



TO: University Affairs Board

SPONSOR: Professor Angela Hildyard, Vice-President, Human Resources & Equity

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DATE: April 24, 2006 for April 25, 2006

AGENDA ITEM: 4

**ITEM IDENTIFICATION:**

Equity Statement

**JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:**

The University Affairs Board is responsible for equity issues and initiatives. (Terms of Reference, Section 5).

**PREVIOUS ACTION TAKEN:**

A key recommendation of the Equity Infrastructure Review, undertaken in 2004-05, was that the University develops an Equity Statement. The Equity Statement was drafted by a working group established by the Equity Advisory Board. Drafts have been reviewed by the members of the Equity Advisory Board and PVP.

**HIGHLIGHTS:**

The Equity Statement outlines a broad vision of the university community, which will benefit all members of our community. It sets out our commitment to the principles of equity, diversity, human rights, inclusiveness, and respect. It connects these principles to excellence. It reiterates our commitment to the existing values of freedom of speech and expression, academic freedom and freedom of research. It sets out some of the efforts that the University will make in order to realize this vision, and also identifies various members of the University community whose participation would assist in creating the envisioned community. Some efforts that the University commits to making include those directed at preventing or remedying prohibited discrimination and harassment, eliminating or minimizing adverse effects of barriers, increasing our level of diversity, and being inclusive and respectful of all. In sum, the new Statement is a broad commitment by the University to the entire University community.

While the original mandate of the working group was not to replace the Statement on Human Rights, it quickly became evident that the Equity Statement encompasses and expands upon the content of the Statement on Human Rights, making the latter redundant. The Statement on Human Rights is a very short statement that briefly touches on equity, diversity and preventing or remedying prohibited discrimination or harassment.

Almost half of the draft Equity Statement is drawn from the language of the existing policies, statements and remarks listed below:

- Statement on Human Rights,
- Statement of Commitment regarding Persons with Disabilities,
- Statement on Prohibited Discrimination and Discriminatory Harassment,
- Policy on Freedom of Speech
- Stepping Up
- President Naylor's recent remarks on recent incidents and allegations involving race
- interview Angela Hildyard gave to the Bulletin in January.

**FINANCIAL AND/OR PLANNING IMPLICATIONS:**

N/A

**RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the University Affairs Board approve the Equity Statement, and that the Equity Statement replace the Statement on Human Rights dated June 25, 1991.