

I am pleased to post the External Review of the Equity and Inclusion Office (EIO), which was conducted in the fall of 2022. I am thankful to the reviewers and to all individuals at McMaster University who contributed to this report, which identifies new opportunities for future development.


At McMaster our purpose is the discovery, communication and preservation of knowledge and that must take place in an institution that intentionally engages and respects a diversity of peoples, perspectives, and ways of knowing. Inclusive Excellence must be embedded in the fabric of our university and the EIO plays an important leadership role toward that institutional goal. It is important that the EIO be effective and active.

One tool for strengthening the mandate of the EIO is an external review by experts who bring a range of perspectives. Through consultations described as thorough and candid, the reviewers found that McMaster's EIO is respected, provides invaluable services and occupies a complex role.

It is heartening that the reviewers concluded that it is clear to members of our campus community that McMaster is deeply committed to aligning its commitment to inclusive excellence with a renewed mandate for the EIO that prioritizes academic excellence with a view to addressing systemic, structural and strategic barriers to the fullest success of all those who call our community home.

At the time of the report's release, McMaster is undergoing a hiring process to identify a new executive leader of the EIO. I welcome the recommendations made by the reviewers and I look forward to working with the EIO to address gaps identified in the report.

The Office of the Provost will continue to support the work of the Equity and Inclusion Office as we embark upon the next part our journey toward Inclusive Excellence.



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External Review of the Equity and Inclusion Office, McMaster University Review Team Report

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PREAMBLE

During the course of a two-day site visit review process conducted on September 28 and 29, 2022, a number of parties and stakeholders that had a working relationship with the Equity and Inclusion Office (EIO) were consulted in an attempt to capture as broad an experience as possible of a representative cross section of the McMaster University community. The consultation with divisional leaders made it clear that there was a great deal of respect for the existing strategy as it connected meaningfully with McMaster's inclusive excellence vision. These consultations and the subsequent analysis yield important insights that are meant to unearth opportunities for more meaningful impact and to address gaps that are a natural consequence of organizational inertia.

Our recommendations are duly informed by consultations and external research on key aspects of what contributes to an effective and active EIO in an academic setting. They reflect a current snapshot within the organization. The President's Office and the broader University are encouraged to establish processes for a regular assessment to monitor the efficacy of these changes. Part of our recommendations is that the staff of the EIO actively develop and maintain trust with the University and broader community. Capturing learnings and what these staff hear from the community is data that ultimately informs any changes or adjustments. We have structured the report to focus on three areas: EIO's mandate, relations to other phenomena and the type of role.

EIO's Mandate

We recommend three primary categories of responsibility – Academic Mission, Advisory Function, and Governance.

Relations to other phenomena

Through this mandate the EIO must identify and advance the linkages between other phenomena. The office must be explicit about how it is examining the foundation of the University and its systems and the inequity that persist particularly for Indigenous people and racialized communities.

The type of role

The new Associate Vice-President Equity & Inclusion (AVPEI) will be integral in animating and executing on the office's mandate in a way that furthers the University's aspiration of being a more inclusive and equitable community. Therefore, this person must have credibility in this space – through both lived experience and professional expertise.

The following pages of this report will delve into further details on the specifics of each recommendation, and what this looks like in operation.

The following executive summary includes our recommendations for what might be included in the EIO mandate – including what the key functionality of those efforts are in action; how this office should explicitly and implicitly relate to other university phenomena within and outside of the academic community; and parameters for what must be true about the person in this role.

As in all processes, the experts that were brought together bring a range of perspectives and this report attempts to respect the diversity of approaches and aims to preserve a variety of opinions.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We have all been paying attention to the reality that over the past few years, there has been a call for greater demonstration of organizational commitment to and capacity for putting a strategic lens on the work of equity, diversity, and inclusion across society at large. This important imperative reinforces the necessity of reviewing how institutional leaders can address systemic, structural, and strategic inequities and, at the same time, seize opportunities for greater inclusion at all levels.

McMaster University is highly reputable across many dimensions, and therefore, this review offers a robust and practicable opportunity for deepening its commitment to equity and inclusion. Over the course of this review, the reviewers had the opportunity to learn from the diverse and disparate stakeholders and partners who were consulted. These individuals and groups (who represented a rich cross-section of the McMaster University community) spoke with conviction, courage, and precision. This timely engagement provided clarity on key accomplishments of the office, and opportunities for addressing gaps that McMaster might act upon to advance its commitment to creating a more equitable and inclusive university culture.

