

**Canada Research Chair Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Action Plan:
Progress Report, December 2021 – December 2022**

PART A: Objectives and Actions

Objective 1

Brief description of S.M.A.R.T. (specific, measurable, aligned with the wanted outcome, realistic and timely) Key Objective 1:

“To facilitate a welcoming interview process that is sensitive to the unique challenges of candidates from diverse backgrounds and make appropriate accommodations for them.” (item #6)

“To embed accessibility considerations in University processes, and facilitate communication between faculty/staff with disabilities and University administration.” (item #19)

“Attain specific, thorough knowledge of extent and priority of accessibility challenges.” (item #19)

Systemic barriers - Please provide a high-level description of the systemic barriers (e.g., summarize what the barriers are and how they were identified):

“The formality, inflexibility and adversarial nature of conventional interview processes can discourage participation from certain candidates.” (item #6)

“Limited access and accommodation of the needs of disabled faculty and staff.” (item #19)

How identified: See Concordia’s *Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan for the Canada Research Chair Program, 2019*, Sections 1 and 2.

Corresponding actions undertaken to address the barriers:

- 1) Concordia welcomed its first Accessibility Change Lead, Anna Barrafato, in the spring of 2022. The role involves working across the university to foster more accessible and inclusive physical and digital spaces and the provision of appropriate technology and services to more equitably serve all Concordians. In addition, the role will focus on advancing accessibility in classroom environments to better support faculty and students, whether teaching and learning is taking place online or in-person. Additional

responsibilities will also include spearheading the development of an institution-wide campus strategy to reduce obstacles to inclusion for students, staff, faculty and visitors, and serving as the primary contact for full-time faculty applicants, including CRC applicants, who anticipate requiring accommodations throughout any stage of the recruitment process.

- 2) The Accessibility Learning Series was launched in Fall 2022 as a means of raising awareness within the campus community. Offered by the Equity Office and led by the Accessibility Change Lead, these workshops support staff and faculty in their shared responsibility of creating an accessible campus. Topics include Introduction to Accessibility and its French version Démystifions l'accessibilité, Understanding Disability, How to Make your Documents Accessible (introductory and advanced levels), Accessible and Inclusive Teaching Practices, and Accessible and Inclusive Events.
- 3) The Accessibility Hub, a one-stop online resource on accessibility and disability at the university, was launched in Fall 2022. The website provides information on accessible event planning, facilities management, instructor resources, and more, and highlights the Policy on Accessibility and Accommodation for Students and Employees. The hub and Concordia's new accessibility policy are part of the university's renewed commitment to Universal Design for Learning, an educational framework that guides the design of learning goals, materials, methods and assessments while keeping the diversity of learners in mind. The hub will provide Concordians and campus visitors with invisible and/or visible disabilities with resources to help them better navigate the digital and/or physical campus and further improve their university experience.
- 4) The Policy on Accessibility and Accommodation for Students and Employees (PRVPA-14) went into effect on May 19, 2022. Elements of the policy update process were reported in the previous year's progress report (submitted June 2022 for actions undertaken in 2021). The policy is inclusive of all Concordia community members and outlines the university's commitment to preventing, identifying and/or removing barriers for persons with disabilities. It aims to ensure access to services, events, activities, facilities, premises and buildings, employment, digital structures and university processes and accommodation.
- 5) Concordia introduced priority boarding and reserved seating on its shuttle buses in 2022 as another measure to help reduce barriers on campus. Directives include awareness of priority seating, understanding that some people need priority boarding, including those with invisible disabilities, and to not judge based on appearance.
- 6) The Concordia Facilities Management Accessibility and Inclusivity Action Plan (2022–2026), in September 2022, has been developed to provide a long-term strategic approach to accessibility and inclusivity on campus and to drive innovation and change. The Action Plan outlines a university-wide strategy for improving the physical

environment of both campuses by identifying, preventing, and removing barriers to accessibility and inclusion and describes steps for Concordia to take to ensure accessible and inclusive facilities, over the next five years and beyond. The Action Plan is part of Facilities Management's ongoing efforts to support Concordia's commitment to accessibility and inclusion on campus. This work has been led by key members of the Strategic Planning and Development team.

