

Faculty of Dentistry Statement on Equity, Diversity and Excellence

The purposes of this statement are to express the University of Toronto, Faculty of Dentistry's values regarding equity and diversity and related these to our unwavering commitment to excellence in pursuit of our academic mission.

Equity and Human Rights

We strive to be an equitable and inclusive community, rich with diversity, protecting the human rights of all persons and based upon understanding and mutual respect for the dignity and worth of every person. We seek to ensure to the greatest extent possible that all students and employees enjoy the opportunity to participate as they see fit in the full range of activities that the Faculty offers and to achieve their full potential as members of our community.

Our support for equity is grounded in a Faculty-wide commitment to achieve a working, teaching, and learning environment that is free of discrimination and harassment as defined in the Ontario Human Rights Code. In striving to become an equitable community, we will also work to eliminate, reduce or mitigate the adverse effects of any barriers to full participation in University life that we find, including physical, environment, attitudinal, communication or technological.

Diversity and Inclusiveness

Our teaching, scholarship, and other activities take place in the context of a highly diverse society. Reflecting this diversity in our own community is uniquely valuable to the Faculty as it contributes to the diversification of ideas and perspectives and thereby enriches our scholarship, teaching and other activities. We will proactively seek to increase diversity among our community members, and it is our aim to have a student body and teaching and administrative staffs that mirror the diversity of the pool of potential qualified applicants for those positions.

Excellence

We believe that excellence flourished in an environment that embraces the broadest range of people, helps those people to achieve their full potential, and facilitates the free expression of their diverse perspectives through respectful discourse in which high standards are maintained for students and staff alike. An equitable and inclusive working and learning environment creates the conditions for our diverse staff and student body to maximize their creativity and their contributions, thereby support excellence in all dimensions of the institution.

Responsibility

The creation of an equitable community, one that is diverse as well as inclusive and that is respectful and protects the human rights of its members, requires the work of every member of the community, including students, teaching staff, administrative staff, visitors, alumni and guests. For its part, the Faculty will strive to make considerations of equity a part of the processes of setting policies, developing procedures and making decisions at all levels of the Faculty.

Culturally Sensitive Oral Health Care

Our Faculty must provide culturally sensitive oral health care to our diverse patient population. In terms of cultural competency, our students, Faculty and staff must be able to interact effectively with diverse patient populations and understand how cultural influence interact with the situational, social, and psychological variables that influence a patient's oral health conditions and behaviour.

Reference:

- University of Toronto Governing Council Statement on Equity, Diversity and Excellence (December 14, 2006)
- Competencies for a Beginning Dental Practitioner in Canada
- J Dent Educ 2014;78(3):454-464

University of Toronto, Faculty of Dentistry Recommendations to address Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) challenges.

Recommendation 1: Mission/Vision and Strategic Planning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the Faculty’s mission and value statements to include principles, goals and objectives that support EDI at the next strategic plan.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop measures of success and address how accountability is measured.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address how to communicate progress to the internal and external community.

Recommendation 2: Creating a Welcoming Climate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand training about harassment, racism, unconscious bias, cultural competency, racial microaggression and diversity trainings for faculty, staff, students. • Utilize ARCDO (Anti-Racism and Cultural Diversity Office) training for faculty and staff. • Have managers infuse more EDI goals during goal settings. • Provide enough time for staff for training.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct an audit to review the Faculty’s social media accounts, publications and website to ensure diversity, equity and inclusion are represented appropriately.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review style guidelines for communication and messaging related to diversity, equity and inclusion.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain Faculty baseline climate data with climate survey that focuses on well-being, engagement and intergroup relations, differential treatment/discrimination, classroom/clinical environment, etc.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a short pulse survey to get a quick snapshot of impact of contemporary issues and gauge the thinking and concerns of faculty, staff, students and alumni.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in the American Dental Education Association (ADEA) Collaborative on Dental Education Climate Assessment (CDECA) committee.

Recommendation 3: Administration of EDI
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop diversity statement.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the feasibility of diversity officer.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review EDI resources.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a Decanal advisory EDI committee. Establish terms of reference and call for nominations that include representations of various communities. This will include internal and external stakeholders such as community leaders.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an EDI strategic plan that is consistent with Faculty’s strategic plan.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop dashboard to share faculty, student, staff data and used to drive decision making.

Recommendation 4: Support for Diverse Students

- Engage campus experts (such as from Indigenous, Black Canadian/African, Gender and Women's, LGBTQ+ studies) to assist and create a safe and healthy learning environment.
- Develop and implement strategies to improve the pipeline for Indigenous and Black students. The focus will be to increase recruitment and enhance support for Indigenous and Black students so that they will have increased success with respect to admission and completion of the undergraduate dental program.
- Create mentoring and programs to support activities for Indigenous and Black students interested in the oral health professions.
- Break down financial obstacles faced by low-income student applying to dental school.
- Improve communication strategy about admission intent.

Recommendation 5: Curriculum

- Engage campus experts (such as from Indigenous, Black Canadian/African, Gender and Women's, LGBTQ+ studies) to assist and develop curriculum content and embed principles of EDI into curricula and teaching across the Faculty to create a safe and healthy learning environment.
- Develop cultural competency at the individual and institutional level.
- Develop training opportunities to assist the faculty members with developing strategies for incorporating inclusive pedagogies to engage all students, fully and fairly, in learning.

Recommendation 6: Supporting Diverse Faculty and Staff

- Develop a diversity survey of faculty and staff to establish a database to help develop strategies to support staff recruitment and retention.
- Create mentor program for faculty and staff.

Recommendation 7: Patients and Community Engagement

- Expand community based dental education to address oral health inequities and disparities among the historically underrepresented minorities. Possible future locations may include CAMH, Haliburton, northern Ontario dental clinics, Mississauga/Scarborough campus.
- Engage with community partners to address health inequities.

References:

- ADEA Checklist to Promote Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Report of the University of Toronto Anti-Black Racism Task Force 2021