Many offices with such mandates often evolve as an assortment of legacy initiatives within the institutional life that are brought under an umbrella with the intention of enabling consistency of practice. However, taking the necessary strategic lens through reviews like this one can enable alignment of institutional purpose, existing processes and the requisite structures to close the gap between intent and impact. The EIO enjoys credibility across a range of stakeholders within the University and at the same time, there is evidence that its mission, mandate and operational choices can benefit from further tweaks.

These consultations yielded both textured and nuanced insights and meaningful recommendations.

Resources need to be aligned with the purpose

- The EIO is a vital part of the University's apparatus and a tangible mechanism by which it fulfills its commitments towards greater equity and inclusion. It requires and deserves more dedicated resources that allow it to fulfill its connection to the academic mission through adequate staffing, meaningful space allocation, appropriate niche resources such as case management software, and the requisite governance that addresses the mandate being stretched too thin.
- There has been significant turnover in the office, and it speaks to the nature of equity work being particularly challenging and deserving appropriate staffing levels to avoid burnout.

Recommendation: The office deserves adequate level of staffing, meaningful physical space and a programming presence that signals institutional commitment to the centrality of its mission. Support for staff in this office is critical to addressing the phenomenon of high turnover that is common in such roles. Renewed funding for programs that connect the office to broader community initiatives will also add to the institutional credibility in the space of equity, diversity and inclusion.

- The committee has consistently heard that the University's accountability towards accessibility was too wide a mandate for the Office to be responsible for given the limited resources available to meet it. Furthermore, it is nearly impossible for the EIO to fulfill all of the accessibility-related

demand for consultation, advocacy, complaints resolution and strategic program development with only having one person dedicated to this effort.

Recommendation: Consider the establishment of an accessibility office that may or may not fully overlap with the EIO and will certainly have a natural connection to the MacPherson Institute.

- The range of activities and responsibilities associated with the EIO and McMaster are broader than a typical university office's mandate. This stems from the fact that the human rights advocacy and complaints work has not been separated from the EIO function around advisory and strategic work. As the recommendations from this review make clear, getting clarity and separation of duties and responsibilities will help greatly in bringing the EIO in line with wiser practices across the post-secondary sector in Canada and abroad.

Recommendation: The University needs to explore how it can implement systems that support the office in its mandate of tracking salient issues and reporting on them in a timely manner. This could include outsourcing cases that are complex and consume the officer's time which takes away from supporting the community in other ways. Furthermore, the centralization of intake processes would benefit both the efficacy of response and clarity around tracking of complaints.

Connections between the office's mandate and institutional outcomes need to be clearer

- Given McMaster's connection to inclusive excellence, there needs to be both a much higher degree of clarity with regard to purpose and deepening of resources at sustainable levels to support this clearly defined mission that is linked to the academic mandate.

Recommendation: While there has been significant progress on the development of a meaningful strategic vision that has been put in place through the initiative of the inaugural AVPEI, critically examining governance and operational structures is essential at this moment. This separation is essential not only due to capacity constraints, but also to avoid any conflict of interest by its involvement in, and being privy to sensitive knowledge that can challenge its objectivity and fairness around due process. There is clearly a desire for the implementation of a sophisticated case management system that can enable consistency of practice and the ability to make the process less opaque. Specifically, we recommend that the AVPEI role be arm's length from the investigations function of the office.

The AVPEI role needs clarity and connection to institutional responsibilities

- The review of the EIO presents a unique opportunity at a particular moment in time. In addition to a broad-based survey of experiences, the process ought to address issues that have been raised about how the office actively participates in the University's response to phenomena such as Indigeneity, anti-Black racism, 2SLGBTQ+ rights, accessibility, Islamophobia, Anti-Semitism, and others. The new AVPEI will be integral in animating and executing on the office's mandate in a way that furthers the University's aspiration of being a more inclusive and equitable community. Therefore, this person must have credibility in the space – through both lived experience and professional expertise. Given the decentralized nature of the University, equity work has to be channeled through divisional programs and initiatives. Effectively offering guidance, support and meaningful counsel to deans, chairs and directors necessitates a robust and credible understanding of academic life and mission.

