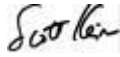




MEMO

TO: The St. Jerome's University Community

FROM: Dr. Scott Kline, Interim President and Vice Chancellor 

DATE: April 20, 2020

RE: The Launch of the SJU Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Initiative and
The Formation of the President's Working Group on EDI

I am delighted to announce the formation of the SJU President's Working Group on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI). With this announcement, the University is launching a multiphase process that will lead to the creation and implementation of an EDI action plan at St. Jerome's University.

1. EDI Context at St. Jerome's University

In October 2017, Universities Canada members (which includes St. Jerome's University) endorsed seven [Inclusive Excellence Principles](#) as part of their [ongoing commitment to advance equity, diversity and inclusion](#) (EDI). At the same time, Universities Canada (UC) committed to a [five-year action plan](#) to support members' progress. UC's [Report](#) was released in late October 2019.

SJU's commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion is embedded in our Strategic Plan, "Building on Tradition, 2016-2021." The fifth commitment in that plan concerns "Our Culture." It reads: "We foster a respectful, inclusive community that is centred on the wellbeing of our students and the promotion of the common good." Among the priorities named as part of that commitment is to "support a culture of encounter that focuses on integrative questioning from a variety of perspectives and traditions." An action identified to realize this commitment's priorities is to "foster a welcoming, inclusive environment where all feel a sense of place."

During my almost 18 years at St. Jerome's, I have experienced our community as one that aspires to be welcoming to all. It doesn't seem to matter whether we're working in residence life, student services, campus ministry, facilities, the library, an office, the classroom, or anywhere else on campus, we are collectively striving to establish a welcoming environment.

Let me cite one example. One of the hymns we traditionally sing at our public University gatherings is "All Are Welcome," which has a refrain that goes, "All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place." This hymn conveys a message that hospitality is a virtue at the core of the Catholic tradition and an expression of our community's shared commitment to be welcoming. As a defining virtue at St. Jerome's, hospitality calls us to reflect on how our programs, policies, organizational structures, hiring practices, and recruiting are aligning with our strategic commitments, University priorities, and values as a Catholic university federated with the University of Waterloo.

One of the seven *Inclusive Excellence Principles* highlights the need for universities to develop EDI action plans: "We commit our institutions to developing and/or maintaining an equity, diversity and inclusion action plan in consultation with students, faculty, staff and administrators, and particularly with individuals from under-represented groups. We commit to demonstrating progress over time."

To make good on this commitment, the SJU community is invited to engage in a three-phase process. In phase one, the Working Group will take an inventory of current EDI initiatives at SJU, identify current institutional strengths and challenges, review promising practices, and formulate baseline recommendations to be used in the development of SJU's action plan. Phase two will be the development of the SJU EDI action plan. That work will be spearheaded by the President's Advisory Group, which will be formed once the initial phase has been completed. Phase three will be the implementation and assessment phase, which will be administered by the Administrative Leadership Group.

2. Terms of Reference: President's Working Group on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

2.1 Mandate and Scope

Through a consultative and collaborative process, the Working Group will engage the St. Jerome's University community in preparatory work required for the development of a comprehensive University EDI action plan. The Working Group's scope should focus on five areas within the University:

1. Hiring Systems and Practices
2. Curriculum and Programs
3. Outreach, Recruiting, and Marketing
4. Facilities
5. Campus Culture

2.2 General Duties and Responsibilities:

The general duties and responsibilities of this Working Group are the following:

- Consult with and seek feedback from students, faculty, and staff, as well as other key external stakeholder groups on current EDI initiatives and practices
- Identify strengths and unique challenges related to EDI at SJU
- Compile meaningful and measurable data, which will be used in formulating success indicators
- Conduct an environmental survey of promising EDI practices in other universities
- Submit a final report to the President containing recommendations that will form the basis of an SJU EDI action plan

2.3 Structure

- Cristina Vanin, (Interim) Vice President Academic and Dean (co-chair)
- Mike Gourlay, Executive Director of Finance and Administration (co-chair)
- Veronica Austen, Associate Dean
- Michelle Watson, Director of Human Resources
- John Arnou, (Acting) Director, Student Affairs
- Martha Fauteux, Director, Campus Ministry
- Sue Brubacher, Director, Enrolment and Upper Year Transition
- Gina Hickman, Director of Equity, University of Waterloo
- Two faculty members (elected by SJU full-time faculty and CAS)
- Two student members (appointed in consultation with the SJU Students Union)

2.4 Timeline

The Working Group should aim to complete its work on or before October 15, 2020.

3. Phases in the SJU EDI Initiative

