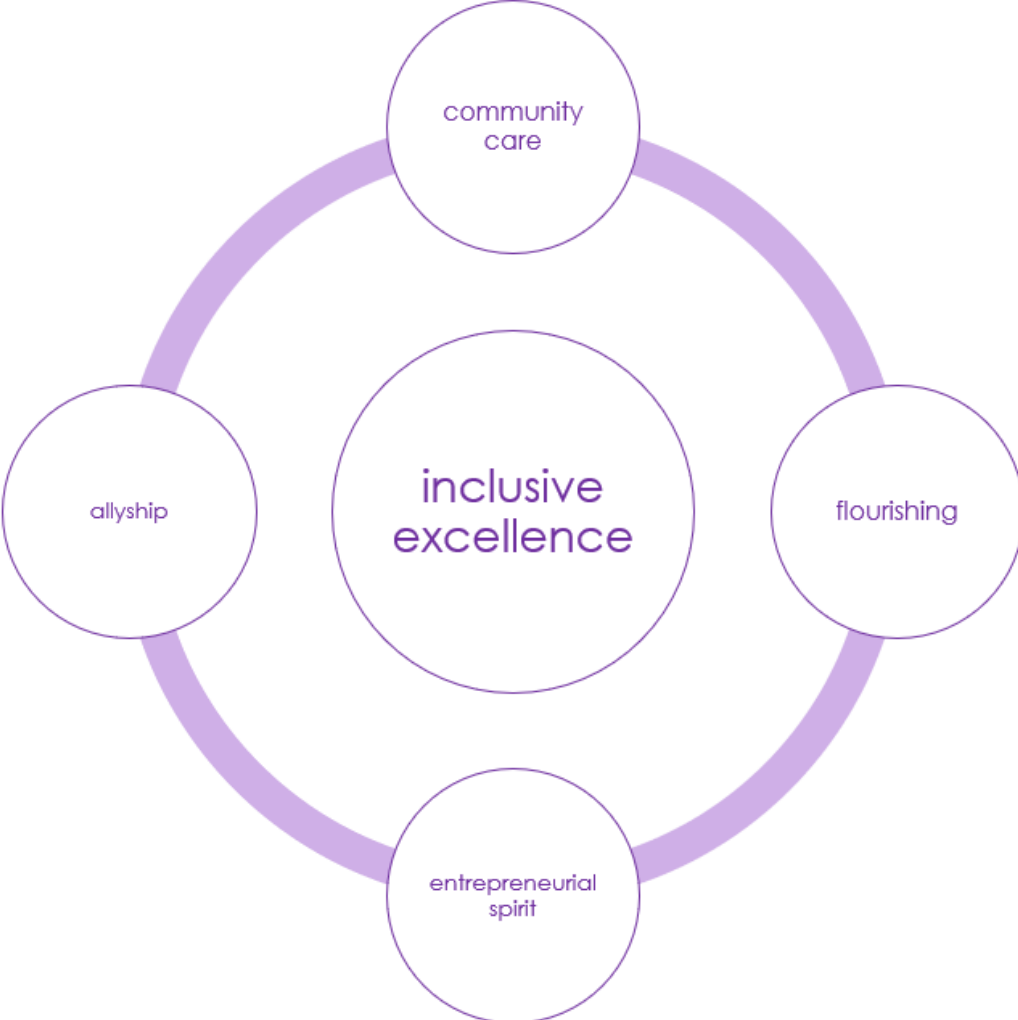
Entrepreneurial Spirit

Entrepreneurial spirit is an attitude and approach to thinking/doing that seeks out change rather than waiting to adapt to change. It is a mindset that embraces critical questioning, reflection/reflexivity, dialogue, innovation, service, and learning. We are on a continuous path of (un)learning and growth, ask critical questions, and practice deep listening. We take calculated risks and make decisions that yield inclusion, sustainability, transformation, social justice, and/or innovation. Thus, we with entrepreneurial spirit may be purposeful and benevolent disrupters and change agents. As such, we may ask, "What are our practices? Whose values underpin our practices? Who defines what is valued, real, or normal? Who benefits from this? Who is harmed? What could or should our practices be?" Our ongoing search for new or deeper understanding and our practice of critique will suggest new directions and ways of doing. Entrepreneurial spirit calls us to be adaptable, relational, resilient, and transformational in spaces of conflict or uncertainty. Practicing entrepreneurial spirit calls us to become deeply reflexive and understanding the impact of our actions. We connect our intentions and behaviours to a deeper passion and purpose.

