As a nation, Canada has a strong commitment to diversity and has enshrined the value of human diversity and the recognition of equality in legislation.

Equality rights provisions have been articulated in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and human rights laws. The commitment to diversity and substantive equality, or equity, will continue to be important as Canada continues to become increasingly diverse.

The opportunity for all members of society to participate fully, in social, political and economic aspects of life, is a foundational principle of a successful democracy. Substantive equality, or equity, for all is a matter of justice and the promise of full citizenship. Universities, like other institutions, are committed to equity, diversity and inclusion.

The University of Waterloo (University) values students, faculty and staff and recognizes that the talents of diverse people strengthen its ability to be among the world’s top innovative institutions of higher learning.

Learning and working while engaging with diverse people from diverse backgrounds offers an unparalleled opportunity for growth and innovation. In the continuous quest for academic and research excellence, relevance and innovation, equity has been embraced as a strategic priority at the University, as noted in the Strategic Plan 2013.¹

The plan states that the University of Waterloo is “committed to integrity, equity, diversity and a balanced life for students, faculty and staff” and recognizes that “without these core values, the University cannot fulfill its mission as a leading institution of higher learning.”

This five-year Equity Office strategic plan maps the way forward for equity at the University of Waterloo.

MAHEJABEEN EBRAHIM
Director of Equity

¹ A Distinguished Past — A Distinctive Future, University of Waterloo Strategic Plan 2013
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Strategic Plan for Equity ....................................................2
Statement of Ends ............................................................. 4
Statement of Means ...........................................................8
strategic plan for equity

In 2014, the Provost’s Advisory Committee on Equity (PACE) was convened to advise on Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility for Success (IDEAS) at University of Waterloo. PACE is comprised of student, faculty and staff representatives.

The Committee provides a forum for consultation with stakeholders on equity matters at Waterloo. This Committee will build on the efforts of the University Diversity Advisory Committee (UDAC) that was created in 2010. UDAC members were instrumental in identifying the needs of equity-seeking groups and were focused on broad outcomes such as increasing on-campus leadership for equity.
As stated in its Strategic Plan 2013, the University needs “a supportive campus community that proactively articulates, promotes and effects change to achieve equity for students, faculty and staff through policies, programs and practice.”

The University affirmed its commitment to balanced life, equity and diversity in the Strategic Plan 2013. To fulfill this commitment the following objectives were established:

» Develop a strong, vibrant integrated community;

» Assist students, faculty and staff in achieving appropriate work-life balance;

» Set up an Equity Office and hiring a Director of Equity;

» Develop and enhance relevant policies, taking into consideration input from student, faculty and staff stakeholders, including the AccessAbility office, University Diversity Advisory Committee (UDAC), and SWEC;

» Enhance awareness, understanding, respect, support and celebration of equity and diversity among students, faculty and staff;

» Meet accessibility standards in new buildings and in those being renovated; and

» Meet accessibility standards, as outlined in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), across print and digital communications platforms.

The University appointed its Director of Equity on the first of October 2013. The preliminary work done by UDAC and within the University’s Strategic Plan 2013, has been build upon within the Equity Office plan. In addition, the Equity Director has undertaken consultation with stakeholders, a scan of University policies and relevant legislation, as well as reviewing the following reports, to form the basis for development of a vision for equity at Waterloo:

» The University of Waterloo Working Group on Work Life Balance’s report to the Provost and the President of Faculty Association of the University of Waterloo on “Striking the Right Balance” which identifies various issues relating to work-life balance for faculty (October 2012);

» The report for the Status of Women and Equity Committee on “Compassionate Care and Bereavement Leave Policy at the University of Waterloo: A Call for Change” (October 2012);

» Strategic plans of faculties (2013-2014);

» Staff Life Cycle Project: Final Report (June 2013) and the University of Waterloo Staff Association’s Staff Engagement Survey (August 2013); and

» Graduate Student Association’s Student Advocacy Project: Research Report (January 2013) and Graduate Student Advocacy: Survey Report (January 2013).

This Strategic Plan for the Equity Office is based on the vision of a culture and community that is supportive of diverse people in all aspects of University life.
Achieving equity is a process of continual improvement; working to achieve conditions that are conducive to the full participation of individuals and ultimately success.