Recommendation: There were a range of committee members' opinions as to whether the new AVPEI needs to possess academic background and role. While having a respected academic with a proven track record of weaving in equity through research, teaching or service to the academic community may be of benefit to the role, having a seasoned administrator with depth of experience in institutional change management, diplomacy and tact is equally of great value. McMaster will have to strike a balance in its choice.

- Hiring decisions at McMaster need to be done in a transparent and consistent manner. The bar is even higher in the EIO.

Recommendation: All decisions pertaining to the office and its role need to be made in a manner befitting the ethical commitments of the institution and the transparency needed to rebuild trust and confidence, which may have been compromised due to a perceived lack of adherence to due process in the past.

- It must be understood that Equity Diversity and Inclusion at any institution is a shared responsibility with shared accountability. As such every unit will be required to do their part within their own sphere of influence. In many instances the success of an initiative will require contributions from multiple stakeholders. Reviewers heard that the Employment Equity Facilitator Program was an example where Human Resources and EIO had shared responsibilities. Inclusion excellence will only be achieved when units see themselves as enablers and facilitators of success.

Recommendation: A spirit of cooperation, collaboration and partnership must be fostered by unit leaders and by extension members of their respective units. The spirit of One McMaster needs to be cultivated and expected as part of leadership performance management.

Connections with community partners need to be deepened

- The consultations clearly demonstrated trust and faith in the importance and supportive stance of the office as evidenced by student leader and other key individuals' feedback. Further, evidence of the office's meaningfulness is found in an openness by Security Services to considering a mental health support resource that may reside within EIO should that be part of the office's strategy. There is a need for EIO to be visible to community partners and a sought-after office for collaborations that map onto the University's commitments to inclusive excellence. The office needs to continue to advance the building of trust, increase visibility and be accountable to the community. The EIO must be seen as a resource to the university community.

Recommendation: The EIO needs to be resourced and supported adequately in being leveraged as an essential conduit for engagement with and across communities.

Clarifying the connection between Indigenous initiatives and the EIO is timely

- On the question of a parallel path of Indigenous initiatives at McMaster (the metaphor of the wampum belt was repeatedly addressed), both EIO and Indigenous offices recognize that colonial structures and systems have deep roots in how all universities have been conceived and constituted. The EIO and Indigenous offices have a role to actively invite, harmonize with the parallel processes and programs that the University has in place around living its commitments to the recommendations within the TRC report.

Recommendation: The EIO needs to engage in consultation that ensures that its efforts towards reconciliation are supportive of and not inadvertently diminishing the work that is being done by Indigenous members of the academic community at McMaster.

Streamlining the connection between PACBIC and EIO matters

- The relationship between PACBIC and EIO needs to be envisioned to support the Inclusion Excellence that McMaster aspires for. In particular, the relationship between the AVPEI and PACBIC requires clarifying and codifying in keeping with the renewed vision of the role of the EIO. Both PACBIC and EIO need to maintain their independence while working in alignment to support McMaster's vision.

Recommendation: Both the President and the Provost offices need to disentangle PACBIC and the EIO so that the two are structurally better aligned in their complementary roles. PACBIC needs to revisit their Terms of Reference (ToR) to ensure that both the EIO and PACBIC's mandate be separate but also dialogical. We recommend that the incoming AVPEI act as an ex officio member of PACBIC rather than co-chair. This will provide that:

- The EIO can continue to preserve the integrity and autonomy of the office;
- PACBIC can continue to have a direct advisory role to the President that includes (but is not limited to) EIO's various outputs on matters of equity, inclusion and diversity.

A similar committee membership structure can be found on Brock University's [President's Advisory Committee on Human Rights, Equity and Decolonization \(PACHRED\)](#) (See section 3(c) and 3(h)).

If this recommendation is accepted by relevant stakeholders, it will also be important to consider the advising and reporting structures. The AVPEI currently reports to the Provost, while PACBIC advises the President (and both on similar institutional matters). As such we recommend that both the EIO and PACBIC along with senior leadership streamline these advising and reporting mandates to ensure that the President and Provost are receiving a holistic and comprehensive picture on matters of equity, diversity, and inclusion.

