Athabasca University

Canada Research Chairs

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Action Plan

Prepared November 30, 2020

Approved March 29, 2021

Dear Canada Research Chair EDI Committee:

Athabasca University (AU) is Canada's Online and Open University, dedicated to identifying and removing barriers that restrict access to and achievement of higher education and learning for all. AU has been a recognized leader in distance and online learning since its inception in 1970. Today, the university serves 43,000 students throughout Alberta, across Canada and in 87 countries around the world.

By its very design, AU prioritizes equitable access and inclusion and makes it possible for people around the world to take courses and earn degrees regardless of their location, family status, age, language, race, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, career or community commitments. Our programs encourage students to learn in a variety of ways to accommodate various learning styles and cognitive abilities, and include print materials, e-texts, and a variety of multimedia tools to allow students to learn when and where they choose and at their own pace. AU operates in a global marketplace where students are freed from the demands of rigid institutional schedules and provided with equitable, personalized instruction from subject-matter experts and one-on-one advising and student services.

It is a critical priority of AU to advance and promote diverse, equitable, and inclusive research throughout the Canada Research Chair (CRC) program, as well as in our nearly 80 bachelor's, master's, doctoral, and undergraduate and graduate certificate and diploma programs. Significant efforts have been made to prioritize equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) work and to integrate it into all decisions, policies, processes and practices within the CRC program and the broader institution.

We have deliberately broadened our EDI work to include consideration of disproportionate impacts beyond the four Employment Equity historically minoritized groups (women, Indigenous peoples, people with disabilities, and visible minorities) to include the intersectional considerations, impacts, and lived experiences of Black, Indigenous and People of Colour, and to encompass gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, age, location, socio-economic status and income, ability (including physical, cognitive, visible and invisible), and other factors like rank, years of service, employment status and functional department.

As one of the four Comprehensive Academic and Research Universities in Alberta, Athabasca University takes its commitment to openness, accessibility, equity, diversity and inclusion seriously. We recognize that achieving these goals is critical to producing the most innovative and impactful research, and to fostering the best environment possible for our learners, our faculty and our researchers.

Sincerely,

Dr. Neil Fassina
President, Athabasca University

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Introduction

Athabasca University (AU) is deeply committed to equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) as fundamental to its [Mission and Mandate](#) to remove barriers that restrict access to higher education.

In meeting this commitment, AU will strengthen and sustain an environment in which individuals, including those from the four federally designated groups (FDGs)—women, persons with disabilities (visible and invisible), Indigenous Peoples, and people of colour—and other minoritized groups, have equal opportunities to participate and excel at teaching and research. AU is dedicated to achieving a more diverse, equitable, accessible, and inclusive environment for all who work, learn, and live within its community, advancing equity, diversity, and inclusion using an intersectional approach, for not only faculty and staff, but also students and the broader community.

As part of these commitments, AU is guided by its I-CARE values as outlined in the strategic plan, *[Imagine: Transforming Lives, Transforming Communities 2018-2021](#)*. Fully aligned with EDI, the values include:

- **Integrity:** We are guided by ethics, honesty, and fairness in all our actions.
- **Community:** We embrace collaboration and connectivity among our diverse individual community members and their teams.
- **Adaptability:** We respond to the changing needs of our University and its learners with courage and continuous improvement.
- **Respect:** We foster respect by contributing to an environment in which every individual is valued.
- **Excellence:** We ask bold questions, provoke new ways of thinking, and focus on those things at which we can excel to enhance the quality of all that we do.

These values are critical components of an effective EDI program. AU understands that ensuring the organization is equitable and inclusive will increase faculty, staff, and students' engagement and sense of belonging. AU is committed to an environment that is supportive of diverse opinions and encourages advancement of ideas for the overall benefit of individuals and society.

This AU CRC EDI Action Plan is part of this larger vision and work. It draws upon several sources, including the AU EDI Strategic Framework, AU [Nukskahtowin](#) (Meeting Place) Strategic Plan, the AU Strategic Research Plan, Universities Canada principles, and the Tri-agency best practices. The AU strategic plan, *Imagine: Transforming Lives, Transforming Communities*, includes as one of its strategic directions, "AU Success," a declaration that

"our University reflects a culture of inclusion" and "[a] learning and research space respectful of the knowledge and values of Indigenous Peoples through cultural affirmation and academic excellence." AU's Strategic Research Plan (2018-2022) speaks specifically to "fostering equity, diversity and inclusion, including the participation of women, persons with disabilities, Indigenous Peoples, and people of colour in research" and "building a strong research culture that embraces diverse perspectives, methods and ways of knowing."

AU endorses Universities Canada's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion principles. AU's [Code of Conduct for Members of the University Community](#), [Employment Equity Policy](#), and the [Harassment, Violence, and Sexual Violence Policy](#) underscore the importance of cultivating an inclusive and welcoming community.

Through this Action Plan, AU is committing to advancing the broader institutional EDI goals by advancing EDI in the Canada Research Chair (CRC) program and recognizing that, "achieving a more equitable, diverse and inclusive Canadian research enterprise is essential to creating the excellent, innovative and impactful research necessary to advance knowledge and understanding, and to respond to local, national and global challenges."[1] In recent years, AU has increased both awareness of barriers to EDI in its CRC program and implemented strategies to address and overcome such obstacles in the present and future. Several of these strategies have been deployed within the last year; these will be explained further in this report. In addition, in this process, we have identified other gaps, now matched with key mitigation strategies outlined in the Objectives, Actions and Measures section.

AU's EDI CRC Action Plan outlines three overarching objectives:

1. Ensure an equitable and inclusive research environment for traditionally minoritized groups such as women, Indigenous Peoples, people of colour, people with disabilities (visible and invisible), and LGBTQ2S+ people, recognizing the intersectionality of identities.
2. Enhance the recruitment and retention processes for the CRC program to increase representation of traditionally minoritized groups.
3. Establish meaningful and culturally safe research environments in which the participating community, group or individual is a partner in decision-making during research.

This CRC EDI Action Plan has been developed to communicate AU's EDI objectives in connection with the CRC program and its broader strategic direction of building a strong

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[1] Tri-Agency Statement on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.

research and institutional culture that embraces diverse perspectives, methods, and ways of knowing. The action plan details specific actions over a two-year period and includes ongoing progress assessments to ensure AU charts a course for greater EDI representation in our CRC program well in advance of our 2029 targets (discussed in more detail in the Objectives, Actions, and Measures section).

AU EDI Leadership

AU President, Dr. Neil Fassina, signed the *Dimensions Charter* in July 2019, endorsing the university's commitment to adopting key principles to achieve greater EDI throughout the university's practices and culture. In endorsing the *Charter*, AU has committed to transformation to increase EDI and deeper cultural change. To advocate for Black student and researcher inclusion in Canadian higher education, Dr. Matthew Prineas, AU Provost and Vice President Academic, is also pursuing organizational partnership in the University of Toronto National Dialogues and Actions. Throughout the consultation sessions held with diverse staff, faculty, and administration in the creation of this report, common sentiments were expressed around an appreciation for AU's current diversity in leadership and for AU's expressed commitment to advancing EDI.

> *"AU has a modern and forward-thinking executive team. We feel we can talk to our leaders. 5 out of 7 VPs are women."* - EDI Committee Member

> *"There is a 'Connect with the President' town hall at least monthly, sometimes more, it is open to all staff and faculty. The President takes questions in advance and opens the floor to chat at the end. You can address harder questions here. Communication with the President is open."* - EDI Committee Member

EDI Committee(s)

A key component of AU's EDI advancement over the past year has been the development of an EDI Engagement Committee, an EDI working group, and a Champions Network, as well as a growing CRC Committee. These groups are responsible for driving progress and activity in the EDI space at AU and establishing a sense of accountability. It is a priority of AU to have representation from all employment types and areas of the university within these important committees to demonstrate that EDI is everyone's responsibility and to support effective transparent communication across the organization.

In December 2019, there was a call to the entire AU community seeking volunteer members for the EDI Engagement Committee. There was a significant response with a total of 48 individuals expressing interest in becoming involved. A comparative analysis[2] was conducted with other post-secondary institutions in Canada to determine the best size, structure, and governance model for the committee. Based on this work, the committee size was set at 12 members. The selection process was based on pre-determined factors that included seeking representation from a variety of diverse populations. The selection criteria for finalizing the EDI Engagement Committee membership included representation from minoritized groups such as women, Indigenous Peoples, people of colour, and people with disabilities (visible and invisible), and LGBTQ2S+ people. Other elements that were considered in selection included age, functional department, geographic location, experience, skills, and knowledge, and demonstrated passion for, or professional and research experience in EDI.

The EDI Engagement Committee meets biweekly and is a very committed group. Through qualitative interviews with Committee members, there was a strong motivation and dedication to advance EDI at AU. It was noted several times that meeting cancellations are rare, and all attendees typically attend every meeting.

The following quotes illustrate common perspectives shared in consultation sessions with diverse EDI Engagement Committee members in the preparation of this report.

> *"I really appreciate that AU is committed to advancing and making a difference in EDI in a really tangible way."* - EDI Committee Member

> *"(The EDI Committee) is properly resourced."* - EDI Committee Member

> *"The EDI committee – I just love it. When I was selected to be part of the committee, it was like I won the lottery."* - EDI Committee Member

EDI at AU has two executive sponsors, the Chief Human Resources Officer and the Provost and Vice President Academic, as well as three co-chairs, the Deputy Chief Human Resources Officer, the Associate Vice President, Academic Resources, and the Associate Vice President, Research (AVPR). It was important to include executive sponsors, co-chairs, and committee members from a variety of faculties and functional departments to prevent EDI efforts and accountability mechanisms from becoming siloed. Research leadership representation was also integral to ensure alignment and integration between institutional EDI efforts with the development and implementation of the present CRC EDI Action Plan.