Community Care

Community care is an ethos and practice of solidarity. Practicing community care stands in direct opposition to oppressive principles and practices of meritocracy and 'bootstrap' thinking. It refers to the use our power, privilege, and resources to uplift or act in service, like to a friend, a classmate, a colleague, or a visitor to our campus. We serve both the common good and tend to the wellbeing of individuals. As such, there is a necessary tension and balancing in response to the changing needs of the collective and the individual. Relationships are sacred. As such, we cannot use people as a means to an end, such as to achieve power, status, profit, efficiency, and so on. Community care is therefore a kind of resistance to dehumanizing ways of thinking and doing such as colonialism, patriarchy, and white supremacy. Community care practices can look like activism, practicing anti-racism, calling out injustices, donating to organizations, or simply asking someone, "What do you need and how can I help you?" In turn, we also receive help from the community. Community care means we develop reciprocal relationships and honour the gifts that each of us brings. We use our resources in stewardship of the lands and waters where our community is situated locally, nationally, and globally, or to mitigate and combat environmental harms. Community care considers the intersections of inequity and injustice on the environment and on individuals and communities. As such, community care is a practice of sustainability.

Flourishing

Flourishing is an ethos and a pursuit that stands in opposition to harm and oppression. It transcends inclusion beyond mere compliance, representation, and safety. As a component of inclusion, equity, and justice, the pursuit of flourishing calls us to evaluate how our university treats the people we affect-- past, present, and future. We are called to ask which injustices and inequities are genuine obstacles to flourishing. We are called to remove those barriers. Just as there are many forms of harm, there are many forms of flourishing. Yet, our university is not a neutral space. And, we cannot be 'all things to all people'. So, we are called to identify and cultivate the core values and criteria in which a plurality of concepts of flourishing overlap, and with which we can measure the extent to which people at Bishop's University are flourishing. Flourishing is both a component of and an aim of a liberal education. As such, we are called to cultivate learning experiences that go beyond workforce preparation. Prioritizing flourishing lives and minds by "cultivating critical consciousness, and by connecting individuals to the broader world, a multicultural democratic education" develops citizens who are "committed to the broader world… to the (re)creation of a robust, pluralistic democracy" and develops citizens who are "committed to fighting injustice and working for a better world" (Grant, 2012, p. 913).

Grant, C.A. (2012). Flourishing lives: A robust social justice vision of education. *American Educational Research Journal, 49(5)*, 910-934.

Allyship

Allyship is a practice of accountability. Our allyship will not be rooted in fear, blame, shame, or guilt. Our allyship is fueled by deep purpose, radical empathy, and the desire for personal and organizational excellence. Allyship means we are called to demonstrate our EDI values and commitments in our actions. We measure, chart, and share our individual and institutional learning and progress. We take responsibility for our unlearning, learning, actions, and impacts and embrace the role of discomfort in our growth. We commit to unpacking our conscious or implicit biases and racism. We own our mistakes and do the work to redress them. We do not coopt space, time, attention, and resources from equity-deserving individuals and organizations who are already leading and defining the work. We acknowledge that human and Indigenous rights are not gifts for the majority to bestow. Inclusion, equity, and justice are not charity. When we practice allyship, we transfer the benefits of our privileges to those who lack it and amplify the voices of the oppressed before our own. We are called to continuous organizational and individual improvement. Practicing allyship calls us to advance inclusion beyond cosmetic platitudes and rhetoric. Our allyship involves a commitment to ongoing education and to courageous action built on deeply consultative, equitable, and ethical processes. We are called to action-taking beyond representation, compliance, and safety. We will advance transformative inclusion across university structures, policies, procedures, pedagogy, and curricula. We are answerable for concrete outcomes, including to our respective Boards, communities, and other stakeholders.

Our Priorities

1. Elevate the quality of our academic programs and our liberal education model by promoting innovation and interdisciplinary collaboration.

