

Thank you for joining

**THE FUTURE-READY WORKFORCE SERIES:  
TRANSFORMING WORKPLACES FOR EQUITY-  
DESERVING LEARNERS**

The session will begin soon.



# FUTURE-READY WORKFORCE SERIES: TRANSFORMING WORKPLACES FOR EQUITY- DESERVING LEARNERS

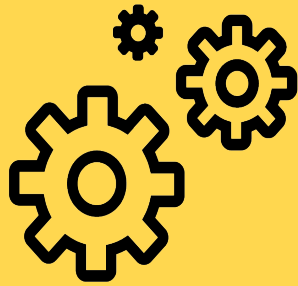
Anne-Marie Fannon, Director, Work-Learn Institute  
Anushka Ashish Kuwar , Research Assistant, Alumni  
Veronica Nhio-son, Research Assistant, Alumni



# TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I acknowledge that the University of Waterloo, where this work was created, is located on the traditional territory of the Neutral, Anishnaabeg and Haudenosaunee people. The University of Waterloo is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land granted to the Six Nations that includes six miles on each side of the Grand River.

Our active work toward reconciliation takes place across our campuses through research, learning, teaching, and community building, and is co-ordinated within the Office of Indigenous Relations



**65 years**

of innovation & growth  
in co-operative education  
and work-integrated  
learning programs



**25,000+**

co-op students  
enrolled in

**120+**

programs



**9,300+**

employers in

**75+**

countries



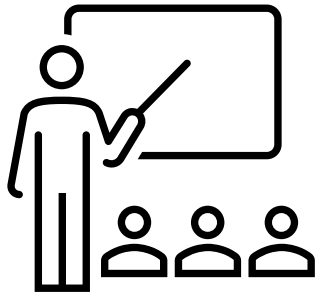
home of the  
**Work-Learn  
Institute  
(WxL)**



UNIVERSITY OF  
**WATERLOO**

# ABOUT WxL & THE FUTURE-READY WORKFORCE SERIES

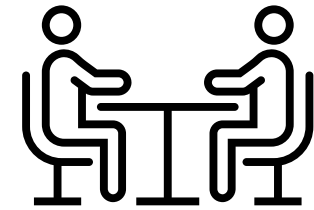
## EDUCATION



## RESEARCH



## CONSULTING



Our **future-ready workforce series** is designed to share insights about the future workforce that can influence how organizations build their talent strategy through five key themes: recruiting, engaging, converting, retaining, upskilling and reskilling.

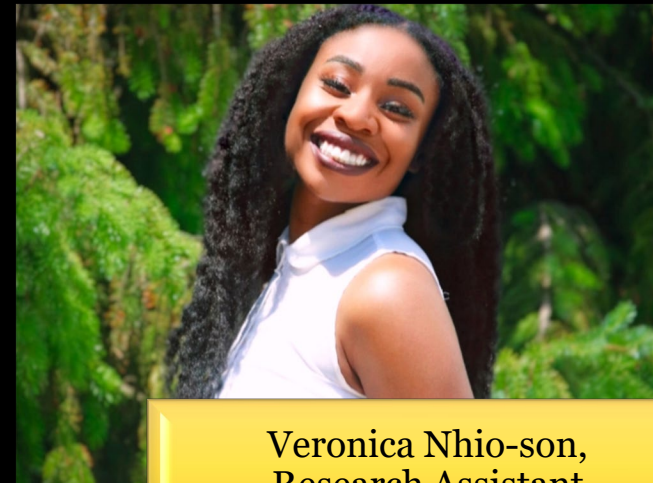
# MEET OUR SPEAKERS



Anne-Marie Fannon, Director,  
Work-Learn Institute



Anushka Ashish Kuwar,  
Research Assistant



Veronica Nhio-son,  
Research Assistant

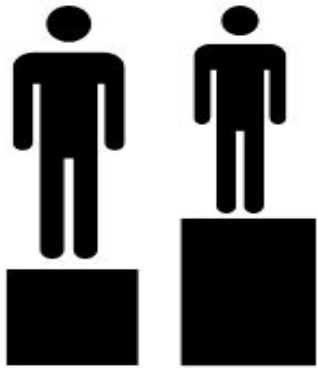


# OVERVIEW

- Importance of Building Inclusive Workplaces
- Research-informed Insights: Barriers faced by students from equity deserving groups
- Tips for building inclusive WIL experiences
- Call to action
- Q&A

