UNIVERSITY OF PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND
EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION (EDI) STRATEGY

February 2021

We acknowledge that the University of Prince Edward Island
is located on the traditional, unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People.

DEFINITIONS: EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

UPEI uses the following definitions of equity, diversity, and inclusion to promote a common understanding and meaning for the terms in respect to campus dialogue.

Equity is a principle of fairness in treatment, access to opportunity, and advancement for all members of the University community. It requires acknowledging that treating people equally does not always produce fair outcomes, and there is a need to eliminate systemic barriers and biases that have played a role in impeding the full participation of underrepresented or disadvantaged groups.

Diversity means differences between people. This can relate to the groups protected by human rights legislation, and, also within the University community, can refer to differences in beliefs, disciplines, education, and values. Understanding diversity requires recognizing that people have multiple and intersecting identities.

Inclusion is the creation of an experience where everyone on campus can feel welcomed, respected, and valued. Inclusion requires

recognizing that some groups have been historically and/or structurally disadvantaged and meaningfully engaging with those groups.

AT A GLANCE: UPEI EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION (EDI) STRATEGY

UPEI's EDI Strategy is meant to help guide our University in identifying and removing barriers, encouraging participation, and working towards an inclusive campus culture. UPEI has identified five areas of focus to help build EDI across campus.

These five focus areas are

1. **Student Success**
2. **Success of Faculty, Researchers, and Staff**
3. **Organizational Systems**
4. **Capacity Building**
5. **Campus Culture**

INTRODUCTION

This UPEI Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy is the culmination of several years of commitments and processes furthering the University's progress towards equity, diversity, and inclusion.

A key aspect of that work was the launch of the *UPEI Strategic Plan (2018–2023)*, which identifies building an **inclusive campus culture** as one of five institutional priorities. The plan also outlined **inclusion, equity, and reconciliation** as institutional values:
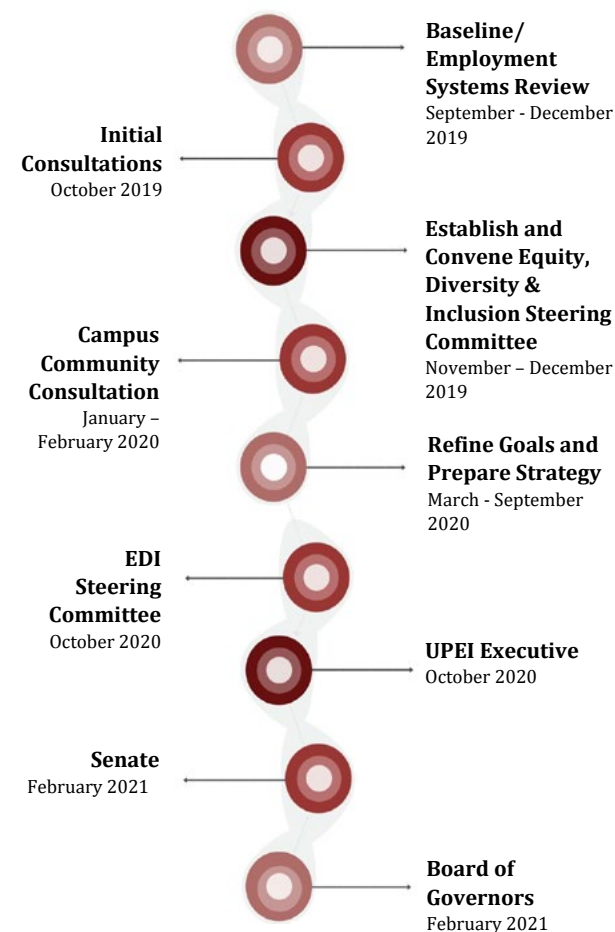
UPEI VALUE STATEMENT

As a learning community…

"We are dedicated to making UPEI an open, accessible, and welcoming community, and to the fair treatment of all persons. We are committed to continually re-examining and growing our understanding of the role UPEI must play in promoting a better understanding of cultures and identities and the needs of community members with disabilities in a manner that supports education and respectful relationships." UPEI Strategic Plan (2018–2023)

In addition to our University's Strategic Plan and this EDI Strategy, UPEI will develop a campus strategy towards reconciliation and indigenization of our campus.