Data gathered and Indicator(s) - can be both qualitative and quantitative:

- 1) *Employment Equity Census*: In February 2021, Concordia faculty and staff were invited to participate in a university-wide equity census, with the initial results published on the Equity Office website in 2022. Some elements of the process for this inaugural census were reported in a previous year's progress report (submitted May 2021 for actions undertaken in 2018-2020). In addition to collecting data with respect to designated groups (i.e., women, Indigenous persons, linguistic minorities, racialized persons, and persons with disabilities), as required by employment equity legislation, Concordia's census exercise also invited other equity-deserving groups to self-identify, such as members of 2SLGBTQIA+ communities.

The census was sent to 6,722 active faculty and staff. A total of 2,687 respondents completed the census, distributed as follows, which represents a 40% response rate (Academic staff: 1,424, Non-academic staff: 1,263). The data were analysed by SOM, an independent firm. The census data, when sample sizes permitted, were also cross tabulated by employee group, type of position, sector, faculty and department. The cross tabulated results (where available) were presented to the leadership teams of Concordia's institutional units, Faculties, and departments.

Publicly available information on People living with disabilities (employees):

- a. 5.7% (+ 0.7%) of Concordia's employees reported a disability. This is lower than Montréal and Quebec (16%), the Canadian population (22%) and the national workforce (16%). Note: The Statistics Canada definition of disability, because it is broader, may include more people, which means the gap observed here may be lower in reality. Further data collection will generate more insight.
- 2) *Student Equity Census*: In spring 2022, Concordia undergraduate and graduate students were invited to participate in an equity census. Collecting and analyzing demographic information is an essential first step for the university to meaningfully address underrepresentation and examine institutional barriers that may prevent students from fully participating in university life. The data collected will be used to design and deliver more inclusive and impactful services, programming and experiences to the student community as well as allow Concordia to measure its progress vis-à-vis equity and inclusion over time. The census was sent to 37,893 students. A total of 8,259 students

completed the census. This represents a 21.9% response rate. The data was analysed by SOM, an independent firm.

Publicly available information on Disability and impairment (students)

- a. Among Concordia students, 15% identify as living with a disability or impairment.
 - b. For the vast majority, the disability or impairment is invisible (87%), while 25% indicated having an ongoing medical condition. Finally, a lower proportion (16%) reported having a physical disability or impairment.
 - c. Concordia has a higher proportion of graduate students living with a disability or impairment (9%) compared to Canadian universities overall (5%). The proportion of undergraduate students with a disability or impairment is lower (16%) compared to Canadian universities overall (22%).
 - d. Students who identified as a member of a gender-diverse community (49%) and/or 2SLGBTQIA+ communities (32%) or who mentioned being caregivers (26%) are more likely to report a disability or impairment. The same is true for part-time students (19%), undergraduate students (16%) and those from the Faculty of Fine Arts (26%) or the Faculty of Arts and Science (19%).
- 3) *Accessibility and Inclusivity Action Plan*: From November 2021 – March 2022, Facilities Management conducted a study of the accessibility and inclusivity of the Sir George Williams and Loyola campuses. The study included high-level building audits, detailed exterior circulation studies, and community consultation and engagement initiatives. The objective was to better understand the challenges people experience when they access – or try to access – buildings and other campus facilities, to identify existing affordances and to inform a vision for the future.

