What is EDI and Why Does It Matter to Research and Innovation?

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Agenda

• Overview and context
• Interactive activity
• Bias in recruitment and peer review
• Initiatives to promote equity, diversity, and inclusion
  ➢ VPRI initiatives
  ➢ Federal sponsor requirements and initiatives
Overview and Context
What is “EDI”? 

**Equity**: the fair and respectful treatment of all people; reduction of disparities and barriers faced by under-represented groups

**Diversity**: the demographic mix of the community, with a focus on the representation of equity-seeking groups

**Inclusion**: the creation of an environment where everyone feels welcome and is able to fully participate
Equity versus equality

• Equity is the *process*; equality is the result
• Treating everyone the same may produce inequality
Why does EDI matter for research?

• Equity, diversity, and inclusion lead to better research
  ➢ Attract the largest possible pool of researchers
  ➢ Allow scholars and the institution to reach full potential
  ➢ Result in research that is stronger, more relevant and applicable

• U of T’s public mission as a world-leading institution
  ➢ Statement on Equity, Diversity and Excellence

• New and emerging federal requirements (CRC, Tri-Agency, CERC)
Context and data

Under-representation is relative to participation in higher education

Myth of the “pipeline problem”

University enrolment in Canada since the 1920s

Context and data

Context and data

CIHR Competition Success Rates: Foundation Grant

Source: www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca

CIHR Average Grant Funds: Foundation

Source: www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca
Context

An inclusive environment affects researcher experience

- Impact on retention
- Opportunities for collaboration and funding
- Opportunities for leadership/senior positions
- Mentoring and service burdens
Context

Inequities in research design

• Sex and gender disparities in health research
  ➢ Heart disease is the leading cause of premature death for women, but 2/3 of heart disease research focuses on men
  ➢ Intersectional identities
• Research involving First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples
  ➢ Need for consent, reciprocity, and respect
The Fun Activity!
• Partners

• 30 seconds per slide
DEMONSTRATION
Say the COLOUR of the word. (Do not read the word)
1a) Say the **COLOUR** of the word. (Do not read the word)

<table>
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<tr>
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1b) Say the **COLOUR** of the word. (Do not read the word.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grass</th>
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March 2019
1c) Say the **COLOUR** of the word. (Do not read the word.)

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- Blue
- Yellow
- Pink
- Orange
- Blue
- Green
- Blue
- Black
- Pink
- Yellow
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- Brown
- Red
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- Yellow
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- Blue
- Black
2a) Say the **COLOUR** of the word. (Do not read the word)

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Orange  Blue  Green  Blue  Black
Red  Green  Blue  Yellow  Pink
Brown  Red  Blue  Yellow  Green
Green  Yellow  Orange  Blue  Black
Pink  Yellow  Green  Brown  Red
Calculate # of correct responses per slide

1) Which slide had the most correct responses? Which slide had the fewest?

2) For the slide with the most errors, why do you think you made these errors?
Unconscious Bias
Unconscious bias

- Influence of unconscious or implicit assumptions
- “Shortcuts” in our thinking that rely on previous experiences or perceived patterns
- Can also rely on social stereotypes and assumptions about people
- Biases may be positive or negative
Unconscious bias

• Can affect judgements and assessments of individuals’ skills and abilities
  ➢ Unconscious assumptions based on race, gender, age, sexuality, disability, etc.

• Effects of unconscious bias have been demonstrated in numerous research studies
  ➢ Most people exhibit some level of bias
  ➢ Can be biased against members of our own group
Unconscious bias in action

- Implicit bias in recruitment or peer review
  - Responses for “Emily and Greg” vs. “Lakisha and Jamal”
  - Gendered differences in evaluation of CVs
  - “But will her husband move?”
  - “Let’s talk about some of the intangible factors he brings.”
  - “This candidate is just a better fit.”

- Gender bias in letters of reference
  - Letters for women tend to be shorter, contain gendered language, and include “doubt-raisers”
Unconscious bias in action

- Bias in peer review regarding career interruptions
  - Maternity/parental leave, caregiving leave, medical leave, and other career interruptions can all affect research productivity
- Narrow definitions of “excellence” and “quality”
  - Need to consider emerging disciplines or methodologies, Indigenous ways of knowing, community-engaged research, and less established publication venues
Effects of unconscious bias

- Biases can compound to produce significant downstream effects

Changes in gender ratio when there is a 5% bias in favour of men

Source: doesgenderbiasmatter.com
Mitigating unconscious bias

• Unconscious bias training and education
  ➢ Canada Research Chairs/Tri-Agency online module
• Recognize biases and work to reduce their impact
• Use of clear and consistent criteria
• Allows reviewers, hiring committees, etc., to focus on the quality and excellence of the candidate
• As part of a diverse and inclusive environment
Initiatives to Promote EDI in Research and Innovation
VPRI Initiatives

• Integrate EDI into research and innovation practices and processes
• Institutional Strategic Research Plan, 2018–2023
  - Strategic Objective: “Advance Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Across Research and Innovation”
• Equity and Diversity in Research and Innovation Working Group
  - Advise on EDI across U of T’s research and innovation ecosystem
VPRI Initiatives

• May 2018: Working Group report and 49 recommendations
  - Standing Committee on EDI in research and innovation
  - EDI resources for administrators, staff, adjudicators
  - Training for VPRI staff (unconscious bias training)
  - EDI integrated into internal programs and awards (e.g., Connaught Fund)
  - Promoting community partnerships in research
  - Other initiatives in development
Canada Research Chairs Program

- Human rights challenge in 2003 (gender discrimination)
- Canadian Human Rights Tribunal settlement in 2006
- Nomination processes must be fair and transparent
- CRC created targets for four designated groups (FDGs)
  - Women
  - Visible minorities
  - Aboriginal peoples
  - Persons with a disability

Source: CRC Program Statistics
Canada Research Chairs Program

- 2015 program review: institutions not meeting targets
- Institutional EDI Action Plans: December 2017
- **Must** meet equity targets by December 2019
- New requirements for nomination processes (September 2018)
  - New steps to promote equity
  - Increased transparency and accountability
  - Monitoring by the CRC Program (48 months following the nomination date)
Canada Research Chairs Program

• Special call for CRCs at U of T (launched October 2018)
  - Current faculty members/recent hires who self-identify as members of one or more FDGs
  - To meet/exceed our targets and nominate outstanding researchers
  - Very positive response to this call
Tri-Agencies

• 2018: self-identification form for all program applicants
  ➢ Need for better equity data to address barriers to participation
  ➢ Naylor Report recommendation

• Equity frameworks
  ➢ NSERC Framework on EDI
  ➢ CIHR Gender Equity Framework (other areas in progress)
Tri-Agencies

- EDI requirements within some grant applications
  - Equity/diversity in research design
  - Diversity in team composition
  - e.g., New Frontiers Research Fund – Exploration

- Guidelines for researchers/reviewers
  - NSERC, Guide for Applicants: Considering EDI in Your Application
  - CIHR, How to Integrate Sex and Gender into Research
Athena SWAN

- UK initiative focused on women in STEM
- Institutions sign on to charter of principles
- Awards recognize commitment to EDI
- Minister Kirsty Duncan: made-in-Canada version of Athena SWAN
  - Draft Charter announced February 2019
  - All disciplines and fields of study (beyond STEM)
  - Women, visible minorities, Aboriginal Peoples, persons with disabilities, LBTQ2 community
Questions?