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[2] Comparator schools included Mount Royal University, Brandon University, Royal Roads University, Trinity Western University, Laurentian University, University of Northern British Columbia, Brock University, Lakehead University, Thompson Rivers University, and the University of Lethbridge.

The relationship and reporting structure of these units is as follows:
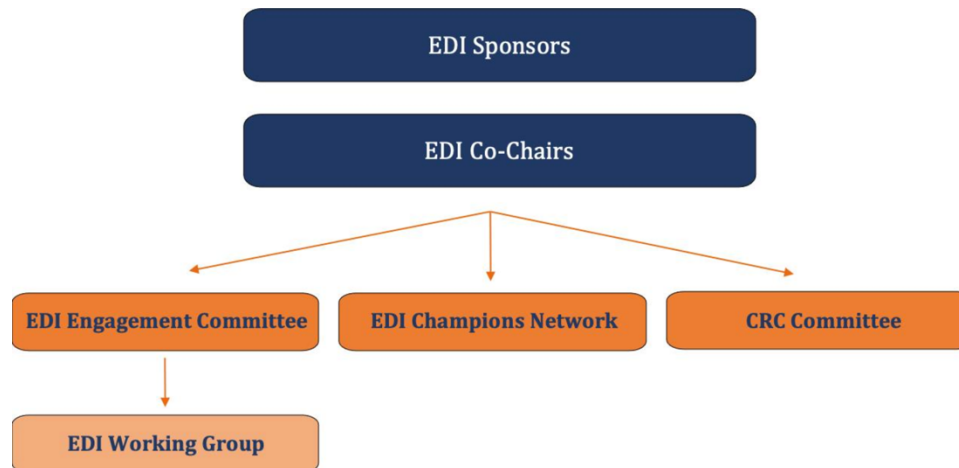
The EDI Engagement Committee's role is to collaboratively analyze the data collected from the KPMG environmental scan to inform the creation of a broader institution wide AU EDI Framework and Action Plan. This Framework and Action Plan are currently being finalized and will include the CRC program EDI Action Plan. In this way, AU's growing culture around EDI is a coordinated effort, resulting in a collective lift in awareness, resources, and engagement. The broader institutional EDI Framework and Action Plan contains five key themes to guide EDI priorities at AU with one being "Research Excellence." This broader EDI Framework and Action Plan will include a timeline that will help build EDI momentum across the full institution and advance beyond incremental success.

Volunteers not selected to join the EDI Engagement Committee were invited to join an EDI Champions Network that supports critical EDI activities, promotes awareness, and encourages participation in EDI across the university. The Champions Network members are consulted to provide broader perspectives to the EDI Engagement Committee and promote awareness of EDI activities and progress across the institution. The Network is diverse and includes representation from historically minoritized groups including women, people with disabilities (visible and invisible), Indigenous Peoples, Black people, people of colour, as well as representation from a variety of ages, languages, sexual orientations, genders, geographic locations, and a blend of functional departments, years of service, ranks, and more.

The EDI Engagement Committee has also developed an EDI Working Group, which is focused on organizing and leading substantive and operational activities for the Committee. The Working Group is currently advancing and finalizing the broader institutional EDI

Strategy and Action Plan. The working group comprises members of the EDI Committee and the EDI Champions Network.

AU has also made efforts to grow its CRC Committee, which previously had a limited membership and mandate. This group is responsible for speaking into the strategic direction of AU's program and ensures the implementation of all Tri-Agency requirements for the AU CRC program. This committee is increasingly focused on advancing EDI in the CRC program, a task for which it is better prepared now that its membership reflects the diversity that AU strives for in the program itself. The CRC Committee is diverse and constitutes members of historically minoritized groups including women, people with disabilities (visible and invisible), and Black, Indigenous Peoples, and people of colour. It also includes a blend of emerging and established scholars, two active CRC chairholders, researchers who specialize in inclusion and organization development, as well as a representative from the AU EDI Engagement Committee.

To guide the work of these groups, over the past year, AU has developed a common understanding of what EDI means to employees, faculty, students, and administration through a collaborative process. This process involved interactive discussions, visioning, and alignment amongst AU's internal EDI Engagement Committee along with its Working Group and the EDI Champions Network. The common understanding of EDI is as follows:

Equity refers to fair, equitable and respectful treatment of all people.

Diversity is about acknowledging, recognizing, respecting and valuing everyone's unique qualities and attributes.

Inclusion is creating an environment that welcomes everyone to participate and fully engage in all opportunities with dignity, and no one gets left behind.

Nukskahtowin Partnership

AU has a long-standing partnership with Indigenous communities through Nukskahtowin (formerly: The Centre for World Indigenous Knowledge and Research), an Indigenous-led partnership led by the Elder-in-Residence, Maria Campbell. Nukskahtowin was formed in 2001 to address the academic and administrative needs of Indigenous Peoples who are academics and learners at AU. As part of the initial vision, the Centre worked towards the development and delivery of Indigenous Studies and education in the AU environment. The Centre worked towards the respectful inclusion of Indigenous research by and about First Nations, Metis, and Inuit people. The main goal was and remains the acknowledgment and

development of traditional Indigenous knowledge in the academy and to support, protect, and preserve Indigenous knowledge, education, and oral traditions.

One of AU's EDI Committee members is the Chair for Nukskahtowin, and led the development of an Indigenous Strategic Plan in a community-led collaborative process for AU. The Indigenous Strategic Plan recognizes that historically institutional research has been grounded in systemic oppression and colonization. AU is actively engaging in efforts to decolonize research and to ensure that research systems, processes, and policies are equitable and do not repeat historical patterns of exclusion.

AU's *Imagine Plan* references the creation of the Indigenous Strategic Plan and the partnership is grounded in the principles of reciprocity and conciliation. Aspects of the Indigenous Strategic Plan are also reflected in AU's current Strategic Research Plan, which underscores "of particular significance is the preservation of Indigenous knowledge, language and culture and the co-creation of paths of reconciliation" under the thematic focus, "Society, Culture, Health, and Well-Being." Reciprocity is the equitable maintenance of harmony and balance in the exchange of knowledge, ideas, services, and support between peoples, the land, and all our relations, including creatures and plants. Reciprocity is a way of being and a way of living; it is the central philosophy and tenet of Indigenous Peoples' worldview that ensures humility, respect, and honour. Kwayskahsatsowin (Conciliation) is AU's commitment to learning from and working in partnership with Indigenous Peoples, nations, and communities in AU's conciliation journey. As part of this journey, AU seeks to understand how to more effectively support Indigenous learner and researcher success. AU is drawing on the insights and recommendations of the EDI Engagement Committee and Champions Network to continually advance reciprocity and conciliation in AU's research culture.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Action Plan

The design and creation of this CRC EDI Action Plan has been highly collaborative. Consultations and recommended actions were co-created with team members from Human Resources, the Research Centre, the CRC Committee, existing CRC chairholders, the EDI Engagement Committee, Working Group members, the Champions Network, and non-CRC Research Chairs. This consultative process included the perspectives and lived experiences from historically minoritized groups including women, people with disabilities (visible and invisible), Indigenous Peoples, Black people, people of colour, as well as representation from a variety of ages, languages, sexual orientations, genders, geographic locations, as well as functional department, years of service, rank, and more.

Data Collection and Analysis

Environmental Scan

KPMG LLP ("KPMG") was retained to conduct a current state assessment of EDI at AU in the summer of 2020. This scan built upon previous internal evaluations of EDI at AU. The assessment scope was that of an environmental scan, which analyzes the health of an institution's workplace environment and culture and serves to recognize the different lived experiences and unique barriers/challenges that may be faced by FDGs, among other minoritized groups, within the institution's environment.

 The assessment methodology included the following:

- EDI survey administered to senior leaders, faculty, and staff.
- Focus groups with representation from women, Indigenous women, people of colour, persons with disabilities (visible and invisible), LGBTQ2S+ persons, and a range of age groups.
- Review of comparator institutions.

The survey response rate was 39%, resulting in a sample size of n=441; respondents were assured that responses were confidential. Survey responses were reported as group statistics and were not tied to any employee identifier. Open-ended responses were summarized by theme. Subsequently, three focus groups were conducted with eight to ten people in each. All sessions were approached the same way and all participants experienced the same content. The questionnaire and facilitator guide for the focus groups are included in **Appendix B: KPMG EDI Survey** and **Appendix C: KPMG Focus Group Facilitator Guide**, respectively.

The KPMG methodology was used to evaluate AU's EDI maturity across six dimensions:

1. Strategy: Designing an EDI strategy that aligns with the organization's strategy and putting structures in place to govern it is a bold way to demonstrate that EDI is an organizational priority.
2. Leadership & Culture: Recognizing EDI as a driver of organizational excellence often begins as a leadership imperative.
3. Talent Processes: Processes like recruitment, promotion, and talent development should be inclusive in nature, and tailored to a diverse stakeholder base.
4. Talent Infrastructure: An organization should understand its resources (budget, systems, people, capabilities) available to drive EDI efforts, and the gaps it needs to fill.

5. Stakeholders: Organizations are often accountable to external bodies like government, regulators, and their communities.
6. Brand and Reputation: An organization's brand strategy should be cognizant of the diverse makeup of its internal and external stakeholders (employees, prospective employees, and customers).