At Waterloo, we embrace equity and diversity. We recognize that working to achieve equity is about the fulfillment of the highest aspiration of all human beings. We recognize that the talents of diverse individuals will be critical to the success of our mission. We recognize that equity is a strategic priority at the University.

EQUITY VISION

TO FOSTER EQUITABLE LEARNING, TEACHING, WORKING AND LIVING ENVIRONMENTS FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND TO ADVANCE EXCELLENCE AND INNOVATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO.

The fulfillment of this vision is based on senior management commitment and relies upon the engagement of stakeholders. The Equity Office will lead efforts to foster equity for diverse people at the University of Waterloo so that everyone can succeed. Success at the University is about the attainment of individual potential to benefit the University’s mission and for the betterment of society. Equity at the University of Waterloo encompasses inclusion, diversity, substantive equality, and accessibility.

Equity is about the recognition of human diversity and engaging individuals fully and fairly. Equity is based on the fundamental notion that all human beings are worthy of respect. It is based on the recognition of the dignity and worth of all individuals irrespective of their age, ancestry, colour, racialization, ethnic origin, place of origin, creed, disability, family status, marital status, gender identity, gender expression, biological sex, and sexual orientation. It includes actions to ameliorate the condition of historically disadvantaged groups.
Where EQUITY exists, you’ll find:

**INCLUSION:** FOR ALL STUDENTS, FACULTY AND STAFF

**DIVERSITY:** RECOGNIZING AND EMBRACING THE DIVERSE, UNCHANGEABLE HUMAN CHARACTERISTICS THAT EXIST WITHIN EACH OF US

**EQUALITY:** IN ALL ASPECTS OF UNIVERSITY LIFE

**ACCESSIBILITY:** WE CREATE ACCESSIBLE LEARNING, TEACHING, LIVING AND WORKING ENVIRONMENTS

**SUCCESS:** STUDENTS, FACULTY AND STAFF WILL ULTIMATELY CARRY THESE IDEAS FORWARD, CONTRIBUTING TO A MORE EQUITABLE WORLD

At the University of Waterloo, we are mindful and thoughtful in our mission to proactively promote — and remove barriers to — equity. We strive to achieve excellence in equity.

At the University of Waterloo we value:

**INCLUSION**

**DIVERSITY**

**EQUITY**

**ACCESSIBILITY** FOR **SUCCESS** TODAY AND ALWAYS!

EQUITY. IDEAS FOR LIFE.
THE FOLLOWING THREE STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS, OR GOALS, HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED TO ESTABLISH THE PATH TO EQUITY:

1. An equitable organizational culture for students, faculty and staff at the University;
2. Supportive systems for students, faculty and staff at the University; and
3. A diverse workforce to foster innovation and excellence at the University.

VISION
- EQUITABLE LEARNING, TEACHING, WORKING, LIVING ENVIRONMENTS

GOALS
- EQUITABLE ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE
- SUPPORTIVE SYSTEMS
- DIVERSE WORKFORCE

OBJECTIVES
- DEVELOP AND PROMOTE A STRATEGIC APPROACH TO EQUITY
- EVALUATE AND ENHANCE POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND PRACTICES
- ADDRESS SYSTEMIC ISSUES
- EQUITABLE RECRUITMENT
- RETENTION

The Equity Office is a central source of expertise for University community members on substantive equality, diversity and inclusion. The Office staff will endeavour to act with the highest level of professionalism, in a manner that upholds the respect and dignity of individuals.

Equity Office staff will be committed to learning and development so as to innovate and advance equity at the University. The Office staff will advise and support stakeholders to create and maintain equitable learning, teaching, working and living environments at the University. Staff will "proactively articulate, promote and effect change to achieve equity for students, faculty and staff through policies, programs and practice".
STATEMENT OF ENDS

THE EQUITY OFFICE WILL:

1. Develop and promote a strategic approach to advance equity at the University
   Working in collaboration with stakeholders, the Director will develop and support a strategic approach to equity including establishing goals and objectives to further the University’s strategic plan and priorities.

2. Evaluate and enhance University policies, procedures and practices
   a. The Director will assist with review and creation of policies and procedures to support equity at the University.
   b. The Director supports managerial efforts to be proactive in fostering equity in individual units. The Director will advise managers about practices that promote equity goals and objectives in their division or department.

