Gender Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.

Business and Higher Education Perspectives
Preface

In February 2017, the Quality Network for Universities met at the University of British Columbia to discuss gender equity, diversity, and inclusion in post-secondary education (PSE) and in the private sector. This report explores insights shared at the meeting, with the intention of continuing the conversation on gender equity in Canada; inspiring decision-makers to take action; and engaging more deeply with the assumptions that can impact our judgment. It closes by highlighting best practices and sharing steps that PSE institutions and other organizations can take to help all students and employees reach their full potential.
# CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Chapter 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Gender Equity in Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Gender Equity and Post-Secondary Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Gender in the Workforce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Chapter 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Using Innovative Practices to Address Gender Inequity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Change Requires a Creative Toolkit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Gender Equity and Innovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Chapter 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Rethinking Diversity on Campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Rethinking Gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Racial and Gender Diversity on Campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Women in STEM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>The Diversity Circles Initiative at BCIT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Embracing Diversity on Campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Chapter 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Diversity Inside and Outside PSE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Gender Equity and the Way Forward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Chapter 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>Toward Gender Equity: Key Take-aways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>Gender Equity in the Age of Trump</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>Key Take-aways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>Appendix A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>Bibliography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>Appendix B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>Meeting Agenda</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Foreword

“Proudly diverse, intentionally inclusive” and “EDI is a part of our DNA” are messages often communicated by Ryerson University leadership to our campus community, pointing to our shared responsibility and intentional action required to bring about gender equality and substantive organizational change. By intentionally integrating values of equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI), the post-secondary education sector can become a more inclusive space for women of multiple intersecting identities and contribute to building the type of society and world we want to live in.

This report by The Conference Board of Canada encapsulates a range of ideas from academia, government, and business on gender equity in post-secondary education. Key take-aways include engaging leaders as diversity champions, using design-based solutions, setting targets to determine progress, establishing accountability, reducing implicit bias, leveraging external forces, and recognizing the necessity of an intersectional approach to gender equity.

Reporting diversity data on faculty, staff, and students at universities is important for transparency, drawing attention to issues, and tracking progress. However, more must be done to bring about the culture shift necessary to create and sustain an inclusive campus whereby different perspectives and experiences are sought out and considered valuable contributions to the educational enterprise. While a systemic approach is essential, the driver of this change requires strategic integration to be successful.

Finally, it is important to acknowledge this is not the beginning of Canadian efforts to address gender equity in post-secondary education. There are decades of activism, research, and programs that provide invaluable information about what does and doesn’t work, along with practitioners, researchers, and activists who have accrued knowledge and skills, and used their voice to advance gender equity. Building on this foundation, initiatives discussed in this report can lead to new ideas and innovations to bring swifter and lasting change.

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Acknowledgements

This report was prepared by Dr. Matthew McKean, Associate Director, Education and Manager of the Quality Network for Universities, Dr. Jessica Edge, Senior Research Associate, and Eleni Kachulis, Research Associate, The Conference Board of Canada, with the financial support of the Centre for Skills and Post-Secondary Education and the Quality Network for Universities. Find a list of the Centre’s members at www.conferenceboard.ca/spse/Partners.aspx and the Network’s members at http://www.conferenceboard.ca/networks/qnuvp/membership.aspx.

The foreword to the report was contributed by Dr. Denise O’Neil Green, Vice-President, Equity and Community Inclusion at Ryerson University.

The report was reviewed internally by Alison Howard, Associate Director, Education and Strategic Initiatives. Feedback was also provided by Barbara MacLaren, Senior Gender Equality Expert, and Lota Bertulfo, Principal Gender Equality Expert. The report was reviewed externally by Dr. Imogen Coe, Professor and Dean, Faculty of Science, Ryerson University; and Dr. Valerie Walker, Vice-President, Talent and Skills, Business Council of Canada. We thank them for their helpful comments.

The findings in this report are based on a Conference Board of Canada meeting at the University of British Columbia (UBC), February 1–3, 2017, convened by Dr. Matthew McKean on behalf of the Quality Network for Universities. Thank you to network member Dr. Eric Eich, Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President (Academic Affairs), UBC, for hosting the meeting, and to Selina Fast, Executive Assistant to the Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President (Academic Affairs), UBC, for her help in coordinating the meeting on campus. Thank you as well to UBC students Bayan Qutub and Lauren Oakley, who served as notetakers for the meeting. Additional thanks to Alison Howard for stepping in to help with logistics.

Special thanks to Dr. Noreen Golfman, Provost and Vice-President (Academic), Memorial University, Dr. Karen Chad, Vice-President (Research), University of Saskatchewan, and Dr. Susan Searls Giroux, Associate Vice-President (Faculty), McMaster University for their inspiration and guidance in the early planning stages.

Thank you to Elisabeth Finch, PwC Partner, Tax Services, Transfer Pricing, B.C. Diversity and Inclusion Leader, for organizing two of the panels. Thanks, too, to the many assistants and support staff who coordinated the busy schedules of our distinguished speakers and delegates.

Meetings of this size, scope, and calibre are made possible by the commitment of the speakers and delegates. We thank everyone involved for taking the time to prepare their remarks, travel, and engage on this critical issue.

Any errors or omissions in fact or interpretation remain the sole responsibility of The Conference Board of Canada.
About the Centre for Skills and Post-Secondary Education

The Conference Board of Canada's Centre for Skills and Post-Secondary Education (SPSE) is a multi-year initiative that examines the advanced skills and education challenges facing Canada today. While education is a provincial/territorial government responsibility, improving Canada's skills and post-secondary education performance is a national priority. The Centre examines important themes and issues in post-secondary education from a pan-Canadian perspective. The Centre involves a broad collaboration of public and private sector stakeholders. Together, we aim to address the future of work and the drivers of change in the educational landscape.

For more information about the Centre for Skills and Post-Secondary Education, visit www.conferenceboard.ca/spse.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Gender Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion: Business and Higher Education Perspectives

At a Glance

- In February 2017, the Quality Network for Universities (QNU) met at the University of British Columbia to discuss gender equity, diversity, and inclusion in post-secondary education (PSE) and in the private sector.

- Achieving gender parity has both public and private benefits for Canada, but will require concentrated efforts on the part of governments, employers, PSE institutions, and other stakeholders.

- This report explores insights shared at the 2017 QNU meeting, with the intention of continuing the conversation on gender equity in Canada; inspiring decision-makers to take action; and engaging more deeply with the assumptions that can impact our judgment.
With representatives from government and business, members of the Quality Network for Universities met in early 2017 to discuss ways to improve culture and leadership practices around gender equity, diversity, and inclusion. The two-day meeting featured presentations from university administrators, academics, the private sector, and others on gender equity through design thinking (which prioritizes finding practical and creative solutions to problems); gender and innovation; inclusive recruitment and retention in the workplace; and gender diversity on campus.

**Quality Network for Universities**

The Conference Board of Canada’s Quality Network for Universities (QNU) is a long-standing and distinguished network of Canadian university leaders. The network, which is made up of provosts and vice-presidents from universities across Canada, comes together three times a year to explore topics that are critical to the university mission. Meetings explore leading practices across sectors and include concentrated and candid discussion on challenges facing members and their institutions.

The meeting represented a desire on the part of its participants to continue to stand against violence, oppression, and exclusion and to defend the collective values of equity and inclusion. The QNU convened this group of PSE, public sector, and business leaders with the intention of continuing the conversation on gender equity in Canada; inspiring decision-makers to take action; and engaging more deeply with the assumptions that can impact our judgment.
This report provides a brief snapshot of the status of gender equity, diversity, and inclusion in Canada's PSE system and labour market, and offers insights and recommendations shared at the 2017 QNU meeting. The discussion is organized around the following three themes:

- **Using Innovative Practices to Address Gender Equity:** How can creative tools like design thinking and strategic foresight help us combat implicit gender bias within PSE institutions and the innovation sector?

- **Rethinking Diversity on Campus:** How can PSE institutions create environments that foster diversity and support the success of women, LGBTQ2S individuals, Indigenous peoples, and visible minorities? What can be done to improve the representation of female students, and increase the rates of recruitment and advancement of female faculty in STEM fields?

- **Diversity Inside and Outside PSE:** Why should employers prioritize increasing diversity within their organizations? What kinds of barriers hinder women's recruitment and advancement within organizations, and how do we design effective solutions? What unique challenges do Indigenous women face in Canada's economy, and how can these be mitigated?

The meeting's closing keynote, on leadership in the age of Trump, was delivered by The Right Honourable Kim Campbell. The report concludes by expanding on the following key take-aways:

1. There is both an ethical and business case for increasing gender equity.
2. Efforts to increase diversity and inclusion must begin at the top.
3. Students and external forces put pressure on PSE institutions to become more diverse and inclusive.
4. Steps must be taken to reduce implicit bias in PSE institutions.
5. Design-based solutions can play a significant role in addressing implicit bias.
6. Diversity initiatives must include targets and measurement of progress towards targets.

While the QNU meeting continued the critical discussion on equity and inclusion in Canada, the conversation is far from over. PSE institutions, in their role as educators and birthplaces for innovation, have an invaluable role to play in achieving greater gender equity on and off campus,
but achieving real change will require collaboration on the part of all stakeholders. It will require answers to questions such as: How do we incentivize positive policy change and shifts in organizational culture?; Who is responsible for what?; and What mechanisms can we use to hold institutions and decision-makers accountable?

As a national, non-partisan organization, The Conference Board of Canada is ideally placed to convene key stakeholders on this issue. Future Conference Board research will examine evidence-based strategies to further gender equity and diversity in Canada’s PSE system.
CHAPTER 1

Gender Equity in Canada

Chapter Summary

- International movements for gender equity, diversity, and inclusion are leading to meaningful structural reform, new legislation, financial commitments, and social change.

- In February 2017, the Quality Network for Universities met at the University of British Columbia to discuss gender equity in post-secondary education (PSE) and in the private sector.