Progress and/or Outcomes and Impacts made during the reporting period:

- 1) *Equity census (students and employees)*: The results represent a snapshot of Concordia's student and employee populations in time. This information gathering will better inform the university's equity goals and strategy. For employees, due to small sample sizes in some cases, we were not able to generate detailed data specific to Faculties and sectors. With continued iterations of this exercise, we will be able to conduct more localized analyses as well as monitor enduring trends and new shifts concerning the demographics of our community.
- 2) *Accessibility and Inclusivity Action Plan*: Information gathered and input received during the study informed the development of the Action Plan. Insights from Concordia students, faculty, and staff, including people with disabilities and lived experience, as well as accessibility and inclusion professionals, were integral to the development of this plan. Lived experience plays a crucial role in defining and understanding accessibility

barriers and ensures user perspectives and experience remain at the centre of this work, creating a higher standard of accessibility and inclusion.

The Action Plan proposes a high-level framework for collective action toward advancing accessibility and inclusion on campus, and defines the vision, actions, and responsibilities Facilities Management has committed to in driving innovation and change. The actions are divided into key categories including additional studies and research, accessibility audits and unique guidelines, feasibility and prioritization analysis, planning for continued consultation, communication and streamlining processes, implementing upgrades and new initiatives, and evaluation.

Challenges encountered during the reporting period:

- 1) *Equity census (students and employees)*: The census may have attracted more respondents who are members of underrepresented communities in the Quebec and/or Canadian population. As such, the picture presented by the data may be influenced by increased representation of certain subgroups. Results should be interpreted with this in mind; future census exercises will provide more data to analyze with a higher degree of certainty.

The report also indicates the need for a more nuanced understanding of the multiplicity of identities within broad groups (e.g., racialized persons, linguistic minorities, and 2SLGBTQIA+ communities) as well as a better comprehension regarding the representation of these groups in leadership positions and other roles at Concordia.

- 2) *Accessibility and Inclusivity Action Plan*: To demonstrate full respect for the academic capacities and potential of students, employees and visitors with disabilities, Concordia's *Policy on accessibility and accommodation for students and employees* (PRVPA-14) identifies the need to remove attitudinal and physical barriers that may hinder or prevent individuals with disabilities from participating fully in university life. Creating meaningful change on campus requires a culture of openness and close listening to diverse community voices. Community consultations empower Concordia to re-think, re-imagine and re-emerge as an even better university.

Next Steps (indicate specific dates/timelines):

- 1) *Equity census (students and employees)*: The censuses provide a strong starting point to better understand the makeup of our community as well as affirm the need to be iterative in our data collection approaches. Concordia will continue to conduct this exercise on a regular basis and share the results with the community so we can collectively track our progress and be data informed in our next steps. The process for the census will unfold in cycles and evolve over time to meet the changing needs of the Concordia community. The aim is to remain in dialogue with all constituencies, including ongoing consultations with campus units, faculty, staff, students, and the broader university community. Concordia will consider modifications to the census content at regular intervals so that it continues to reflect the demographics, experiences and aspirations of the university. The next iteration of the Equity Census for both students and employees is planned for Fall 2023.

- 2) *Accessibility and Inclusivity Action Plan*: The Action Plan is endorsed by Concordia’s Leadership Team and will guide work and efforts toward a more accessible and inclusive Concordia over the next five years and beyond, starting mid-2022. Details of the implementation are currently under discussion.

Was funding from the CRCP EDI stipend used for this key objective?

No

Objective 2 / Action Item # 14

Brief description of S.M.A.R.T. (specific, measurable, aligned with the wanted outcome, realistic and timely) Key Objective 1:

“To ensure that mentorship is available and responsive to the unique experiences and needs of CRCs, and particularly members of DGs.”

Systemic barriers - Please provide a high-level description of the systemic barriers (e.g., summarize what the barriers are and how they were identified):

“Mentorship is lacking, unstructured, and sub-optimal for CRCs.”

How identified: See Concordia’s *Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan for the Canada Research Chair Program*, 2019, Section 14.

