

For Nov. 15, 2005

Report to the University Affairs Board (UAB)

From: UTSC - Special Advisor to the Principal on Equity Issues (Aysan Sev'er)

MANDATE:

The UTSC advisory position on equity issues has been created for the first time in July 1, 2005. The conceptualization of equity is based on the justice and fairness concepts identified in the Stepping-Up document and its companion papers. It subsumes equitable treatment and opportunities one receives based on one's potential, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, Aboriginal status and/or disability. The mandate of the advisory position covers all equity related issues that pertain to UTSC students, staff and faculty, including hiring, promotion and recruitment and promotion of an inclusive learning environment. Professor Aysan Sev'er (Sociology/UTSC) has been appointed to serve for a two-year term in this newly created position. She reports directly to the Vice-President and Principal of UTSC. Since September 2005, she is a member of the Principal's Advisory Group (PAG) and routinely informs PAG of her on-going work. She is also a member of the Equity Advisory Board (EAB) and Equity Issues Advisory group (EIAG).

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES: Due to the recency of the creation of the UTSC advisory role on equity issues, there is nothing to report for the 2004-2005 period. However, many opportunities and challenges are already present in the position which need to be highlighted:

Opportunities:

- To establish a positive working-link with bodies of UTSC Governance.
- To establish positive working-links with the (six) departmental chairs at UTSC.
- To establish strong working-links with existing equity-related offices at UTSC (most particularly, with Accessibility Services, Teaching/Learning Services and the Health & Wellness Centre).
- To establish a strong working-link with existing student-related offices at UTSC (most particularly, with Student Affairs Office and elected representatives of SCSU).
- To establish positive links with equity, gender, culture and/or faith-based student groups/committees at UTSC, including the Positive Space Committee.
- To represent equity related issues at UTSC at the Equity Advisory Board (EAB) and its sub-groups, and to bring decisions of EAB back to UTSC.
- To represent equity related issues at UTSC at Equity Issues Advisory Group (EIAG) and its sub-groups, and to bring decisions of EIAG back to UTSC.
- To establish strong working-links with existing equity-related offices/officers that have a tri-campus mandate (most particularly, the Equity and Status of Women Office, Anti-Racism and Cultural Diversity Office, LGBTQ Resources and Programs Office, Sexual Harassment Office, Aboriginal Student Services and Programs, Employment Equity Office, Ombudsperson and the Director of Faculty Renewal).

Challenges:

- In unison with the existing services, to work towards equity for students, staff and faculty on one of the most diverse campuses in Canada (UTSC).
- To help identify and respond to challenges which may be specific to UTSC within a centralized, tri-campus equity format.
- To ascertain that equity is an integral part of student experience at UTSC.
- To highlight the continuing importance of equity within faculty and staff recruitment, hiring, promotion and retention processes.
- To find ways of avoiding satiation and tiredness in the interest on equity matters.
- To establish new or strengthen existing bridges amongst numerous equity offices and services.
- To gather relevant and accurate base-line information from which progress and achievement can be measured.