- While women make up over half of post-secondary graduates in Canada, they are under-represented in certain academic and professional fields, in senior decision-making roles, and in the workforce as a whole.

- Achieving gender parity has both public and private benefits for Canada, but will require concentrated efforts on the part of governments, employers, PSE institutions, and other stakeholders.
International movements for gender equity, diversity, and inclusion are leading to meaningful structural reform, new legislation, financial commitments, and social change. In Canada, Budget 2018, dubbed the “Equality + Growth” budget by the federal government, was informed by gender-based analyses and targeted several areas to improve gender equity in Canada’s economy—from pay equity and transparency to boosting the number of women in political office, business leadership, and trades.

Canada’s researchers and post-secondary education (PSE) leaders have been especially outspoken—calling for change and strong commitments to equity, diversity, and inclusion in universities, colleges, polytechnics, and research communities after years of neglect, false assumptions, and unfulfilled promises.

A 2002 study of the Canada Research Chairs (CRC) program, for example, found that women were consistently under-represented among the nominees. Following a complaint to the Canadian Human Rights Commission, new language was added to CRC referee instructions around avoiding unconscious bias. Fast forward to October 2016 and the federal government was still working to address long-standing gender gaps in research funding—this time in its highly competitive Canada Excellence Research Chairs (CERC) program. Of the 28 chair-holders at the time, only one was a woman. Institutional applicants in subsequent competitions will be required to submit gender equity and diversity plans that outline hiring criteria for researchers and students.

1 According to the Government of Canada, “gender equity means being fair to women and men. To ensure fairness, measures are often needed to compensate for historical and social disadvantages that prevent women and men from otherwise operating as equals.” Government of Canada, “Policy on Gender Equality.”

2 Canada is not alone in this—nearly half of OECD countries are practising, planning for, or actively considering gender budgeting. See OECD, The Pursuit of Gender Equality, 61.

3 Bégin-Heick and Associates Inc., Gender-Based Analysis of the Canada Research Chairs Program.

4 Semeniuk, “Gender Gap Spurs New Rules for Top-Tier Research Chairs.”
Budget 2018 committed $210 million over five years to help early-career researchers establish their careers and increase the diversity of Canada’s scientists. The public and private sectors are anteing up, progress is being made, but Canada still has a long way to go. While women continue to outnumber—and often outperform—men in education and PSE attainment, they remain under-represented and underpaid in many sectors, disciplines, research communities, and professional roles. The structural barriers and gaps to PSE and work are wider yet for Indigenous peoples, people with disabilities, LGBTQ2S, and racialized Canadians. For these reasons, leaders and advocates across disciplines and sectors, academic and non-academic, are increasingly working together to foster inclusivity and equity in workplaces across the country.

In 2017, The Conference Board of Canada convened over 50 representatives from PSE, government, and business to discuss ways to improve cultural and leadership practices around gender equity, diversity, and inclusion. The two-day meeting, organized on behalf of the Quality Network for Universities, featured presentations from university administrators, academics, the private sector, and others on gender equity through design thinking (which prioritizes finding practical and creative solutions to problems); gender and innovation; inclusive recruitment and retention in the workplace; and gender diversity on campus (for the full meeting agenda, see Appendix B).

The meeting represented a desire on the part of its participants to continue to stand against violence, oppression, and exclusion, and to stand up for the collective values of equity and inclusion. The QNU convened this group of PSE, public sector, and business leaders with the intention of continuing the conversation on gender equity in Canada; inspiring decision-makers to take action; and engaging more deeply with the assumptions that can impact our judgment.

Presenters were selected not only for their experience and expertise, but also for their status as trailblazers and disruptors. The agenda included The Right Honourable Kim Campbell, Canada’s first and only female
prime minister; and Dr. Deborah Saucier, Canada’s first Indigenous female university provost, and now the first Indigenous female president at MacEwan University. It also included vocal advocates for gender equity in the academy, including UBC’s Dr. Jennifer Berdahl and the University of Alberta’s Dr. Malinda Smith, co-author of an important new book, *The Equity Myth: Racialization and Indigeneity at Canadian Universities* (UBC Press, 2017).

To highlight best practices in diversity and gender equity among employers outside of PSE, representatives were selected from the private consulting firms PwC and EY. In addition to prioritizing gender equity in their talent management and recruitment practices, both of these firms have dedicated executive personnel responsible for diversity and inclusion.

While the main focus of the meeting was gender equity, the agenda was designed with the intention of promoting an intersectional approach—one that considers gender not just in isolation, but also within the context of race, sexual orientation, disability, and other factors. Conversations on gender equity must not ignore the diverse challenges and experiences of those with multiple intersecting identities. 

It is for this reason that the meeting included sessions on racial and gender diversity among university leadership; Indigenous women and economic reconciliation; and diverse gender identities on campus. The key take-aways at the end of the report pertain not only to gender equity, but also to greater inclusion for a variety of under-represented groups.

As employers and educators, post-secondary institutions have an important role to play in supporting the success of diverse students and faculty. Given the composition and mandate of the QNU, presentations at this meeting focused largely on the university experience. Nonetheless, many of the issues covered have direct bearing on everyday scenarios in all PSE institutions—from recruitment, hiring practices, succession planning, and performance appraisals, to selection committee

6 See, for instance, Crenshaw, “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex;” Crenshaw, “Mapping the Margins;” and Carbado and others, “Intersectionality.”
membership, advisory councils, and equitable representation on leadership and scholarship teams.

Achieving gender equity is not just a moral imperative, but an economic one. While women represent 51 per cent of Canada’s population and 52 per cent of post-secondary graduates, their talent continues to go underutilized. Women are under-represented in senior decision-making roles, certain academic and professional fields, and the workforce as a whole. Men, too, are under-represented in certain academic disciplines and career fields. While governments, businesses, and PSE institutions are already taking steps toward building a more inclusive society, discussions at this meeting served as a reminder of the important work that still lies ahead.

A Note on Terminology

While this report often uses binary forms of categorization (e.g., female, women) to discuss gender, it recognizes that gender identities are diverse, and an individual may not identify with a binary gender categorization or their biological sex. Individuals who identify with non-binary or non-traditional gender norms face unique challenges and experiences.

Gender Equity and Post-Secondary Education

In Canada, women between the ages of 25 and 64 are 17 per cent more likely to have obtained a tertiary qualification than their male peers. The attainment gap exists across Canada, but the magnitude varies by province. For example, in Saskatchewan, only 60 men have a tertiary education for every 100 women, while in Ontario, this rises to

87 men for every 100 women. Women have accounted for the majority of full-time university enrolments since the early 1990s, and while still outnumbered by men at the doctoral level, they now make up about 56 per cent of bachelor's degree holders in Canada. They also make up 58 per cent of college, CEGEP, and other non-university certificate and diploma holders. (See Chart 1.)

This trend is not unique to Canada: in 2012, 30 per cent of men across Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries had attained tertiary education, compared to 34 per cent of women. Though some countries (e.g., Austria, Germany, Japan) have a gender imbalance that favours men, the gender gap in most industrialized countries favours women. The Conference Board’s How Canada Performs: Education and Skills report card ranks Canada’s gap as less severe than that of the United Kingdom, United States, France,

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10 Turcotte, Women and Education, 19.
12 Ibid.
13 OECD, The ABC of Gender Equality in Education, 23.
Belgium, and Ireland, but more severe than that of Denmark, Norway, Finland, and Sweden.\footnote{Conference Board of Canada, The, “Provincial and Territorial Ranking: Gender Gap in Tertiary Education.”}

The educational attainment gap has resulted in concerns about a “boy crisis”—not just at the tertiary level, but along the education continuum. The results of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2012 survey showed that, across OECD countries, males’ performance in reading lagged females’ by an average of 38 points, or the equivalent of one year of school.\footnote{The PISA survey is an international triennial survey that measures the skills and knowledge of 15-year-olds in subjects like reading, science, mathematics, problem-solving, and financial literacy.} While males were more likely to outperform females in mathematics, they were also more likely to achieve sub-baseline scores in all three core subjects (reading, mathematics, and science) and less likely to aspire to formal education beyond high school.\footnote{OECD, \textit{The ABC of Gender Equality in Education}, 20–24.}

Although in Canada the gender gap in educational attainment favours women, gender imbalances vary widely by degree level and discipline. Women obtain more bachelor’s degrees than men and earn 51 per cent of master’s degrees, but they earn only 38 per cent of doctorates. Women are also under-represented in STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) fields. They comprise 32 per cent of graduates in mathematics, computer, and information sciences; and just 20 per cent of graduates in architecture, engineering, and related technologies.\footnote{Statistics Canada, 2016 Census, Catalogue no. 98-400-X2016285.} (See Chart 2.) Notably, STEM disciplines tend to be among the highest earning.\footnote{Frank, Frenette, and Morissette, \textit{Labour Market Outcomes of Young Postsecondary Graduates}; see also Finnie and others, \textit{Barista or Better?}, 19–20.}
The gender imbalance in STEM fields, while still present, improves when it comes to master's degrees: women represent 43 per cent of master’s graduates in mathematics, computer, and information sciences; and 25 per cent of graduates in architecture, engineering, and related technologies. At the doctoral level, however, these figures fall to 23 per cent and 16 per cent, respectively.  

At the college level, women account for 58 per cent of total graduates; 35 per cent of graduates in mathematics, computer, and information sciences; and just 9 per cent of graduates in architecture, engineering, and related technologies. Men, on the other hand, account for just 12 per

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19 Women’s representation in STEM is explored further in Chapter 3 of this report; Statistics Canada, 2016 Census, Catalogue no. 98-400-X2016285.
cent of graduates in education, health, and related fields. The gap in health and related fields is most pronounced in nursing, where in 2011, only 6 per cent of diploma holders were male.\textsuperscript{20} (See Chart 3.)