Linkages between the *UPEI Strategic Plan (2018–2023)* and the commitments outlined in this EDI Strategy are highlighted throughout this document. This Strategy also aligns with previous commitments made by UPEI towards equity, diversity, and inclusion. These commitments include UPEI being a proud signatory of the NSERC Dimensions Charter, as well as its demonstrated commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion in research and innovation as set out in the UPEI *Canada Research Chairs Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Action Plan*. For more information about the background of the UPEI EDI Strategy, please see Appendix A.

Strategy Development Timeline

Baseline/ Employment Systems Review
September - December 2019

Initial Consultations
October 2019

Establish and Convene Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Steering Committee
November – December 2019

Campus Community Consultation
January – February 2020

Refine Goals and Prepare Strategy
March - September 2020

EDI Steering Committee
October 2020

UPEI Executive
October 2020

Senate
February 2021

Board of Governors
February 2021

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The UPEI EDI Strategy was a highly consultative process that took place over a year. The Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Steering Committee provided guidance throughout the process. The consultation process was integral to developing this Strategy. Through consultations and surveys, over 400 people provided input. For more information about the UPEI EDI Steering Committee, see Appendix B. Information on the strategy development process can be found in Appendix C, and a list of the consultation groups is provided in Appendix D.

The UPEI Executive and UPEI EDI Steering Committee will champion this Strategy on campus; however, we call on all members of the University community to work together towards these commitments. This Strategy is designed to direct ways to remove barriers, encourage participation, and work towards an inclusive campus culture.

COMMITMENTS

Through the exercise of developing this Strategy, UPEI has identified five key commitments on which to focus. These commitments will guide UPEI towards achieving greater equity and diversity, and building an inclusive campus culture.

STUDENT SUCCESS

Attracting a diverse student population through equitable processes is important. Once students are at UPEI, we want them to be able to reach their full potential. To do so, they must feel supported, welcomed, respected, and valued throughout their university experience.

1. Equity in Admissions

- Ensure admissions requirements, processes, and practices are equitable.
- Implement measures to increase enrolment by traditionally underrepresented groups.
- Ensure admission committees understand impacts of unconscious bias.

UPEI Strategic Plan

In the *UPEI Strategic Plan (2018–2023)*, our University committed to actions related to student success:

- Collaboratively identify and promote new pathways for the overall health and sense of belonging for our campus members.
- Develop additional approaches that support students in their transition from high school to university, strengthening the first-year experience we offer.
- Stimulate creativity and self-expression through a vibrant and supportive campus.
- Build UPEI's reputation as a welcoming university that offers a sense of belonging to campus members through its inclusive learning environment, and further incorporate Universal Design practices in the ongoing development of an accessible campus, including removing barriers that may limit students' full participation in learning.

2. Equity and Inclusion While Studying at UPEI

- Continue to build understanding of student accommodation needs and processes.
- Continue to respond to unique challenges faced by international students.
- Improve cross-cultural competency skills.

3. Fostering Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in Teaching

- Encourage delivery of culturally inclusive courses and content from diverse perspectives.
- Encourage delivery of accessible content to ensure students with disabilities are provided equitable access.
- Encourage development of Open Education Resources to support equitable access to learning materials.

4. Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Through Learning Opportunities

- Ensure equity, diversity, and inclusion are embedded into UPEI quality assurance review processes for all programs.

- Increase visibility of courses related to equity, diversity, and inclusion.
- Increase library resources related to historically disadvantaged or marginalized groups, including BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour) and the 2SLGBTQ+ community.