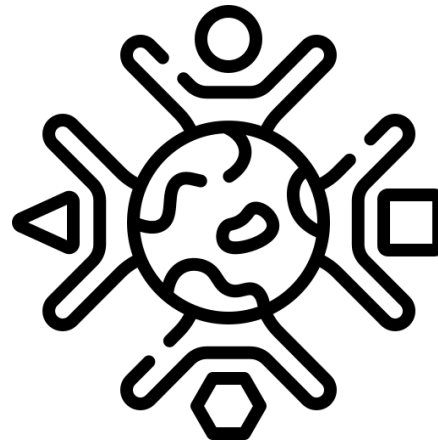
# CONSIDER NOT JUST WHO HAS PRIVILEGE BUT WHETHER THEIR PRIVILEGE IS USED TO HELP LEVEL THE PLAYING FIELD

## Equity



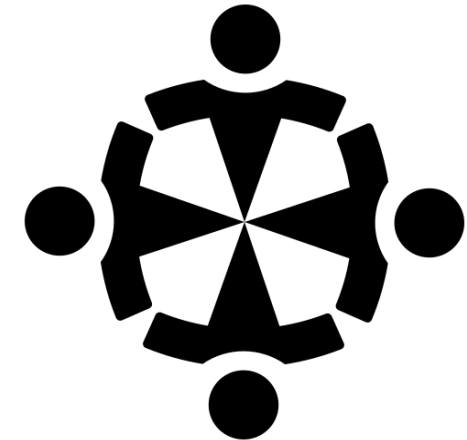
of policy & practice

## Diversity



of people and perspectives

## Inclusion



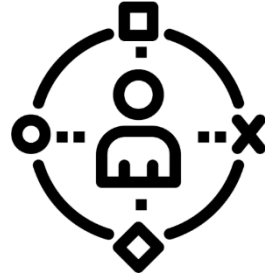
of all voices & visions



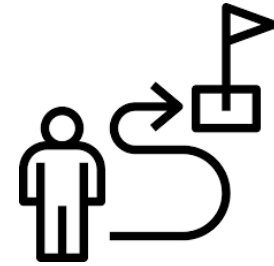
# EQUITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION IN WORKPLACES



Broader talent pool



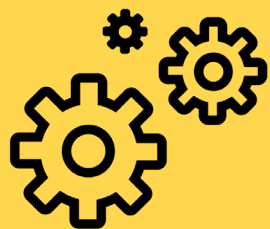
Increased engagement



Reduction of bias and stereotypes

**EDI CONTRIBUTES TO RETENTION**  
& COMMITMENT TO **EDI** CONTRIBUTE SIGNIFICANTLY TO ENHANCING AN  
**ORGANIZATION'S REPUTATION**

*Source: Talentlyft*



**Improved  
Productivity**



**2X**

More likely to  
meet or exceed  
financial targets



**6X**

More likely to be  
innovative



**6X**

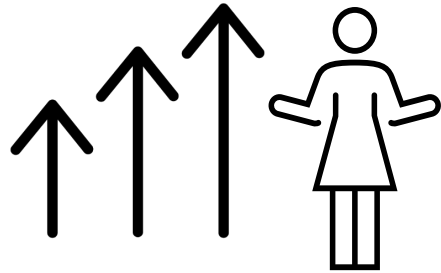
More likely to  
effectively anticipate  
change

*Source: [accessibleemployers.ca](http://accessibleemployers.ca)*

*Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in WIL :*

**ENSURING THAT ALL STUDENTS HAVE  
INCLUSIVE WIL EXPERIENCES**

# EQUITY DESERVING GROUP (EDG) PARTICIPATION IN NUMBERS:



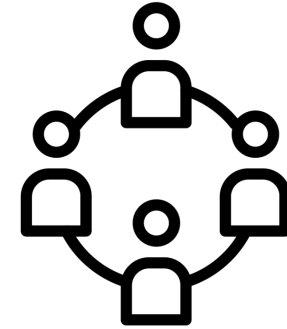
**59%**

Women faced barriers during WIL versus 44% for men.