Chart 3
College Graduates by Gender and Major Field of Study
(per cent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field of Study</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
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<tr>
<td>Personal, protective, and transportation services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and related fields</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, natural resources, conservation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture, engineering, and related technologies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics, computer, information sciences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical and life sciences, and technologies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business, management, public administration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Social and behavioural sciences, law</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual and performing arts, communications technologies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
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</table>

Note: Data include college, CEGEP, and other non-university certificates or diplomas.
Sources: Statistics Canada, 2011 National Household Survey; The Conference Board of Canada.

There is also a considerable gender gap when it comes to apprenticeships, with men representing approximately 86 per cent of apprenticeship completers in 2015.\textsuperscript{21} In many trades, women are still a significant minority—for instance, they make up less than 2 per cent of carpenters, millwrights, and plumbers; and less than 1 per cent of nurses.

\textsuperscript{20} Statistics Canada, 2016 Census, Catalogue no. 98-400-X2016285; Ferguson, \textit{Women and Education}, 19.

\textsuperscript{21} Statistics Canada, CANSIM table 477-054.
Gender in the Workforce

Just as gender gaps are present in post-secondary attainment, they are also evident in labour force participation and outcomes. Compared to other OECD countries, Canada's performance on gender-based workforce indicators is mixed. With women participating in the workforce at a rate of 74 per cent, Canada scores above the OECD average (68 per cent). While there is a 7 per cent gap in labour force participation between men and women in Canada, this is better than the OECD average of 12 per cent.24

However, Canada still has considerable work to do before achieving gender parity in the labour market. Despite its relatively high performance in female workforce participation overall, Canada underperforms on female participation in full-time employment. Its rate of 73 per cent, two percentage points below the OECD average, has changed little in the past two decades.25 Additional challenges include the gender wage gap, which persists in Canada and is wider than the OECD average, and the low representation of women in high-ranking positions.26

Gender Wage Gap

Canada's gender wage gap has narrowed in recent decades, decreasing from 23.9 per cent in 2000 to 18.2 per cent in 2016.27 Despite this

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22 Ibid.
23 Munro, MacLaine, and Stuckey, Skills—Where Are We Today?
24 PwC, “Ready for Change.”
25 Ibid.
26 Ibid.
27 This refers to the difference between male and female median full-time earnings as a percentage of male median full-time earnings.
Chapter 1 | The Conference Board of Canada

progress, significant room for improvement remains. In the Conference Board's 2017 How Canada Performs report card, Canada earns a C grade for gender wage parity and ranks 13th out of 16 peer countries, outperforming only the U.S., Finland, and Japan.\textsuperscript{28} The report card also shows that, while male and female college graduates receive similar income advantages in most provinces, female university graduates (i.e., bachelor’s degree holders) receive a larger earnings premium than their male peers.\textsuperscript{29}

But a gender wage gap persists, which might be explained in part by the fact that women work fewer hours than men, spending more time on child care and other domestic responsibilities. Women are also over-represented in lower-paying jobs. However, a wage gap exists even when each of these factors is considered. For instance, when the pay gap is calculated according to median hourly wages, Canada still has an overall gap of 12.5 per cent.\textsuperscript{30} Further, a Statistics Canada study comparing the earnings of full-time workers aged 25–54 found a 9 per cent pay gap between men and women in broadly comparable industries and occupations.\textsuperscript{31}

While earnings vary according to post-secondary attainment, a 2016 study by the University of Ottawa's Education Policy Research Initiative found the gender wage gap persists for university graduates in all academic disciplines. The study, which followed eight cohorts of graduates (2005 to 2012) from 14 Canadian post-secondary institutions, found that the gender wage gap increases in the years following graduation. In the year after graduating, male university graduates from the 2005 cohort earned $2,800 more than their female counterparts; but the wage differential increased to $27,300 eight years later.\textsuperscript{32} The study found similar results for college graduates: Men in the 2005 cohort earned $5,500 more than their female peers in the first year after

\textsuperscript{28} Conference Board of Canada, The, “Provincial and Territorial Ranking: Gender Wage Gap.”
\textsuperscript{30} Conference Board of Canada, The, “Provincial and Territorial Ranking: Gender Wage Gap.”
\textsuperscript{31} Morissette, Pico, and Liu, The Evolution of Canadian Wages Over the Last Three Decades, 48.
\textsuperscript{32} Finnie and others, Barista or Better?, 24.
Closing the gender wage gap will result in considerable economic gains for both individuals and society.

Graduating. By the eighth year after graduation, this had increased to $23,600.\(^{33}\)

Closing the gender wage gap is not only an ethical priority. It will also result in considerable economic gains for both individuals and society. PwC estimates that if female workers’ earnings were on par with those of male workers, the total increase in annual earnings for women in Canada would be $92 billion. Further, increasing women’s participation in the workforce from the current 74 per cent to 79 per cent could result in more than $105 billion in GDP growth.\(^{34}\)

**Women in High-Ranking Positions**

Despite making up 48 per cent of the labour force in Canada, women are under-represented in senior leadership positions. However, among Financial Post 500 companies, the proportion of board of director seats held by women is on the rise. In 2001, just 10.9 per cent of FP500 board members were women. By 2016, this figure had nearly doubled, rising to 21.6 per cent.\(^{35}\) When it comes to gender parity, Crown corporations fare best, with women making up 30.4 per cent of board members. This contrasts sharply with performance among publicly traded companies, where women make up 12.1 per cent of board members and just 4.1 per cent of board chairs.\(^{36}\)

Just as female representation varies by company type, it also varies by sector. Health care and social assistance is the only sector in which women make up at least a third of board members (31.9 per cent). This is followed closely by retail/trade (29.4 per cent) and utilities (29 per cent). In contrast, female board representation is particularly low in construction (12.8 per cent); and agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting (12.8 per cent).\(^{37}\) (See Chart 4.)

In 2014, the Government of Canada’s Advisory Council for Promoting Women on Boards recommended a national goal of 30 per cent women

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\(^{33}\) Ibid, 47.

\(^{34}\) PwC, “Ready for Change,” 5–6.


\(^{36}\) Mulligan-Ferry and others, 2013 Catalyst Census, 1–3.

on boards by 2019. Research suggests that, in heterogenous groups, a "critical mass" of a given minority group (often specified as 30 per cent in relative terms and three members in absolute terms) is necessary to avoid tokenism and reap the benefits of diversity.

Chart 4
Female Representation on Boards of FP500 Companies by Sector (per cent)

In 2009, women held approximately 55 per cent of professional business and financial posts, up from 38.3 per cent in 1987. They also filled approximately 37 per cent of managerial roles, representing an increase of about 4 percentage points since 1987. The Conference Board has predicted that, if the proportion of women in middle management

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Sources: Canadian Board Diversity Council, 2016 Annual Report Card; The Conference Board of Canada.

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38 Government of Canada’s Advisory Council for Promoting Women on Boards, Good for Business, 1.
39 Bohnet, What Works, 231.
continues to grow at this rate, it will take approximately 151 years for the managerial gender gap to close.\textsuperscript{40}

Proportionally, women fare better in the public sector than the private sector. In 2014, approximately 36 per cent of all Governor in Council appointments were women—a significant improvement on the 2012 figure of 30 per cent.\textsuperscript{41} Further, while women made up only 5.2 per cent of public sector executives in 1983, they now make up 45.7 per cent.\textsuperscript{42} This earned Canada first place in EY’s \textit{Worldwide Women Public Sector Index 2014}.\textsuperscript{43}

However, a 2011 Conference Board report demonstrates that when women’s presence in public sector senior management roles is considered alongside their rate of labour force participation in the sector, the public sector is on par with the private sector in terms of gender parity. In both sectors, women have been two to three times less likely than men to hold senior management positions for the past two decades. The same study suggests little progress has been made at the middle management level: from 1987 to 2009, men were twice as likely as women to hold a middle management role in the public sector.\textsuperscript{44}

LeanIn.Org and McKinsey & Company’s report \textit{Women in the Workplace 2017} examined workplace equality in the United States, and found that women—especially women of colour—are under-represented in the corporate pipeline, and are less likely to be promoted than men. It also found that, while women are not leaving their organizations at higher rates than men, people of colour are significantly more likely to leave than their white counterparts. The report also suggested that men are more likely than women to think that a workplace is equitable; in fact, almost half of men surveyed believed that women were well represented in leadership in companies where women accounted for only one in 10 senior leaders.\textsuperscript{45}

\textsuperscript{41} Status of Women Canada, \textit{Progress Highlights}, 2.
\textsuperscript{43} EY, \textit{Worldwide Women Public Sector Leaders Index 2014}.
\textsuperscript{44} Wohlbold and Chenier, \textit{Women in Senior Management}, 5–6.
\textsuperscript{45} Krivkovich and others, \textit{Women in the Workplace 2017}.
Women are also under-represented among business owners in Canada. They retain ownership in 47 per cent of Canadian small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), but hold majority ownership of just 17 per cent. Women-owned companies are less likely to be categorized as “high-growth” than male-owned ones, although women start businesses at twice the rate of men. Certification campaigns (e.g., Women’s Business Enterprises, WEConnect International) have been implemented in Canada and around the world to help promote women-owned enterprises. In addition, 97 per cent of Fortune 500 companies have programs to encourage supplier diversity. However, gender parity has still not been achieved in this area, with certified Women Business Enterprises currently receiving fewer than 5 per cent of government and corporate contracts.

