Igniting Change: Final Report and Recommendations
By the Congress Advisory Committee on Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Decolonization

FAQ

Congress Advisory Committee on Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Decolonization

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When and why were members of the Advisory Committee on Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Decolonization (AC-EDID) appointed?

Several lines led to the need for this committee. One obvious line was the racial profiling experience of a Black graduate student at the Congress 2019 held at The University of British Columbia, and the developments that flowed from it. A second line was the cancellation of Congress 2020 at Western and, in turn, the historic conference theme ignited by the Black Canadian Studies Association: *"Bridging Divides: Confronting Colonialism and Anti-Black Racism"* focusing on historical and contemporary Black and Indigenous experiences in Canada. A third line as the Covid19 pandemic, which created uncertainty about the possibilities of Congress 2021, whether it would be face-to-face, hybrid, or virtual, and the possibilities for continuing necessary conversations on anti-Black racism and colonialism

The Federation has a long history of working towards inclusive practices; however, the response has often been intermittent or narrowly focused on specific issues or equity-deserving groups (Appendix I and Appendix II of the Report). On May 5, 2020, in response to these historical and ongoing challenges, the Board of the Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences (Federation) approved a proposal initially to create an Advisory Committee on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI). On May 12, 2020, the draft terms of reference were approved by the Federation's Board and the Executive was delegated the power to appoint members. In consultation with the AC-EDID's chair, the mandate of the committee was revised to incorporate decolonization and this was approved by the Board. On July 30, 2020, the Federation announced the appointment of the Congress Advisory Committee on Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Decolonization.

Who served on the Congress Advisory Committee on EDID?

The committee members selected were based on their diverse backgrounds, national scholarly expertise in research, teaching, community engagement, administrative, and lived experiences in the areas of accessibility, anti-colonialism, decolonization, anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion. The independent AC-EDID, which worked mostly *in camera*, was composed of seven members from across social sciences and humanities disciplines at Canadian universities:

- Dr. Malinda S. Smith (Chair), Vice-Provost Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion and Professor of Political Science at the University of Calgary.
- Dr. Noreen Golfman (Vice Chair), Professor of English, and Past Provost and Vice-President Academic at Memorial University.
- Dr. Marie Battiste, Professor Emerita, Educational Foundations, University of Saskatchewan.
- Dr. Wesley Crichlow, Professor of Critical Race Theory, University of Ontario Institute of Technology, Federation EDID Board Lead.
- Dr. Jay T. Dolmage, Associate Chair Undergraduate Communications Outcomes Initiative,

and Professor of English Language and Literature, University of Waterloo.
- Dr. Florence Glanfield, Vice-Provost Indigenous Programming & Research, and Professor of Secondary Education, University of Alberta.
- Dr. Claudia Malacrida, Professor Sociology and Board of Governors Research Chair Emerita, Past Associate Vice-President Research, University of Lethbridge, Federation Board member.
- Dr. Anne-José Villeneuve, Associate Professor of French Linguistics at Campus Saint-Jean, University of Alberta.

What was included in the status and mandate of the Congress Advisory Committee on EDID?

The status and mandate of the AC-EDID are outlined in the introduction section of "Igniting Change: Final Report and Recommendation" of the committee. The status of the committee included two key elements: first, to take into account the full range of events organized by the Federation, as a suite of activities; and, second, to provide advice to the Federation's Board of Directors and President and CEO on objectives and strategies to support EDID in Congress and other Federation events.

The mandate of the committee included four interrelated themes: first, to advise the Board on (1) strategies to support EDID in Congress and other Federation events, and (2) specific action the Federation and its member associations can take in the short, medium, and longer term. Second, the committee was asked to identify strategies to support equitable and inclusive access and participation for its members in Federation activities. Third, the committee was mandated to advise the Federation on how to advance decolonization, and on how to support reconciliation with Indigenous communities, and on collaborative means of increasing opportunities for Indigenous students, scholars, and communities. Fourth, and finally, the committee's mandate included identifying opportunities and the means to continue the critical conversations about colonialism and anti-Black racism, using an intersectional lens, that make visible the impact of multiple and compounding forms of systemic discrimination.

How does "Igniting Change" define equity, diversity, inclusion, and decolonization?