2. Expand experiential learning.

3. Enhance the quality, quantity, stature and reputation of research.

4. Enhance the student experience.

5. Enhance the strength, vibrancy, diversity and inclusivity of the Bishop's community.

6. Preserve and enhance the natural and built environment.

7. Ensure financial sustainability.

8. Enhance our internal and external communications.

community
care

allyship

inclusive
excellence

flourishing

entrepreneurial
spirit
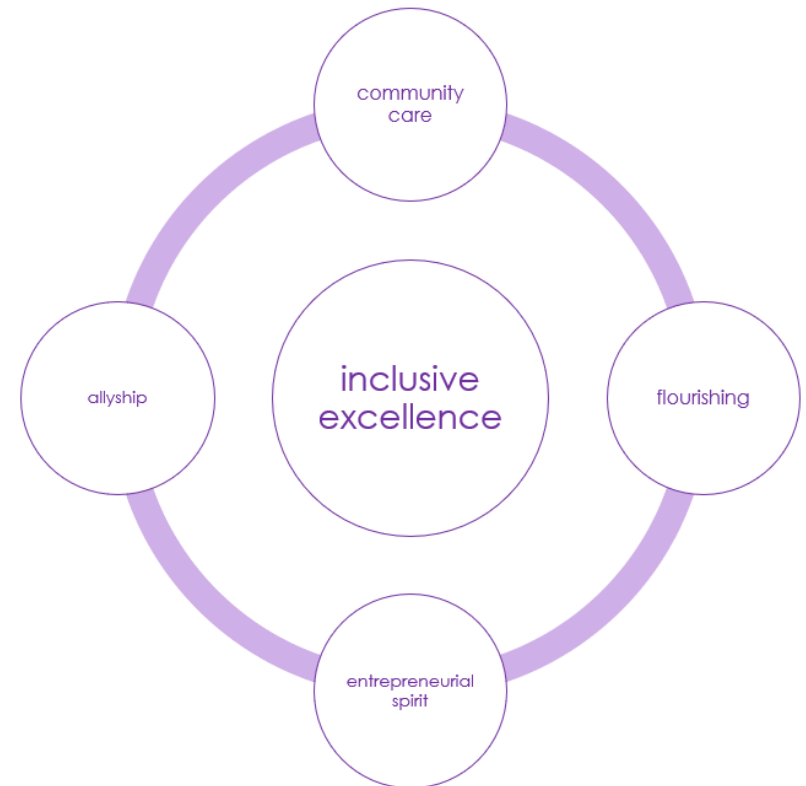
Liberal Education

- promotes an integration of learning—academic and experiential learning
- promotes learning outcomes that are essential for work, citizenship, and life:
    - knowledge of cultures and physical/natural world
    - intellectual & practical skills, e.g., inquiry, analysis, critical & creative thinking, information literacy, teamwork, problem-solving, & social justice
    - personal and social responsibility
    - civic knowledge & civic engagement
    - intercultural competence
    - ethical reasoning & action
        - all achieved through active involvement with diverse communities & real-world challenges, & integrative/applied learning
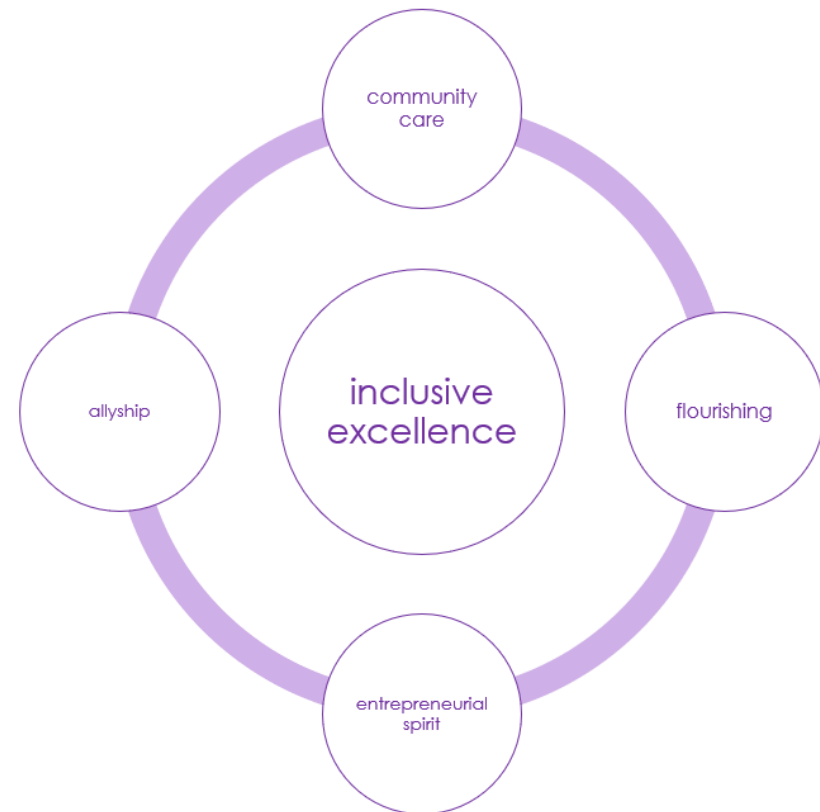
Values