A significant gender gap also exists when it comes to political leadership. In 2015, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau introduced Canada’s first gender-balanced cabinet. However, in May 2017, women represented only 26 per cent of Members of Parliament. Canada ranks 63rd out of over 190 countries on the Inter-Parliamentary Union’s list on women in national parliaments. On the other hand, Canada ranks among the highest when it comes to female representation in the Senate. At the provincial and territorial level, women account for just two of Canada’s 13 premiers. Note that Canada outperforms the United States on this front: according to Rutgers University’s Center for American Women in Politics, only six women are currently serving as state governors. As of 2018, women hold approximately 22.8 per cent of available statewide elective executive offices. In Canada, female representation in provincial and territorial legislatures varies, ranging from 10.5 per cent in the Northwest Territories to 36 per cent in British Columbia. At the municipal level,
women make up 28 per cent of city councillors and 18 per cent of mayors.\textsuperscript{53}

The barriers to gender parity in leadership positions are numerous and diverse. They can include conscious and unconscious (or implicit) gender bias, hostile work environments, family responsibilities, and the “glass cliff”—a metaphor for the notion that women are more likely than men to hold high-risk positions.\textsuperscript{54} When it comes to political participation, women are under-represented partly because they are less likely to run for office than men. According to the American University’s Women & Politics Institute, young women are less likely to be socialized by their parents to consider a career in politics; they are less likely to believe they are qualified to run for office; and they are less likely to receive encouragement to do so from family, friends, and authority figures.\textsuperscript{55}

Conclusion

In terms of overall post-secondary attainment, Canada is a leader among OECD countries.\textsuperscript{56} But gender gaps in rate of attainment, level of attainment, and field of study indicate that Canada may not be harnessing the full capacity of its population. Similarly, gender differences in labour market participation, career field, attainment of leadership roles, and earnings highlight an opportunity to better leverage the talent of all Canadians—no matter their gender, race, Indigenous status, or sexual orientation.

Action is required to address systemic barriers and to ensure that all Canadians have the opportunity to reach their full potential and to contribute to Canada’s social and economic well-being. Achieving gender parity has both public and private benefits for Canada, but will require concentrated efforts on the part of governments, employers, PSE institutions, and other stakeholders.

\textsuperscript{53} Federation of Canadian Municipalities, 2015 – Municipal Statistics.
\textsuperscript{55} Lawless and Fox, \textit{Girls Just Wanna Not Run}, ii; see also Lawless and Fox, \textit{It Still Takes a Candidate}.
\textsuperscript{56} OECD, “Canada,” 1.
CHAPTER 2

Using Innovative Practices to Address Gender Inequity

Chapter Summary

- Women's career progress is hindered in part by implicit bias, or bias based on unintentional assumptions.

- Tools like design thinking and strategic foresight can be leveraged to address implicit bias and develop solutions to gender equity challenges.

- When creating design-based solutions, it is important to take intersectionality into account, and to ensure that these solutions do not replicate existing structures of inequity.

- To address gender gaps in Canada's technology and innovation sectors, post-secondary institutions and employers must take measures to champion gender equity and diversity.
One element of the gender bias that hinders women’s career progress is unconscious or implicit—that is, it is based on unintentional assumptions. Explicit bias, which is overt and intentional, still exists and poses a significant challenge to women’s equity in the workplace. However, implicit bias—which is more a product of socialization than of overt hostile attitudes—can still have a significant impact on women’s career paths.\(^1\) Many organizations have adopted diversity training programs to improve workplace equity, but when it comes to implicit bias, these programs may not be effective on their own. A shift in overall workplace culture is required.

Research has shown that encouraging conscious suppression of biases can be unsuccessful, and in some cases can even result in an increase in biased judgments.\(^2\) Fortunately, innovative tools are emerging to address this challenge. Behavioural design, for instance, can be leveraged to create organizational processes that minimize biased behaviour, regardless of the biases that individuals hold. Speakers at the QNU meeting elaborated on the role of design in addressing gender inequity, highlighting how it is being used in the post-secondary context.

### Change Requires a Creative Toolkit

Sara Diamond, President and Vice-Chancellor, OCAD University, began by stressing the need for continued efforts to close the gender gap in leadership roles. The gender gap persists partly due to a perceived lack of qualified candidates, as well as perceptions of likeability and fit. Diamond called for more research on gender bias in search firms and more support for women as they move through the corporate ranks.

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Diamond highlighted the potential of design thinking in the creation of more inclusive organizations. The concept, she explained, originated with the international design firm IDEO in the 1990s. It is defined by IDEO’s President and Chief Executive Officer, Tim Brown, as “a human-centered approach to innovation that draws from the designer’s toolkit to integrate the needs of people, the possibilities of technology, and the requirements for business success.” Diamond emphasized that, just as design thinking can be used to develop technology that reflects customers’ behaviours and needs, it can be used to solve “wicked problems”—a term used by design theorist Horst Rittel to describe “social problems that are poorly formulated, confusing, and include many decision makers with conflicting values.”

Design thinking is an outcomes-oriented process that embraces systems thinking, is grounded in participatory design, and develops possible solutions based on a wide range of perspectives. As Diamond and Karel Vredenburg explain in a 2016 Globe and Mail commentary, “the essence of design thinking involves empathizing deeply, listening to people and observing them to identify tough problems to address or new opportunities to explore.” At the meeting at UBC, Diamond discussed design thinking from the perspective of “agonism,” which emphasizes the power of constructive conflict in bringing about positive change.

Design thinking is already being used as a tool to promote gender equity, Diamond explained, pointing to Hélène Frichot’s How to Make Yourself a Feminist Design Power Tool and Iris Bohnet’s What Works: Gender Equality By Design. She provided examples of design responses to gender imbalances in the sciences, including gender neutral math and science teaching; role models and mentorship; movements for women in engineering, medicine, and science; girls learning code initiatives; and movements like TransHackFeminism, an intersectional feminist convergence that aims to “better understand, use, and ultimately
develop free and liberating technologies for social dissent.” OCAD U’s own programming is also designed to promote inclusivity. Curricula are designed to support pathways for all genders, and gender is foregrounded whenever it becomes a barrier. Women teach technical courses and lead or co-lead technical labs, and female students are encouraged in research labs.

Design thinking can be enhanced through the use of strategic foresight. In an industry context, strategic foresight is used to analyze trends that could affect business to better inform market and strategy development. Diamond highlighted how OCAD U is using strategic foresight exercises to address diversity challenges. For example, Suzanne Stein and Prateeksha Singh in OCAD U’s Super Ordinary Lab used card games to guide ICT sector leaders’ discussions on strategic, tactical, and cultural interventions they could employ to improve inclusivity in their organizations. According to Stein and Singh, the value of these games lies in their ability to provoke rich discourse. The guided discussions draw on players’ personal experiences, resulting in new realizations and interventions.

Diamond also pointed to the emergence of new, disruptive practices, like the work of futurist Stuart Candy, who was involved in designing the award-winning imagination card game, The Thing From the Future. She also highlighted AbTeC, a network of artists, academics, and technologists that is identifying ways to use new media technologies (e.g., web pages, online games) to complement Indigenous cultures and empower Indigenous people. Finally, she profiled FemTechNet, an international coalition of scholars, artists, and students that is “[collaborating] on the design and creation of feminist technological innovations” and promoting digital literacy and practices among women and girls.

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For further information on the TransHackFeminist convergence, see Calafou, *A TransHackFeminist (THF!) Convergence Report.*

Diamond and Vredenburg, “There’s No Innovation Agenda Without Design Thinking.”

Stein and Singh, “Gaming Our Way to Understanding the Barriers Faced by Women in Tech.”

OCAD University, “Stuart Candy.”

AbTeC, “Aboriginal Territories in Cyberspace.”

Diamond concluded by emphasizing that universities looking to incorporate design thinking, strategic foresight, and other innovative ways of thinking into their own organizational cultures may need to work outside of formal structures—for instance, through task forces. She also advised that they adopt existing creative tools, and facilitate dialogue among people with diverse questions and perspectives.

**Applying Design Thinking to Gender Inequity**

Ron Burnett, President and Vice-Chancellor of Emily Carr University of Art and Design, began by discussing pedagogy at Emily Carr. As a design school, the university takes a participatory and collaborative approach to learning and is moving away from the traditional authoritarian teaching and learning model. In the studio environment, teachers serve as navigators, and students collectively take responsibility for learning outcomes.

With its diverse student body (including a large Indigenous cohort and over a third of students from Asian backgrounds), maximizing inclusivity is a priority for Emily Carr. However, Burnett acknowledged the core inequity of universities, which lies in the hierarchical power structure between teachers and students. Emily Carr has taken action by implementing consistent systems of evaluation and marking for teachers and students, and embracing openness to democracy and willingness to change. However, some students have resisted these changes. Burnett noted that while there are some modalities where design can be helpful, design thinking can also have a homogenizing effect, causing communities of interest to act together and failing to bring out the multiplicities.

Bonne Zabolotney, Vice-President (Academic) and Provost at Emily Carr, discussed other potential challenges associated with design thinking. She noted that when she consulted female faculty on the potential of design thinking, they shared several reservations. First, they expressed concern that it does not contribute to the intellectual growth of the design field, as it is often an instrument of other disciplines like business, health, and engineering. They expressed a desire for a more collaborative approach. They also highlighted that Canada does not have its own body
Gender inequity persists in the innovation sector, where success is driven by gendered, biased markets.

of knowledge on design: there is no PhD program in design in Canada, meaning traditional design scholars leave the country to pursue their research. Burnett also highlighted this gap, pointing out that Canada has no design strategy and only a handful of institutions that focus on design.

Further, female faculty pointed out that design thinking is still based on a mid-century model, and has so far been unable to resolve the issue of gender inequity in the context of intersectionality (that is, gender as it intersects with class, race, and other social categorizations). Diamond, however, suggested this may be too wide a critique. While design thinking may be based on a mid-century model, it is possible to invert or flip a methodology to make it viable and contemporary. Diamond emphasized the positivity of inclusion and users’ participation within design thinking, and stated that design thinking is simply a tool set that can be expanded.

Female faculty also stated that gender inequity persists in the innovation sector itself, where success is driven by gendered, biased markets. Gender inequity, said Zabolotney, is an invisible and unintended force built into both innovation and design.