The report highlighted different areas of improvement to help AU build a more equitable and inclusive institution. Several key findings are included below:

- The report highlighted that AU's culture is viewed as one that embraces diversity and is striving to create a heightened sense of belonging for all. Across the university, it was generally acknowledged that AU leaders are committed to EDI but greater clarity on further actions is required. Through a deeper discussion in the focus groups, there was a strong consensus that increased transparency and communication of EDI goals and progress are critical steps in supporting AU's commitment.
- 79% of survey respondents reported that they felt that their performance was evaluated based on their contributions, efforts, and outcomes. Yet 51% of survey respondents felt that the university could do more to ensure opportunities for career advancement are based on experience and qualifications.
- 46% of survey participants indicated that the current HR policies and processes do not meet their needs. Many survey and focus group participants expressed interest in having more inclusive programs and materials available to better support team members, such as how performance evaluations should be completed and how to navigate nuanced discussions between manager/supervisor and employee.
- 42% of research-based faculty members who responded reported not knowing how to incorporate EDI principles into research projects. It was found that the available EDI resources through AU are focused on how to conduct research related to EDI rather than how to conduct research projects with EDI principles at the fore (e.g., how project team members interact and work together).
- The report highlighted that those who identified as Indigenous were more likely to have witnessed and/or experienced harassment at AU and felt less confident that AU would address their complaint in an equitable manner. The experiences of Indigenous members of the AU community have resulted in them feeling less confident about the progress and efforts made by senior management regarding EDI across the institution.
- The report highlighted that people with a disability felt less supported in their health and wellness, reporting challenges in accessing resources. Within their department/faculty, they were less likely to feel that their ideas and experiences are

valued. Similar to those who identify as Indigenous, they were less optimistic about the organizational progress and EDI commitment from senior management.

- Survey respondents who identified as part of the LGBQT2S+ community did not feel supported in their health and wellness compared to those who identify as heterosexual. They were also more likely to have witnessed and/or experienced harassment than those who identify as heterosexual. They were more fearful of reprisal if they reported an incident and had less confidence in AU's process for dealing with complaints. Like the other FDGs mentioned above, LGBQT2S+ community members felt much less positive about leadership and the culture at AU.

- Within the focus group discussions, there was a strong desire for training on topics such as unconscious bias, harassment, microaggression, and EDI learning for managers. There was consensus on the importance of creating a process for reporting incidents of harassment, such as creating an anonymous hotline to report incidents and gather information and resources for support.

Some of these outcomes of the environmental scan can also now be contextualized in the engagements that took place in the development of this CRC Action Plan. The conversations with the EDI Engagement Committee and working group identified a common theme that there is a lack of recognition of the challenges and barriers experienced by Black, Indigenous Peoples, people of colour, people with disabilities (visible and invisible), women, and gender diverse peoples across the university. The following samples from these consultations capture this trend:

> *"I feel like AU is lacking in understanding of the barriers face by LGBTQ2S+ and Indigenous Peoples."*

> *"In addition to unconscious bias training, I think we need an Indigenous-specific sensitivity course, mandatory for all staff. And then follow up with Indigenous ways of knowing training."*

> *"EDI discussions tend to focus quite a bit on larger topics – focus on race or gender. Not as much talk around accessibility."*

> *"There is usually always an office to help students with disabilities but there tends to not be an office for staff with disabilities. The emphasis tends to fall on the faculty member to help find someone to help them solve the issues themselves."*

> *"Disabilities in Academia are HUGELY underrepresented. Female academics are barely acknowledged, so the fact that academia doesn't recognize people with disabilities is un-surprising."*

The objectives and actions in the final section of this report include corrective measures to address the findings from the environmental scan.

Employment Systems Review

Working with an external EDI consulting team (Canadian Equality Consulting), a CRC-specific employment systems review (ESR) was conducted to identify equity gaps and potential barriers for FDGs in the recruitment, nomination, and retention processes for the CRC program. As part of the ESR, recruitment, nomination, and retention systems and processes were examined with an EDI lens to identify where there may be a need for proactive measures to encourage the participation minoritized groups.

It was important to capture the perspectives and lived experiences of those who both conducted the CRC recruitment or renewal processes and those who have participated in them as candidates. Current chairholders, CRC Committee members, and the AVPR were interviewed to understand past practices and to identify where modifications were needed. Given that there is currently no representation of FDGs in the AU CRC program, the interviews with the chairholders were framed to inquire about perceptions of equity issues within the recruitment and allocation processes and practices.

In addition, a review of AU's EDI statement on the 2019 CRC job description was conducted (the 2019 statement is shown below).

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The Canada Research Chair Program seeks to attract and retain a diverse cadre of world-class researchers to reinforce academic research and training in Canadian postsecondary institutions. Tier 2 Chairs are intended for exceptional emerging scholars (i.e., candidates must have been an active researcher in their field for fewer than 10 years at the time of nomination). Applicants who are more than 10 years from having earned their highest degree (and where career breaks exist, such as maternity, parental or extended sick leave, clinical training, etc.) may have their eligibility for a Tier 2 Chair assessed through the program's Tier 2 justification process. Candidates are encouraged to highlight how alternative paths and/or interruptions have impacted them in their applications. Appointment to a Tier 2 Chair is for five years and is renewable once. Please consult the Canada Research Chairs website for full program information, including further details on eligibility criteria, www.chairs-chaires.gc.ca.

Athabasca University develops and maintains an environment that supports equitable working conditions for individuals traditionally unrepresented in universities. AU is committed to employment equity, encouraging applications from women, Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities, and members of visible minorities. All qualified candidates are encouraged to apply; however, Canadians and permanent residents of Canada will be given priority.

AU is committed to ensuring that the application and interview process is accessible to all applicants; if you require accommodations or have questions about AU benefits, services, accommodations policies or equity considerations, please contact Ms. Carrie Potts, Senior Human Resources Advisor, Athabasca University via email at cpotts@athabascau.ca.

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AU's current chairholders all identify as cisgender white males; however, AU recognizes the importance of bringing diversity into the recruitment of future chairs and will strive for a CRC program that represents the diversity of Canada and is guided by CRC targets set for 2029. While the most recent nomination was unsuccessful, it was encouraging that the recruitment process resulted in a more diverse pool of candidates, with two finalists who represented equity-seeking groups. AU will draw upon and refine this process for future nominations. Appendix A is AU's most recent self-identification survey that was built in collaboration with EDI subject matter experts.

While AU's CRC EDI targets are forthcoming in the CRC allocation exercise in January 2021, the university has begun to chart a course forward in view of current projections for the Canadian population, according to diverse identity factors, collected by Statistics Canada.

	Current (2016)		Projections (year indicated)
	Alberta	Canada	Canada
Aboriginal Identity	6.5%	4.9%	4.6% - 6.1% (2036)
Visible Minority	23.5%	22.3%	29% - 32% (2031)
Male	50.1%	49.1%	49.68% (for 2025)
Female	49.1%	50.9	50.32% (for 2025)
Population (enumerated)	4,067,175	35,151,728	39,326,966 (for 2025)

1 Statistics Canada: 2016 Census. https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/_index-eng.cfm
2 Statistics Canada: Projections of the Diversity of the Canadian Population. https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/100309/dq100309a-eng.htm
3 Statistics Canada: Projections of the Aboriginal Population and Households in Canada, 2011 to 2036. https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/91-552-x/91-552-x2015001-eng.pdf?st=tC_BG-QW

Through the interviewing process, it was found that AU's recruitment, nomination, and retention processes have room for improvement to support the university to build a more diverse CRC program. Participants shared both examples and stories, which identified key

barriers throughout the CRC process. Common barriers and quotes to contextualize them are included below:

- Lack of support to understand how to embed EDI into the CRC research projects themselves (i.e., how to build a diverse research team, what to include in job descriptions, etc.). Lack of knowledge and understanding of Indigenous ways of knowing and how to decolonize research.

    "I felt like I was left to my own devices to figure out how build EDI into my own research project. I had to figure out how to build EDI into my own recruitment processes to build my research team."
    – CRC chairholder

- Very lengthy process from initial application to onboarding; no full-time offer until CRC application is approved, which can take upwards of 1-1.5 years. This prolonged onboarding and application process without a full-time offer may not be possible for those who do not have a support system in place.

    "The lengthy process and waiting with a job offer can create a lot of pressure for folks. I was lucky enough to have support throughout the waiting process, but others may not have the same structures in place."
    – CRC chairholder

- Lack of connection and spontaneous collaboration among other researchers in a virtual environment.

    "The freedom here is great. But when most of your interactions are by pre-arranged phone calls... I miss the spontaneity of academic life. There are challenges with a virtual environment."
    - CRC chairholder

The consultation sessions also revealed many positive experiences. Participants recognized and appreciated the strong commitment by AU to advance EDI in meaningful ways. It was also commonly noted that when an issue was raised with supervisors or a Dean, the matter was always promptly dealt with in a positive manner.

The objectives and actions in the final section of this report also include corrective measures to address the findings from the ESR.

Comparative Review

A comparative review of AU with other post-secondary institutions in Canada was conducted by KPMG. Ten schools that also participate in the CRC program were identified as comparators. The comparator schools included Mount Royal University, Brandon University, Royal Roads University, Trinity Western University, Laurentian University, University of Northern British Columbia, Brock University, Lakehead University, Thompson Rivers University, and the University of Lethbridge. This analysis revealed that only five of the 11 (including AU) had a designated equity office with the number of staff varying from 1-8. Five of the 11 have an EDI Committee/Working Group, including AU. Nine of the 11 have institution-wide EDI policies, including AU. This revealed that comparable universities are understanding the importance of EDI and are taking greater actions to support it.

Working with an external EDI consulting team (Canadian Equality Consulting), a comparative review of institutional support was conducted amongst the four existing AU CRC chairholders. Due to the small number of CRCs at AU, each support package was reviewed individually, and interviews were conducted with CRC chairholders. Compensation packages of chairholders, taking seniority (years since PhD/post-doc) and rank level into account, were comparable. Two chairholders receive higher salaries. These chairholders receive market supplements as members of the Faculty of Health Sciences and Faculty of Business. Apart from this difference, all chairholders were found to receive analogous supports to develop and deliver their research programs from the AVPR and AU's Research Centre. Each chairholder expressed that they were able to obtain the necessary equipment for their research and were provided with support from the Research Centre when needed.