The main concepts and definitions used throughout the report can be found in several key parts: first, in the glossary at the beginning of the full report; second, in Part II, *On the Second 'D' in EDID: Decolonization Principles, Guidelines, and Promising Practices*; in Part III, the *Better Practices Inclusive Conference Guide*, which also spells out what inclusion requires for five equity-deserving groups (women, Indigenous peoples, visible/racialized minorities, persons with disabilities, and LGBTQ2S+); and in Part IV, *The Charter on Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and*

As with many scholarly texts in the social sciences and the humanities, the authors also developed various working definitions of key principles and concepts:

Equity
Equity is concerned with justice and fairness. Equity is a state of being, a process, and a condition that is rooted in fundamental human rights, and, therefore, is not reliant on individual choice or voluntarism. Whereas equality may lead to an assumption of an even playing field, and may shape individual and institutional efforts to treat people the same, equity requires more; it is about understanding and accommodating difference and providing people with what they need to enter and thrive within the academy. Equity requires proactively identifying and combatting discriminatory ideas, attitudes, behaviours, as well as systems, policies, processes, and practices that lead to disadvantage. It is concerned with a legal and ethical commitment to doing what is right and necessary to achieve such a state through proactive measures to identify root causes, and design interventions to remove obstacles to fair opportunities and experiences in all spheres of academic life.

Diversity
Diversity is a characteristic of human societies that has been used in multiple ways across the postsecondary education sector. It includes the whole range of human, cultural, and societal differences among populations across Canada. Diversity encompasses identity difference, and the representation of students, staff, faculty, administrators, and senior leadership in the academy. Social diversity also includes the protected grounds under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Aboriginal and Treaty rights, and human rights legislation, such as race/ethnicity, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, and disability. Diversity is also used to differentiate types of knowledge production, educational institutions and units within institutions, such as faculties, schools, departments, programs, and institutes. Diversity also encompasses the nature and content of curricula, research, teaching, service and engagement.

Inclusion
Inclusion is a skillset and a condition that must be cultivated and that require resources in order to advance an equitable and fairer academy. Inclusion entails interconnected actions to dismantle barriers that impede participation, engagement, representation, and empowerment of members of diverse social identities and from various backgrounds in the life of the academy. Inclusion means that we design our educational and cultural spaces from the beginning so that they can be used fully by all peoples and all communities. Inclusion foregrounds the social and institutional relations of power and privilege, drawing necessary attention to who gets a seat and voice at the decision-making tables, and who is empowered by institutional processes, policies, systems, and structures.

Decolonization
The principles, processes, and practices of decolonization are fundamental to a more equitable,

diverse, enlightened, and inclusive social sciences and humanities community in Canada. We believe the sustainable future of higher education requires confronting and unsettling the impact of colonial histories, ideologies, experiences, and legacies on disciplines, archives, canons, curricula, methodologies, and pedagogies, as well as on structures of governance, institutional design, and cultures, symbols, and ceremonies. Decolonization is a necessary and ongoing process of unlearning, uncovering, and transforming legacies of colonialism, as well as utilizing the educational and knowledge systems available to relearn and rebuild the social, cultural, and linguistic foundations that were lost, or eroded through colonialism. Decolonization also requires making space, balancing, generating and enabling diverse knowledge systems to thrive in the academy as well as in and through educational and knowledge transmitting places for Indigenous Peoples, the formerly colonized or continuing colonized nations, peoples, and cultural knowledge systems.

Who was consulted to draft "Igniting Change: Final Report and Recommendations"?

The AC-EDID's work unfolded in three broader and overlapping stages. The work began with the urgent need to review and provide substantive input on EDID to the Task Force on Contingency Planning. This input is reflected in many of the EDID initiatives incorporated into Congress 2021 at the University of Alberta, though of course the AC-EDID was not at the decision-making table when a theme and format for Congress 2021 were selected. This work was followed by blue-sky thinking as well as consultations – interviews, town halls – with the social sciences and humanities community. The final stage of the work, completed independently, entailed brainstorming and small group drafting of various sections of the final report and recommendations. Section III was completed with the support of a research assistant.

- The AC-EDID provided substantive EDID feedback on the drafts and the Final Report of The Task Force on Contingency Planning.
- The AC-EDID also engaged a large number of member associations on EDID at the September 2020 Congress Planning Meeting.
- Consultations with the co-presidents of the Black Canadian Studies Association, and a member of the former Indigenous Advisory Circle.
- Several town halls were held with leaders of social science and humanities scholarly associations.
- In-depth discussions were held with the Social Science and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) and Universities Canada.
- For a full list of individuals and organizations consulted, see page 37 of the report.

What are the goals of "Igniting Change: Final Report and Recommendations"?

Following six months of committee deliberations, social sciences and humanities community consultations and interviews, and a research and literature review, this report includes an overview of our work and our recommendations, and represents the completion of the mandate of the AC-EDID. The background, analysis of issues, identification of principles, guidelines, better practices, promising practices and the recommendations were developed to enable the Federation to pursue, embed, and advance equity, diversity, inclusion, and decolonization at Congress and other Federation events. They provide the analytics, tools, and mechanisms to advance EDID, recognizing the Federation must be proactive in working with the broader social sciences and humanities community both to achieve a more equitable, diverse, inclusive, and decolonial Congress and other Federation events, and to embark upon the journey toward decolonization in our social sciences and humanities disciplines, scholarly associations, and universities and colleges.

