

## **University of the Fraser Valley EDI Action Plan 2021**

This action plan represents efforts by the University of the Fraser Valley (UFV) to work toward excellence in the recruitment, management, and retention of our Canada Research Chairs (CRC), and CRC allocations.

The development of this inaugural CRC EDI Action Plan document was made possible through a capacity building stipend awarded by the Canada Research Chairs Secretariat. While this document represents work in the direction of excellence, UFV recognizes that excellence is a journey, and we will continue the work to greater equity and inclusion and continue to update this document as our knowledge evolves. In the spirit of growth, this plan will be evaluated biennially to track progress toward, and the continued relevance of the Objectives, Measures, and Strategies outlined below.

## **Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Objectives and Measurement Strategies**

The University of the Fraser Valley has developed the following objectives, designed to enable progress toward addressing disadvantages that individuals from the federally designated groups currently experience and to assist us in continuing to meet our equity and diversity targets.

### **Our objectives are:**

1. Establish processes that contribute to attracting a diverse pool of Canada Research Chair candidates, in particular: women, indigenous peoples, visible minorities, and persons with disabilities.
2. Provide unconscious bias training to all members of the of CRC recruitment committees, as well as administrators and other staff/faculty that may be involved in recruitment.
3. Ensure that all CRC search committees include at least two members from the four federally designated groups.
4. Ensure all CRC recruitment committees include at least one member who is Indigenous.
5. Collect self-identification data from all CRC applicants.

While this plan has been written specifically to meet criteria under the Canada Research Chairs program, many of the objectives and actions will be explored as a basis to inform good practices at UFV in general.

## Measuring Success:

<b>Objective 1</b>	<b>Establish processes that contribute to attracting a diverse pool of Canada Research Chair candidates, in particular: women, indigenous peoples, visible minorities, and persons with disabilities.</b>
<b>Actions</b>	Human Resources and the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion will collaborate to develop good practices that can be applied to promoting CRC openings at the university to a diverse pool of candidates.
<b>Measures</b>	Guidelines established for reaching a diverse pool of candidates with opportunities.
<b>Status/Deadline</b>	In progress / to be utilized in next CRC hiring cycle (fall 2021)

<b>Objective 2</b>	<b>Provide unconscious bias training to all members of CRC recruitment committees, as well as administrators and other staff/faculty that may be involved in recruitment.</b>
<b>Actions</b>	Create guidelines and resources for standardized unconscious bias training for all CRC hiring committees and key administrators/staff associated with CRC recruitment.
<b>Measures</b>	Consistent unconscious bias training for all hiring committee members
<b>Status/Deadline</b>	In progress / to be utilized in next CRC hiring cycle (Fall 2021)

<b>Objective 3</b>	<b>Ensure all CRC recruitment committees include at least two members from the four federally designated groups.</b>
<b>Actions</b>	When hiring committees are constituted for CRCs, at least two members will be from the federally designated groups.
<b>Measures</b>	Number of members of federally designated groups on hiring committees
<b>Status/Deadline</b>	In progress / to be implemented in next CRC hiring cycle (Fall 2021)

<b>Objective 4</b>	<b>Ensure all CRC recruitment committees include at least one member who is Indigenous.</b>
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<b>Actions</b>	When hiring committees are called for CRC's, at least one member will be Indigenous.
<b>Measures</b>	Number of Indigenous individuals on CRC hiring committees
<b>Status/Deadline</b>	In progress / to be implemented in next CRC hiring cycle (Fall 2021)

<b>Objective 5</b>	<b>Collect self-identification data from all CRC applicants.</b>
<b>Actions</b>	Develop a system to collect and store self-identification data on all Canada Research Chairs applicants that meets all regulation and best practices for privacy.
<b>Measures</b>	System developed for collection and storage of self-identification data for all CRC applicants.
<b>Status/Deadline</b>	In progress / to be implemented in next CRC hiring cycle (Fall 2021)

## **Employment Systems Review**

As a part of our commitment to promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion within the Canada Research Chairs and beyond, UFV contracted the services of an EDI subject-matter expert, Grace Wong-Sneddon. Dr. Wong-Sneddon conducted the employment systems review with support from the Director, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, Sundeep Hans, the Director of Research Services and Industry Engagement, Jerri-Lynne Cameron, and the Associate Vice-President of Human Resources, Marnie Wright.