5. Making Classroom Experiences More Accessible

- Invest in technology that best matches the needs of our students within existing classroom spaces.
- Encourage online course delivery that is equitable, including leveraging technologies appropriately to ensure accessibility.
- Encourage ongoing consultation regarding student accommodation needs to ensure processes are well understood and aligned with practices.

6. Ensuring Accessibility for Diverse Students

- Proactively consider and make information available about common practices for meeting diverse needs.
- Commit to using chosen names and

pronouns, as well as gender-neutral language wherever possible.
- Explore and implement practices designed to ensure diverse students are welcomed into an inclusive residence space.
- Support the UPEI Health and Wellness Centre in providing specialized care to meet the needs of gender-diverse people from the University and Island community.

SUCCESS OF FACULTY, RESEARCHERS, AND STAFF

UPEI is committed to recruiting and retaining diverse faculty, researchers, and staff as part of our commitment to an inclusive campus culture. We believe this enriches our learning community while supporting our goals in innovation and creativity.

UPEI Strategic Plan

In the *UPEI Strategic Plan (2018–2023)*, UPEI committed to actions related to the success of faculty, researchers, and staff:

- Promote a greater understanding of reconciliation, inclusion, equity, and social justice within our campus community.
- Build UPEI's reputation as a welcoming university that offers a sense of belonging to campus members through its respectful workplace.
- Collaboratively identify and promote new pathways for the overall health and sense of belonging for our campus members.
- Identify and put in place initiatives that continuously contribute to a healthy and respectful working environment.

1. Building Diversity and Inclusion Through Equitable Recruitment Practices

- Encourage diversity through the introduction of a statement to all job advertisements that expresses the University's commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion.
- Introduce a new statement in all job advertisements that explains how to obtain any required accommodations in the application process.
- Post job advertisements for at least two weeks to assist with increasing diversity in applicant pool.

2. Employ Best Practices in Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in Hiring Processes

- Provide equity, diversity, and inclusion training to all members of hiring committees.
- Hire personnel with the equity, diversity, and inclusion skills and competencies relevant to the position.

- Incorporate equity, diversity, and inclusion best practices into hiring on an ongoing basis.

3. Supporting Faculty/Staff for Success

- Encourage all areas of campus to create inclusive spaces.
- Provide guidance on processes and resources relevant to equity, diversity, and inclusion to new faculty members.
- Make the process for faculty/staff to pursue accommodations transparent and readily available.
- Provide information to ensure that faculty/staff have clarity regarding the terms and conditions of their employment, including benefits for staff outside of a collective agreement.
- Proactively make information available about common practices for meeting diverse needs.

4. Advancing Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in Research

- Create a portal so that all researchers may access equity, diversity, and inclusion resources.
- Make training related to equity, diversity, and inclusion available to researchers.
- Provide up-to-date information and best practices to researchers about how to incorporate equity, diversity, and inclusion in research projects, including research team composition and development.
- Make participation in equity, diversity, and inclusion training a requirement for graduate student supervisors.
- Achieve the equity, diversity, and inclusion objectives set out in the UPEI *Canada Research Chairs Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Action Plan*.

5. Bias-Free Processes

- Provide unconscious bias training.
- Make training and resources about unconscious bias and the assessment of academic work available to faculty members.
- Provide information about limiting unconscious bias in the reference letter process to all faculty members.
- Share training on any such equity-related policies, procedures, and practices for faculty members on selection and renewal, tenure/permanency, and promotion committees (including the Departmental Review Committee and University Review Committee) with the Faculty Association.
- Encourage the incorporation of equity, diversity, and inclusion competencies in all committee composition decisions.

ORGANIZATIONAL SYSTEMS

UPEI aims to ensure that its institutional processes, practices, and structures are equitable. This requires an understanding of, and an appropriate response to, how historically and/or structurally disadvantaged groups experience those systems.