What are the recommendations outlined in "Igniting Change: Final Report and Recommendations"?

In the Report, forty-three specific recommendations are made. These recommendations are calls to action directed first and foremost to the Federation itself. Second, they are a call to action by scholarly associations, the disciplines they represent, and the broader social science and humanities community. Third, they are a call to collaboration between the Federation, its member scholarly associations and universities, host universities and organizing committees of Congress and other Federation events.

Who is accountable for implementing the recommendations in "Igniting Change"?

The Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences has a membership that includes 80 scholarly associations, and is led by a Board, and with a staff based primarily in Ottawa. The Federation's Board initiated the AC-EDID and its mandate. As the organization serving these associations, the Federation is accountable for implementing these recommendations, and for working with scholarly associations and host universities to achieve the vision of the Igniting Change report.

The recommendations thus are directed to the Federation and its member associations of scholars from universities and colleges across Canada and beyond. Accountabilities are shared among many, including the Federation, its scholarly associations that are represented at Congress and other Federation events, and the universities that accept responsibilities to host a Congress that embeds the principles and practices of accessibility, anti-racism, equity, diversity, inclusion, and decolonization. Because each of the EDID terms are complex, multi-layered, intricately related to each other, and often contested as new knowledges and research are

revealed, the report urges the accountabilities to be viewed as a 'journey', not a checklist or checkbox, but a lifelong learning process with organizations and institutions formulating their own plans and activities for their members to work toward unlearning exclusionary, discriminatory and oppressive practices, and learning or relearning foundations, principles and practices of EDID.

What practical steps can organizers and host universities take to ensure a more equitable, diverse, inclusive and decolonial conference?

The *Igniting Change: Final Report and Recommendations* offers concrete recommendations to individuals, organizers and host universities to build ambitious, bold, practical and transformative processes for igniting change and ensuring that Congress and related Federation events. These are outlined in the recommendations, spelt out in Part II of the Report, "Decolonization: Principles, Guidelines, and Promising Practices," and Part III of the Report, *"Better Practices for an Inclusive Conference Guide."*

· recognize and include the context and situatedness of diverse knowledges and peoples,

· critically examine the history of exclusions and oppressive policies and practices related to people, languages, knowledge systems, protocols, and processes and make active affirmative steps to remedy or ameliorate these exclusions, and

· build acceptance, relationship and belonging, safety, and intellectual, linguistic and cultural diversity of equity-deserving groups (women, Indigenous peoples, visible/racialized minorities, persons with disabilities, LGBTQ2S+, and intersectionality), Indigenous nations, and diverse knowledges and languages at Congress and other Federation activities.

What is the Charter on Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Decolonization in the Social Sciences and Humanities?

The AC-EDID developed and recommended the Charter, and it was adopted by the Federation's Board as an important vehicle for continuing the conversations on equity, diversity, inclusion, and decolonization in the Federation, its governance and leadership, member associations, at Congress and other Federation events and, more broadly, in social science and humanities disciplines, universities and colleges.

The Charter on EDID builds on, and extends, the Tri-Agency's initiatives like the Dimensions EDI Charter, which aims to increase equity, diversity, and inclusion in the research ecosystem. Where many international Charters focus on STEM disciplines, the Charter on EDID highlights a central role the Federation must play by working collaboratively to advance EDID with member associations, universities and colleges, and national partners like the Social Sciences and

Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), Universities Canada, and the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT), among others.

The Charter is the Federation's commitment to work with member associations, universities and colleges and the broader social science and humanities community to identify and ameliorate any obstacles, barriers, and biases that have negative impacts on the experiences of members of equity-deserving groups, including, but not limited to women, Indigenous Peoples (First Nations, Metis, Inuit); members of visible/racialized minority communities, persons with disabilities; members of LGBTQ2S+ communities; as well as linguistic, religious and cultural communities.

Read and endorse the Charter on Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Decolonization in the Social Sciences and Humanities here.

How can I share my feedback to "Igniting Change: Recommendations and Report"?

We welcome, and are grateful for, any feedback of the report and recommendations. There are a few ways people can share their thoughts:

Join the community on April 9 at 1pm (EDT) to hear a presentation of the report by the Advisory Committee on Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Decolonization (AC-EDID) Chair Malinda S. Smith and Vice-Chair Noreen Golfman; or
Send an email to federation@ideas-idees.ca.