Student-Centred

Bishop's highest priority is to support each of its students in achieving the institution supported by engaged alumni, Bishop's is able to provide its st environment, rich co-curricular and extracurricular offerings and outstanc

Community-Focused

We are a diverse, vibrant, inclusive and collaborative intellectual communi territory and more than 60 countries, the world meets on our campus. Ou for a high degree of engagement and close relationships among faculty, s conduct in all activities and relationships.

Excellence

We value outstanding teaching, research and creative expression, and the students and in all other members of our community.

Sustainability

We value the natural beauty of our surroundings and the exceptional arch

Bishop's University is located on the traditional territory of the Abenaki pe that subsequent generations of Bishop's students and the wider commur

We promote sustainability as an overarching principle for all our activities sustaining our institution through viable financial, cultural and social pract institutional activities.
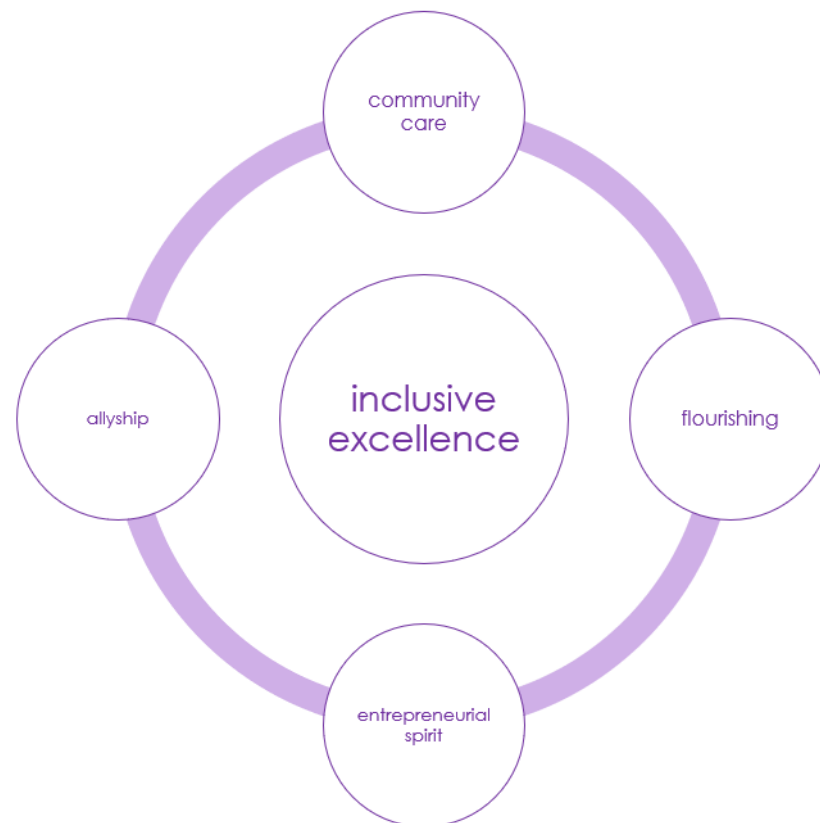
Choosing the EDI Strategy's Areas of Focus

It took approximately two months and 40+ hours of engagement with students, employees, and executives from all around BU to name our EDI Strategy's areas of focus. Here, I paraphrase some of the key points from those many discussions.