Corresponding actions undertaken to address the barriers:

Mentorship consultants hired to:

- 1) Clarify overarching objective and goals, and establish priorities
- 2) Develop project plan, including timeline and breakdown of tasks
- 3) Develop list of people who may participate in this project, including CRCs, leadership (university and faculty-level), other stakeholders
- 4) Identify, collect, and scan relevant policies and procedures documents at Concordia University
- 5) Identify, collect, and scan relevant policies from Tri-Council
- 6) Environmental scan of mentorship programs at other post-secondary institutions
- 7) Review of recent peer-reviewed literature on mentorship and best-practices
- 8) Consult and decide on most appropriate method for needs assessment
- 9) Develop needs assessment
- 10) Conduct needs assessment with CRCs, university and Faculty leadership, and other stakeholders
- 11) Analyze information generated from needs assessment
- 12) Present final report and recommendations

Data gathered and Indicator(s) - can be both qualitative and quantitative:

As of December 2022: literature collected and reviewed; universities to be used for baseline comparisons identified, public-facing documents collected and reviewed.

Progress and/or Outcomes and Impacts made during the reporting period:

See “Data gathered,” above. In addition, all Associate Deans, Research consulted on Faculty-specific priorities, and all CRCs and other research chairs at Concordia contacted, made aware of initiative, and invited to participate. Needs Assessment survey design begun, December 2022.

Challenges encountered during the reporting period:

The pool of CRCs at Concordia being relatively small, a CRC-specific mentorship initiative revealed itself to be infeasible. The consultancy was therefore broadened to include all research chairs at the University, while maintaining a specific focus on identifying unique needs of CRCs.

Next Steps (indicate specific dates/timelines):

Consultants will:

- 1) Conduct needs assessment with CRCs, university and Faculty leadership, and other stakeholders (Jan. 2023 – Feb. 2023):
 - a) further developing the research survey and interview guide

- b) coordinating group activities, such as focus groups or participatory methods
- c) writing and sending letters of invitation to survey participants
- 2) Analyze information generated from needs assessment (Jan. 2023 – Feb. 2023):
 - a) transcribing, conducting thematic analysis/co-analysis with participants, follow-up work if deemed appropriate
- 3) Present final report and recommendations (Feb. 2023 – March 2023):
 - a) prepare presentation and report
 - b) dialogue and receive feedback
 - c) submit plan to OVPRGS
 - d) final report to include summary of literature and policy scan, description of consultation process, discussion of findings, and final recommendations

Was funding from the CRCP EDI stipend used for this key objective?

Yes - \$50,000

Objective 3 / Action Item #14

Brief description of S.M.A.R.T. (specific, measurable, aligned with the wanted outcome, realistic and timely) Key Objective 1:

“To recruit, engage and hire exceptional Indigenous graduate students to work on innovative Indigenous research.”

Systemic barriers - Please provide a high-level description of the systemic barriers (e.g., summarize what the barriers are and how they were identified):

“Insufficient representation and inclusion of Indigenous graduate students.”

How identified: See Concordia’s *Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan for the Canada Research Chair Program, 2019*, Sections 1 and 2.

Corresponding actions undertaken to address the barriers:

Concordia’s Gina Cody School of Engineering and Computer Science and [Office of Indigenous Directions](#) launched the Kaié:ri Nikawerà:ke Indigenous Bridging Program, a path to university education for First Nations, Inuit and Métis students who do not meet Concordia’s conventional admission requirements. Important features of this program include removing minimum GPA requirements for Indigenous applicants to the undergraduate engineering and computer

science program and providing decolonized CÉGEP-level bridging courses rather than requiring them as prerequisites.

In addition, the Concordia University Indigenous Graduate Scholarship is an entrance scholarship designed to provide more incentivizing offers to Indigenous students considering graduate studies at Concordia. The scholarships – \$10K for research based-Master’s students and \$40k (\$10k per year for 4 years) for PhD students – are designed to provide an added financial incentive to any base package offered by departments in order to “increase the recruitment, admission, retention, and graduation of Indigenous learners” as specified in Concordia’s [Indigenous Directions Action Plan](#). These scholarships respond to *IDAP* Action 6.4.