According to Zabolotney, we must ask two questions before addressing inequity: Where do I feel oppressed?; and Where do I think I am being oppressive? To shed light on how design thinking could be applied effectively to gender inequity, she referred to Carl DiSalvo’s *Adversarial Design*, which demonstrates how technology design can “do the work of agonism.” DiSalvo defines agonism as “a political theory that emphasizes contention as the foundation to democracy.” The book explores how design can engage with the political to challenge values, beliefs, and structures. Zabolotney emphasized that we must use provocation and engagement to challenge hegemonic beliefs and values. The aim of this process is not necessarily to find answers, but to challenge the status quo.

When it comes time to design solutions, we must work to acknowledge invisible structures and biases that exist within the production process. Otherwise, said Zabolotney, we are at risk of replicating the things

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we intend to change. Burnett also acknowledged the importance of challenging entrenched structures, stating, “If we don’t challenge the core model, we are reproducing it.” He pointed to the need for a more democratic process, as students currently do not have any control in the knowledge-power system. Diamond echoed this, highlighting the importance of lateral processes in policy design. She emphasized the need to play a curatorial role to ensure that different people are at the table, and that the burden of change does not fall disproportionately on Indigenous and racialized faculty.

When designing policies in this area, there needs to be a willingness to engage in a state of existential crisis, said Burnett. The goal is unclear; categories and discourses are messy. Most innovation does not happen by design, so it is important to create the context for innovation rather than defining the outcomes before we begin.

Gender Equity and Innovation

Building on Sara Diamond’s call for more women in leadership, Joy Johnson, Vice-President, Research and International and SFU Innovates Leader at Simon Fraser University, emphasized gender’s role as a positive force for innovation. Greater diversity at the leadership table can be disruptive to traditional thinking—something that is particularly valuable in the innovation sector. However, the female talent pool is underutilized. Rather than rising, female participation in the technology sector has declined over recent decades. In the early 1980s, women represented 38 per cent of ICT workers in Canada; by 2013, they represented just 20 per cent.14 In a sector where diversity can spur innovation, this is a critical loss.

Jill Earthy, Chief Growth Officer at the equity crowdfunding platform FrontFundr, added that women represent only 37 per cent of entrepreneurs in Canada, and even fewer engineers. According to Engineers Canada, female representation in the profession is lower than

14 Stein and Singh, “Gaming Our Way to Understanding the Barriers Faced by Women in Tech.”
Increasing gender equity in the innovation sector requires a multi-pronged approach.

13 per cent. Earthy also highlighted a need for greater female presence on the investor side. She stated that while progress is being made, continued persistence is key to achieving gender parity.

Greg Caws, President of the British Columbia Premier’s Technology Council, emphasized that innovation is more than technological entrepreneurship; it requires a focus on the application and social value of technology. Female leaders are present in the high-tech sector, including as CEOs, but do not necessarily come from STEM backgrounds. Caws also expressed a need for greater understanding of gender impact in the innovation sector. He pointed to a study suggesting that women may be disproportionately involved in social innovation (e.g., societal and environmental development) and other non-traditional fields, resulting in their omission from much of the literature on innovation.

Caws also noted that gender gaps in the innovation sector are particularly pronounced in certain disciplines, such as mechanical engineering, where women make up only about 9 per cent of the workforce. There is a better gender balance in environmental engineering (a branch of civil engineering), but there remains a significant gender gap in civil engineering as a whole, with women representing less than 18 per cent of employees.

Increasing gender equity in the innovation sector requires a multi-pronged approach. Earthy pointed out that the PSE sector, which serves as a bridge to industry, has an important role to play in driving diversity. PSE institutions can do their part by fostering cross-faculty collaboration and integrating discussions on diversity in the classroom. She also highlighted the role of women-oriented incubators in fostering diverse teams. For example, SheEO, a venture capital firm based in Toronto, Ontario, provides funding and coaching to start-up teams that are majority female-owned and female-owned and -led. Similarly, Communitech’s Fierce Founders Accelerator, based in Waterloo, targets

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15 Statistics Canada, Self-Employment, Historical Summary; Engineers Canada, “Women in Engineering.”
16 Belghiti-Mahut, Lafont, and Yousfi, “Gender Gap in Innovation.”
18 SheEO, “Apply to Be a Venture.”
companies with at least one female founder and provides fund matching, mentorship, training, and other support.\textsuperscript{19}

Earthy discussed the importance of championing women, a major theme that arose at the October 2014 conference B.C. Economic Forum: Women as a Catalyst for Growth, and in the accompanying report.\textsuperscript{20} According to the report, “a champion looks forward on behalf of a young woman and encourages them to access opportunities they may not have on their own.” This can include recommending women for board positions, introducing female entrepreneurs to business expansion opportunities, or connecting promising women in STEM or trades with leadership development initiatives. It can also include encouraging supplier diversity by making purchasing from businesses owned by women a priority.\textsuperscript{21}

Caws, meanwhile, suggested specific measures employers can take to make their organizational culture more inclusive, such as introducing flexible work hours, keeping women engaged during maternity leave, and providing them with opportunities to kick-start their career upon their return. He also emphasized the need to combat systemic bias at the recruitment stage through education for CEOs and other decision-makers.

Earthy stressed that we must champion gender equity in a way that engages both genders. “The key is activating men, and further [engaging] them, and [demonstrating] that this is not just a women’s issue,” she said. Senior leaders, both male and female, are well positioned to signal a cultural change. Men have important roles to play as mentors and champions, both in the workplace and at home. The \textit{Action Plan} recommends “[engaging] men as active participants and critical partners in conversation and action, to collectively shift the dial.”\textsuperscript{22}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{19} Communitex, “Fierce Founders Accelerator.”
\item \textsuperscript{20} Greater Vancouver Board of Trade, “B.C. Economic Forum.”
\item \textsuperscript{21} WEB Alliance of Women’s Business Networks, \textit{Women as a Catalyst for Economic Growth}, 62–63.
\item \textsuperscript{22} Ibid, 65.
\end{itemize}
CHAPTER 3
Rethinking Diversity on Campus

Chapter Summary

• Post-secondary educators and administrators are increasingly being called on to support women, LGBTQ2S individuals, Indigenous peoples, and other groups with distinct needs.

• Creating an environment that fosters gender diversity will require a systematic rethinking of gender on the part of institutions.

• Visible minorities remain under-represented among university faculty and senior leadership. Effective interventions will need to be proactive, avoid creating silos around equity groups, and be integrated into all university activities.

• In STEM fields, action is required to improve the representation of female students and increase the rates of recruitment and advancement of female faculty.
As in the Canadian population as a whole, the diversity of the student body at Canadian PSE institutions is increasing. Post-secondary educators and administrators are being called upon to respond to the needs and demands of different communities—including women, LGBTQ2S individuals, Indigenous peoples, racialized minorities, and students with disabilities.

Currently, systems and initiatives at PSE institutions to support diverse communities generally take a stratified and disparate approach. For example, disability services support students with cognitive differences, advocacy programs respond to specific cultural groups, and specialized programs support under-represented gender groups. While this approach assists students, it also self-perpetuates barriers because it does little to fundamentally reshape how the campus community addresses diversity and inclusion.

Rethinking Gender

Vice Provost, Research and Interdisciplinary Studies and Professor at Royal Roads University, matthew heinz, emphasized that “the fundamental task is to rethink gender in a new way.” Gender diversity is different from sexual orientation. While sexual orientation “refers to the sex of those to whom one is sexually and romantically attracted,” gender diversity refers to “the extent to which a person’s gender identity, role, or expression differs from the cultural norms prescribed for people of a particular sex.”

While policies today are less likely to enshrine systemic inequalities, heinz noted that inequalities continue to exist in everyday human interactions. While gender identity is often cast as a problem of structural discrimination, the reality is that systemic inequalities are operationalized

1 American Psychological Association, Divisions 16 and 44, Key Terms and Concepts in Understanding Gender Diversity and Sexual Orientation Among Students, 20–22.
and normative. Normative binary understandings of gender continue to be embedded in institutions, including PSE institutions.

Individuals who are trans, gender non-binary, or Two-Spirit face constant microstresses. Microstresses or microaggressions are “subtle, mundane exchanges that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to individuals based on group membership.” Individuals who engage in this behaviour are often unaware they are doing so. Microstresses cause individuals who are trans, gender non-binary, or Two-Spirit to consider how they dress, how they speak, etc., in a way that cisgender people do not. Due in part to microstresses and discrimination, individuals who are trans, non-binary, or Two-Spirit are more likely to experience health and socio-economic challenges—including mental health challenges, unemployment and underemployment, and violence and harassment.

PSE institutions play an important role in creating an environment that can foster gender diversity. Emphasizing that a “systematic rethinking and unthinking of gender is needed,” heinz said PSE institutions “have a role to play in helping to conceptualize how to view the world. This isn’t about accommodation, but about knowledge.” PSE institutions across Canada are reacting to unprecedented demands from gender-diverse individuals, including non-discrimination in housing, facilities, and curricula. Changes that PSE institutions make to increase gender diversity are partly a reaction to the threat of lawsuits, global events, and media stories. Students are also providing impetus for change—younger generations are more aware and accepting of individuals with non-binary gender identities than older generations.

Concluding his presentation by encouraging PSE faculty and staff to increase their awareness of how they approach gender diversity, heinz asked:

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2 Two-Spirit “refers to a person who has both a masculine and a feminine spirit, and is used by some First Nations people to describe their sexual, gender and/or spiritual identity.” For more information, see Researching for LGBTQ Health, “Two-Spirit Community.”

