



## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Executive Committee of Faculty Council (March 22, 2016)  
Faculty Council (April 12, 2016)

**From:** Edgar Acosta  
Chair, Community Affairs and Gender Issues (CA&GI)

**Date:** March 22, 2016

**Re:** Terms of Reference for Diversity Climate Survey

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## REPORT CLASSIFICATION

This is a major policy matter that will be considered by the Executive Committee for endorsing and forwarding to Faculty Council for vote as a regular motion (requiring a simple majority of members present and voting to carry).

## BACKGROUND

The mandate of the Community Affairs & Gender Issues Committee 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.

At its February 9, 2015 meeting, the committee discussed the current state of affairs in terms of gender diversity in the Faculty. The committee discussed various alternatives to support the gains made and ongoing efforts to further improve the diversity of our community. The committee agreed on two priority initiatives: to undertake a diversity climate survey, and to enhance outreach by better connecting the research efforts in the faculty with our outreach office, particularly through video demos.

The input from the Executive Committee of Faculty Council of April 2, 2015 was supportive of these efforts. However, it was noted that a diversity climate should go beyond gender diversity.

The committee has been reviewing recent diversity climate surveys, particularly from UCLA (<http://campusclimate.ucop.edu/common/files/pdf-climate/ucla-full-report.pdf>), the University of Maryland ([http://ischool.umd.edu/sites/default/files/page\\_content\\_files/Diversity%20Climate%20Survey%20Combined%20FINAL%206.18.13.pdf](http://ischool.umd.edu/sites/default/files/page_content_files/Diversity%20Climate%20Survey%20Combined%20FINAL%206.18.13.pdf)) and from Texas A&M University (<http://diversity.tamu.edu/getattachment/Campus-Climate/Studies/Undergrad->

[Campus-Climate-Assessment-2013.pdf.aspx](#)). One of the greatest contributions of these surveys is that they produce a quantitative assessment of the diversity of the community, and survey responses that can be cross-referenced with subgroups.

As per our report to Faculty Council on December 8, 2015, we have continued the consultation process towards the completion of a proposal for a diversity climate survey detailing overall objectives, resources, and timeline. The proposal is to be considered by the Executive Committee, and eventually at Faculty Council, before the end of the 2015-2016 academic year. This document presents the terms of reference for the planned Diversity Climate Survey.

## **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:

1. Ethnicity
2. Gender and sexual orientation
3. Religion
4. Age
5. Disability
6. Legal status (marital, visa vs. residence/citizen, First Nations status)
7. 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:

1. Assess the diversity of our community, including students, faculty and staff
2. Help identify groups facing marginalization, discrimination, disparagement or alienation
3. Assess if current FASE practices/policies provide support to identified groups, inviting comments on specific practices and policies and potential recommendations for changes
4. 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.

## **PROCESS AND CONSULTATION**

The terms of reference were developed after a set of consultations were undertaken, first with a sub-group of the committee, then with the input of the Equity and Diversity Office of the University of Toronto, then via a formal meeting of the committee on February 17, 2016. This last meeting prompted the development of a draft document that was circulated to the committee on February 29 to provide input on it until March 05, 2016. A compilation of the editions was then submitted for an electronic vote on March 06, 2016 passing with a 7 votes in favour, 2 against.

The reason for one of the votes against the document was the inclusion of Religion as part of the dimensions of diversity. The concern expressed was the potential use of policies that would support a religious group vs. others, particularly in recruiting or hiring policies. A discussion on the topic was invited and there was support for leaving Religion as separate dimension (separate from Ethnicity). There was a general sense that the role of the committee and the DCS is to identify issues and bring those issues to light at the Faculty level and discuss potential solutions, not to design or implement specific policies. The committee would be open to edit the sentence "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 from our community", if needed to properly reflect that role.

There was also discussion about including "refugee" as part of the legal status dimension.

There was also discussion about First Nations being a separate category from ethnicity or legal status.

There was also discussion about legal status being a relevant dimension. However, DCS conducted by other universities showed that visa students tend to have a different experience – often more challenging – than citizens/residents.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS AND MOTIONS FOR FACULTY 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.