For the 2021-2022 academic year, 10 doctoral scholarships and 20 Master’s scholarships were centrally allocated at the Graduate Awards Office. The scope of these scholarships is top-up: they are added on top of competitive offers from the program/department/Faculty that are made to Indigenous students.

Data gathered and Indicator(s) - can be both qualitative and quantitative:

- 1) Number of Indigenous applicants
- 2) Seminars (2) created specific to program
- 3) Concordia’s Graduate Awards Office collects and tracks data on the number of incoming Indigenous Master’s and PhD students who are accessing entrance scholarships, with additional competitive funding from individual departments.

Progress and/or Outcomes and Impacts made during the reporting period:

The Kaié:ri Nikawerà:ke Indigenous Bridging Program launched in 2022 – impacts on Indigenous undergraduate recruitment will be assessable in 2023.

The number of Indigenous PhD students accessing entrance scholarships increased in 2021-2022, while the number of Indigenous Master’s students accessing entrance scholarships fell in 2021-2022 (see “Challenges” below). Numbers not reported due to Privacy Act.

Challenges encountered during the reporting period:

The major challenge encountered for the graduate awards is, as in previous years, that the pool of eligible applicants is not large enough to exhaust available entrance scholarships. This is an at least bi-directional challenge, particularly in STEM areas (the Graduate Awards Office has never received an application for this scholarship from an applicant in a STEM-field department): 1) Limited access to high-quality STEM education at the secondary level heavily impacts Indigenous students’ access to post-secondary STEM education; in addition, the relevance of STEM education for Indigenous students is greatly limited by colonized curricula that ignore or

suppress Indigenous ways of knowing and the crucial vitality of community. Together, these create enormous hurdles for potential Indigenous undergraduate applicants, and very substantially decrease aspiring Indigenous students' access to university education at its point of entry. 2) The accumulated effects of social, economic, environmental, and political circumstances on Indigenous undergraduate students significantly increase attrition at the graduate level (see Jaiden Herkimer's 2021 Indspire Report, *Holding Our Ground: Indigenous Student Post-Secondary Persistence & Early Leaving*: <https://indspire.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Holding-Our-Ground-Report-EN-Final-WEB1.pdf>). Concordia hopes to mitigate this challenge, in part, with the Kaié:ri Nikawerà:ke Indigenous Bridging Program.

Next Steps (indicate specific dates/timelines):

Recruitment is underway for the Kaié:ri Nikawerà:ke Indigenous Bridging Program for the 2023-2024 academic year.

The pilot project will thereafter be expanded to STEM fields in the Faculty of Arts and Science, beginning with the Department of Psychology, and to the John Molson School of Business. Anticipated roll-out, 2024-2025 academic year.

Efficacy of the Concordia University Indigenous Graduate Scholarship will be reviewed by the Office of Indigenous Directions beginning Winter 2023.

Was funding from the CRCP EDI stipend used for this key objective?

No

Objective 4 / Action Item #3

Brief description of S.M.A.R.T. (specific, measurable, aligned with the wanted outcome, realistic and timely) Key Objective 1:

"To ensure that EDI considerations are fully applied from the earliest stages of CRC planning and allocation."

Systemic barriers - Please provide a high-level description of the systemic barriers (e.g. summarize what the barriers are and how they were identified):

"As with all research chairs, the stated criteria for allocation of available CRCs are research excellence and fit with the University's Strategic Research Plan. As such, the allocation of chairs is susceptible to systemic bias in the resourcing and advocacy bias in the application pool."

How identified: See Concordia's *Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan for the Canada Research Chair Program*, 2019, Sections 1 and 2.

Corresponding actions undertaken to address the barriers:

Two new training sessions were developed for the Faculty Research Committees (FRCs) and University Research Committee (URC), respectively, in 2021, and iteratively expanded in 2022. The goals for both sessions were to align with the University EDI strategy; meet specific needs of committee members, and avoid a "check-box" approach; to expand upon the online training provided by the Tri-council; to allow for discussion and knowledge exchange, which online modules do not allow for; and to open up communication with the Equity Office in the event that further support is needed. Of note, members of the FRCs and URC had completed the required Tri-council unconscious bias training module upon appointment. Though well received, the consensus was that campus-based sessions would be instrumental in meeting both institutional needs as well as needs specific to each committee and Faculty.