EIO's MANDATE

The EIO needs to aim for consistency between expectations of stakeholders and the guiding principles of an inclusive excellence that drive McMaster's vision for impact. The EIO can only be as effective as it is clearly aligned with McMaster University's Inclusive Excellence Priority: *"Aspire to embed an inclusive excellence approach that intentionally engages and respects a diversity of peoples, perspectives, and ways of knowing, in everything we do."* The AVPEI constitutes an important function of senior leadership in tandem with presidential, vice-presidential and provostial leaders in turning the University's mission into life along three dimensions: policies, programs and dealing with complaints or allegations of differential treatment on the basis of prohibited grounds.

1. ACADEMIC MISSION

Policies

All institutions rely on policies to establish congruence between espoused values and enacted values. McMaster University aims to deliver on the promise of an equitable and engaging experience for all members of its communities. Its policies therefore have to reflect this commitment in both articulation and practice. The EIO can play an important role in auditing and assessing policies for compliance with not only legal codes and requirements but also for congruence with the espoused values of engagement and inclusion day-to-day.

The Committee saw evidence of the EIO engaging with questions of consequence related to equity, human rights, sexual violence and accessibility across the various programming and consultative activities that it was engaged in. Once again, this important work could benefit from a more holistic and evidence-based approach to capturing impact.

The office could also benefit from clearly communicating and being more visible about its mandate and the range of supports it can offer to senior administrators across the University in understanding and consistently implementing policy with more resources. There was some evidence during the consultation of a lack of clarity in this regard that needs to be addressed.

Programs

The EIO has a natural role to play in initiating programming aimed at faculty, staff and student communities around education and engagement around various dimensions of lived experience and identity. Conceivably, such programs can be co-sponsored with other related university offices whose mandates span the student, staff and faculty experiences. Key outcomes of such programming are enhancing a common basic understanding of expectations under various codes and moving beyond into creating a confluence of conditions under which engagement is the common outcome. To be clear, these programmatic initiatives have to be owned by EIO and its co-sponsors in a way that is consistent with the University's commitment to inclusive engagement.

In particular the office needs to be leading in the creation of a range of engaging training sessions that focus both on awareness and advanced attention to human rights and equity related policies, practices, and legislative requirements throughout McMaster University. It is very likely that the office will need the ability to retain external trainers for such purposes as is common across peer institutions when developing and delivering broad-based programming of this nature.

Human Rights Investigations and Resolution

The EIO has considerable range in terms of responsibility that would make it difficult to the point of impracticality for it to also manage and oversee the complaints process stemming from allegations of differential treatment on the basis of some or many of the prohibited grounds under various codes. It is strongly advised that the complaints management investigation, resolution and communication functions are separated out of the EIO's mandate. The Human Rights program currently exists in the EIO structure. The work of this program is guided by the Harassment and Discrimination Policy, the Sexual Violence Policy, and the AODA Policy. The following services are provided: consultations, compliant resolution, and disclosures. At McMaster University there are multiple intake processes that create a number of challenges. A review of the pros and cons of multiple offices is a necessary next step.

Some of the reasons for this recommendation include transparency of process, speed of resolution, and frequency of the communication necessary to keep complainants satisfied with their experience. The EIO can continue to serve as a source of referral to the right parties for those who approach it directly with complaints and grievances. To be clear, in any such instance, the Human Rights Officers share their knowledge of such grievances with the rest of the senior administration at the University and does not investigate the allegations but draws attention to the right parties to do so. The EIO has a duty to communicate clearly and cogently on limits of confidentiality, the difference between anonymity and confidentiality and the need to communicate on a need-to-know basis.

Finally, the reviewers recognize that there are times when the Investigation team may be required to inform senior administrators of a complaint in order to facilitate risk management. As such, we recommend that a protocol be developed on the information to be shared (need to know basis); that this communication be included in the Discrimination and Harassment Policy and that senior administrators receive communication training on how to respond publicly to high stake cases.