1. Building Transparent Policies, Practices, and Procedures Important to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

- Ensure equity, diversity, and inclusion are part of the development of any new policies, and are a requirement within the review of existing policies.
- Make information available about common practices so that all community members (students, staff, and faculty) can effectively identify resources and pathways for having their diverse needs addressed.
- Encourage UPEI's faculties, led by their respective deans, to identify, implement, and communicate equity, diversity, and inclusion initiatives that are specific to their learning context and environment.

2. Embedding Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Competencies Across Campus

- Provide training to all members of senior management about the principles of Gender-Based Analysis Plus to ensure they consider how processes are experienced by diverse people.
- Ensure all members of the University's governance structure (UPEI Board of Governors, UPEI Senate, and UPEI Executive) participate in equity, diversity, and inclusion training.
- Hire for equity, diversity, and inclusion competencies.
- Encourage the incorporation of equity, diversity, and inclusion competencies in all decisions about the composition of committees.

3. Collecting and Using the Right Data

- Collect workforce diversity information, guided by best practices, to create baseline information to better inform future decision making in equity, diversity, and inclusion policies and processes.
- Ensure processes that collect personal information are carried out in the proper manner for the intended use.

CAPACITY BUILDING

UPEI is committed to building capacity to ensure individuals and units understand how to put equity, diversity, and inclusion principles into practice so that we ensure an inclusive campus culture. This means building awareness and education through training and tools.

1. In-Person Training

- Collect information through formal and informal means to determine the areas of campus that would benefit from specific equity, diversity, and inclusion training.
- Provide tailored equity, diversity, and inclusion training for faculties and departments as capacity and need allows.

2. On-Demand Training Options

- Create a myUPEI page for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion for internal resources.
- Ensure equity, diversity, and inclusion training is available via myUPEI.
- Provide in-person and online training on specific issues such as anti-racism, unconscious bias, and interrupting harmful behaviours.

3. Ongoing Embedded Training

- Include issues related to equity, diversity, and inclusion in training for deans, chairs, and managers, anyone with supervisory responsibilities, and anyone dealing directly with students.
- Provide training related to equity, diversity, and inclusion to all members of hiring committees, admissions committees, and service providers.
- Offer additional resources for campus members to develop cross-cultural skills.
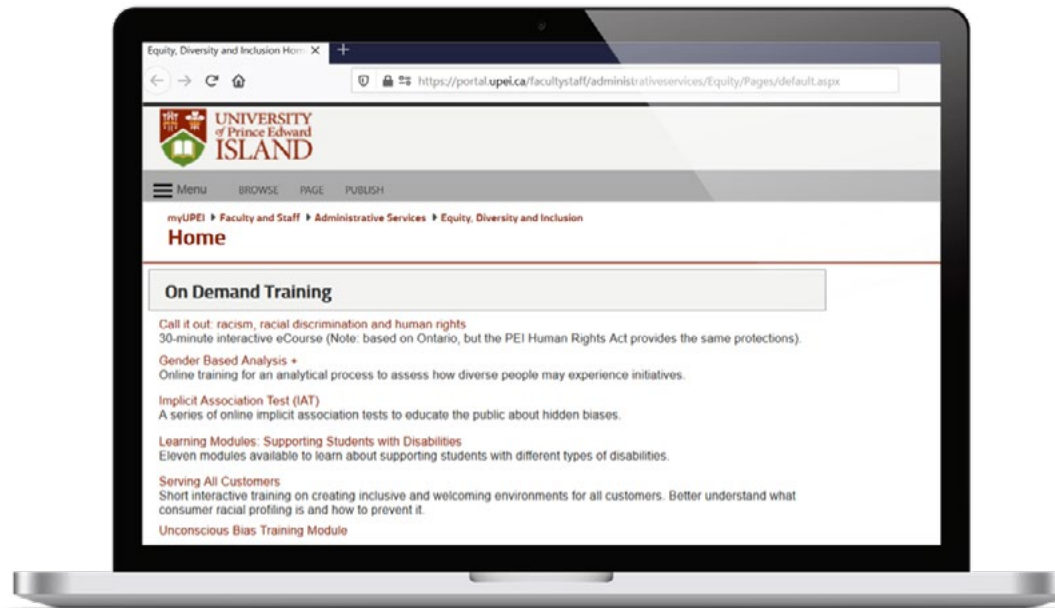
CAMPUS CULTURE