All CRCs at AU teach no more than one 3-credit graduate course each year and have limited-service obligations. Research comprises 75%-80% of their roles. The institution has ensured that they have similar salaries, outside of market supplements in two cases, and access to the same resources, services, and support. The following is reflective of the resources offered to all of AU's CRCs:

- AU provides a $10,000 stipend annually to each CRC for the direct cost of research.
- When relevant to their initial applications, AU supports the development and application for CFI funding.
- AU supports the CRC in applying for the Small Equipment Grant (SEG) stream offered by Alberta's Minister of Jobs, Economy and Innovation, which is intended to help Alberta's research universities attract and retain outstanding talent.
- An annual Research Incentive Grant of $15,000. This fund is typically provided to new faculty for between one to three years. For CRCs, however, AU provides the grant for each year of the first term.

- CRCs are also eligible and invited to apply for several awards facilitated internally to support their own research (Academic Research Fund, Academic and Professional Development Fund) as well as the activities of team members (e.g., SSHRC CGS Graduate and Doctoral Awards; Vanier CGS; Graduate Student Research Fund). The AVPR coordinates annual budgets to ensure adequate matching funds are available for grants requiring internal support.
- Faculty members, including CRC chairholders, are entitled to up to thirty days professional development/annual research leave per annum. In addition, they receive two months of Research and Study Leave (i.e., sabbatical) for each year worked, providing an extended period that can be dedicated exclusively to their research. Leaves of this type can be useful to foster time-sensitive aspects of a Chair's research.

Currently, there is no representation of FDGs within the CRC program at AU so the comparative review process and discussions with CRC chairholders were limited in scope. The review amongst the CRC chairholders identified gaps and barriers in AU's CRC program. These include:

- A lack of collaboration and research integration with the academic community (other researchers) and with the broader external community.
- Additional support is needed for AU's Research Centre to increase their responsiveness and budget to support the chairholders.
- Assistance and guidance on how to integrate EDI and Indigenous ways of knowing into their research program and teams is needed.

A comparative review was also conducted between CRC chairholders and other AU research chairs (non-CRC chairholders). The research chairs that were consulted represented diverse ethnicities. This review revealed that the support and resources provided to research chairs is comparable to the support and resources provided to CRC chairholders; however, the non-CRC research chairs typically have terms of seven years in length.

In the comparative analysis with CRC chairholders, they were asked, if they had a complaint related to equity, diversity or inclusion inequities, were they aware of a place to report the concerns and seek remedy. The chairholders all expressed that they would be comfortable approaching the AVPR or their faculty Dean to discuss any issues related to inequities. There have been instances where the chairholders have brought problems or issues unrelated to equity issues to their Deans or the Research Office and all expressed that these concerns were dealt with and remedied quickly and satisfactorily. However, the current lack of diverse representation in AU's CRC program reveals a potential gap for the mechanisms in place to report inequity issues in AU's growing CRC program.

Objectives, Actions, and Measures

The objectives, actions, and measures identified below are intended to directly target the gaps and areas for improvement detailed from the environmental scan, the employment systems review, and the comparative review, including the consultation sessions with Human Resources, the AVPR, the CRC Committee, the CRC chairholders, the EDI Engagement Committee, the working groups, the Champions Network, and the non-CRC research chairs. Many of the actions and measures identified below were co-created through the consultation sessions.

The roles and offices accountable for the identified actions include current leaders in AU as well as projected support for a planned hire of an EDI Officer, with support from a planned application for an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion [Institution Capacity-Building](#) grant. Such funding will also enable further resources to support the development and implementation of the strategies outlined below.

OBJECTIVE #1: Ensure an equitable and inclusive research environment for traditionally minoritized groups such as women, Indigenous Peoples, people of colour, people with disabilities (visible and invisible), and LGBTQ2S+ people, recognizing the intersectionality of identities.

Actions	Measures	Accountability	Timeline
Develop and execute an EDI communications and awareness-building strategy for AU's research communications and an EDI intranet site for community-building engagement.	- Read response rates from analytics available in Research Centre communications. - Completion of foundational EDI training for all existing faculty-specific communications liaisons who develop media items from project research. - Updated EDI statement on CRC job descriptions to be more inclusive. - Updated AU CRC webpage that expresses the university's commitment to EDI within research and across the institution. - Diversity of the candidate pool.	Associate Vice President Research; Human Resources; EDI Champions Network	Starting February 2021, ongoing
Deliver foundational EDI training to internal team members across AU's research infrastructure to	- Inclusion measures from the annual EDI organization-wide survey regarding the resources and support for EDI in research.	EDI Committee; Associate Vice President Research;	Starting January

enhance their ability to support the development and facilitation of EDI-informed research programs and teams. Ensure that the training includes a focus on the specific gaps identified in the environmental scan.	- Evaluation of the training for its effectiveness and impact.	Human Resources	2021, ongoing
Create and facilitate a regular series of "EDI in Research" webinars for raising awareness around systemic barriers, building researcher networks and support, and resourcing researchers and EDI committees and champions.	- Number of events that bring members together to exchange experiences, ideas, and resources. - Attendance of live events and other engagement analytics.	EDI Committee; EDI Officer	January 2022
Strengthen current equity concern and complaint processes for CRC chairholders.	- Development of a formalized mechanism for reporting equity related complaints.	EDI Committee; Associate Vice President Research EDI Officer	April 2022

OBJECTIVE #2: Enhance the recruitment and retention processes for the CRC program to increase representation of traditionally minoritized groups.

Actions	Measures	Accountability	Timeline
Provide unconscious bias training to all individuals involved in the CRC recruitment and hiring process that includes a specific focus on the disproportionately impacted populations as identified in the environmental scan.	- Participation in the training curriculum. - Evaluation of the training. - Diversity of the candidate pool.	Associate Vice President Research; CRC Committee	March 2021
Finalize targets for increased representation of FDGs for the future CRC program	- Hiring consistent with CRC AU EDI diversity targets of two (2) women, one (1) Indigenous Person, and one (1) person of colour, and/or a person with a disability, recognizing the intersectionality of identities.	Associate Vice President Research	February 2021
Develop a best practice guide for recruitment and retention in alignment with AU's emerging strategy for	- Completion and implementation of a CRC best practice guide for implementation in current open	Associate Vice President Research; CRC Committee	February 2021

CRC allocations, nominations, and renewals toward the 2029 EDI targets.	allocations and projected renewals. - Diversity of the candidate pool in future competitions.		
Deliver training for current CRC chairholders on EDI foundations and embedding EDI and Indigenous ways of knowing into research projects and teams.	- Completion of training by all CRC chairholders.	EDI Committee; Associate Vice President Research; EDI Officer	February 2022

OBJECTIVE #3: Establish meaningful and culturally safe research environments in which the participating community, group or individual is a partner in decision-making during research.

Actions	Measures	Accountability	Timeline
Partner with Nukskahtowin to discuss how (1) to integrate Indigenous ways of knowing into the AU research priorities and practices and (2) to create guidelines for future CRC program hiring panels for evaluation purposes.	-Completion of an action plan to build Indigenous ways of knowing into CRC recruitment and research design.	EDI Committee; Associate Vice President Research	May 2021
Embed EDI throughout the consultation process, design, formation, and implementation of the renewed Strategic Research Plan.	- Delivery of a Strategic Research Plan that advances decolonization of research by including (1) research processes and products that recognize non-traditional, unconventional, and Indigenous ways of knowing, and (2) prioritizes supports for researchers working within or impacting minoritized groups	EDI Committee; Associate Vice President Research	December 2022

AU's Canada Research Chair Program

AU is committed to ensuring that EDI is integrated into the CRC program systemically, purposefully, structurally, and sustainably. It is a priority to not only ensure that AU is attracting and selecting individuals with diverse identities and backgrounds, but that AU provides adequate supports for diverse representation and research. AU also aims to

position chairholders as leaders in their fields who can affect greater change and increase EDI in their disciplinary guilds. In this way, AU's CRC program not only champions research leaders today but invests in a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive academic culture for the future.

Overview of the CRC Program at AU

The CRC Program provides AU with the opportunity to recruit and retain world-class scholars across all research disciplines. In addition to adhering to guidelines for recruitment by the CRC Secretariat, the following principles guide the current CRC nomination process at AU:

- The CRC strategic research focus must align with CRC requirements, the University Strategic Plan, and the Strategic Research Plan.
- The CRC allocations must be used to attract or retain outstanding diverse scholars to the University.
- Throughout the recruitment, hiring, and retention process, EDI evidence-based best practices must be upheld.[3]
- Tier 1 candidates are world-leading experts in their field, advancing Canada's reputation as a leader in research and innovation.
- Tier 2 candidates must be exceptional emerging diverse scholars who show potential to become a leader in their research area.
- All candidates must demonstrate how they plan to integrate and advance EDI considerations into their research design, projects, team, and outreach.
- Deliberate strategies are undertaken to ensure equity and prevent unconscious bias throughout the recruitment process.