The sessions for the Arts and Science FRC and the URC took place in January 2022.

Following the completion of all sessions, the content for both respective workshops was revisited and feedback from each session carefully considered and integrated into an updated module, where possible and appropriate. Additionally, each committee was required to devote the same time to the session. The time allotted ranged from 45 minutes to 1 hour depending on the committee, which resulted in certain sessions feeling rushed and/or limited in terms of discussion time.

Regarding content, consideration was given to consequences of not incorporating inclusive excellence perspectives and practices, in addition to the current approach focusing on the benefits of doing so. This approach may support participants in their understanding of the centrality of inclusive excellence in the research sector. See "Next Steps" below.

Finally, the intention is to maintain ongoing conversation with FRC and URC members across the four Faculties, addressing long-standing issues in addition to new concerns as they arise.

Data gathered and Indicator(s) - can be both qualitative and quantitative:

As of December 2022, all FRCs have completed the required workshop. (Fine Arts and John Molson School of Business, one session each; Gina Cody School of Engineering and Computer Science, and Arts and Science, two sessions each). Feedback based on discussions is integrated into the sections on progress and/or outcomes, challenges and next steps.

Progress and/or Outcomes and Impacts made during the reporting period:

The sessions for the Arts and Science FRC, and the URC were welcomed opportunities for the Equity Office to open the conversation with these particular committees, learn about their specific concerns, and plan for additional engagement in the future, including updated content for these sessions.

One benefit of the session was the opportunity to learn about select Faculty-specific equity initiatives, which resulted in some opportunities for follow-up conversations and feedback on drafts of working documentation. Some Faculties are arranging their own equity-focused workshops and educational events, which open further opportunities for consultation, collaboration and alignment.

Challenges encountered during the reporting period:

A frequently mentioned challenge – as last year – remains evaluation criteria. An important recommendation for equitable processes, including adjudication, is the integration of inclusive excellence considerations into the criteria. A major counterpoint was that for some competitions, external agencies set criteria that do not include inclusive excellence explicitly. Some suggested that considering equity at this stage was too late in the process, referring to the cumulative impact of barriers to inclusion in addition to the limitation presented by the required criteria. There was a suggestion to incorporate this discussion of equity in the vetting of criteria, at least for internal competitions, to partially address this issue.

Finally, scheduling the sessions was an occasional challenge due to the limited availability of committee members. The main approaches included being invited to an existing meeting or scheduling two separate meetings in order to accommodate all committee members.

Next Steps (indicate specific dates/timelines):

In Winter 2023, Concordia's Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies (VPRGS) will apply for the CRCP EDI Stipend to fund a workshop series (November 2023 – March 2024) on inclusive excellence and its necessary counterpart, reforming evaluation of academic excellence.

In response to the need to move to the next phase of embedding inclusive academic excellence for its CRC Program, a series of workshops with invited experts will provide education and communication on the practical implementation of academic assessment reform.

Experts with successful experience in the application of equity principles and criteria for academic assessment and recognition, within Canada and internationally, will bring an interrogative focus to particular elements of equitable assessment reform for CRCs and the broader faculty. We intend for the University's CRCs, and the assessments thereof, to be

models of inclusive academic excellence for the broader cohort of academic faculty and librarians.

The workshop series will be designed to (1) meet actual initial, midterm and renewal assessment requirements for Concordia's CRCs during the 2024-2025 cycle; and (2) co-develop recommendations and action items in partnership with, and with the assistance of personnel from, each of Concordia's four Faculties.

Was funding from the CRCP EDI stipend used for this key objective?