UPEI is committed to working on an ongoing basis to develop a campus culture that is equitable, diverse, and inclusive for all members of our campus community.

UPEI Strategic Plan

"We are dedicated to making UPEI an open, accessible, and welcoming community, and to the fair treatment of all persons. We are committed to continually re-examining and growing our understanding of the role UPEI must play in promoting a better understanding of cultures and identities, and the needs of community members with disabilities in a manner that supports education and respectful relationships."

1. Creating Inclusive Campus Spaces

- Encourage the creation and maintenance of safe and inclusive spaces across campus.
- Review accessibility of campus on an ongoing basis and make improvements as necessary.
- Ensure residence spaces meet the needs of diverse students.
- Increase the number of accessible residence rooms.

2. Celebrating Diversity

- Enable and encourage dialogue and idea sharing about equity, diversity, and inclusion.
- Encourage people to work across differences.
- Celebrate equity, diversity, and inclusion practices, processes, initiatives, and champions that make UPEI an inclusive and welcoming learning community.

3. Expressing Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Values

- Continue to share and live the value statement set out in the *UPEI Strategic Plan (2018–2023)*.
- Share and communicate this UPEI Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy widely with the campus community and our partners.
- Make campus definitions of equity, diversity, and inclusion highly visible.
- Highlight UPEI's commitment to the NSERC Dimensions Charter, *Canada Research Chairs Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Action Plan*, and other best practice initiatives that work to foster equity, diversity, and inclusion.

4. Building a Culture of Accountability

- Develop a culture of accountability for implementation of this Strategy.
- The Vice-President Academic and Research and the Vice-President Administration and Finance will

identify short- and long-term priorities and the implementation and evaluation of the initiatives set out in this Strategy.
- The Vice-President Academic and Research and the Vice-President Administration and Finance will consult with the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Officer, the UPEI EDI Steering Committee, and UPEI EDI-focused working groups (including the Faculty Association Joint Equity Committee) on an ongoing basis to seek feedback

and input into campus processes and initiatives.
- Senior administrators will report to the Vice-Presidents on the progress made in their respective areas.
- The Vice-President Academic and Research and the Vice-President Administration and Finance will report to the President on an annual basis regarding the progress made on this Strategy. Progress reports will be made publicly available.

UPEI Strategic Plan

In the *UPEI Strategic Plan (2018–2023)*, our community outlines actions related to campus culture:

- Identify and put in place initiatives that continuously contribute to a healthy and respectful working environment.
- Stimulate creativity and self-expression through a vibrant and supportive campus.
- Build UPEI's reputation as a welcoming University that offers a sense of belonging to campus members through its inclusive learning environment and respectful workplace.

COLLECTIVE AND INDIVIDUAL ACTION

At UPEI, there are faculty, staff, and students who are committed to putting the principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion into practice on our campus every day. UPEI is fortunate to have these champions as part of our community to help educate and engage our campus members on these important issues. This work is indispensable and integral to the collective success of UPEI.

The Vice-President Academic and Research and the Vice-President Administration and Finance will report to the President annually on the progress made in relation to this Strategy. That includes accountability for identifying short- and long-term priorities and the implementation and evaluation of these initiatives. The Vice-Presidents will consult with the Equity, Diversity, and

Inclusion Officer and the UPEI EDI Steering Committee, as well as any equity, diversity, and inclusion-focused working groups on an ongoing basis.