Recruitment and Retention Nixed

Many other universities have chosen 'climate' or 'campus culture' or 'student experience' or 'employee experience' as among their EDI strategy's focuses. For us, while a climate shift/culture shift is necessary and, for many, strongly desired at Bishop's University, this would be the *outcome* of the actions our EDI Strategy would identify and prioritize. Our actions will influence a culture shift or influence a someone's experience. For this reason, we did not include 'culture', 'climate', or 'experience' as among the areas of focus in our EDI Strategy. We recognize that University's culture and someone's experience of it will depend on the actions we undertake.

The EDI Task Force's final report indicates that recruitment of equity-seeking faculty and students is among the priorities Bishop's University should focus on. And yet, we are not 'collecting' equity-seeking[1] individuals like Pokémon; nor are we 'ticking a box' and pursuing cosmetic inclusion. Our many discussions yielded the idea that increasing the number of equity-seeking students or employees would be an *outcome* of actions our strategy would identify and prioritize, and would be an *outcome* of a culture shift here at BU. For these reasons, we did not include 'student recruitment/retention' or 'employee recruitment/retention' as areas of focus for our action items. We recognize that whether or not equity-seeking students and employees are attracted to BU, stay here, and flourish here will depend on the actions we undertake and the 'culture' we nurture.

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[1] An *equity-seeking* person or group is someone who experiences marginalization or oppression based on such factors as race, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, ability, religious affiliation, language, and so on. The term *equity-deserving* is also used to refer to the same. Some support 'equity-seeking' because they believe all people are deserving of equity but are not all are seeking it. Others say that one deserving of equity should not have to take on the burden of seeking it, and thus support the term 'equity-deserving'. Other language options include 'people who are marginalized' or 'people who are oppressed', and yet, critics of those terms say they take a deficit approach rather than focusing on the positive. Language is important, but I do not want the substance of this work (the action-naming and action-taking) to stagnate because we are hyper-focused on the 'right' language in a document. For the time being, I have opted to use 'equity-seeking' in this particular document. We will continue having these discussions around language choices and terminology as we write this Strategy. Your input on our choice of terminology is welcome.

Not adding 'recruitment and retention' as an area of focus does not mean that increasing the presence and leadership of people who belong to equity-seeking or marginalized groups is not important. It is. Who is at Bishop's University affects the experience of Bishop's University. The EDI climate affects the quality of life and the experiences of people at the University. One of the factors that contributes to a hostile EDI climate includes when students, faculty, and researchers encounter a dearth of equity-seeking (e.g., racialized) faculty or students in their respective departments and cannot see themselves represented in the academic community. This creates a vicious cycle where, even in what Hurtado *et al* (1999) refer to as a *benign* climate, universities can experience nearly a 30% loss of racialized faculty; that number, logically, is higher in academic environments where the climate is perceived as *mildly unwelcoming* or *hostile*. This attrition contributes to the so-called diversity dearth and thus the perceived inclusivity or hostility of the university. I perceive the process as more of a spiral than a cycle, the dearth (the problem) becoming larger and larger each time we recruit and fail to create a climate for someone to flourish, or worse, do them harm.

This attrition spiral makes it more difficult to attract faculty, staff, and students from equity-seeking or marginalized communities. It is imperative that there are students, faculty, employees, and leaders here from diverse communities and bringing a diversity of perspectives and experiences to Bishop's University—namely, perspectives, leadership, pedagogy, decision making models, and experiences that are not rooted in epistemic Eurocentrism, or perspectives, leadership, pedagogy, and decision making models and experiences that advance anti-racism, decolonization, Indigenization, and the many ways we hope to advance EDI and social justice. BU must strive to be place where all can flourish; in turn, we will flourish because of who comes here. Addressing the culture and habits of BU directly impacts our ability to attract, recruit, celebrate, and nurture faculty, researchers, and students, especially those belonging to equity-seeking and marginalized groups.

Recruitment and retention *action items* are to be included under the umbrella of "Alignment". Our recruitment policies should have EDI principles/practices embedded in them, and our practices should reflect those principles. How we recruit and support students is important, but this is a question of *process*. It is a question of *how we do things*, and how are practices are articulated in a policy. This is not the same as 'increasing the number of equity-seeking students or employees' but instead forming robust habits and processes that reflect *and result in* inclusion and equity.

