

WLUFA Diversity and Equity Committee  
2019-2020 Year End Report for September 2019 to 2020 (13 months)  
Submitted by Laurie Jacklin, Committee Chair (2019-2020).

**Committee mandate:**

WLUFA's D&E Committee is mandated to advise, support, inform, and educate the WLUFA Executive and WLUFA members on issues pertaining to diversity and equity, with a particular emphasis on creating an equitable working environment for members who have been marginalized in Canadian society due to any grounds in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, including age, ancestry, (skin) colour, race, citizenship, ethnicity, place of origin, creed, different abilities (disability in the *OHRC*), family or marital status, gender identity and expression, sex, and sexual orientation. The D&E Committee supports all members in achieving equity within the context of diversity. We do not support ideas, groups, or individual members who advocate for the disempowerment of other groups or individual members. The D&E Committee advises and supports through the development of educational programs, initiatives to create policies and projects within the Faculty Association that increase awareness of equity issues and celebrate diversity, and networking/outreach in the WLUFA community and with other faculty associations to develop strategies to create more equitable working environments.

**D&E Committee membership and growth:**

Several new members joined the committee in 2019: Matthew Rohweder, Maritt Kirst, Sara Matthews, and Sobia Iqbal. Returning members included Chris Klassen, Ciann Wilson, Matt Thomas, and Laurie Jacklin. The committee benefited from the increased number of members, who bring more diversity, interests, and experiences to the table, while representing more faculties. Matt Thomas implemented a process to tier the length of the appointments. Members now sign up for fixed terms (one, two, or three years) and the annual changeover refreshes the membership while allowing the group to retain its institutional memory.

The committee's mandate is to advise WLUFA and consult with the Executive on matters involving diversity and equity. While this mandate is important in and of itself, the committee also desires to enhance its outreach and be more directly involved in relevant issues and tables across the university. As such, WLUFA organised for the Faculty Colleagues (as cross-appointed by the University and WLUFA) to join the committee as of the first meeting of the new year (October 2020). The members look forward to welcoming the Faculty Colleagues and collaborating and cooperating on D&E initiatives at Laurier.

**Administrative structure for 2019-2020:**

As required in the WLUFA Charter, the D&E Committee elected a Chair for the 2019-2020 term. The committee elected me (Laurie Jacklin) to this position in September. The Committee benefits substantially from the work of our active (and activist!) secretary. Once again, Matt Thomas volunteered his unending support as the secretary. A heartfelt "thank you" to Matt for his leadership on many important developments!

WLUFAs formalized the appointment of a liaison from the Executive Committee. Anne-Marie Allison assumed the role for the first six months as a non-voting member with no additional committee work required. Marcia Oliver assumed the role early in 2020 and actively contributes to the committee.

As the out-going Chair and after four-terms in that role, I offer the following recommendations on the administrative structure:

- WLUFAs should adapt the regulations to introduce a process to rotate the Chair position between a full-time and CTF member on an annual basis. The rotation would assist in diversifying an important aspect of “lived experience” in the leadership.
- WLUFAs should formalize the role of Secretary in the committee structure. It is a difficult role and Matt deserves a great deal of credit for his unrecognized contributions for several years! Moreover, it is important to ensure that the role is entrenched and therefore encourages volunteers to step forward.
- The WLUFAs Exec liaison role is designed to streamline communication between the two committees. While I appreciate WLUFAs right to select and despatch a liaison to the committee, an important new check and balance would ask WLUFAs offer a slate of candidates and ask the D&E Committee to recommend one candidate, similar to the process in place to recommend the appointment of new D&E members and to recommend the appointment of the Faculty Colleagues.

#### **Major accomplishment: New Strategic Priorities Plan for 2020-2021:**

Our attentions in the fall term concentrated on on-boarding several new committee members and then collecting data to refresh the Strategic Priorities. The process stimulated a great deal of discussion within the committee and allowed each member to formulate a strategic priority consistent with their interests and constituency. The committee used a derivative of the original strategic planning methodology (as adopted by numerous public and private sector organizations in Ontario) to augment the on-going Strategic Priorities. This involved a mini environment scan (encouraging broad input for planning purposes) and opportunities to brainstorm with WLUFAs colleagues in many faculties. Our informal scans, member outreach, and discussions resulted in a new Strategic Priorities plan, as presented to the WLUFAs Executive in May 2020.