Process for Allocation of Chairs

The Faculty in which the chair will be situated will depend upon the source of the funding from the Tri-Agency. For an allocation that is funded by a specific Tri-Agency, the Academic Leadership Team (ALT)[4] will consult with researchers from related Faculties to discuss the strategic research focus of the Chair and the Faculty in which the Chair will be located. This

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[3] Government of Canada. Best Practices in Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Research. Link: https://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/nfrf-fnfr/edi-eng.aspx
[4] The ALT consists of the Provost & Vice President Academic, Deputy Provost, Academic Operations, all Deans, Associate Vice President Research, Associate Vice President Integrated Planning, and Associate Vice President Academic Resources. The Associate Vice President Research will chair the committee the CRC consultation sessions with ALT.

process will also involve consultation with the CRC Committee to ensure that considerations around EDI are embedded in the process from the outset. All CRC Committee members have received EDI 101, unconscious bias, GBA+ and Indigenous awareness and ways of knowing training to ensure their decisions are as equitable, inclusive, and informed as possible. This collaborative process is intended to mitigate any biases and ensure broader perspectives are brought to the decision-making table that prioritize EDI considerations alongside research strategy. Based on the joint recommendations of this process by consensus, the Provost and Vice President Academic will bring the recommendation to the President for approval.

In the case of a "special" allocation, the ALT will meet to discuss and recommend the strategic research focus of the chair. The lead Faculty will be determined, and a recruitment committee struck. The committee will be chaired by the AVPR and will draw upon both the existing membership of the CRC Committee and representatives of the faculty in which the chair will be placed. New members to this group will complete the same training as the CRC Committee, outlined above, to ensure all participants are prepared to facilitate an open and fair recruitment process informed by EDI best-practices. As with normal nominations, the Provost and Vice President Academic will present the joint recommendation to the President for approval.

Recruitment, Nomination, and Retention of CRCs

Recruitment

After the internal approval of a CRC allocation and agreement on the strategic research focus of the chair, the following steps are now implemented to integrate EDI practices.

- An executive search firm is hired to collaborate with the AU search committee. An executive search firm is preferred over relying on an internal-led process to provide external oversight of the process and to ensure it is led by recruitment experts with an expansive global network. AU requires the firm to have experience in the hiring of CRCs and in EDI recruitment and hiring best-practices. The search firm must also have greater knowledge of the range of venues that a diverse pool of candidate would access. AU recognizes that, to increase diversity, the recruitment methods must be equitably targeted to that diversity. Through consultations with the AVPR, the firm is also provided with the CRC Action Plan as a guiding document, as well as an outline of AU's strategy for recruitment as it relates to CRC targets.
- The membership of the AU search committee has and will continue to have representation from the four historically minoritized groups across faculties. The

committee also includes one current CRC chairholder, as well as a Human Resources partner with expertise in EDI. The committee is chaired by the AVPR.

- Prior to the first search committee meeting, all members are required to complete the Tri-Agency Unconscious Bias module, attend an EDI 101 and unconscious bias live session, GBA+ training and Indigenous awareness and ways of knowing training. Records of completion for all items are submitted to the Human Resources representative. AU's training and recruitment timeline ensures committee members have sufficient time for self-reflection, interactive discussions, and case studies that equip participants with the ability to apply EDI and bias awareness to their work sustainably. With the support of the Human Resources partner, training will also include best-practices in equitable, accessible, and inclusive recruiting, hiring, onboarding, and advancement. It will also include curriculum on biased evaluation indicators, systemic inequities and barriers imbedded in academia, and in how to identify and remain objective when cultural differences and behaviours show up throughout a recruitment and hiring process. In all of this, the goal is not merely information but formation of the process.

- Once the committee is struck, a meeting of the committee with the executive search firm takes place. Questions and points on how the committee members can work together to be aware of and resolve unconscious bias during the recruitment process will be raised. All members of this group will be provided with the following documents in advance of the meeting for discussion:
    - Tri-Agency EDI Best Practices;
    - AU EDI Framework and Action Plan (once approved);
    - AU CRC EDI Action Plan;
    - AU Strategic Research Plan;
    - AU Indigenous Strategic Plan;
    - The Board/Athabasca University Faculty Association Collective Agreement;
    - Confidentiality form to be signed by individual members;
    - Information and Privacy form;
    - Executive Brief and role description of the position; and
    - A customized equity tool to apply an EDI lens to all decision-making (see next).

- The customized equity tool is a series of guiding questions for the committee to consider in all their decision-making. The tool includes reflective questions that remind the committee to examine their assumptions and biases and ensure that all decision-making is evidence-based, objective, and incorporates consultation and collaboration. It will also ensure the committee is actively advancing EDI in all consultations and interactions. The customized equity tool "ABCDEs" described below ensures that equity considerations remain prominent in the committee's

decisions surrounding shortlisting candidates. The tool includes the following guiding questions:

- o   A: What assumptions are being made?
- o   B: Who might be left behind?
- o   C: Who did you consult? How are you communicating?
- o   D: What data and evidence are available to you?
- o   E: How are you ensuring equality of opportunity? How are you evaluating?

- The search committee and firm jointly develop a job description with careful attention to exclude gendered or racial biased language and terms.[5] The wording of the job description includes the university's commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion and a statement on the institution's accommodation policies. A statement is also included that recognizes the impact of leaves (parental, maternity, illness, immigration) on a candidate's record of research achievements and encourages applicants that have had career interruptions or taken leaves to apply. The future Dean of the CRC allocation and the AVPR review and provide the final approval of the role description.

- In consultation with the search committee, the search firm will establish clear and objective criteria for the equitable review of applications. Particular attention will be paid to exclude biased indicators such as years of experience (especially as it relates to career interruptions or leaves), institutional prestige (subjective indicator that can be biased according to income, socio-economic status, and geographic location), number of publications (biased along gender lines with women required to do more university service work and having less focused time on research or fields of research with non-traditional ways of capturing research output), and the value of past research grant projects (subjective and can be biased along gender and racial lines). The questions that will be used at the interviews are also developed at this time, to prevent any bias and ensure objective evaluation criteria will be applied after the applications of candidates are seen. This aims to prevent biases like the affinity or anchoring bias from affecting the interview questions. The final list of proposed questions is then vetted by the Co-Chairs of the EDI Committee.

- The CRC position is advertised publicly for a minimum of 30 days in a wide range of venues to specifically target diverse applicants as well as on AU's career opportunities website. The advertisement of the CRC position includes targeted outreach to historically minoritized populations including, but not limited to, the Senior Women's Administrators in Academia in Canada, Aboriginal Professional Association of Canada, Chronicle of Higher Education. Specific outreach will also be conducted to organizations, associations or service providers that serve Black, Indigenous Peoples, and people of colour, LBGTQ2S+ communities, and people with

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[5] WWEST. Gender Diversity 101 White Papers. Link: http://www.sfu.ca/wwest/resources/White-Papers.html

disabilities (visible or invisible). After the minimum of 30 days, the search firm and committee will meet to review the applications using the criteria previously developed. A medium list of candidates or a shortlist will be created. Excellence is not considered a "point" on a continuum, but a "space" within which more than one individual can exist.

Renewal

Nomination for the renewal of existing chairholders must be transparent, open, and equitable. The chairholder must express an intent and create an application for renewal with the support of the AVPR. The application process at this stage is based upon the following evaluation criteria.

- Accomplishments of the chairholder in attaining the objectives outlined in their initial nomination, including non-traditional forms of research activities and/or research outputs. Particular consideration is made for research projects and outcomes that relate to Indigenous culture, communities, and ways of knowing.
- Career interruptions, personal circumstances, or research disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic that affected the chairholder's research accomplishments or productivity during their first term will not be held against them or result in them receiving a poor evaluation.
- Demonstrated excellence in research and in training highly qualified personnel.
- Impact of their research program nationally and internationally.
- Demonstrated collaboration with other researchers at AU and with external community, academic, or industry partners.
- Demonstrated commitment to the integration of EDI in their research design, project, environment, and team.
- Plans for extending their research program in the second term.
- The contribution of the renewal to meeting the identified EDI 2029 targets set for AU's CRC program and in light of course corrections required due to periodic reallocation exercises.

Recommendations regarding renewal of a chairholder are made collaboratively by the respective Dean and the AVPR for submission to the Provost and Vice President Academic for approval.

Advancement of Tier 2 Chairs to Tier 1

All the current chairholders at AU are Tier 2 CRCs, including the open special allocation. Advancement of a Tier 2 chairholder to a Tier 1 would result from a joint recommendation

by the Dean of the faculty in which the chair is located, the AVPR, and the Provost and Vice President Academic to the President. These decision-makers are also required to apply the intersectional equity tool "ABCDEs" to assess the chair's accomplishments, challenges, and setbacks. This advancement typically only takes place under exceptional circumstances and/or if the decision resulted in addressing a gap in EDI demographic targets. It is also important to consider in this decision the chairholder's demonstrated commitment to the integration of EDI in their research design, project, environment, and team. If the Chair is not a member of a historically minoritized group, they will need to also demonstrate a commitment to allyship in their research, field of research and at AU. To be eligible for advancement, the Tier 2 CRC would be required to apply for an available Tier 1 allocation. An open and transparent process is important, which would also allow internal candidates to apply. This process would follow the similar process for recruiting a chair as outlined above and require the same EDI awareness training for participants in the process.

Loss of a Chairholder Position

A loss of a chair due to the re-allocation process will involve collaborative discussions between the AVPR, Provost and Vice President Academic, and the respective Dean to determine which chairholder position will be phased out. The decision is final and is not open to appeal.

The following criteria will be taken into consideration in the decision-making:

- Length of time remaining in each chairholder's term.
- Accomplishments of each chairholder in attaining the objectives outlined in their initial nomination of renewal application.
- Career interruptions and personal circumstances that affected the chairholder's research accomplishments during their first term will not be held against them or result in them receiving a poor evaluation.
- Demonstrated excellence in research and in research training and the impact of the loss of the chairholder on their trainees.
- Impact of their research program nationally and internationally.
- Demonstrated collaboration with other researchers at AU and with the external community and the loss of the chairholder on the overall research community.
- Impact on the University's CRC EDI diversity demographic targets.