**62%**

Of students with disabilities faced barriers compared to 52% for students without disabilities.



**70%**

Of international students faced challenges compared to 47% for domestic students.

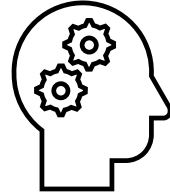
*Source: HEQCO*

# EXPLORING THE PROBLEM LANDSCAPE



## Disparities in WIL participation

EDGs participate in WIL at lower rates



## Documented inequalities and discrimination

EDGs encounter discrimination, unequal resources and underemployment



## Common issues across EDGs

There are some common challenges across students from equity-deserving groups

*We wanted to know:*

# **WHAT BARRIERS STUDENTS FROM EDGs FACE THROUGHOUT THEIR WIL EXPERIENCES**

# DEFINING EDGs

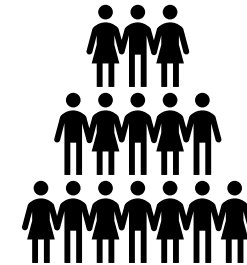
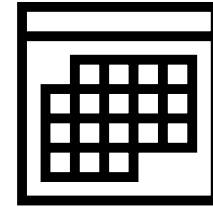
An EDG may include but is not limited to the following list. Note that some individuals belong to many groups:

- Women
- Racialized peoples
- Members of 2sLGBTQ+ communities
- People living with disabilities
- People who identify as members of a racialized community, who exercise cultural and/or religious practices, and any intersection of these identities
- Indigenous groups in the land we now know as Canada including First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities, who are sovereign nations with inherent rights
- International students



# WHAT WE DID:

Conducted interviews with **30 randomly selected students** from equity-deserving groups (**EDGs**) with co-op program experience.





# RESEARCH FINDINGS

# INFORMATION GAP

- Information discrepancies
- Lack of guidance
- Mismatch in understanding

*“I just **don’t know who to go to about that**. Like, I don’t know if it’s HR and nobody’s really told me who I would talk to get accommodations.”*

*Female student living with disability*

*“harassment and discrimination aren’t even reported, right? It’s like, oh, I experienced that. But like, I don’t know who to go. Like, **who’s gonna listen to this, right?**”*

*International and BIPOC Female student*

# ANUSHKA'S PERSPECTIVE ON INFORMATION GAPS

Lack of clarity

Experience confusion

Hesitation seeking help



# DISCLOSURE AND SOCIAL STIGMA

## Discrimination Based on Identity:

- Fear of discrimination
- Impact on job opportunities and relationships
- Impact on student mental health
- Self-censorship in workplace interactions

*I don't really want to tell many people because it's just literally based on my experiences in my life, there is a significant, not majority, but significant chance that the **people involved just will lose all their respect for me because I'm disabled person** and maybe not explicitly in their head think about this, but they'll start treating me differently and start not having a good attitude towards me.*

Student with Down syndrome

*I do believe that interviews were a bit more challenging to make a good impression because of my identification, whether that was like subconsciously or consciously made by an interviewer, but **I do believe it had an impact, so I did not want to mention that.***

Female student and identified as 2SLGBTQ+

# ANUSHKA'S PERSPECTIVE ON DISCLOSURE & SOCIAL STIGMA

Self-censorship

Feelings of isolation

Academic & family pressure



# RECRUITMENT

- Insufficient information in job postings
- Inaccessible interviews

*“Now post-COVID stuff their starting to do interviews at the Tatham Center again and like stuff like that. **With actual mobility issues, that is a lot harder than just going to a zoom interview.** Because what should be for a normal person a 10-minute walk and it's not a 10-minute walk for me, right? Or things like that. So, a lot of with COVID ending, a lot of the great for accessibility things that happen at least on my end with respect to digital communication becoming available. Suddenly now it feels like... when a lot of that has gone away with COVID.”*