The plan consists of five Strategic Priorities and eleven Action Plans. The key items and approximate status of each item (as of September 2020) are as follows:

- Strategic Priority: Diversity and support outreach to WLUFAs members
  - Matt Rohweder – LGBTQ supportive space and faculty/librarian resource group. Currently being reimaged for a virtual campus.
  - Matt Thomas – Preferred names for WLUFAs members. Discussions are ongoing.
  - Sobia Iqbal and Maritt Kirst – Mental health and well-being support for full-time and CTF faculty. On hold during the pandemic.
- Strategic Priority: Education for WLUFAs Executive and WLUFAs Committee members
  - Matt Rohweder – Enhanced inclusion through *Pronoun Go-Round Protocols* –

- briefing document. In progress.
  - Laurie Jacklin – Expert-led online lecture: *Ableism on Campus*. On-hold pending broader interest from potential attendees.
  - Chris Klassen – Expert-led workshop: *Islamophobia*. On-hold but considering virtual possibilities.
- Strategic Priority: Indigenous Allyship
  - Sara Matthews – New Indigenous allyship strategy. On-going discussions with Indigenous Affairs Office.
  - Chris Klassen – Hawkstarter campaign to augment funds in the Indigenous Knowledge Fund. No update.
- Strategic Priority: WLUFAs strategic representation at WLU EDI tables
  - Ciann Wilson – D&E Committee “seat at the table” for WLU’s EDI Community of Practice. Ciann successfully secured a seat on the committee. WLUFAs President secured a second seat for the D&E Committee Chair. Action plan is complete.
- Strategic Priority: WLUFAs equity statement
  - Laurie Jacklin: Facilitate the development of the WLUFAs Executive organizational equity statement. Action plan is complete; see statement on the WLUFAs website.

#### **On-going initiatives and committee contributions during 2019-2020:**

- The committee reviewed the applications for the Waterloo EDI Faculty Colleague and made recommendations to the Exec. Recommendations on evolving the Faculty Colleague recruitment process and candidate pool are still on the table for 2020-2021 negotiations between WLUFAs and the employer. The recommendations are to make the positions more inclusive and alleviate the concerns that racialized candidates are deterred from applying and CTF are excluded. The posting format and period should change. The committee members remain keen to assist in this process.
- The committee recommended WLUFAs to encourage the employer to develop a comprehensive Employee Census that includes all full-time and part-time WLUFAs members.
- The committee and WLUFAs Exec collaboratively drafted a public letter to President MacLachy regarding the statement, “Laurier commits to direct action to achieve racial justice” (June 2020), which is also known as the “Being Raced” statement.
- The committee formulated several recommendations as a result of the data breach when the employer transferred a data file with employee demographics to WLUFAs.
- The D&E Committee offered to create a new Strategic Action Priority to work with WLUFAs to develop a process to collect demographic information on members in a safe way, including establishing the process for a member Census, and then organizing demographic information for future surveys. This will include the creation of a larger data collection, access, and retention strategy for WLUFAs.
- The committee initiated outreach to the membership using the WLUFAs “coffee chat drop-in” format, with a great turnout at Brantford and minimal uptake in Waterloo.
- The committee continued to encounter impediments to communication with the WLUFAs Executive (and vice versa). While confidentiality is important in a labour organization, committee members expressed the fact that it is difficult to work effectively when full (or

- even partial) disclosure is not available when issues are being discussed by the committee.
- The committee recommended that WLUFAs formulate the new Communications Officer position as a targeted equity hire. Further recommendations included:
    - structuring a composite grid to compare equity-seeking identities in an objective way,
    - using D&E committee experts as non-voting consultants in the search/hiring process,
    - acknowledging the significant job losses by CTF members (due to SARS-Covid-19 cutbacks) and encouraging applications from qualified CTF members.
  - The Chair negotiated with OCUFA for in-person WLUFAs presence at the Worldviews Lecture, *The Myth of Meritocracy. From Satire to Social Inequality*. April 7, 2020. OCUFA agreed to provide transportation to Toronto or a video downlink (for a 'viewing party') for interested attendees. The conference changed to a virtual broadcast after the lockdown.
  - The Committee developed a structure to integrate and welcome the Faculty Colleagues to the D&E Committee for the new term starting in September 2020.
  - The Chair continued to write reference letters confirming service and contributions of individual members in support of tenure, merit, and award applications.
  - Committee members represented WLUFAs at several university-sector events. Matt Thomas and Sobia Iqbal attended the SWEC Equity Workshop (October); Laurie attended the SWEC meetings (October and January) and the pandemic-inspired conference calls (April, May, June); Ciann Wilson, Matt Thomas, and Laurie Jacklin attended the ConversAction Diversity and Equity Summit at the University of Waterloo (November); Laurie represented WLUFAs at the CAUT conference (February 2020).

**Laurie Jacklin signing off:**

It has been an honour to serve the WLUFAs Executive, membership, and D&E Committee as the Chair of the D&E Committee for four terms. From our very tentative first meeting, it has grown and evolved during a tumultuous time due to the dedication and persistence of its members and the support from the WLUFAs Presidents and Executive Committees. I wish the committee continued success.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Laurie Jacklin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a small dot above the 'i' in "Laurie".