Process for Equity Complaints and Concerns

 AU's primary objective as demonstrated throughout the CRC EDI Action Plan is to prevent individual, institutional and systemic inequities from occurring. However, if they do arise or are identified, AU wants to ensure that this established process is easy to follow, respects individual dignities, and does not further burden or create barriers for the complainant.

The CRC chairholders can raise complaints or concerns to their Dean, the AVPR, or the Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO). These concerns will also be brought to the attention of the CRC Committee. To date, no complaints have been raised about issues related to their chairholder position and experience. The AVPR meets with the chairholders individually or as a small group at a minimum of once per year formally and more regularly on an informal basis to discuss their roles, concerns, experiences, and need for additional support. These consultations are also a safe space to identify, discuss, and address recurring or systemic issues.

Conclusion

AU is energized by the progress made on its EDI journey. Significant achievements have been made within the past year at the institutional level—the present CRC EDI Action Plan both aligns with and extends those efforts in identifying gaps and developing mitigation strategies in our research culture. While AU is increasingly known for our distinctive research output, the present plan underscores our commitment to being known also for our diversity of researchers. As an open university, AU also prides itself on boundless research discovery without barriers. AU prioritizes accessibility for higher learning for all and is well-positioned to build upon its foundational EDI principles and direction to become a leader in Canada. AU is excited about extending EDI across its CRC program to not only attract the best research talent but to cultivate a culture of belonging, inclusion, and equality.

Appendices

Appendix A: Self-Identification Form

Date:

To:

From: Associate Vice-President, Research

RE: Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Self-Identification Form

The Tri-Agency expects recruitment of Canada Research Chairs (CRC's) to follow the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) requirements.

Below is an excerpt from the Tri-Agency website that provides some background on the EDI program:
The Government of Canada and the Canada Research Chair Program (CRCP) are committed to excellence in research and research training for the benefit of Canadians. Achieving a more equitable, diverse and inclusive Canadian research enterprise is also essential to creating the excellent, innovative and impactful research necessary to seize opportunities and for responding to global challenges. As such, the program is committed to the federal government's policies on non-discrimination and [employment equity](#).

Participating institutions administer funds in partnership with the agencies and the Tri-Agency Institutional Programs Secretariat (TIPS). Therefore, all institutions that accept agency funding are expected to make concerted efforts to meet their equity and diversity targets, and provide a supportive and inclusive workplace. This supports the goals of equity, diversity and inclusion within the CRCP and the broader Canadian research enterprise.

Equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) strengthen research communities and the quality, social relevance and impact of research. Athabasca University's *[Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan](#)* outlines the university's commitment to research excellence and equal opportunity for all individuals. Athabasca University embraces diversity as differences in race, place of origin, religion, immigrant and newcomer status, ethnicity, ability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and age. Sound equity practices afford access to all qualified candidates; uphold the integrity of the recruitment, selection and nomination process; and support research excellence and training.

The questions on this form are based on the current standard used by Statistics Canada in the Census, and wording from the *[Employment Equity Act.](#)* The collection, use, disclosure, retention and disposal of your personal information are in accordance with the [Access to Information Act](#) and the [Privacy Act](#).

Self-identification as a member of one or more of the minoritized or under-represented groups facilitates reporting related to the university's equity targets. Self-identification is voluntary and sensitive information will remain confidential. You may choose not to self-identify by selecting the option "I prefer not to respond"

for some or all of the questions. To protect the privacy of chairholders, only aggregate data shall be reported publicly and only in years in which Athabasca University has five or more Chairs.

After reading the descriptions that follow, please indicate if you self-identify with one or more of the following designated groups. The definitions offered reflect, in large part, those in the Government of Canada Employee Self-identification Form.[4]

Sincerely,

The self-identification form below was created by external EDI expert consultants at Canadian Equality Consulting for AU to use in all future EDI self-identification surveys. The questions below are standard diversity demographic questions and can be customized to the audience being surveyed.

<p style="text-align:center">Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Self-Identification Form</p>

A. Name **&** _____   Date: _____

B. Title of Position: _____

C. Are you a Canadian Citizen or Permanent Resident of Canada?
- ❒ Yes
- ❒ No

D. How do you describe your gender identity? Select all that apply. (Gender identity describes a person's internal sense of gender, whether as a man, a woman, or something beyond the gender binary.)
- ❑ Agender
- ❑ Bigender
- ❑ Feminine-of-Centre
- ❑ Genderfluid
- ❑ Gender non-conforming
- ❑ Genderqueer
- ❑ Man
- ❑ Masculine-of-Centre
- ❑ Non-binary
- ❑ Questioning
- ❑ Stealth
- ❑ Third gender
- ❑ Two-Spirit
- ❑ Woman
- ❑ Another gender identity not listed above (please specify in comment box)
- ❑ I prefer not to respond

E. How do you like to describe your sexual identity or sexual orientation? Select all that apply. (This describes a person's physical, romantic, or emotional attraction to other people in the world.)
- ❑ Asexual
- ❑ Bisexual
- ❑ Demisexual
- ❑ Fluid
- ❑ Gay
- ❑ Heterosexual
- ❑ Lesbian
- ❑ Pansexual
- ❑ Queer
- ❑ Questioning
- ❑ Another sexual identity or orientation not listed above (please specify)
- ❑ I prefer not to respond

F. Do you or have you ever identified as trans*? Trans* is an umbrella term used to describe people whose gender identity or gender expression differs from the biological sex they were assigned at birth.
- ❑ No
- ❑ Yes
- ❑ I prefer not to respond

G. What racial/ethnic groups do you belong to? Select all that apply.
- ❑ First Nations
- ❑ Inuit
- ❑ Métis
- ❑ Arab
- ❑ Black – African
- ❑ Black – Caribbean
- ❑ Black – Other
- ❑ Hispanic
- ❑ Chinese
- ❑ Filipino
- ❑ Central Asian
- ❑ North Asian
- ❑ Northeast Asian
- ❑ South Asian
- ❑ Southeast Asian
- ❑ Pacific Islander
- ❑ White
- ❑ Another racial group not listed above (please specify in comment box)
- ❑ I prefer not to respond

H. What is your current religion or belief system, if any? Select all that apply.
- ❑ Agnostic
- ❑ Atheist
- ❑ Baha'i
- ❑ Buddhist
- ❑ Christian
- ❑ Hindu
- ❑ Jainist
- ❑ Jehovah's Witness
- ❑ Jewish
- ❑ Muslim
- ❑ Pagan
- ❑ Rastafarian
- ❑ Sikh
- ❑ Spiritual
- ❑ I do not have a religion or belief system
- ❑ Another religion or belief system not listed above (please specify in comment box)
- ❑ I prefer not to respond

I. Do you have others depending on you for care? Select all that apply.
- ❑ Child(ren)
- ❑ Elderly person(s)
- ❑ Person(s) with a disability or accessibility needs
- ❑ Pet(s)
- ❑ I do not have others depending on me for care
- ❑ Other (please specify in comment box)
- ❑ I prefer not to respond

J. Only show this question to those who have others depending on them for care at QJ
What structure do you have for caregiving at home?
- ❑ Partnered Parent/Support/Guardian
- ❑ Single Parent/Support/Guardian
- ❑ Other (please specify in comment box)
- ❑ I prefer not to respond

K. What is your age bracket?
- ❑ 18-25
- ❑ 26-30
- ❑ 31-35
- ❑ 36-40
- ❑ 41-45
- ❑ 46-50
- ❑ 51-55
- ❑ 56-60
- ❑ 61+
- ❑ I prefer not to respond

L.   Where is your work located?
- ❑ Insert various options
- ❑ I prefer not to respond

M.   What is your highest level of formal education?
- ❑ Secondary education (high school) or less
- ❑ Trade Certification
- ❑ Some College or University (did not finish)
- ❑ College Diploma
- ❑ Bachelor's University Degree
- ❑ Advanced University Degree (MSc, MA, MBA, JD, PhD, etc.)
- ❑ Other (please specify in comment box)
- ❑ I prefer not to respond

N.   Do you identify as a person that is actively managing their mental health? Select all that apply.
- ❑ Addiction
- ❑ Anxiety
- ❑ Depression
- ❑ I do not identify as a person that is managing their mental health
- ❑ Other (please specify in comment box)
- ❑ I prefer not to respond

O.   Do you identify as a person with cognitive accessibility needs? Select all that apply.
- ❑ Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
- ❑ Autism Spectrum Disorder
- ❑ Bipolar Disorder
- ❑ Down Syndrome
- ❑ Dyslexia
- ❑ Speech and Language Impairment (not caused by hearing loss)
- ❑ I do not identify as a person with cognitive accessibility needs
- ❑ Other (please specify in comment box)
- ❑ I prefer not to respond

P.   Do you identify as a person with physical accessibility needs? Select all that apply.
- ❑ Blindness or Low Vision (does not include vision correctable by glasses or contact lenses)
- ❑ Coordination, Manual Dexterity or Strength (e.g. handling objects, etc.)
- ❑ Deaf, Deafened, or Hard of Hearing
- ❑ Medical (e.g. epilepsy, diabetes, heart condition, lung disease, kidney disease, etc.)
- ❑ Mobility (e.g. wheelchair, ca----ne, etc.)
- ❑ I do not identify as a person with physical accessibility needs
- ❑ Other (please specify in comment box)
- ❑ I prefer not to respond

Q. Comments

If you have any comments, please contact the Associate Vice President Research, who is Athabasca University's Canada Research Chairs *Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan* contact, by telephone [INSERT] or email at [INSERT]. All comments will be kept confidential.

R. Chairholder Signature

Canada Research Chair	Signature	Date

Appendix B: KMPG EDI Survey

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Survey

COLLECTION AND PRIVACY NOTICE
Athabasca University collects, uses and discloses as authorized by *section 33(c) of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. A privacy assessment has been conducted and approved by the Privacy and Policy office at AU.