2. ADVISORY FUNCTION

Academic Leaders

Another important dimension of the EIO's value and institution is in the form of an incredible advisory source to a variety of parties at the University. Academic leaders such as deans, chairs and directors ought to feel welcome to approach the EIO for advice around deepening their practice of equity and inclusion across the various processes that they manage. These consultations can span the core activities of research, teaching, and the student experience more broadly. It is noteworthy that success in such an advisory capacity result in divisional leaders feeling supported and encouraged to build their own capacity in these domains and the deepening of relations between such equity leads across the various divisions within the University.

In situations where the EIO is playing a supportive and collaborative role it is important to highlight the foundational work done by offices that are leading processes such as the Employment Equity Facilitator Program where Human Resources is the lead. For instance, the important work around employment equity must always be primarily associated with the CHRO function and while the EIO can play an important advisory role, it cannot lead due to distraction from the primary role that the EIO was set up for. Centering on the core responsibilities of policy and programmatic initiatives ought to maintain the right level of attention to the office's strategic priorities.

Community members

The EIO is experienced by most as a credible and visible source of insight, advice, and resources for communities that are equity deserving across the University. The office still has work to do to be more visible, accessible and seen as supportive to all members of the McMaster community particularly those from equity deserving members. Building bridges across the communities requires being attentive and present in ways that build trust and enhance accountability to communities. It is not clear whether the EIO has the appropriate resources dedicated to such outreach and support. With increased resources, the EIO can play an important advisory function in connecting communities that are not yet part of the McMaster ecosystem through outreach initiatives that allow them to conceive of partnerships into the future. Such partnerships are essential to the University's attempt in building an equitable and inclusive

environment that supports its ambition to diversifying its cohorts in areas where underrepresentation of Indigenous and equity deserving groups is high. The consultation process heard from many who offered evidence of a level of meaningful engagement with the EIO around joint initiatives with a consistent call for greater resources to deepen the impact of the important work of the office. The office could benefit from keeping closer record of the variety of initiatives and programs it is involved in with an eye to measuring impact consistent with McMaster's inclusive excellence mandate.

3. GOVERNANCE

Boards

Governance and leadership across universities has been under much scrutiny along the dimensions of representation, responsiveness and resources. The EIO can play a meaningful role in assisting existing systems of university governance to add the additional lenses of equity and inclusion in their day-to-day operations. Such support would likely take the form of consultations and sharing wiser practices from other peer institutions with regard to such university functions. It is totally conceivable that the AVPEI and EIO is a member of various governance initiatives to embed EDI into the University process in a sustainable way and make progress towards more inclusive and responsive governance processes.

Task forces

Contemporary societal shifts necessitate action on behalf of the University to respond in meaningful ways. Universities in the recent past have struck task forces to examine and address climate on the campuses with regard to phenomena such as anti-Black racism, Islamophobia, antisemitism, accessibility, homophobia, to name just a few. The EIO would be an ideal partner in framing the objectives of and supporting the outcomes of such task forces. Furthermore, it has the necessary credibility and know-how to both guide the process and help steer the institution towards implementation of recommendations from such task forces. It is also possible for EIO to be the sole convener of a task force when communities deem it to be the most appropriate and credible path forward for studying sensitive phenomenon.

PACBIC & EIO Matters

On the question of PACBIC there were a variety of opinions within the committee. There was however consensus on the fact that PACBIC remains an important and potentially influential source of insights and action at McMaster University. However, the relationship between the EIO and PACBIC deserves closer attention and clearer codification. Given the fact that the AVPEI is a member of the senior team of McMaster University's administration, it is best that they play a non-voting role vis-à-vis membership within PACBIC. Furthermore, they ought to keep PACBIC abreast of their strategy, mandate, and programs on a regular basis (perhaps biannually) such that there is regular and open communication about the priorities around equity and inclusion at the University. The final decision around the exact relationship between PACBIC and the EIO ought to be arrived at through broader consultation between senior administrators and the incoming AVPEI. The presence of the EIO within PACBIC at the right level reinstates the University's commitment to taking a holistic view of equity and inclusion as phenomena that inform leadership choices consistently.

