

Canada Research Chairs Program (CRCP) Institutional Report

Institution: OCAD University

Reporting Period: April 2024 – March 2025

EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION 1

Research demonstrates that achieving an equitable, diverse, and inclusive work environment leads to increased excellence, innovation, and impact. A diversity of experiences, perspectives and voices is fundamental to achieving excellent research.

Key institutional actions in support of EDI in the CRCP:

Share up to three key EDI actions related to the CRCP that were undertaken by the institution during the reporting period as well as their impact.

Key EDI action #1

- **Describe the key action that was undertaken.**

Workshop on equity and diversity for staff within the research and graduate studies areas, bringing in an external consultant (Pause and Effect) to facilitate online and in person discussions.

- **Did this action relate to an objective named in your CRCP EDI Action Plan?**

No

- **Describe outcomes and impacts this action supported during the reporting period.**

Through this series of workshops and consults, staff and faculty were better able to share their experiences both of performing from the position of an equity-seeking group and working with the larger university community on equity and diversity matters. This was also an opportunity for team-building, excruciatingly important in post-Covid, work-from-away norms. The online sessions helped set the tone, and the in person event provided much needed opportunities for sharing and reflecting on equity concerns university-wide.

- **Describe any challenges encountered in undertaking this action, and any mitigation strategies that were employed.**

Only that scheduling is always difficult for this, and in the end it wasn't possible to bring the in person workshop to 100% of the staff/faculty invited. However we did have an 85% turnout and it helped alleviate various concerns in our environment.

- **Was funding from the CRCP EDI stipend used for this action?**

Yes

Key EDI action #2

- **Describe the key action that was undertaken.**

Hiring a facilitator to assist in queer-based arts research at the university, focussed on graduate studies but with implications across the research arena.

- **Did this action relate to an objective named in your CRCP EDI Action Plan?**

No

- **Describe outcomes and impacts this action supported during the reporting period.**

Recognizing that diversity of experience and perspective is essential to high-quality research, we undertook a significant initiative to address systemic barriers related to queer and gender-identity inclusion. We engaged long-time queer arts advocate David Bateman as a facilitator to work with faculty and graduate students on expanding their understanding of queer-identity issues and the forms of artistic expression that emerge from these lived experiences.

Bateman led workshops, consultations, and critiques that created space for difficult conversations, deepened awareness of barriers faced by queer-identifying students and researchers, and strengthened pedagogical approaches aligned with EDI values. This work culminated in a major exhibition and accompanying art catalogue that showcased queer-identity art across disciplines. Students expressed strong enthusiasm for finally “being seen” within institutional structures and for the opportunity to work with a facilitator who understood their experiences and creative vocabularies.

This initiative has meaningfully improved the climate within graduate studies by creating a more informed, supportive, and accountable environment. It stands as a model of how targeted, community-led EDI interventions can enhance research excellence while addressing systemic inequities across our academic community.

- **Describe any challenges encountered in undertaking this action, and any mitigation strategies that were employed.**

none

- **Was funding from the CRCP EDI stipend used for this action?**

Yes

EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION 2

Research demonstrates that achieving an equitable, diverse, and inclusive work environment leads to increased excellence, innovation, and impact. A diversity of experiences, perspectives and voices is fundamental to achieving excellent research.

CRCP Stipend for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Rate the importance the CRCP Stipend for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion has had on your institution in making progress in implementing measures to address systemic barriers

Very important

Other EDI initiatives

Provide an example of an EDI initiative underway at the institution – that is broader than those tied to the CRCP that is expected to address systemic barriers and foster an equitable, diverse and inclusive research environment.

For example, are there projects underway that underscore the importance of EDI to research excellence? Is there additional training being offered to the faculty at large? Are there initiatives to improve the campus climate? Please provide hyperlinks where relevant in the box below. URLs should include https://. Note that collecting this information is a requirement of the 2019 Addendum to the 2006 Canadian Human Rights Settlement Agreement (clause 39.e) and provides context for the work the institution is doing in addressing barriers for the CRCP.

As noted in the prior section, we did two major EDI projects, one a workshop on equity and responsibility, and the other a facilitated set of discussions and art research on queer-based productivity. As an example, the latter project was a significant initiative to address systemic barriers related to queer and gender-identity inclusion. We engaged long-time queer arts advocate Dr. David Bateman as a facilitator to work with faculty and graduate students on expanding their understanding of queer-identity issues and the forms of artistic expression that emerge from these lived experiences. This connected to the ongoing work on diversity being undertaken by our current Canada Research Chairs who focus on diasporic identity.

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