3 WWEST, Gender Diversity in STEM.

4 WWEST, Gender Diversity in STEM; see also Sue and others, “Racial Microaggressions in Everyday Life.”

5 Heinz and MacFarlane, “Island Lives;” Webb and others, Non-Binary Gender Identities.
• Do you greet audiences with “Ladies and Gentlemen?”
• When you hear “gender diversity,” what do you hear?
• How do you create and maintain a respectful campus climate when some use the pronoun “they” or “ze,” or none at all, and present in gender-diverse ways? How do you respond when others (students, staff, faculty) don’t respect an individual’s pronoun use?
• When you approve job postings, do you take a second to assess whether the language used tends to be perceived as “feminine” or “masculine” or do you seek to create gender-neutral language?
• If you are seeking gender representation on a hiring committee, are you balancing out “women” and “men,” and what measure do you use? If you have an openly trans-identified committee member, how do you assess them in that role? How about a Two-Spirit or non-binary identified person?
• Do you ask students to declare their sex/gender on their application for admission? Why?
• Do you divide group activities into gendered groups? Do you designate groups as “co-ed” rather than just “anyone” or “gender-inclusive”?
• Do you segregate housing by binary sex? Do you ask incoming students if they are “OK” living with trans, Two-Spirit, or non-binary students?
• When you pursue internationalization, do you consider the implications of travelling abroad for trans and gender-diverse faculty, staff, and students?
• When you design career support and advising services, do you consider the needs of gender-diverse, non-binary, Two-Spirit, and trans students?
• Do the software systems you rely on for the organization of daily life in your institution demand that you think in gendered binaries? Are these truly necessary fields?
• When you, your students, or your faculty conduct research on “women” and/or “men,” do you operationalize these concepts on the assumption of bio-essentialism?
• When you review research ethics applications, do you ask why a research project seeks to construct men and women, or girls and boys, as distinct groups? Do you ask whether gender is a relevant construct to this study? Do you ask why a project seeks to study the experiences of trans, Two-Spirit, or gender-diverse people, who are simultaneously
subject to being over-researched and disproportionately vulnerable to discrimination, marginalization, and social isolation?

Racial and Gender Diversity on Campus

Malinda Smith, Professor of Political Science and President of the Academic Women's Association at the University of Alberta, began by noting that Canadian society is at a time of great transformation as we move toward societies where the majority of the population consists of visible minorities. Smith drew attention to the issue of racial diversity at PSE institutions, arguing that the term diversity is generally used to refer to gender equity and rarely used to refer to racial equity, which creates a situation focused on diversifying whiteness.

While the student body at Canadian universities is becoming more diverse, this diversity is not reflected in faculty. Smith presented data on the racial and gender diversity of senior leadership at Canada’s top 15 research-intensive universities (known as the U15). She found the leadership teams at the U15 were 62.6 per cent male and 37.4 per cent female. Visible minorities made up just 6.1 per cent of senior leadership and there were no female visible minorities or Indigenous people on senior leadership teams. (See Table 1.)

Previous research has also found a significant gender gap and lack of racial diversity in the distribution of research chairs, the professoriate, and recognition and awards for teaching, research, and community engagement. Smith raised the issue of white normativity, contending we do not have racialized minorities in large numbers in university faculty and leadership because we do not want them there. There is a tendency to hire based on likeness, and implicit bias is a problem.

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7 Others argue that gender equity and diversity should not be conflated, as women are not a minority group. Dr. Imogen Coe, correspondence with author.
8 Smith, “The Diversity Gap in University Leadership 2017.”
Table 1

Leadership Diversity at U15 Research Universities, 2017
(per cent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total number of positions</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Visible Minority</th>
<th>Indigenous</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Visible Minority</th>
<th>Indigenous</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U15 Presidents' leadership teams</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>62.6</td>
<td>37.4</td>
<td>56.5</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>37.4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leadership by position</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>U15 Chancellors</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>73.3</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>73.3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U15 Presidents</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U15 Provosts and vice-presidents academic</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U15 Vice-presidents research</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>46.7</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leadership pipeline</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>U15 Deans</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>68.9</td>
<td>31.1</td>
<td>64.1</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The president’s leadership team is also referred to as the president’s cabinet or executive leadership team. Leadership teams average 7–8 people. Presidents, provosts, and vice-presidents academic are included in U15 presidents’ leadership teams.

Wendy Cukier, Professor of Information Technology Management at the Ted Rogers School of Management and Director of the Diversity Institute at Ryerson University, drew attention to the multiplier effect—if you are racialized and female you face more barriers than if you are racialized or female. Smith noted that women pursuing leadership roles face a “sticky” floor. They may undergo several tests before being promoted, while promising white males are fast-tracked for leadership roles. Cukier raised the issue of a “glass cliff,” where women in senior positions face greater challenges than men. This can include a lack of support and respect for their authority, more performance pressure than male peers, and shorter tenure than men in similar positions.10 The term “glass obstacle course” has also been used to refer to the range of implicit, unanticipated barriers that women face in their professional lives.11

Smith asserted that PSE institutions are not implementing effective strategies to address racial bias. While PSE institutions have equity

10 See Glass and Cook, “Leading at the Top.”
11 De Weide and Laursen, “The Glass Obstacle Course.”
policies to address harassment, discrimination, and inequities, these policies are ineffective for addressing racism. PSE institutions must be more proactive in overcoming barriers for minorities. Smith stated a lack of diversity is not due to a lack of qualified or competent minority groups in hiring pools. Rather, barriers to equity are self-perpetuating, and without policies on intervention, equity is more difficult to realize.

PSE institutions tend to construct silos around equity groups, creating separate advisors and committees. This leads to competition among groups and an uneven distribution of resources. Cukier emphasized that if diversity is treated as a human resources issue, efforts to increase diversity will fail. Initiatives to increase diversity must be integrated into everything—student services, the curriculum, pedagogy, etc.

Mount Saint Vincent University: Canada’s First Women-Only University

Mount Saint Vincent University (the Mount) was established in 1873 by the Sisters of Charity. At that time, the Mount was one of the only institutions of higher education for Canadian women. While the original purpose of the Mount was to train novices and young sisters as teachers, the Sisters soon recognized there was a need to educate other women, and opened enrolment to young women broadly. In 1925, the Government of Nova Scotia passed a bill giving Mount Saint Vincent its own charter and the ability to grant its own degrees. At that time, the Mount became the only independent women’s college in the British Commonwealth. The Mount became a full-fledged university in 1966.

While the Mount was originally a Catholic university and only open to women, today it is a secular university with both male and female students and faculty. Nonetheless, the university’s commitment to fostering an environment where women’s perspectives are valued and to providing strong female role models, continues. In 2016, 72 per cent of students, 62 per cent of faculty, and 66 per cent.

12 See Henry and others, “Race, Racialization and Indigeneity in Canadian Universities,” 10.
13 Mount Saint Vincent University, “Tradition and History.”
14 Mount Saint Vincent University, Mount 2017.
cent of senior administrators were women. All 12 of the Mount’s presidents have been women, including the first female university president in Canada.15

The Mount’s 2017 strategic plan emphasizes its continuing commitment to diversity, including the recruitment of a diverse student body and student services that support diversity. The strategic plan makes specific mention of the need to serve Indigenous and African Nova Scotians.16 In recent years, the university has also made efforts to hire faculty from more diverse backgrounds. It has implemented some programming to address issues of implicit bias and altered its hiring approach to specify a desire for staff who are women, visible minorities, black, and disabled. In outlining these changes, Elizabeth Church, Vice-President Academic, emphasized that to effectively increase diversity, it must be central to the mission of the university. University leaders must initiate important, disruptive conversations, and if these efforts are insufficient, specific policies must be created to increase diversity.

### Women in STEM

Women continue to be under-represented in STEM fields. A recent study that examined over 1,200 reports on women in STEM concluded that “masculine cultures” are the primary reason for women’s continued under-representation.17 Implicit bias further hinders women’s entry into and advancement in STEM fields. As long as bias, inhospitable corporate cultures, insufficient supports, and other factors limit labour market opportunities for women in STEM, women will have diminished incentive to study and pursue careers in these fields.

Elizabeth Croft, Associate Dean for Educational and Professional Development at UBC, NSERC Chair for Women in Science and Engineering, B.C. and the Yukon (2010–15), and Director of the Collaborative Advanced Robotics and Intelligent Systems Laboratory, emphasized that to increase the number of female students in STEM, we must first address the low rates of recruitment and advancement

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15 Mount Saint Vincent University, “Tradition and History.”
16 Mount Saint Vincent University, Mount 2017.
17 Cheryan and others, “Why Are Some STEM Fields More Gender Balanced than Others?”
of female faculty. Women in STEM fields continue to be stuck in the associate professor ranks despite being as qualified as men. For example, research has shown that to be viewed as equally competent to men when applying for a medical fellowship, female applicants need to publish three additional articles in the journals *Nature* or *Science*, or 20 additional articles in specialist journals. Similarly, reference letters for female medical faculty tend to be shorter, vaguer, and place less emphasis on research than those for males. Reference letters for female candidates are more likely to contain the phrases “compassionate” or “relates well with patients/staff” and less likely to contain the words “accomplishment,” “achievement,” and “successful.”

Croft emphasized that there is a need for PSE faculty to receive implicit bias training.

To increase the number of women in STEM, diversity must be a core value for organizations. Women should not need to change their behaviour to succeed in STEM. Rather, organizational cultures must change. Nanon de Gaspé Beaubien-Mattrick, President and Founder of Beehive Holdings, emphasized the need to see women leading in different ways, and for better recognition of different leadership styles. Croft, in turn, stated that men must act as champions for diversity. For example, fathers and male teachers must actively encourage female youth to consider STEM careers. In short, male faculty and leaders must speak up and challenge “masculine” cultural norms, hold colleagues accountable, and call out microaggressions and blatant sexism.

One notable initiative on this front is HeForShe, a campaign launched by UN Women that aims to engage people of all genders as agents of change. Australia’s Male Champions of Change (MCC) Institute is also taking action in this area. The MCC engages approximately 130 male leaders in national and industry-specific peer groups to develop concrete strategies, maintain accountability, and effect change across the private sector and government.

