



TO: University Affairs Board

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DATE: May 25, 2006 for May 30 2006

AGENDA ITEM: 4

ITEM IDENTIFICATION:

Statement on Equity, Diversity and Human Rights

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 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, PVP, UAB and members of the new SAC executive.

HIGHLIGHTS:

The 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 new 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.

In the April 25, 2006, UAB meeting, a number of suggestions were made that were taken away for further consideration. As outlined below, some of these suggestions have been incorporated into the attached draft. It was decided that some suggestions would not be addressed in the statement.

It was stated at the UAB meeting of April 25 that the sentence that the University "hope[d] to mirror the diversity of the community" was insufficiently strong. This statement has been amended.

It was recommended that the Statement contain a commitment to monitor the realization of the University's goals with respect to Equity, and that implementation of the Statement include monitoring and compliance. There are numerous documents within the University that track various aspects of its commitment to Equity. A specific commitment dealing with monitoring was not added to this Statement. Monitoring will continue under other policies and procedures.

It was recommended that a footnote be added to explain what the prohibited grounds of discrimination are. An appendix has been added that contains a link to an on-line version of the Human Rights Code, which lists the grounds that are protected in Ontario. Because these grounds change due to legislative amendments and case law, a list has not been added to the Statement.

It was recommended that the salient points of the Statement be collated into a statement of rights for members of the University community. It was felt that the Statement is quite short and accessible, and that such a list would be repetitive.

The only group that raised concerns with the Statement after that last UAB meeting was the new SAC executive. The members wanted to keep a separate statement on human rights and they proposed a lengthy preamble acknowledging inequity and inequality as a

condemnable social reality. In response to their first proposal, the revised Statement includes “Human Rights” in its title and in a specifically named subsection. In response to their second, it was concluded that the Statement itself is not the appropriate place for a statement of context such as that proposed. A statement of context is found in our recommendation, below.

FINANCIAL AND/OR PLANNING IMPLICATIONS:

N/A

RECOMMENDATION:

WHEREAS: In recognition of the fact that in society at large, certain groups are treated inequitably because of individual and systemic biases,

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT the Statement on Equity, Diversity and Human Rights be approved AND that the Statement on Equity, Diversity and Human Rights replace the Statement on Human Rights dated June 25, 1991.

Equity Statement on Equity, Diversity and Human Rights

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, Statement on Protection of Freedom of Speech, the Ontario Human Rights Code, and any current or future guideline or procedure dealing with equity issues. Links to websites for these documents are listed in an Appendix to this Statement.

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. 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. At the same time, we will continue to respect the core values of freedom of speech and expression, academic freedom and freedom of research.

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. 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.

Human Rights

We are committed to respecting the human rights of all persons. Our commitment to human rights, equity and the encouragement of a climate of understanding and respect for all persons encompasses the aspiration to achieve an environment that is free of prohibited discrimination and harassment and the intention to prevent or remedy prohibited discrimination or harassment. Every member of the University community should be able to work, live, teach and learn in a climate that is free from prohibited discrimination and harassment. The grounds upon which discrimination and harassment are prohibited in Ontario may be found in the *Human Rights Code*, as amended from time to time.

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.

Diversity

The University seeks to be a model of diversity, both nationally and internationally. We recognize that our teaching, scholarship and other activities take place in the context of a richly diverse society. Reflecting this diversity in our own community is uniquely valuable to the University as it contributes to the diversification of ideas and thereby enriches our scholarship, teaching and other activities. We will proactively seek to increase diversity among our community members and it is our aim to have teaching and administrative staffs that mirror the diversity of the pool of potential applicants for those positions.

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 that each individual contributes. Through respect for each other, we will achieve an inclusive community in which all people feel safe and welcome.

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, administrative staff, visitors, alumni and guests. 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.

Appendix

Statement of Institutional Purpose:

<http://www.utoronto.ca/govcncl/pap/policies/mission.pdf>

Code of Behaviour on Academic Matter:

<http://www.utoronto.ca/govcncl/pap/policies/behaveac.pdf>

Policies and Procedures: Sexual Harassment:

<http://www.utoronto.ca/govcncl/pap/policies/sexual.pdf>

Employment Equity Policy:

<http://www.utoronto.ca/govcncl/pap/policies/emequity.pdf>

Statement of Commitment Regarding Persons with Disabilities:

<http://www.utoronto.ca/govcncl/pap/policies/disabled.pdf>

Statement on Protection of Freedom of Speech:

<http://www.utoronto.ca/govcncl/pap/policies/frspeech.pdf>

Ontario Human Rights Code:

http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/DBLaws/Statutes/English/90h19_e.htm