After a period of one year following its adoption, the UPEI Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy will be reviewed by the University Senate and the UPEI Board of Governors.

APPENDIX A:
BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The *UPEI Strategic Plan (2018–2023)* was released in 2018 after a period of positive consultation and campus input. Throughout the consultation process, UPEI stakeholders consistently recognized that many positive steps had been taken to build awareness of equity, diversity, inclusion, and reconciliation at UPEI, as well as efforts made to implement policies and processes to support related initiatives. However, the campus discussions confirmed that as a University, we must continue to invest resources and further

demonstrate our institutional commitment to **Inclusion, Equity, and Reconciliation** if we are to truly make a difference and lead by example. The Strategic Plan includes five institutional priorities, one of which is **Inclusive Campus Culture.**

To build on that priority, and to provide meaningful guidance across campus about how we can make tangible progress towards an inclusive campus culture, the University decided to embark on the process

of developing this Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy.

UPEI is a proud signatory of the NSERC Dimensions Charter. NSERC describes Dimensions as "one of the leading international programs promoting EDI in higher education." Being a signatory shows our recognition that "equity, diversity, and inclusion strengthen the research community, the quality, relevance and impact of research, and the opportunities for the full pool of potential participants." UPEI is committed to putting those principles into practice to advance research excellence through equity, diversity, and inclusion. UPEI will continue to learn from the best practices established by leading EDI voices, and ensure that these continue to inform our approach.
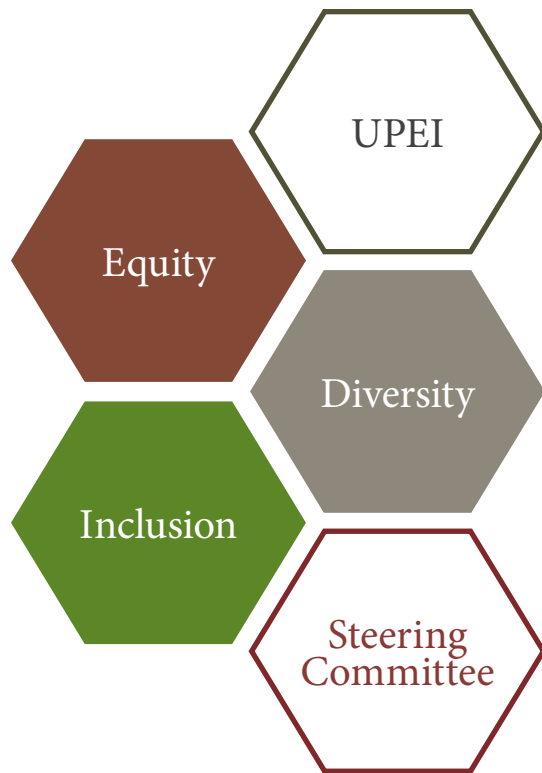
UPEI has also demonstrated our commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion in research through previous commitments. The UPEI *Canada Research Chairs Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Action Plan* continues to drive work closely associated with research.

APPENDIX B:
UPEI EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION (EDI) STEERING COMMITTEE

The UPEI EDI Steering Committee was established in October 2019.

The Committee's mandate is to
- review and provide input into the development and implementation of an institutional EDI strategy;
- provide input and advice regarding issues and practices in the campus community of relevance to EDI;
- provide input regarding potential opportunities to implement EDI measures, programs, or initiatives;
- receive advice and feedback from the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Officer and/or the campus community, and discuss future steps regarding EDI on campus.