This personal information is being collected for the purposes of Athabasca University and KPMG LLP investigating and preparing necessary reports to inform decision making and evaluation of strategies and action plans for AU regarding EDI. If you have any questions about the collection of personal information in this survey, you may contact:
Pauline Smeltz, Deputy CHRO
Peace Hills Trust Tower, 12th Floor, 10011 109 Street, Edmonton, AB T5J 3S8
Telephone Number: 587-588-7377

Use and Disclosure
Your responses will be used to create aggregated reports that summarize findings, but does will not identify participants, to be used in the development of strategies and action plans for EDI at AU.

Your survey submission will not link your responses to you UNLESS you include any personal information or identifiable information in the open-ended questions section.

General Information
Your participation in this survey will support the review of the University's current Equity, Diverity and Inclusion (EDI) environment. We are gathering opinions, observations and ideas from AU's employees on EDI practices at the University. Your participation in this survey, will help identify any gaps or areas of opportunity that may exist with achieving this goal. For detailed information on the AU EDI initiative, information on the survey and other FAQ's please visit the EDI Intranet.

The EDI Survey is voluntary. The EDI Survey will be open until XXX. The survey will take 15-20 minutes in one sitting. If you need to, you may stop, save the survey and resume at a later time.

There are 2 parts to this survey – Part 1 explores the environment at AU in relation to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. Part 2 is a self-dentiifcation section that asks participants to provide information that will be used to help identify trends and interdependencies across the factors of EDI at AU. As a reminder, participation in the survey or providing answers to any of the questions is considered to be purely voluntary.

The EDI Survey is being deployed and administered by Athabasca University in conjunction with KPMG LLP, the external consultant contracted to assist with building the EDI program at AU.

Trigger Statement
Some questions in the survey may be sensitive to some audiences, including questions in Part 1 - Section 6 related to Harassment, Violence and Sexual Violence, and Part 2 – Self-Identification. You may skip any question that you do not wish to answer and go to the next.

Scope
The demographic categories, definitions, questions and wording in this form are consistent with those used by the Canada Research Chairs Program (CRCP) and/or Employment Equity Act.

Equity
Equity is based on fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all students and team members, while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups. The principle of equity acknowledges that there are historically underserved and underrepresented populations and that fairness regarding these unbalanced conditions is needed to assist equality in the provision of effective opportunities to all groups.

Diversity
Diversity includes all the ways in which people differ, and it encompasses all the characteristics, ideas, perspectives and values that make one individual or group distinct from another. Principles of diversity strive toward all-inclusiveness and aim to recognize, respect and value everyone and every group. A broad definition includes not only race, ethnicity, sex, and gender but also age, place of origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation, profession, social class, education, income, marital status, language, and physical appearance.

Inclusion
Inclusion refers to belonging. Inclusion is the act of creating environments that promote and value equity where everyone can raise meaningful voices, feel welcomed, respected and supported with a sense of belonging. An inclusive and welcoming climate embraces differences and offers respect in written and verbal words and actions for all people.

You are important to help embed the EDI principles and achieve our goals of building a OneAU culture. We thank you for your participation.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Survey Questions

Do you consent to Athabasca University and KPMG LLP using the information provided in your responses as indicated in the Collection and Privacy Notice section? *If you do not agree, you will be taken to the end of the survey.*

⬚ Yes, I agree

⬚ No, I do not agree

<u>PART 1: Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Environment</u>

LEADERSHIP AND CULTURE

1. Leadership Commitment

Senior Leadership Team Commitment. Senior Leadership Team refers to the AU Executive Team (President, Provost, VPs, CHRO, University Secretary, Chief of Staff).

Please note the following questions are related to Senior Leadership Team Commitment to EDI at AU.

Please read each statement and indicate your level of agreement.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I am aware of the efforts made by our Senior Leadership Team towards building EDI at AU	⬚	⬚	⬚	⬚	⬚
I am confident that our Senior Leadership Team, is committed to equity, diversity and inclusion for our team members, students and AU communities	⬚	⬚	⬚	⬚	⬚

Senior Management Team Commitment. Senior Management Team refers to the AU Senior Management (AVP, Dean, Registrar, and Excluded Director).

Please note the following questions are related to Senior Management Team Commitment to EDI at AU.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I am aware of the efforts made by my Senior Management Team towards building a respectful and inclusive culture in my faculty / department at AU	⬚	⬚	⬚	⬚	⬚
I am confident that my Senior Management Team is committed to embedding EDI in my faculty / department	⬚	⬚	⬚	⬚	⬚

<table>
<tr><td>Is there anything else about leadership commitment that you would like to share as it relates to equity, diversity and inclusion?</td></tr>
</table>

2. Engagement

The following questions are related to engagement of employees in defining EDI and participating in activities and programs that influence their overall experience and workplace culture.

Please read each statement and indicate your level of agreement.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Our culture at AU is supportive of equity, diversity and inclusion.	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯
My experiences and ideas are valued in my department/faculty	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯
I know how to access information on the EDI initiative at AU	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯
I know what AU's EDI goals are and the initiatives to obtain those goals.	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯
Our culture encourages diversity and inclusiveness at all levels and inspires me to grow my career here.	▯	▯	▯	▯	▯

<table>
<tr><td>*Is there anything else about engagement that you would like to share as it relates to equity, diversity and inclusion?*</td></tr>
</table>

3. Immediate Supervisor/ Management Commitment

Immediate Supervisor / Manager refers to your direct supervisor. The following questions related to management commitment look at the level of visible support that management gives to creating an inclusive work environment.

Please read each statement and indicate your level of agreement.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
My immediate supervisor / manager treats me equitably irrespective of my:					

Age	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Abilities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Gender identity & expression	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Indigenous identity	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Racial identity	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sexual orientation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Self-Identification: _____

I have witnessed my immediate supervisor / manager treat all team members equitably irrespective of:

Age	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Abilities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Gender identity & expression	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Indigenous identity	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Racial identity	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sexual orientation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Self-Identification: _____

Is there anything else about management commitment that you would like to share as it relates to you in terms of equity, diversity and inclusion?

TALENT PROCESSES

4. Design

The following questions related to design refer to how EDI principles are embedded into talent processes such as recruitment, performance reviews, career advancement and compensation.

Please read each statement and indicate your level of agreement.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
My performance is evaluated on my contributions, efforts & outcomes	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Opportunities for career advancement within Athabasca University are based on contributions, experience and qualifications.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

AU's compensation principles meet my needs fairly and equitably regardless of my:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Age	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Abilities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Gender identity & expression	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Indigenous identity	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Racial identity	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sexual orientation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Self-Identification: _____

AU's compensation principles meet the needs of all employees fairly and equitably regardless of:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Age	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Abilities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Gender identity & expression	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Indigenous identity	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Racial identity	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sexual orientation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Self-Identification: _____

Is there anything else about talent processes (including employment, promotion, and assessment of work and hiring) that you would like to share as it relates to equity, diversity and inclusion?

TALENT INFRASTRUCTURE

5. HR Policies and Programs

The following questions look at the HR policies and programs that AU has in place that contribute to an inclusive workplace, and meet the needs of a diverse employee base.

Please read each statement and indicate your level of agreement.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Our current human resources (HR) policies and programs meet my needs regardless of my:					
Age	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Abilities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Gender identity & expression	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Indigenous identity	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Racial identity	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sexual orientation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Self-Identification: _____

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Our current human resources (HR) policies and programs meet the needs of all employees regardless of:					
Age	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Abilities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Gender identity & expression	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Indigenous identity	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Racial identity	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sexual orientation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Self-Identification: _____

I know how to access the current AU HR policies and guidelines.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

AU has measures in place to ensure that recruitment and hiring practices are open and transparent.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Athabasca University supports my health and wellness

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

I know how to access resources and supports for my health and wellness

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

The resources that I have used related to health and wellness have been accessible and useful

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Please provide examples of the types of barriers for HR Policies and Procedures you may have experienced

It is important that the workplace culture is inclusive and free from inappropriate behaviors, and that employees feel a sense of belonging, and are welcome, safe and productive. The following questions are meant to identify any issues of harassment, violence and sexual violence that you might have experienced and need to be addressed.

6. Harassment, Violence and Sexual Violence Policy

*Note - This section of the survey contains questions related to Harassment, Violence and Sexual Violence and may be sensitive for some participants. If you do not wish to respond to these questions, you may skip any question below and go to the next, or proceed to 7. Tools and Resources for Immediate Supervisors / Managers.

If you require any support, or have any questions related to disclosures, complaints, investigations or other procedures related to this section, you may contact:
    Deputy Chief Human Resource Officer

Please read each statement and indicate your level of agreement.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I have witnessed and / or experienced harassment, violence and sexual violence at AU based on:					
Age	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Abilities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Gender identity & expression	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Indigenous identity	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Racial identity	▢	▢	▢	▢	▢
Sexual orientation	▢	▢	▢	▢	▢

Self-Identification: _____

Unknown reason: _____

I can report any incidents either witnessed or experienced at AU without fear of reprisal	▢	▢	▢	▢	▢
I know how to report any incidents either witnessed or experienced at AU	▢	▢	▢	▢	▢
I am confident that AU will address my complaint	▢	▢	▢	▢	▢

Is there anything else about HR policies and procedures that you like to share as it relates to EDI?

7. Tools and Resources for Immediate Supervisors / Manager

The questions in this section are intended for individuals in manager or supervisor roles. **If you do not supervise other team members, please disregard the next three questions.**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I am knowledgeable in EDI principles to help me support my team members.	▢	▢	▢	▢	▢
I have the tools and resources I need to embed EDI principles in decision making and resolving issues in my teams.	▢	▢	▢	▢	▢
I have sufficient training in recognizing and removing barriers to successfully embed EDI in my work unit.	▢	▢	▢	▢	▢

Is there anything else about being an immediate supervisory / manager that you would like to share as it relates to equity, diversity and inclusion?