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18 Parker, Pelletier, and Croft, *WWEST’s Gender Diversity in STEM*.
19 Dr. Steven Murphy, incoming President of the University of Ontario Institute of Technology, expanded on this in a November 2017 op-ed for *The Globe and Mail*. See Murphy, “To Bridge the Gender Gap, Engage Men.”
20 HeForShe, “Our Mission;” Male Champions of Change, “About the Male Champions of Change.”
Panellists emphasized the importance of role models and mentors. Young women need to be able to see themselves in STEM careers. Allison Sekuler, Professor of Psychology, Neuroscience and Behaviour at McMaster University and Vice-President Research, and the Sandra A. Rotman Chair at Baycrest Health Sciences, observed that there are not always appropriate mentors for female STEM students in their own academic departments. Sekuler noted it was not until she became a professor and taught a course that she realized more female students were attending her classes. Both businesses and PSE institutions can encourage young women to pursue STEM by featuring more images of women in STEM careers, including visible minorities, on websites and other communication materials. As Croft, De Gaspé Beaubien-Mattrick, and Sekuler have stated elsewhere:

> Those actions would signal not just that the organization values diversity and inclusiveness, but that STEM fields more generally are places where women can thrive. This perception must be the reality. All students or employees should feel equally respected, appreciated, and supported from the top management levels down.”

Croft, De Gaspé Beaubien-Mattrick, and Sekuler each emphasized the importance of measuring progress on female representation in STEM. Croft described surveys that assess the working climate for engineering and science faculty at UBC. Survey results are publicly reported and have shown female faculty to have numerous disadvantages relative to their male peers. For example, female engineering faculty were significantly less likely than males to feel respected, included, valued, empowered, and legitimized.

The surveys found that even when averaged over the current cohort and adjusted for leaves, women in the Faculty of Applied Science at UBC (which includes engineering) achieve tenure more than half a year later than men, and it takes more than two years longer for them to be promoted from the rank of associate professors. In response, the Faculty

of Applied Science is taking steps to improve the workplace environment for women and visible minorities, and increase faculty diversity. Other universities are adopting UBC's workplace climate model to assess diversity and discrimination. Croft also noted a lack of data on women in STEM at universities and the important role the Tri-Council Agencies and Statistics Canada can play in generating better data.

**Promoting Equity in STEM: Global Best Practices**

When it comes to promoting greater equity and diversity in STEM fields, Canada may benefit from considering approaches taken in the United Kingdom, Australia, and the United States. The initiatives outlined below focus on shifting organizational culture, and they encourage concrete action by incorporating accountability measures and incentives. While further research is required to assess the potential feasibility of these models in Canada, they may help shed light on the characteristics that make equity and diversity programs a success.

**Athena SWAN (U.K.):** The Athena Scientific Women's Academic Network (SWAN) Charter, launched by the United Kingdom's Equality Challenge Unit in 2005, consists of 10 principles designed to further gender equity within institutions (e.g., “We commit to tackling the gender pay gap”). Organizations that join the Charter are expected to work toward an Athena SWAN Award, which involves collecting and analyzing organizational data; creating action plans and monitoring progress; and submitting results for peer review. While the Charter was initially designed with women in STEM in mind, it was amended in 2015 to recognize additional academic disciplines (i.e., the arts, humanities, social sciences, business, and law); types of jobs (i.e., professional and support roles); and equity groups (i.e., trans individuals).

**SAGE (Australia):** Science in Australia Gender Equity, or SAGE, is a program of activities managed by the Australian Academy of Science and the Australian Academy of Technology and Engineering. In September 2015, SAGE launched the Australian Pilot of the Athena SWAN Charter, which has 40 members.

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22 University of British Columbia, *An Assessment of the Working Climate for Engineering Faculty at the University of British Columbia.*

from across Australia, including universities, medical research institutes, and government science organizations. Similar to Athena SWAN in the U.K., the SAGE Pilot has an accompanying awards program.  

**ADVANCE (U.S.):** The ADVANCE program, launched by the United States' National Science Foundation in 2001, aims to foster greater gender equity in STEM by investing in projects that help women enter, and advance in, academic science and engineering careers. It provides funding to post-secondary institutions and not-for-profit organizations to support the development of innovative organizational change strategies, as well as the implementation of existing evidence-based organizational change strategies. ADVANCE also funds partnerships between non-profit post-secondary institutions and/or STEM organizations, targeting projects that aim to create systemic change in one or more STEM disciplines.

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**The Diversity Circles Initiative at BCIT**

Diversity Circles is an initiative of the British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT) Faculty and Staff Association (FSA) that seeks to help faculty and staff celebrate diversity and make students feel comfortable and welcome. The project was motivated by the increasing diversity of the BCIT student body. Diversity Circles uses an Indigenous approach to assist post-secondary teachers and staff in engaging student and community diversity. It is a two-year project funded by a $153,406 grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council's (SSHRC) Community College and Social Innovation Fund. The project will involve the delivery of 40 workshops, the launch of mentoring and networking programs, and the sharing of research findings through the creation of a Digital Diversity Map.

The program co-founders, BCIT faculty member Shannon Kelly and BCIT Aboriginal Services advisor Zaa Joseph, adopted an Indigenous approach because they felt it reflects the complexity, diversity, and

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25 National Science Foundation, “ADVANCE at a Glance;” National Science Foundation, “ADVANCE.”
26 Interview findings; BCIT FSA, “Diversity Circles.”
interconnectedness of life. The model positions individuals in relation to the family, the community, the environment, the cosmos, and the universe. The circle aspect of the model is key, as circles do not have a hierarchy—no individual is at the head of a circle and all are equal. The three pillars of the project are mentoring, networking, and knowledge sharing.

Dialogues and workshops with BCIT faculty and staff are focused on three key themes: gender, neurodiversity, and Indigenous culture. Workshops and focus groups are held with small groups of staff (e.g., an academic department or part of a department) and are customized to the needs of each group. An example of a workshop topic is “student teamwork and how diverse teams can break down.” The initiative will also include a series of mentoring workshops focused on faculty and staff peer-to-peer mentoring. The workshops and dialogues aim to build relationships between individuals and give employees a space where they can share their perspectives—for example, by encouraging staff to share personal information about their family history and background.

By focusing on small, granular workshops, the team hopes to create grassroots buy-in for the initiative, and ensure it has a lasting impact. Diversity Circles also holds larger events for community outreach. As part of the project, a Digital Diversity Map will be created, which maps linkages between different diversity resources within BCIT and the larger community.

**Embracing Diversity on Campus**

PSE institutions must fully embrace diversity. Several meeting participants emphasized that many of the drivers for change will come from outside PSE institutions. In her presentation, Wendy Cukier asserted that universities are fundamentally medieval institutions that will use academic freedom and autonomy to reinforce the status quo. As such, change will need to come from outside the university.

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28 BCIT FSA, “Diversity Circles.”
29 Interview findings; BCIT FSA, “Diversity Circles.”
30 Interview findings.
Sarah-Jane Finley, Associate Vice-President, Equity and Inclusion at UBC, stated that to effectively advance diversity, PSE institutions must include a deep commitment to diversity and inclusion in their mission statements. Commitments to diversity must be made across all levels of an institution and apply to the entire institutional community. PSE institutions must ensure conversations about diversity are held at both the micro and central levels (e.g., by deans, in departments, and by senior administrators). Students are vital advocates for change, and there must be spaces where they can advocate for it.
CHAPTER 4

Diversity Inside and Outside PSE

Chapter Summary

- There is both an ethical and a business case for employers to increase diversity within their organizations.

- The recruitment and advancement of women in organizations is hindered by a variety of workplace barriers, including implicit bias.

- Solutions should focus on changing systems and organizations, not individuals. The impetus for change should come from an organization’s top levels.

- Indigenous women face unique challenges in the labour force. Part of reconciliation means making room for Indigenous knowledge and cultural values in the workplace.
PSE institutions are not alone in the need to respond to an increasing diversity of students and employees. Employers across Canada are facing the same demands, and many are responding with diversity strategies. A recent global survey asked millennial female workers what they saw as the most significant barriers to increasing the number of experienced women hired.

Significantly, four out of the top five barriers highlighted by respondents were internal company issues, including: “the impact of gender stereotypes/assumptions in the recruitment process;” “concerns over the cost and impact of maternity leave;” “women do not pursue career opportunities as aggressively as men do;” “interviewers have a tendency to select candidates that are similar to themselves;” and “organizational diversity policies are not sufficiently effective.”

There is a strong business case for increasing organizational diversity. Companies that successfully recruit and retain a diverse pool of workers draw on a broader and deeper talent pool. As a result, their teams have a wider diversity of perspectives and experiences, which makes them more innovative and creative in how they approach problems.

Gender Equity and the Way Forward

Fiona Macfarlane is Managing Partner and Chief Inclusiveness Officer at Ernst and Young (EY). The position of Chief Inclusiveness Officer advocates to all businesses the importance of diversity and inclusion to success.1 Macfarlane stated that it is time to desalinate the water so fish other than salmon are able to swim in it. She urged PSE leaders to apply “desalination” techniques to flush out barriers and biases. Efforts to de-bias people against women have a positive impact in general, and lead to improved diversity all around.

1 Flood, Winning the Fight for Female Talent, 7.
2 St. Denis, “Fiona Macfarlane: Opening Doors.”
Increasing diversity and inclusiveness is about changing systems and organizations, not people. Macfarlane stated that if women are spending their time at work concentrating on acting like men, then they are not performing at their best. Adaptation to a hostile environment is not a practical or sustainable solution for individuals; rather, organizational cultures must change. Furthermore, the impetus for change must come from the top levels of an organization. The task of organizational change cannot be relegated to the human resources department if it is to be successful.

Macfarlane stated that as educational leaders, the meeting participants play a critical role in shaping the leaders of the future. To improve diversity and inclusiveness, Macfarlane urged participants to begin by seeing their own biases. She emphasized how implicit bias wastes talent and squanders potential. Individuals cannot change their implicit biases, but recognizing them is a first step.