UPEI EDI Committee Members

Katherine Gottschall-Pass, Co-Chair
Vice-President Academic and Research (Interim)

Jackie Podger, Co-Chair
Vice-President Administration and Finance

Brian Affouan
President, UPEI Student Union

Tracy Carmichael
President, CUPE 1870

Nola Etkin
Dean, Faculty of Science

Aitazaz Farooque
Associate Professor, Sustainable Design Engineering
Industry Research Chair, Precision Agriculture

Sharon Myers
Associate Professor, Arts

Patti Wheatley
Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Officer

The EDI Steering Committee also wishes to acknowledge the work of previous committee members who contributed to the development of this Strategy: Sherri Russell, Mawi'omi Centre Coordinator, and Keesha Ryan, Vice-President Finance, UPEI Student Union.
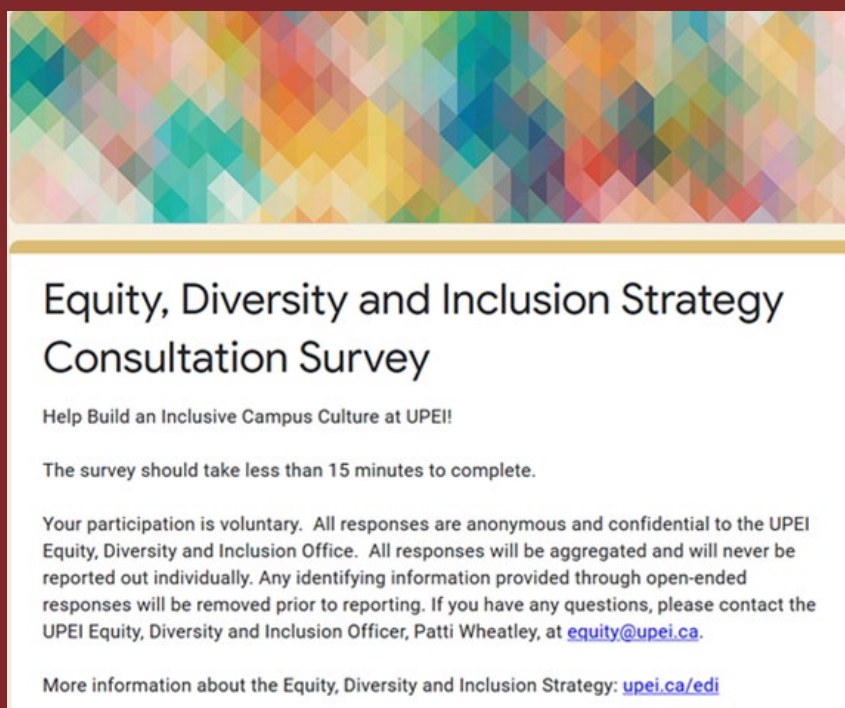
APPENDIX C:
STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The impetus for an UPEI Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy came out the development of the *UPEI Strategic Plan (2018–2023)*. The Strategic Plan was developed through extensive consultation. Topics related to equity, diversity, and inclusion were consistently discussed with strong stakeholder feedback about how the University could further develop in this area. Equity, diversity, and inclusion are highlighted throughout the Strategic Plan. To build on that comprehensive process, we have taken lessons learned from that process forward into the development of this Strategy.

A draft of a preliminary framework to build EDI at UPEI was prepared in early 2019. This discussion paper provided a starting point and served as a basis for consultation with the campus community in order to advance toward the development of a holistic EDI strategy.