*Student living with disability*

# VERONICA'S PERSPECTIVE ON RECRUITMENT CHALLENGES

Inaccessibility

Job Misinformation



# WORK TERM EXPERIENCE

- Insufficient employer policies
- Training deficiency in supporting equity-deserving groups
- Microaggressions/discrimination

*Generally speaking, it just felt like. Like I had a problem. And **no one was really quite sure how to address it**, so they kind of just gave me the answer of try to look towards the future for hope or like ... Yeah, basically just keep looking forward, keep moving forward and that's what I did. And it didn't work.*

*Student living with disability*



# VERONICA'S PERSPECTIVE ON WORK TERM CHALLENGES

Unpaid labour

EDI knowledge





# STRATEGIES: BRIDGING BARRIERS TO OPPORTUNITIES

# UNCONCIOUS BIAS AWARENESS

Over **66%** of Waterloo students said an employer who **values EDI is very important or essential**

Explore initiatives from Waterloo winners of the Co-operative and Experiential Education Employer Impact Award In Equity, Diversity & Inclusion



Encourage individuals to reflect on their own unconscious bias impacts, try **the Implicit Association Test (IAT)**

# TRANSPARENCY MATTERS

*[...] I feel like it was just quite anxiety inducing cause there's no feedback from employers necessarily describing ... especially like post interview, there's not necessary feedback for like why you weren't chosen for a position which makes sense. It just feels like students are often left in the dust, quite put into kind of a position of don't know why this is happening, but it's happening. So we just keep rolling forward.*

*Student living with disability*

Be transparent about the process, timeline, and expectations both during the selection process and performance evaluation feedback.



**Use Inclusive Language**  
Tailor feedback to students needs  
encourage self-expression

# DEMONSTRATE YOUR COMMITMENT TO EDI

*[...] they were very progressive inside of their [job] description... So when I was applying, it did feel like **I could probably feel like safe and comfortable here**. And then when I actually was on the job, it did seem that way as well. And it was pretty diverse in like the sense of the different workers - there's men and women of all different ethnicities and sexual orientations and everything.*

*2SLGBTQ+ Student*



**Training Topics:**  
Disclosure and accommodation  
negotiation, socialization,  
intercultural communication  
and Bias-mitigation...etc.

# MENTORING STUDENTS

Over **78%** of Waterloo students said they wanted an employer who offers **training and development**

**Mentorship Program:** Launch a mentorship program pairing EDG students with experienced team members. Communicate the purpose and benefits of the program, emphasizing its role in professional development.



Arrange a session for students to connect with HR rep.

Facilitate introductions to the broader team/coffee chats

# COLLABORATE WITH HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

**Build partnerships** with higher education to show your commitment to EDI and EDG students

**Engage in open communication:** explore ways to eliminate barriers through collaborative efforts.

**Explore resources that are available through your higher education institution partners**

# NEXT STEPS



# FUTURE READY WORKFORCE SERIES

- Resources for you
- Join us throughout 2024 for a special series focused on supporting inclusive WIL for diverse learners
- Topics will include:
  - accommodations for WIL students
  - supporting racialized students
  - building inclusive experiences for 2SLGBTQ+WIL students
  - recruiting and supporting neurodiverse learners

# NEXT STEPS

- Team of student researchers interviewing WIL students to identify best practices and begin generating solutions
- Community brainstorming sessions to collectively devise solutions and implementation strategies
- Interested in helping out?
  - Simply reply 'yes' to the poll and we'll contact you!

# Q+A

# STAY CONNECTED...

## WORK-LEARN INSTITUTE (WxL)

[UWATERLOO.CA/WORK-LEARN-INSTITUTE](https://uwaterloo.ca/work-learn-institute)

 [linkedin.com/company/worklearninstitute](https://www.linkedin.com/company/worklearninstitute)

 [worklearn@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:worklearn@uwaterloo.ca)



Learn more: <https://uwaterloo.ca/hire/events/cee-employer-impact-conference>



**THANK YOU!**



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**WATERLOO**