Stakeholders

8. Stakeholders

Please read each statement and indicate your level of agreement.

This section looks at stakeholders: Alumni, Students, Funders (private and public grants), Research Grant Funders (public and private), Community, etc.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Embedding EDI at AU will give us more credibility, and help us better understand the needs of our diverse stakeholders.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

The questions in the next section are intended for individuals who participate in research projects. **If you do not participate in research projects, please disregard the next two questions.**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I know how to incorporate EDI principles and practices into my research projects.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I know where to go to get information on how to incorporate EDI principles into my research projects.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Is there anything else about stakeholders that you would like to share as it relates to equity, diversity and inclusion?

9. Brand and Reputation

Please read each statement and indicate your level of agreement.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Our organization's performance, as well as our brand and reputation would be strengthened by greater diversity at the leadership and management levels.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
We can attract talented new employees more easily if our workplace culture is more inclusive.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
There is regular communication about inclusion and diversity internally that contributes positively to our reputation as a good employer and educational institution.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
There is regular communication about inclusion and diversity externally that contributes positively to our reputation as a good employer and educational institution.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

> *Is there anything else about brand and reputation that you would like to share as it relates to equity, diversity and inclusion?*

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

Like many organizations, AU strives to create a positive work environment for its employees. Please provide some additional feedback.

Do you agree that equity, diversity and inclusion as a whole is treated as an important priority for AU? Why or why not?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What are some of the opportunities for AU to remove systemic barriers and / or make improvements when it comes to equity, diversity & inclusion? Please provide examples.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What are the ways that your own identity have an impact on your experience at Athabasca University?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Are there any additional comments you would like to provide that were not covered above?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

PART 2: Self-Identification

The questions under this section are entirely voluntary.

Please select all that descriptors that apply for each of the following categories:

Age

☐ Less than 25 years

☐ 25 to 34 years

☐ 35 to 44 years

☐ 45 to 54 years

☐ 55 to 64 years

☐ 65 or older

☐ Prefer not to answer

Level of responsibility at AU

☐ Senior Leadership Team *(President, Provost, VP, CHRO, University Secretary, Chief of Staff)*

☐ Senior Management Team *(AVP, Dean, Registrar, Excluded Director)*

☐ Full **Professor, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor**

☐ Excluded Managers

☐ Academic Coordinator

☐ AUFA Professional

☐ AUPE Support (including Casuals)

☐ Excluded Professionals

☐ Excluded Support (including Casuals)

☐ Tutors/ Academic Experts/ Markers

☐ Please specify (optional): _____

☐ Prefer not to answer

Gender Identity or Gender Expression

Gender refers to the gender that a person internally feels ('gender identity' along the gender spectrum) and/or the gender a person publicly expresses ('gender expression') in their daily life, including at work, while shopping or accessing other services, in their housing environment or in the broader community. A person's current gender may differ from the sex a person was assigned at birth (male or female) and may differ from what is indicated on their current legal documents. A person's gender may change over time.

☐ Female / Woman

☐ Male / Man

☐ Transgender

☐ Gender Fluid, Non-binary

☐ Two-Spirit

☐ Please specify if different from this list: _____

☐ Prefer not to answer

LGBTQ2S+

☐ Lesbian

☐ Gay

☐ Bisexual

☐ Transgender

☐ Queer

☐ Two-Spirit

☐ Please specify if different from this list: _____

Visible Minority

Note: Visible minorities refer to whether a person belongs to a visible minority group as defined by the Employment Equity Act and (CRC self-identification criteria) and, if so, the visible minority group to which the person belongs. The Employment Equity Act defines visible minorities as "persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour."

☐ Arab

☐ Black

☐ Chinese

☐ Filipino

☐ Japanese

☐ Korean

☐ Latin American

☐ South Asian (e.g. East Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, etc.)

☐ Southeast Asian (e.g. Vietnamese, Cambodia, Laotian, Thai, etc.)

☐ West Asian (e.g. Iranian, Afghan, etc.)

☐ Other visible minority (Please specify): _____

☐ Prefer not to answer

Person with a Disability

Note: A person with a disability is a person who has a long-term or recurring physical, mental, sensory, psychiatric, or learning impairment, and:
- *Who considers themselves to be disadvantaged in employment by reason of that impairment, or*
- *Who believes that an employer or potential employer is likely to consider them to be disadvantaged in employment by reason of that impairment; and*
- *Includes persons whose functional limitations owing to their impairment may have been accommodated in their current job or workplace.*

☐Yes

☐ No

☐ Prefer not to answer

☐ I want to specify: _____

Indigenous

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Prefer not to answer

If "yes", please select the option that you identify with:

☐ First Nations

☐ Metis

☐ Inuit

Please specify: _____

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this survey. Your responses will play an important role in helping Athabasca University build a more inclusive and diverse workplace for the benefit of all employees and the communities in which we live.

Please click done once you have completed the survey.

Appendix C: KPMG Focus Group Facilitator Guide

AU Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Focus Group – Overview and Approach

Session Date: July 28, July 30 and August 5th
Developed by: EDI Engagement Committee Members

Introduction

Hello everyone and thank you for participating in this Focus Group session. It is part of

the ongoing assessment phase in determining the state of EDI at AU. Your participation,

therefore, is a great example of the positive support for AU's EDI Action Plan moving forward,

and it is greatly appreciated as a necessary contribution from the Committee and Leadership.

The Purpose of this Focus Group:

1) Review the findings from the June 2020 survey
2) Highlight areas that need additional analyses
3) Provide additional input on the current state of EDI at AU
4) Propose actions to address gaps and opportunities

These sessions will allow us to gather immediate and *"focused"* responses to the survey

results in order to provide a *"check"* on the meaning and action of these results.

Session Guidelines/Information

Session Length & Format: This Focus Group session is 2 hours in length and follows the

agenda below:

Topic	Duration	Facilitator
Introduction and Ground Rules • Expectations for the session	10 minutes	KPMG
Focus Group Questions and Conversation • Review survey findings related to each of the different areas • Discussion questions and facilitated conversation • Ideas, actions and opportunities	105 minutes	KPMG
Closing Questions	5 minutes	KPMG

As was true of the EDI Engagement Survey, your responses here will be used to generate ideas, possible actions and constructive remarks concerning areas where EDI is already operative, and those that require adjustments. These will remain confidential.

Roles During the Session: KPMG is moderating/partnering with the EDI Committee in the three sessions to provide responses to these Engagement Survey results and facilitate the conversation. The moderators will signal changes as well as ask questions and guide the conversation to the conclusion of the session. An EDI Engagement Committee member will moderate the speaking list and keep track of the time during each session.

Participants Responsibility: The discussion following this introduction will be prompted by questions that are specific to the survey results and it is open in terms of your responses and ideas being forwarded. Some important considerations to guide your participation in this session:

1. All participants are encouraged and will be given time to speak. KPMG will ask questions to guide the conversation as needed.

2. During the sharing session, all ideas and comments are to be directed for moving forward with the AU's EDI Action Plan, and not solely focused on persons, groups or experiences.

3. There should be an acceptance of the contributions of others in a generous spirit, understanding them to be directed at responses and/or ideas, and not any person or groups.

4. Please **mute** your microphone if you are not talking.

Concern for Your Well-being: If at any time you feel uncomfortable or no longer with to participate in the session, you are free to sign off/leave. The KPMG facilitators are available at any point after the session for conversations if there are topics or information you are not comfortable sharing with the other participants.

Virtual Mode of Communication: We encourage all participants to join us through whichever means are most comfortable for them - video, over the phone, and / or through the meeting chat. To make a comment/remark or ask a direct question please use the waving hand (can be found at the bottom of the screen in the Teams meeting).
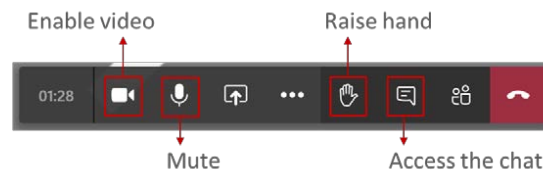
The chat box will also be available and can be used to add your comments/remarks or to ask a direct question (chat box tab is available either at the bottom of the screen or on the right side of the screen). If any issues that are raised trigger other responses for you, please let the moderators know by using the chat box.

Summary: In summary, all participants should allow others to speak and have this be respectful so that the conversation can be maintained as an open forum, yet also be focused so the Committee gains detailed responses, ideas, and possible actions. The hope for these Focus Groups is to acquire objective, immediate, and clear ideas and/or remarks for moving forward with the AU EDI Action Plan.

Below are the three definitions for EDI to refresh the basic principles:

Equity: Equity is based on fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all students and team members, while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups. The principle of equity acknowledges that there

are historically underserved and underrepresented populations and that fairness regarding these unbalanced conditions is needed to assist equality in the provision of effective opportunities to all groups.

Diversity: Diversity includes all the ways in which people differ, and it encompasses all the characteristics, ideas, perspectives and values that make one individual or group distinct from another. Principles of diversity strive toward all-inclusiveness and aim to recognize, respect and value everyone and every group. A broad definition includes not only race, ethnicity, sex, and gender but also age, place of origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation, profession, social class, education, income, marital status, language, and physical appearance.

Inclusion: Inclusion refers to belonging. Inclusion is the act of creating environments that promote and value equity where everyone can raise meaningful voices, feel welcomed, respected and supported with a sense of belonging. An inclusive and welcoming climate embraces differences and offers respect in written and verbal words and actions for all people.