Choosing the Model and Areas of Focus

Some participants in the engagement sessions created matrices that illustrated an architecture for the EDI Strategy. For example, we can ask ourselves, what occurs before a student (or employee) comes to BU, what happens while they are here, and what happens when they leave? Others suggested a matrix that illustrates the relationship between the stakeholders affected (students, employees, executives, and external community members), the areas of focus, and those who would be accountable. Others created visual webs or circles showing the relationship

between areas of focus, actions, and those who would be affected. Our goal was to present an architecture that would be easy to understand so that anyone at the University could pick it up and understand their role in our EDI work.

I also shared some documents that mapped out and compared how other universities and colleges in Canada had organized their own EDI strategies and action plans. These are in an appendix for your reference. Most people wanted to avoid words that seemed too obscure or 'jargon-y'. There seems to be a consistent desire amongst all those who participated in these engagement sessions that we were using language and creating a Strategy that people would be able to pick up, read, understand, and translate into action.

The following indicates the areas of focus for our EDI Strategy, for your review. I invite and welcome your feedback.

Area of Focus	Encompasses	Action Items	Who Operationalizes Actions	Who the Action Impacts
Teaching & Learning	- programs - courses - curriculum - pedagogy - assessment - research - international mobility			☐ Students ☐ Employees ☐ Executives ☐ Community
Alignment	- systems - services - policy, process, & practices - communications - human rights, UNDRIP, TRC CTA, MMIWG, Scarborough Charter - internal strategies, e.g., sexual violence, mental health, etc. - data & measurement - performance management			☐ Students ☐ Employees ☐ Executives ☐ Community
Capacity	- professional development - individual & institutional learning - learning resources & access/availability - data & measurement			☐ Students ☐ Employees ☐ Executives ☐ Community
Physical Environments	- physical spaces - safety - access - security - sustainability			☐ Students ☐ Employees ☐ Executives ☐ Community
Community Engagement	- community outreach - community impact - community listening & learning - local, regional, national, global relationships - impact assessments - experiential learning			☐ Students ☐ Employees ☐ Executives ☐ Community

Appendix A: Comparison of EDI Strategies from a Sampling of Universities and Colleges in Canada

	EDI Values	EDI Strategy Areas of Focus
University of Alberta	• diversity • equity • inclusion • human rights • equality-substantive • intersectionality • accessibility • respect for Reconciliation	1. Vision & Leadership 2. Research, Teaching, & Public Service 3. Workforce 4. Students & student life 5. Climate 6. Accountability
McMaster University	• cultural relevance • critical analysis • community ownership • collective responsibility • coordinated de-centralization • continuous improvement	1. Communication & coordination of EDI imperative 2. Data-informed and evidence-based EDI planning & decision-making 3. Inclusivity & interdisciplinarity in curricula & scholarship 4. Baseline EDI leadership training & development 5. Equity-seeking group consultation

Concordia University	• mutual respect
	• fair access
	• collective responsibility
	• coordinated action
	• continuous improvement
		1. Recruiting & retaining a diverse community
		   a. Retention of students & senior leadership
		2. Supporting inclusive teaching, learning, & research
		   a. Teaching, academic programs, and learning environments
		   b. Research
		3. Fostering an equitable, diverse, & inclusive campus
		   a. Governance
		   b. Data and reporting
		   c. Training & programming
		   d. Campus services

McGill University	• academic freedom • integrity • responsibility • equity • inclusiveness	1. Student experience 2. Research and knowledge 3. Outreach 4. Workforce 5. Physical space
University of British Columbia	n/a	1. Recruitment, Retention, & Success 2. Systems Change 3. Capacity Building 4. Accountability

Humber College	n/a		1. Access & Equity: Students 2. Access & Equity: Employees 3. Curriculum & Programs 4. Campus Culture 5. College-Wide Communication & Engagement
York University	**EDI Values** • equity • diversity • intersectionality • inclusion • social justice • Indigeneity • human rights • anti-racism • Accessibility	**Institutional Values** • Progressive • Excellence • Social Justice and Equity • Diversity and Inclusivity • Sustainability	1. Teaching & Learning 2. Research & Innovation 3. Representation & Success 4. Leadership & Capacity Building 5. Campus Climate & Environment