The key purpose of the employment systems review was to “examine the disadvantages that may be experienced by members of the designated groups through recruitment practices, barriers, or gaps that effect employment, or that prevent application including the nominations of CRC chair positions” (Wong-Sneddon). This review included a review of current policies, procedures, practices, the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Action Plan, and the EDI Progress Report. For this Action Plan, we shall summarize Dr. Wong-Sneddon’s findings as they relate to the recruitment, support, and retention of Canada Research Chairs at UFV.

### **CRC Recruitment and Retention**

With respect to the recruitment and retention of Canada Research Chairs, Dr. Wong-Sneddon focused on identifying any “disadvantages that may be experienced by members of the designated groups through recruitment practices, barriers or practices that affect employment, or that prevent application or nomination to CRC chair positions” (Wong-Sneddon).

Recommendations for the recruitment and retention of Canada Research Chairs include:

- Establish wise recruitment practices and venues for posting job vacancies that will increase the representation of the designated groups (Objective 1);
- Ensure all hiring/search committees take unconscious bias training and any EDI recruitment training (Objective 2);
- Establish procedures for exit surveys with chairholders to determine their reasons for leaving and learn what measures could be taken in the future to improve retention.

Recommendations for the retention of CRC chairholders and applicants include, but are not limited to:

- Develop institutional initiatives that foster a supportive and inclusive workplace-e.g. conduct an environmental scan;
- Review procedures, policies, and supports that enable the retention of members of the designated groups-e.g. conduct a needs assessment with faculties to explore factors that promote or deter retention; for example, spousal accommodation has often been cited as a needed retention strategy;
- Establish formal procedures for managing complaints related to equity in the CRC program and on campus;

- Create streamlined and clear processes for complaints. Review all complaint mechanisms with an equity lens and in compliance with Human Rights legislation.

The review found that UFV is already engaged in some of these recommended strategies, such as a) compensation of hiring committee members through relief from other committee assignments to provide time for recruitment, b) extended search timelines if there are not enough candidates, c) appreciate diverse qualifications beyond a publication record including a review of oral and community-based research and community service record, and d) consideration to include international representatives on search committees.

However, it also found that not enough distinction has been made between racialized and Indigenous search committee members, and that such distinction (and representation) is required in order to benefit from the different perspectives brought by these individuals (Objective 4).

Recommendations that have not been previously addressed are being addressed through this action plan – such as committing to having at least two representatives from the FDGs and at least one Indigenous representative on CRC hiring committees (Objectives 3 & 4), completing an environmental scan of current and recent Canada Research Chairs, and formalizing allocation, recruitment, and management of CRC positions. However more work can be done in recognizing distinctions between individuals from the designated groups and, in particular, Indigenous individuals, and the perspectives they bring to committees, and recognizing that those perspectives are not interchangeable.

Further, it is noted that in order for true change to happen, the university must make an explicit commitment to strategic recruitment strategies.

