



## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Executive Committee of Faculty Council (September 23, 2016)  
Faculty Council (October 25, 2016)

**From:** Professor Edgar Acosta  
Chair, Community Affairs & Gender Issues Committee

**Date:** September 10, 2016

**Re:** Planned Activities for the CA&GI Committee, 2016-17

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## REPORT CLASSIFICATION

This is a routine or minor policy matter that will be considered by the Executive Committee for approving and forwarding to Faculty Council for information.

## BACKGROUND

The mandate of the Community Affairs & Gender Issues Committee (CA&GI) is to seek to improve and to recommend on strategies related to student recruitment and outreach, and the quality of life within the Faculty community.

The committee has two main goals this year, first to complete (and if possible begin the implementation of) a Diversity Climate Survey (DCS), as discussed below; and second, to supplement current outreach efforts by promoting the production of online videos that showcase the experience of engineering students at the University of Toronto. Efforts on this second goal were already initiated during the summer of 2016, in collaboration with the UNERD team and the Vice-Dean Undergraduate office, and are described below.

At the March 22, 2016 Faculty Council, the following terms of references for a diversity climate survey were discussed:

### **TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE DIVERSITY CLIMATE SURVEY**

This document summarizes the objectives, scope, and planned implementation of a Diversity Climate Survey (DCS) for the Faculty of Applied Science & Engineering (FASE) of the University of Toronto.

Within this document, diversity is conceived as having the following dimensions:

- Ethnicity
- Gender and sexual orientation
- Religion
- Age
- Disability
- Legal status (marital, visa vs. residence/citizen, First Nations status)
- Socio economic background

Diversity in its various forms is recognized by FASE as a fundamental value and a strength in an interconnected, global economy. FASE recognizes that supporting our diverse community in a way that enriches our learning and research endeavours requires understanding of the challenges and opportunities towards such integration. The DCS is a tool in achieving an integrated diverse community.

Universities such as UCLA, Texas A&M and the University of Maryland have used various forms of DCS to identify groups facing marginalization, discrimination, disparagement or alienation. These institutions and others have used the DCS data to develop and implement policies that resulted in greater recruitment and retention of students, faculty and staff of identified groups. Those policies include (i) increasing awareness and providing training of faculty, staff and student leadership on the issues facing specific groups and strategies to improve or mitigate the challenges faced by those groups; (ii) promoting groups or activities (including celebrations) that educate the community on the life and culture of specific groups, and promoting dialogue; (iii) targeting recruitment strategies to help strengthen our diversity; (iv) encouraging faculty members to incorporate elements in the curriculum that help correct misunderstandings or stereotypes associated with identified groups; and (v) changing facilities, procedures or schedules to facilitate important practices associated with identified groups. In light of the data produced by the DCS, FASE will use the strategies mentioned above and others to support groups identified by the DCS as facing any form of alienation within our community.

To this end, the objectives of this survey are to:

- Assess the diversity of our community, including students, faculty and staff
- Help identify groups facing marginalization, discrimination, disparagement or alienation
- Assess if current FASE practices/policies provide support to identified groups, inviting comments on specific practices and policies and potential recommendations for changes
- Increase awareness of diversity as a fundamental value for our FASE community

The design and implementation of the DCS resides with the Faculty's Community Affairs & Gender Issues Committee, aided by consultants who will help with the appropriate wording of the questions. The proposed questions will also be vetted by the University's Research Ethics Board. The implementation of the questions will

follow after a motion to approve the implementation of the final survey is approved at Faculty Council.

After discussion, the following motions were approved at the March 22, 2016 Council:

- That the terms of reference for a diversity climate survey, as described in report 3499, be approved.
- That the Faculty of Applied Science & Engineering undertakes to develop the diversity climate survey as per the terms of reference described in report 3499.

**During 2016 summer, the deliberations commenced with the objective of having a final set of questions selected and approved by the Ethics Committee and Faculty Council before the end of the 2016-2017 academic year.**

In the summer of 2016, CA&GI approached the UNERD team with an idea of putting together a student video competition – similar to those ran by NSERC and other institutions. The idea received ample support, particularly from Susan Lee (Assistant Director, Student Experience & Teaching Development, FASE) and Abhinav Mohan (CHE undergraduate student) who took ownership of the project, and with the advice of various groups (including CA&GI), developed a set of terms and logistics for the first U of T undergraduate student video competition. The video competition was launched at the time of the UNERD podium and poster presentation (<http://unerd.skule.ca/index.php/video/>), with a deadline of September 12, 2016 for submissions. The competition looks at two categories: student life and undergraduate summer research. The logistics and costs associated with this competition have been supported by the Vice-Dean Undergraduate's office and by the CA&GI committee.

**The CA&GI's objective for this 2016-2017 year is to provide support to the UNERD student video competition, assembling a team of judges to evaluate the submissions and providing recommendations for future competitions, including the potential for graduate student competitions.**

#### **PROPOSAL/MOTION**

For information.