No

Objective 5 / Action Item #13

Brief description of S.M.A.R.T. (specific, measurable, aligned with the wanted outcome, realistic and timely) Key Objective 1:

“To ensure that researchers understand how EDI considerations should be integrated in their research programs.”

Systemic barriers - Please provide a high-level description of the systemic barriers (e.g. summarize what the barriers are and how they were identified):

“Limited comprehension by CRCs of how to integrate EDI in their research program.”

How identified: See *Concordia's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan for the Canada Research Chair Program, 2019, Sections 1 and 2.*

Corresponding actions undertaken to address the barriers:

Recognizing that limited comprehension of how to integrate EDI in individual research programs was not limited to CRCs, beginning in 2019, the Office of the Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies (OVPRGS) developed two separate but related trainings which were made available to all faculty, including CRCs, built around Tri-Agency and provincial EDI grant application requirements (particularly NFRF): 1) EDI training specifically targeting implementation in research programs, and 2) GBA+ (now referred to as EDI-RD) training. These were launched via an in-person session in August 2019, and further developed for delivery via webinar in June 2020. These trainings have since been held annually, and expanded. Detailed updated slides, with updated discussion and Q & A have been made available to all faculty.

In 2022, the Advisors, Research Development in the Office of Research (Advisors), assumed the one-on-one review of individual and small teams of researchers' EDI plans for grant applications

in order to de-silo EDI practices and more fully integrate them as a fundamental part of research practice. At the same time, the OVPRGS expanded intensive EDI-RP and EDI-RD training and development tailored to much larger teams, including Concordia's CFREF initiative.

Data gathered and Indicator(s) - can be both qualitative and quantitative:

Increased attendance rates of online OVPRGS and Equity Office workshops; increased individual correspondence via email between researchers and Advisors; increased success rates of individual researchers' (and small teams') grant applications with most demanding EDI requirements and evaluation (NFRF-E LOI) + positive qualitative and quantitative feedback from Tri-agency reviewers; increased success rates of large teams' grant applications with most demanding EDI requirements and evaluation (NFRF-T LOI, CFREF LOI) + positive qualitative and quantitative feedback from Tri-agency reviewers

Progress and/or Outcomes and Impacts made during the reporting period:

Individual correspondence via email between researchers and Advisors indicate increased focus on EDI principles and practices on the part of faculty researchers, and a general increase in comprehension concerning their importance and implementation. Increased attendance for training sessions also indicates growing focus on EDI principles and practices on the part of faculty researchers. Increased success of researchers' grant applications with most comprehensive requirements for EDI indicates general increase in focus, commitment and comprehension as well, with shifts away from narrow consideration of the demographics of team composition to implementation of substantive EDI practices and principles.

Challenges encountered during the reporting period:

While de-siloing of EDI seems to be expanding (see above), reliance on separate expertise on EDI in much larger teams both indicates and replicates a continuing – if steadily diminishing – habit of considering EDI to be an addition to research.

Next Steps (indicate specific dates/timelines):

Expand mandatory EDI and unconscious bias training to include selection committees (Faculty- and University-level) for internal Research Chairs – February 2023.

Develop online EDI toolkit, tailored to differing requirements of different Tri-agency and provincial funding opportunities (beginning with NSERC-DG), designed to promote independent EDI self-education and planning – March 2023-December 2023

Was funding from the CRCP EDI stipend used for this key objective?

No

PART B - Challenges and Opportunities

Opportunity: *President's Task Force on Anti-Black Racism.* Following the resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement in response to police violence and persistent inequities impacting Black communities, Concordia University committed to the work of addressing race-related issues among its members and in its institutional fabric. The creation of the President's Task Force on Anti-Black Racism is a testament to that commitment. In June 2022, Concordia's president received a comprehensive set of recommendations from the task force, and an action plan to combat anti-Black racism at Concordia.

Opportunity and Challenge: A transformative shift towards a more nuanced and inclusive approach to academic assessment is underway. This includes considerations of research impact beyond citations, such as open science, community engagement, policy influence, and contributions to solving pressing societal problems. Responsible use of scholarly metrics therefore involves using bibliometric indicators as one tool among many rather than as the sole indicator of academic achievement – considering the limitations and potential biases of such indicators.