### **General Recommendations**

More general recommendations (that apply to the broader campus community) of from the review include the following:

- Revising some less recently updated policies to include inclusive language (Policy 142 – Conflict of Interest; Policy 139 – Employee Exchange; Policy 49- Faculty Overload).
- Separating certain policies in order to more explicitly address recruitment goals, career progression, retention, and better address specific provisions under Human Rights code, including:
  - Separate Policy 16 – Education and Employment Equity to create a more robust employment equity policy with explicit recruitment goals of FDGs, including career progression;
  - Separate Policy 143 – Appointment, Promotion, Suspension and Termination into three policies (Appointment, Suspension and Termination, and adding Tenure to Promotion);

- Examine Policy 18 – Harassment Prevention Policy and consider developing individualized policies on bullying, harassment, discrimination, sexualized violence, physical and emotional abuse prevention and separate as needed to address different treatment in legislation including Human Rights.
- Expand Policy 281 – Workplace Violence Prevention to explicitly address microaggressions;
- Address gaps in policy related to disability, accommodation and accessibility to create a policy that also supports faculty and staff in these areas;
- Consider embedding progressive strategies that address socioeconomic equity such as the Training and Development Allowance, Tuition Waiver, Tuition Assistance, Faculty Sabbatical Leave, and Staff Educational Leave into policy.

While UFV has been collecting demographic data for 15 years, the review has identified that these data have not explicitly included equity data and have not been analyzed to identify inequities or inform recruitment and retention strategies. This finding also has impact with respect to the Canada Research Chairs program at UFV. The University has also identified this gap and is currently in the process of addressing how appropriate equity data can be collected, analyzed, and utilized, while preserving the privacy of Canada Research Chairs, CRC candidates, and the broader community.

While progress has made in developing strategies to train members of Selection Advisory Committees (SACs), we can make better use of exit interview information to identify concerns to then address.

Underlying all of these recommendations is a finding that while UFV has done important work to develop the components of supporting diversity and inclusion at UFV, there are gaps in the explicit acknowledgement that some groups have been marginalized historically and require more support to reach their potential, and in the creation of specificity in the action plan to meet the goal of recruiting, retaining, and promoting a diversified workforce across all ranks, job levels, and classifications. To do this, UFV will have to strategically create a framework for merit, inclusion, respect, and a climate free of discriminatory and systemic barriers. A key recommendation then, is to take the work that is being done in these areas and put it into policy, formalizing those policies with procedures.

## **Comparative Review**

A brief comparative review was conducted of all current and the most recently completed Canada Research Chairs at UFV.

Chairs were compared based upon the following metrics

- Base salary
- Salary top-ups
- Dedicated research funds
- Administrative support
- Faculty appointment level
- Teaching load / Protected time for research
- Dedicated space/facilities

These values were compared and analyzed alongside identity factors which could contribute to inequalities in compensation, support, etc.

Because of the small number of CRC's at UFV it would not be appropriate to share even de-identified information publicly. However, data was collected, analyzed alongside equity information, and shared at senior leadership level so that it may be used to inform this plan and activities moving forward. Where differences in these areas exist, often they are differences based upon differing needs of individual chairs and research programs. With this having been said, we are committed to making an honest analysis of this data alongside chair qualitative feedback to determine whether barriers or differences in support exist that can be addressed moving forward.

UFV is currently meeting our equity targets within the CRC program, and plan to continue to meet these targets moving forward.

## **Challenges**

UFV faces specific challenges in recruiting for all positions, but Canada Research Chairs in particular. As a medium-sized regional teaching university, where salaries are mandated by the provincial government at the lowest level nationally, it is difficult for UFV to match salaries and dedicated research funds expected by top candidates, and difficult for us to provide space, mentorship, or cohort support that can be found at larger institutions. Chairs at UFV quickly become leaders, however that leadership comes with greater demands upon their time and resources that can make it more difficult to focus on their research programs exclusively.

Some of these challenges can be managed through targeting specific in-kind and other supports to the needs of the candidate, being willing to at least match salary levels through salary top-ups and placing focused attention on providing the kinds of resources that will best facilitate Chair success. Recently, the Research Office has hired dedicated administrative support for research centers and Chairs – decreasing the administrative load in an attempt to return to them more time to focus on their research activity.

## **Management of Canada Research Chair Allocations**

Although the processes listed below are designed specifically to meet the best practices under the Canada Research Chairs program, UFV has begun to apply many of these strategies as good practices for all hiring at the university.