The development process for a campus-wide EDI strategy began in September 2019, beginning with a baseline employment-systems review, which involved meeting with key personnel and reviewing documents to analyze a wide range of relevant issues. The process included a review of legislation, policies, procedures, institutional commitments, strategic documents, collective- and employment-related agreements, contracts, audit reports, programs and activities, academic programs, committee mandates, and faculty/staff positions.
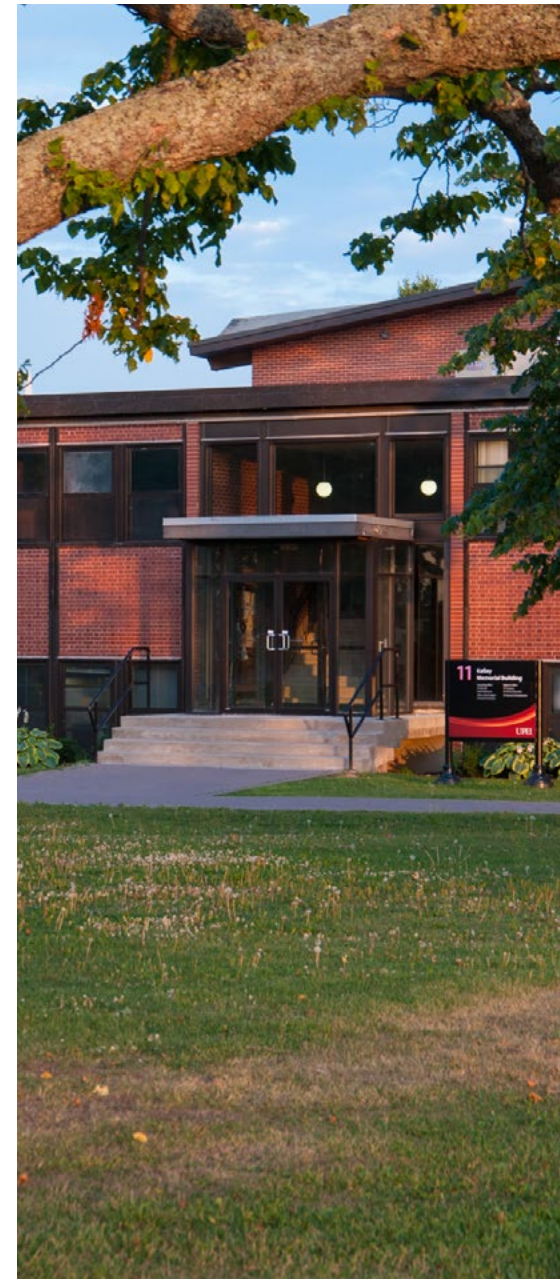
APPENDIX D: CONSULTATION PROCESS

A key part of the development process for the UPEI EDI Strategy was consultation with individuals and groups across campus. An initial round of seven consultations was held in October 2019. A more thorough campus-wide consultation period took place from January–February 2020, which included a further 21 consultation sessions.

In addition, an online survey was distributed to all faculty, staff, and students to collect input. In total, over 400 UPEI community members participated in the consultation process in some way (due to guarantees of confidentiality and anonymity, it is not possible to count the number of unique individuals). Those discussions touched on a wide array of issues that informed the writing of the UPEI EDI Strategy.

This broad approach to collecting information relevant to EDI at UPEI was deeply informative. The consultation process was designed with the aim of collecting input from diverse groups, including groups that have been historically disadvantaged. While some elements of the strategy development process had to be modified to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, we remained strongly committed to a robust process.

APPENDIX E:
CONSULTATION GROUPS

The UPEI EDI Strategy was developed through consultation with a broad range of shareholders, including

- Aboriginal Student Circle
- Academic Planning and Curriculum Committee
- Atlantic Veterinary College (faculty and staff)
- AVC Broad Spectrum Club (LGBTQ+)
- Deans Council
- Diversity and Social Justice Studies (students)
- Faculty Association Joint Equity Committee
- Faculty of Arts (faculty and staff)
- Faculty of Arts Equity and Inclusion Committee
- Faculty of Business (faculty and staff)
- Faculty of Education (faculty and staff)
- Faculty of Nursing (faculty and staff)
- Faculty of Science (faculty and staff)
- Graduate Studies Advisory Committee
- Human Resources (staff)

- Indigenous Education Advisory Circle
- Open meeting (staff)
- Open meeting (students)
- Office of the President (directors and managers)
- Research Advisory Committee
- Student Experience Hub (employees)
- Student Experience Hub (senior staff)
- Sustainable Design Engineering (faculty and staff)
- UPEI Student Union Committee Executives (with relevant missions)
- Vice-President Administration and Finance (directors)