RELATIONS TO OTHER PHENOMENA

Indigeneity

Universities in Canada across provinces and territories have been formulated and brought into existence based upon colonial models of higher education. Not surprisingly, the resulting structures and systems have led to reinforcement of policies, programs, and practices that have reproduced systemic and structural exclusion of Indigenous ways of being, knowing and doing. While recognizing the primacy of Indigeneity as an essential set of experiences, the EIO has a role in harmonizing parallel processes and programs across the University in a supportive and cooperative manner. Wherever possible, the EIO needs to find opportunities for highlighting the University's commitments to salient recommendations within the TRC report in addition to its commitments to equity and inclusion across legal codes and charters. Under no circumstances should the EIO be seen as being in competition with, or in contradiction with, the University's commitments to the TRC process.

A proactive approach may be to support the Indigenous Education Council (IEC) in meaningful ways and to spread awareness of ongoing programs seeking to advance Indigenous communities and initiatives at McMaster. The AVPEI needs to remain deeply knowledgeable about such programs and initiatives without taking on the expert role which rightfully belongs to the IEC.

Other phenomena

The EIO needs to harmonize its mandate with McMaster University's Inclusive Excellence Priority: *"Aspire to embed an inclusive excellence approach that intentionally engages and respects a diversity of peoples, perspectives, and ways of knowing, in everything we do."*

It is clear that there is still work to be done in active programming that increases the awareness of the impact of societal phenomenon such as anti-Black racism, homophobia and transphobia, ableism, and other forms of exclusion. This programming ought to be offered in a way that impacted communities do not have to bear the brunt of ceaseless advocacy to enable engaging in equitable experience at McMaster. Furthermore, through its advisory functions, the EIO can serve as a conduit to leaders across faculties and divisions in addressing and interrupting bias and discrimination in its various forms as experienced by various communities. Such programming requires adequate resources and sustainable funding so that successive generations of McMaster community members can find themselves welcome into even more inclusive environments.

One example of well-intentioned support that has led to a capacity issue came to light in the form of the AccessMac Program. There is clearly an increasing need for support around meeting the needs of learners across divisions. Such an increase in demand for services and consultations points to the creation of resources outside of the EIO that tackle the teaching and learning focus of such requests and engagement. There needs to be clarity about both alignment with the strategic functions of the EIO and the capacity to deliver this well. Such a strategic lens needs to be applied to all areas in which the institutional need for support exceeds the EIOs capacity to offer it consistently and well.

Particular emphasis needs to be paid upon identifying barriers to the success of equity deserving members with those responsible for important decisions around the student, faculty, and staff experiences at McMaster. Having deep and constant connection with leaders such as the Associate Vice-President (Students and Learning) and Dean of Students, the Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies, and the Faculty Deans would be an essential expectation of the office discharging its duties successfully.

THE TYPE OF ROLE

The consultation revealed a strong sense of support for the mandate of the office. The reviewers heard that transparency in decision-making with respect to hiring and resource allocations is of central importance to maintaining the credibility and integrity of the office. It is helpful to note that an office as central to enabling the promise of inclusive excellence needs to embrace transparency and accountability along the dimensions of purpose, process and people management. Recommendations from this process address the need to treat all staff equitably and to resource them in meaningful ways so that they avoid the plight of burnout and disconnection from the organizational mission.

Keeping close track of policy interventions, program initiatives, and transparent resolution of complaints is absolutely essential to demonstrating the efficacy and value of the EIO to a range of stakeholders at McMaster. Systems that enable tracking of the aforementioned metrics ought to be developed and resourced so that a clear picture of the office's accomplishments may emerge.

Through the consultative process we were not made aware of any particular outreach or leadership initiatives within and across peer networks. This does not however, indicate that they did not occur. This committee did not have a line of sight to that line of work externally as no evidence was found through external sources of information such as websites or other materials provided in preparation for the review.

There is a tension that is inherent in this role between advocacy and compliance. So, universities by default rely on systems, structures, and strategies to accomplish their academic mission and these various systems, structures and strategies are prone not to be subject to critical examination precisely because they have worked so well for so long. Communities and activists that are external to the university have somewhat routinely critiqued institutions for being merely performative in their declarations around being committed to principles of justice, equity and inclusion.