### **Allocation of Chairs**

Canada Research Chair positions are allocated in response to strategic institutional priorities and availability of resources (funds, space, etc.). There are two possible paths for allocating a CRC Chair.

In the typical path, the Associate Vice-President Research, Engagement, and Graduate Studies (AVP-REGS) and Provost and Vice-President Academic (VPA) will identify several priority areas and approach the Provost Cabinet to determine the thematic area and resources available to support a CRC. The search committee will be appointed by the VPA to ensure diversity and broad representation by discipline.

In an alternate path, a Dean (or set of Deans) will identify an area which they believe addresses a strategic priority. This proposal will then be brought forth to the VPA for discussion at the Provost Cabinet.

Any CRC allocation must be approved by the VPA, the AVP-REGS, and the relevant Dean(s).

If the opportunity is available to exchange chairs through the corridor of flexibility, these decisions will be made at the allocation phase and will be approved by the AVP-REGS and the VPA.

### **Chairholder Renewal and Allocation Losses**

A minimum of 14 months before the expected renewal deadline for a CRC, the AVP-REGS and Director, Research Services and Industry Engagement (D-RSIE) will meet with the Chairholder to discuss the renewal. The Chairholder will have up to 2 months to develop a proposal for the renewal that will include their accomplishments and a draft renewal plan. This plan will be reviewed by the AVP-REGS, the Dean of the relevant faculty, and the VPA within a month of receipt. This plan will be reviewed alongside annual performance reviews for the chair, institutional equity targets, strategic direction, growth, and any institutional constraints.

From this review a recommendation will be developed and will be submitted to Senior Executive Leadership by the VPA. The Sr. Executives' decision will be communicated to the AVP-REGS and relevant Dean, within 30 days of submission. These results will then be communicated to the Chairholder and, if applicable, a renewal application will be initiated by the D-RSIE working with the Chairholder.

In recognition of the Canada Research Chairs program intent that Tier 2 chairs not be used as feeders to Tier 1 appointments, UFV does not consider moving Tier 2 candidates to Tier 1 allocations.

### **Loss of Chair Funding**

In the event that there is a loss of one or more chair allocations as part of the CRC allocation cycle, the D\_RSIE will notify the AVP-REGS. The VPA, AVP-REGS, and D-RSIE will meet with the AVP-Human Resources to discuss the impact of the loss and possible courses of action. Factors under consideration will include equity targets, strategic directions of the university, fiscal considerations, academic programming needs, and where the chair is in their term. This group will initiate a series of consultations

including the Dean and Director of the affected department/school and will develop a list of potential actions.

From this list, the best course will be selected by the core group and a recommendation will be made by the VPA to the Senior Executive Leadership. The recommendation will include details on how the chair will be supported when funding is lost (might include research funding, etc.).

### **Recruitment of Chairs**

UFV is committed to meeting all CRC requirements and good practices in the recruitment of Canada Research Chairs. As such, a documented process has been established for this recruitment.

When ready to recruit, a senior level university official must be selected, who will be responsible for ensuring that all requirements have been documented and followed and will sign an Institutional Attestation that will accompany the nomination package certifying that all key elements of the required processes have been observed.

All steps of the recruitment, selection, and hiring process will be documented per the CRC Recruitment Process (document) and submitted to the CRC Secretariat.

The UFV Director, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion will serve on all CRC Selection Advisory Committees (SAC) as the EDI specialist. This individual will oversee the process from beginning to end, and advise on language, practices, approaches to recruitment, and any other aspect of the process.

A job posting will be developed with an eye to ensuring that the description is sufficiently broad to be inclusive of a wide range of candidates, and that the language is gender neutral and inclusive, and will include specific statements encouraging members of all federally designated groups to apply. It will include UFV's statement of commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion, and information on the institution's inclusion/accommodation policies. The posting will be reviewed by the EDI champion and edited as needed.