3. Address systemic issues
   a. The Director and staff will work with managers to increase awareness about systemic issues. The Director and staff will maintain the necessary expertise including knowledge of current issues and climate, to assist with the identification of systemic issues that could impact students, faculty and staff adversely.
   b. The Office will provide advice and consultation to address equity-related concerns and systemic issues raised by stakeholders.

4. Develop and implement plans for equitable recruitment and selection
   The Office will develop and pilot the plan for equitable faculty recruitment in order to diversify the faculty cohort in support of the University’s strategic plan and HeForShe priorities. The Office will also guide the development and implementation of equitable recruitment of staff in support of the University’s strategic plan and priorities.

5. Develop and implement retention strategies
   With a focus on equity-related needs, the Office will develop a retention strategy for faculty members. Where the interests of faculty and staff intersect, a consistent approach that meets the needs of both faculty and staff will be favoured. The Office will support the development and implementation of retention strategies for staff where equity needs exist.

6. To support the implementation of the five objectives listed above, learning and development will also be provided. The Office will play a lead role in engaging stakeholders with equity-related learning and development. The Office will assist community members, especially managers, to:
   » Proactively promote a campus culture supportive of equity, one that is welcoming and fully and fairly engages diverse people;
   » Address equity-related concerns such as climate issues;
   » Attract and retain a diverse workforce; and
   » Enhance competencies to build and work with diverse teams.
statement of means

To facilitate the Equity Office’s goals and objectives, the following projects will be developed and implemented based on resources, priorities and feasibility.

1. An equitable organizational culture for students, faculty and staff at the University

   PROJECT A. Senior management commitment to equity
   I. » Articulate commitment to equity goals and actively promote them with direct reports and to the community at large;

   PROJECT B. Promote an equitable organizational culture
   I. » Support senior managers, deans, chairs and managers to address equity proactively;
   II. » Assist with issue identification, assessment and development of solutions to equity-related issues at an individual or systemic level;
   III. » Communicate equity-related values and principles to campus community members.

TIMELINE FOR PLAN

This Equity Office strategic plan, 2014-20, aims to establish equity practices on campus. The specific goals and objectives of the Equity Office for each year will be identified in a yearly implementation plan.
2. Supportive systems — Enhance and align systems to support equity, diversity, and inclusion

PROJECT A. Examine policies and procedures that impact retention of faculty and staff, prioritize and develop plans for action where feasible.
   I. » Explore feasibility of a dependent care fund to reimburse expenses incurred due to work-related travel;
   II. » Develop procedures for the provision of accommodation;
   III. » Examine policies and determine how to support their consistent application;
   IV. » Explore retention rates of faculty and staff and determine causes for exits including identifying equity related issues;
   V. » Develop and support the implementation of a retention strategy for faculty that addresses equity related needs;
   VI. » Assist with the development of a retention strategy for staff to address equity related needs.

PROJECT B. Examine practices that impact retention of students, faculty and staff
   I. » Create and implement an inclusive washroom plan;
   II. » Develop initiatives that enhance safety on campus.

3. A diverse workforce — Attract and recruit diverse talented faculty and staff

PROJECT A. Support equitable recruitment and selection of faculty with a focus on increasing representation of women as well as address any under-representation of other historically disadvantaged groups;
   I. » Review recruitment related policies and procedures.
   II. » Develop equitable hiring procedures.
   III. » Develop and deliver training sessions on implicit/unconscious bias for faculty members.

PROJECT B. Support equitable recruitment of talented staff with a view to addressing any under-representation of historically disadvantaged groups.

4. Learning and Development (LD)

PROJECT A. To increase awareness, inform, educate and provide training on equity matters
   I. » Determine specific activities that the Office will support to raise awareness about equity;
   II. » Pilot and implement education and training for students to prepare them for working with diverse teams.

PROJECT B. Capacity building for equity
   I. » Pilot and implement equitable recruitment and selection training for faculty search committees;
   II. » Develop and deliver equity-related senior manager nomination committee training sessions;
   III. » Develop equitable workplace training and education. Pilot and implement training for a future campus-wide sweep;
   IV. » Deliver equity-related education and training sessions.

PROJECT C. Communicate with campus community members about equity-related initiatives.