The concept of academic excellence has also expanded to incorporate the benefits associated with diversity, equity, and inclusion. Traditional definitions of excellence based exclusively on ostensibly objective bibliometrics can perpetuate systemic inequalities and overlook contributions from underrepresented groups. An inclusive definition of academic excellence takes into account a broader range of backgrounds, talents, knowledges, and perspectives that contribute to the academic community's richness and impact.

Yet it is challenging to establish agreement on how to evaluate and compare these inclusive elements, within and across fields.

PART D - Engagement with individuals from underrepresented groups

In addition to those engagements with members of underrepresented groups described throughout this report, the following engagements were vital to Concordia's equity progress in 2022.

In June 2022, Molson Coors was the latest donor to join the Campaign for Concordia: Next-Gen Now. The company gave \$125,000 to help alleviate systemic barriers that prevent Black students from attaining higher education. Starting in the 2022-23 academic year, the Molson Coors Bursaries for Black Students will fund five annual in-course bursaries in collaboration with Concordia's Black Perspectives Office. The bursaries will assist and encourage Black undergraduate students who are pursuing a degree in any Faculty.

On September 16, 2022, Concordia hosted its first-ever Pow Wow, to kick off the 30th anniversary celebrations of the Otsenhákta Student Centre. Open to all nations, it was an opportunity for the entire university community to discover how Indigenous cultures celebrate together, share knowledge and create new bonds of friendship. The event was conceived not only to celebrate the history of the OSC but also the success of past, current and future First Nations, Inuit and Métis students at Concordia.

In October 2022, the University acknowledged the role of racism in the 1969 student protest at Sir George Williams University and extended a public apology. This was on the occasion of the public release of the President's Task Force on Anti-Black Racism Final Report, whose recommendations Concordia President and Vice-Chancellor Graham Carr publicly promised would be implemented in their entirety.

In October 2022, the Gina Cody School of Engineering and Computer Science EDI Research Grant was launched to support and recognize the research of full-time faculty members on EDI within the context of engineering and computer science. The inaugural grant was awarded to a research group composed of PhD students who will carry out their work under the direction of the Special Advisor to the Dean on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. The project aims to support faculty, instructors and students in engineering and computer science who wish to integrate decolonizing perspectives into their teaching. They will begin their work by conducting a review of the main undergraduate engineering and computer science course textbooks to identify and interrupt colonial patterns. From there, they will develop a toolkit to help instructors include other resources and pedagogical frameworks.

PART E - Other EDI Initiatives

In addition to the initiatives discussed in Concordia's EDI Action Plan for the Canada Research Chairs Program, the following initiatives of the Equity Office at Concordia bear noting:

Harmonization of equity policies and initiatives

We build collaborative relationships with university stakeholders and work closely with groups and individuals leading equity and accessibility initiatives in faculties, departments and units. We provide support and guidance on equity and accessibility policies, rules and regulations to achieve harmonization on equity and accessibility issues, plans and approaches, including with respect to rollout and implementation. Our aim is to foster consistency while instilling flexibility among equity and accessibility efforts across the university.

Consultation services

We develop, implement and evaluate strategic initiatives advancing equity on campus and provide guidance and advice on related issues and concerns. This includes creating space for students, faculty and staff with equity and accessibility concerns to consult, seek assistance and explore solutions.

Training programs

We [develop and deliver education opportunities](#) on topics such as raising equity and accessibility awareness, dispelling misconceptions about how biases, discrimination, power and privilege work in university settings, and applying equity approaches in university spaces and activities.

Partnerships

We cultivate mutually beneficial relationships with community members, faculties, departments, and units. We celebrate milestones that are achieved through cooperation and coordination, and understand that through harmonization, we can create and discover new opportunities while affirming that equity and accessibility are shared responsibilities of all community members.