The posting will be distributed widely, with special, documented effort to identify venues that will attract a diverse pool of applicants. These efforts may include identifying specialist organizations and publications, using portals and job boards, reaching out to colleagues and asking them to distribute widely, etc. If a sufficiently diverse pool of candidates does not apply, UFV will consider engaging the services of a professional recruitment firm. The position will be posted for a minimum of 30 days, and self-identification data will be collected for all applicants.

All members of the SAC will participate in 3 – 1-hour modules of unconscious bias training in order to raise their awareness of unconscious bias and other factors that can lead to inequity in the selection process. They will also be made aware of the institution's commitment and strategy for meeting or sustaining EDI diversity targets and any gaps or targets that will need to be applied to the chair they are seeking to fill. Coaching will be provided on how to consider career gaps and diverse measures of accomplishment/leadership.

The Committee will be convened and will include the EDI champion and ensure the participation of at least two members from one or more of the federally designated groups and at least one Indigenous member. Any conflicts of interests or biases of committee members will be identified and managed.

Committee members will be provided with a package that includes:

- A copy of CRC EDI best practices guide;
- Advice on how to evaluate applications that include non-traditional components (e.g. Community based or focused research), and a list of internal contacts at the institution who can provide further advice;
- Institution's EDI targets and gaps, EDI commitment, and action plan;
- List of suggested and effective interview questions (and impermissible questions).

The committee will develop selection criteria and steps will be taken to ensure they are applied equally to all candidates. All stages of the committee's evaluation and selection process will be carefully documented.

### **Nominee Compensation and Support**

Nominees will be offered compensation that is aligned with current practices with respect to compensation, level of faculty appointment, office and research space, additional research funds, and teaching load. Individual needs will be negotiated between the potential nominee, the AVP-REGS and Faculty Dean – taking into consideration the individual's current compensation level and specific needs of that individual's research program. Negotiated terms will be reviewed and approved by the VPA, whose review will include consideration that individuals from the federally designated groups are not disadvantaged in negotiations related to the level of institutional support offered, and that offers remain consistent with those offered to current chairs at the same level. Once a compensation package has been reviewed and approved, it will be sent to the President and Board for final approval.

### **Collection of Equity and Diversity Data**

It is critical in working to increase diversity to ensure appropriate data is collected, stored, and analyzed. Equally critical is the safeguarding of individual privacy, particularly when considering small institutions where the number of chairholders is very small.

UFV takes seriously the requirement to collect appropriate data in order to inform equity decisions and the removal of barriers to the success of all faculty, including Canada Research Chairs. In support of this commitment, Human Resources is currently working closely with the Director, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, and Institutional Research and Planning to develop the best methods for collecting, analyzing, and respecting diversity data for Canada Research Chairs candidates, faculty, staff, and students.

Building to this priority, we continue to analyze structures and processes, and to work within the community to educate and communicate a clear message about the importance of equity, diversity, and inclusion and our commitment to better support all individuals in our community.

### **Retention and Inclusivity**

UFV is a medium-sized institution with a Canada Research Chairs allocation of three. Due to size considerations, inclusivity and retention of chairs is measured alongside that of other faculty. To date, no chairholders have left UFV, and expired chairholders have remained with UFV until their retirement.

Should chairholders have concerns about institutional climate, inclusivity, equity, or other related matters, they may follow Human Resources policies that are in place for all employees. They may file grievances under the Collective Agreement between the University of the Fraser Valley Faculty and Staff Association and the University of the Fraser Valley, Article 7: Grievance Procedure.

The person responsible for addressing any equity concerns/complaints regarding the management of the institution's chair allocations, or management concerns about equity, diversity, and inclusiveness is the Director, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (Sundee.Hans at ufv dot ca). Formal complaints will be managed in accordance with UFV Policy 18 – Harassment Prevention.