Any leader that comes into the role of AVPEI can find themselves conflicted between the need for fulfilling a compliance mandate and the call for more substantive action from the critical institutional lens. One way to go beyond recognition of this inherent tension is to articulate the responsibilities of the AVPEI along three planes of performance. The most fundamental metric of success of the senior leader is their ability to be well versed in the University's core mission. Furthermore, their success requires a commitment to weaving into the University's core mission elements of equity and inclusion. This takes the form of outreach, rendering advice and following up with practical strategies that are policy-based and connected to programmatic offerings. A secondary dimension of success for this role is the senior leaders' ability to help craft a strategic vision of inclusion that allows divisions within the University to translate this vision into their core activities. Once again, the AVPEI adds tremendous value by showing up as an approachable, supportive, and knowledgeable colleague and partner for all those seeking engagement in those ways. In such a capacity the leader offers of their knowledge and skills in ways that empower the divisions to be at their best in connecting aspiration with equity and inclusion. A third dimension of success for this role is predicated upon their ability to enable regular and meaningful reflection about institutional progress around how processes and practices are evolving in response to a common commitment to greater equity and inclusion. Such reflection is best communicated through annual reports and externally through conferences and gatherings of thought leaders where McMaster's tangible efforts towards equity and inclusion can be shared with a broader audience.

Key attributes and behaviours that the AVPEI needs to embody include the capacity to truly understand the academic cycle, priorities, and commitments that enable McMaster University to be a leader in its core mission while remaining committed to equity and inclusion. Such a leader can come into the role

from a variety of backgrounds. Having an academic background can offer some unique advantages that may be helpful to consider as one reflects on conditions necessary for success. Those academics who have a demonstrable track-record of raising issues of equity and inclusion in their respective disciplines and those who have furthered the discourse through practicable strategies would make exemplary candidates for such a role. Such leaders combine deep knowledge of their disciplines with behaviours that enable them to be influential across a range of parties both within academic life and across administrative circles. In addition to being deeply knowledgeable about their own respective areas of expertise, such individuals understand the power of building common cause across a range of interests within an academic institution. Usually, able to be effective in communicating the institutional case for inclusion and equity, such leaders explore with curiosity the underlying challenges that leaders need assistance with. Such academic leaders also are most successful when they are able to translate in their minds the uniqueness of institutional practices that are emblematic of the focus on inclusive excellence that makes McMaster unique.

An inclusive and equitable leader also needs to put into practice in their daily interactions with their own staff and partners a humility and a supportive stance that makes them a welcome party for collaboration. Effective leaders in such spaces are able to connect often esoteric concepts such as freedom of speech and expression with notions such as duty to accommodate, investigate and communicate, seamlessly. Fundamentally, leadership in this space requires a complementary set of skills that twin sophistication of analysis with credibility of practice. Naturally an office as important and potentially influential as the EIO would benefit from a senior administrator at the director level who works in tandem with the AVPEI in fulfilling the mandate of the office and who brings a strong and capable practitioner lens to translating such a strategy into action.

CONCLUSION

The process of consultation was both thorough and candid, allowing for a range of perspectives and experiences of the EIO to be shared openly with the reviewers. The EIO is respected and recognized for its invaluable services provided to the university. Most participants recognized the complex role that the EIO plays in a large institution with competing priorities. The development of an EDI vision and a coherent strategy was lauded by almost every participant. It is clear that McMaster University is deeply committed to aligning its commitment to inclusive excellence with a renewed mandate for the EIO that prioritizes academic excellence with a view to addressing systemic, structural and strategic barriers to the fullest success of all those who call our community home. The incoming AVPEI inherits many assets that their predecessor has put in place and at the same time must directly address the gaps identified in this report with a view to deepening trust and collaboration. This review is timely given the higher expectation of all institutions with regard to equity and inclusion across society and McMaster is well-positioned to seize this opportunity for embarking upon the next part of its journey towards inclusive excellence.

APPENDIX

Groups at other institutions that play a similar role to PACBIC

Listed below are three Universities with similar committees and roles as McMaster's PACBIC:

- York University: President's Advisory Council on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Terms of Reference
- Brock University: Presidents Advisory Committee on Human Rights, Equity & Decolonization
- Mount Royal University: President's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee

Listed below are Universities with no Presidential EDI (or related) Advisory Group to the President:

- University of Toronto
- Toronto Metropolitan University (TMU)
 - TMU is considering implementing an EDI Advisory Group, though the governance structure is not yet decided