

## Equity Statement

*In working toward its goals under this Statement, the University will act conscientiously and in keeping with its own policies and legislation related to equity issues, including the following: Statement of Institutional Purpose, Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters, Policies and Procedures: Sexual Harassment, Employment Equity Policy, Statement of Commitment Regarding Persons with Disabilities, the Ontario Human Rights Code<sup>1</sup>, and any current or future guideline or procedure dealing with equity issues.*

### **Commitment to Equity and Equitable Principles**

At the University of Toronto, we wish to be an equitable community, one that is rich with diversity and inclusive of all persons, that respects and protects the human rights of all persons, and that is based upon understanding and mutual respect for the dignity and worth of every person.<sup>2</sup> In our efforts to become an equitable community, we will strive to ensure that all students and employees have access to the opportunity to participate in the full range of activities that the University offers, and to achieve their full potential as members of the University community.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, we will continue to respect the core values of freedom of speech and expression, academic freedom and freedom of research.<sup>4</sup>

### **Excellence**

Our culture of excellence depends upon equity and equitable principles. Excellent scholarship and teaching can only thrive in an environment that embraces the broadest range of people and encourages the free expression of their diverse perspectives.<sup>5</sup> When we provide an equitable and inclusive working and learning environment, and when we focus attention on recruiting a diverse staff and student body, all members of the community are able to thrive and to maximize their creativity and their contributions, thereby supporting excellence.<sup>6</sup>

### **Discrimination and Harassment**

Our commitment to equity and encouraging a climate of understanding and respect for all persons encompasses the aspiration to achieve an environment that is free of prohibited discrimination and harassment<sup>7</sup> and the intention to prevent or remedy prohibited discrimination or harassment.<sup>8</sup> Every member of the University community should be able

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<sup>1</sup> From Statement on Human Rights. Similar statement made in Statement of Commitment regarding Persons with Disabilities.

<sup>2</sup> This paragraph is based on the first paragraph of the Statement of Commitment.

<sup>3</sup> From Statement of Commitment.

<sup>4</sup> Adapted from Statement on Prohibited Discrimination and Discriminatory Harassment.

<sup>5</sup> Sentence from President's statement, March 23/06.

<sup>6</sup> Sentence partly adapted from Angela Hildyard's Bulletin interview

<sup>7</sup> From "aspiration" to "harassment" from the Statement on Prohibited Discrimination and Discriminatory Harassment.

<sup>8</sup> From "prevent" to "harassment" based on Statement on Human Rights.

to work, live, teach and learn in a climate that is free from prohibited discrimination and harassment.<sup>9</sup>

### **Barriers**

As we continuously strive to be an equitable community, we will work to eliminate or minimize the adverse effects of any barriers that we find, including physical, environmental, attitudinal, communication or technological that may prevent an individual from full participation in the University community.<sup>10</sup>

### **Diversity**

The University seeks to be a model of diversity, both nationally and internationally.<sup>11</sup> We recognize that our teaching, scholarship and other activities take place in the context of a richly diverse society.<sup>12</sup> Reflecting this diversity in our own community is uniquely valuable to the University as it contributes to the diversification of ideas<sup>13</sup> and thereby enriches our scholarship, teaching and other activities. We will proactively seek to increase diversity among our community members and hope that our teaching and administrative staffs will mirror the diversity of our student body.

### **Inclusiveness and Respect**

We aspire to create a community that is inclusive, that takes into account individual and group differences, and that encourages and enables the adoption of diverse approaches in order to meet a variety of needs. In order to succeed at bringing together a diverse community, we wish to create a culture of respect for the differences<sup>14</sup> that each individual contributes. Through respect for each other, we will achieve an inclusive community in which all people feel safe and welcome.<sup>15</sup>

### **Responsibility**

The creation of an equitable community, one that is diverse as well as inclusive and that is respectful and protects the human rights of its members, requires the work of every member of the community, across all of our sites and campuses, including students, teaching staff,

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<sup>9</sup> Sentence adapted from Policy on Freedom of Speech.

<sup>10</sup> From Statement of Commitment regarding Persons with Disabilities.

<sup>11</sup> Sentence adapted from Stepping Up

<sup>12</sup> Sentence from the Statement on Human Rights.

<sup>13</sup> From “diversity” to “ideas” dapted from faculty job posting language.

<sup>14</sup> Adapted from President’s statement, March 23/06: “...devote major resources to strengthening the culture of inclusiveness and respect for differences that already characterizes so much of our University.”

<sup>15</sup> “feel safe and welcome” from President’s statement, March 23/06.

administrative staff, visitors, alumni and guests.<sup>16</sup> The effort put in by each individual will be rewarded through membership and the ability to participate fully in this rich and respectful community.

The University will strive to make equitable considerations a part of the processes of setting policies, developing procedures, and decision-making at all levels of the institution. While for governance purposes, responsibility for this Statement resides with the Vice-President of Human Resources and Equity, daily responsibility for ensuring that the values expressed in this Statement live and breathe throughout the University will also rest with the President, the Vice-President and Provost, the Vice-Presidents and Vice-Provosts, and each Principal, Dean, Chair and manager, within the scope of each person's role in the University.

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<sup>16</sup> Adapted from Stepping Up: “equity and the creation of a truly collegial environment for every member of a diverse community, is the work of every single member of the University of Toronto community: students, staff, and faculty.”