Macfarlane went on to explain how EY is working to shift its corporate culture away from one tailored to white males. However, changing company culture is a journey, not a quick fix. Even something as basic as how meetings were run at EY was biased, for example, because the process did not account for different communication styles, cultures, and personalities. The same dynamic occurs in classrooms. To increase inclusiveness for LGBTQ2S individuals, EY implemented a reverse mentoring program. Reverse mentoring occurs when a less experienced employee mentors a senior employee. EY’s Just Ask program matched Generation X, and Y, and LGBTQ2S individuals with senior staff to give them the opportunity to address differences and build bridges.

Macfarlane stated that “mankind’s progress was not built on foundational groupthink.” Organizational groups or teams where all members come from similar backgrounds and are insulated from outside opinions.

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3 See for example, Comaford, “How to Work With Unconscious Bias in Your Organization.”
4 The Implicit Association Test was developed by researchers at Harvard University to measure attitudes and beliefs that individuals may be unwilling or unable to report. For example, an individual may believe they associate women and men equally with science, but the test may show that the individual more strongly associates men with science. The test measures implicit bias in a number of areas, including race, gender, and sexual orientation. https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/canada/takeatest.html.
5 Jermyn, “Reverse Mentorship Opens Minds at Work.”
and alternative perspectives may be more vulnerable to groupthink. Diverse groups contribute to an organizational culture that “encourages questioning, debate, and openness to different perspectives.” They are less susceptible to groupthink and contribute more effectively to risk management.\(^6\)

Macfarlane concluded by emphasizing the importance of implementing action plans and measuring progress on diversity. She stated that targets give organizations a business issue to strive for, but they must be publicly and clearly stated if they are to have any power. Disclosing targets makes organizations and boards of directors more accountable. Measurement also creates understanding of what the issues surrounding diversity are in an organization. It helps company leaders understand what the company truly values, rather than just what it says it values.\(^7\)

**Best Practices for the Retention and Advancement of Women in Organizations**

Maureen Fitzgerald, a gender diversity advisor and author, referred to a transformative experience she had in the workplace when she realized she was trying to achieve success by masculinizing her behaviour. Fitzgerald emphasized the importance of first demonstrating that inequity exists, and that it is a problem. As she has stated elsewhere, “I want women to see that it’s not their fault they are not progressing as they had hoped. I want them to know that working harder or smarter will not actually lead to success, at least not in the long term, or it will likely come at a very high cost.”\(^8\)

Fitzgerald noted several myths hindering the achievement of gender equity, including: that it is a women’s issue; the pipeline of qualified women candidates is too small; and women need more skills. Rather, the root of the problem is our social, educational, economic, and political

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\(^7\) This idea was echoed by participants at a May 2017 roundtable meeting on equity, diversity, and inclusivity in STEM, convened by Ryerson University’s Faculty of Science and the Canadian Science Policy Centre. Recommended accountability measures included legislation; fines; requiring justification for non-compliance with equity measures; and making compliance necessary to obtain government contracts, grants, and licensing. Ryerson University Faculty of Science, *Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics*, 11.

\(^8\) Fitzgerald, *Lean Out*. 
systems. Many efforts to increase gender equity are simply “trimming the tree, without addressing its roots.” To create a more gender-diverse organization, it is necessary to read the research, understand the business case, and gather data on your own organization.

Jennifer Berdahl, Professor in Leadership Studies: Gender and Diversity at the UBC Sauder School of Business, said that improving the retention and advancement of women in organizations is more than an ethical issue—it is not sustainable for organizations or the economy to have a situation where merit does not rise to the top. As she has stated elsewhere, “Gender bias should be recognized as a form of incompetence in the workplace: the inability to work with and respect women, or to recognize merit and promising ideas independent of their style or source, are social and intellectual handicaps.”

Berdahl argued that organizational culture in male-dominated domains systematically or unwittingly excludes some individuals. Highly masculinized organizational cultures are associated with high percentages of men, value physical strength and cutthroat competition, and discourage signs of weakness. They lead to toxic leadership, bullying, low psychological safety, and burnout.

The success of an organization’s gender equity policies depends on how they are implemented. Strategies designed to “fix the women” by helping them develop specific skills are only mildly successful. While they help women get ahead, they leave in place a masculinized organizational culture that blames women for their lack of success, and create a backlash against those who do not subscribe to gender norms. Gender diversity strategies that seek to “value the feminine” are problematic because they create an expectation that women will act in a feminine manner, and women experience a backlash when they do not. Another approach is to “even the playing field” for women, which focuses on removing barriers and biases, and encouraging sponsorship, networking, and other more women-friendly policies. However, this can

9 Berdahl, “Find the Quiet Heroes and Fire the Bad Apples.”
10 See for example, Berdahl and Moon, “Workplace Mistreatment of Middle Class Workers Based on Sex, Parenthood, and Caregiving.”
create a perception of reverse discrimination among men and does little to change organizational culture.\textsuperscript{11}

Rather than trying to turn women into men, the goal should be to celebrate differences. Berdahl's research has found a relationship between the number of Olympic medals a country wins and its level of gender equity, even when controlling for variables such as national GDP, population size, geographic latitude, and income inequity. Countries with higher levels of equity win more Olympic medals in both men's and women's events. Berdahl and her co-authors concluded that:

\begin{quote}
… gender inequality is likely to hurt both women and men by encouraging stereotypes that limit their ability to reach their full potential as individuals. Eroding false and antiquated norms regarding what men and women can and cannot do is a ‘win-win’ that allows members of both genders to realize their true potential.”\textsuperscript{12}
\end{quote}

**Successful and Inclusive Recruitment**

Debbie Amery, Vice-President and National Talent Leader at PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), spoke about PwC's efforts to increase gender equity. PwC has set a goal for 50 per cent of its partnership admissions to go to women by 2020. Currently, PwC Canada has about 550 partners. In 2017, about 22 per cent of new partners were women, and that number is expected to rise to 34 per cent in 2018.\textsuperscript{13}

Amery discussed how implicit bias is a significant issue in how organizations recruit and attract potential workers. Employees and company management can benefit from training that generates awareness about the existence of implicit biases. To address implicit bias in the hiring process, PwC has built a robust process that uses multiple reviewers.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{11} See also Berdahl, “Beyond Diversity as a Body Count.”
\item \textsuperscript{12} Berdahl, Uhlmann, and Bai, “Win-win,” 2.
\item \textsuperscript{13} Lindores, “Getting to Gender Diversity and Equality.”
\end{itemize}
Wyle Baoween, CEO and co-founder of HRx Technology, spoke about the role technology can play in reducing implicit bias in the hiring process. Baoween noted that we live with implicit bias just about all the time, and posting a job is an inherently biased process. His company matches employers with potential employees, but unlike a traditional recruitment firm, when employers receive resumés from applicants, there is no identifying information (gender, age, name) about a candidate included. This helps remove implicit biases against candidates and promotes diversity in the workplace.¹⁴

Economic Reconciliation and Indigenous Women

Chastity Davis, Chair of the Minister’s Advisory Council on Indigenous Women, is of mixed European and First Nations descent and has dedicated her life to building bridges between Indigenous and settler societies. She believes reconciliation can be achieved.

Davis discussed how Indigenous women were not oppressed pre-contact. Pre-contact, over 80 per cent of Indigenous communities were matriarchies, and Indigenous people were innovative, had technology, and ran a sustainable society for many years. She asked, “How do we look back at who we were pre-contact?” Davis said we can accept Indigenous people for who they are, their ways of knowing, and their science and innovation.

Davis compared efforts at reconciliation to circling a mountain—we talk and talk about reconciliation, but never actually address the problem because it is too big. We must incorporate Indigenous peoples’ ways of being and knowing into how we understand and organize our institutions. The issue of reconciliation cannot be solved by people who are not “in the gut of it.” Indigenous people, she said, are living in the “gut of it”—they are living the statistics we hear about. To be effective, institutional solutions must include Indigenous perspectives. To radically enact change, Davis pointed to the 94 calls to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

¹⁴ Britten, “Want to Increase Workplace Diversity?,” HRx, “HRx Recruit, Services.”
Karen Joseph, Chief Executive Officer of Reconciliation Canada, said that Canadian society is missing out on the compassion, innovation, and creativity of Indigenous women. Indigenous people in leadership positions are mostly male, and there is a huge opportunity to include more Indigenous women. Joseph asked, “How do we make room for Indigenous realities in our institutions? Are we trying to fit women into a system that is antithetical to Indigenous women or are we trying to create a more egalitarian system?”

Joseph emphasized that reconciliation is not about providing more people to be eaten up by systems that do not respect the values they bring to the table. She stated that, from her perspective as an Indigenous woman, reconciliation does not mean making space for Indigenous people to fit into the system. To her, that is like someone raping you and then asking you to come back again and again.

There is an innate undervaluing of Indigenous knowledge in Canada. A commitment to reconciliation is the acknowledgement that Indigenous people bring valuable knowledge through a culture that emphasizes sustainability, transformation, and lifting people up. Joseph stressed the need to create a shared prosperity that lifts all of us up collectively, rather than benefitting only a small number of individuals. She noted how the meaning of “success” is different for many Indigenous people; it is not about how much money they have in their bank accounts, but how much they contribute to their community.

Denise Williams, Executive Director of the First Nations Technology Council, spoke about how a lack of access to technology hinders the potential of Indigenous youth. Due to a lack of infrastructure, many Indigenous communities in Canada lack access to digital technology—and many Canadians are unaware of this lack of technology infrastructure and the challenges it creates for Indigenous people. Indigenous youth need access to information, technology, and networks if they are to succeed in today’s economy and society. Williams emphasized that there are institutions, frameworks, and societal ways of separating people into those who have access to information and those who do not. Many Indigenous people do not know their capacity because
they do not have access to the same body of information that non-Indigenous people have access to.

Part of the core mandate of the First Nations Technology Council is to provide digital skills training to Indigenous people in British Columbia. The organization delivers a variety of industry-certified and post-secondary credentialed programs and interest-based courses. Programs are designed in partnership with First Nations communities and organizations, industry sectors, academic institutions, and the provincial and federal governments. To date, over 2,800 participants have completed this training.15

By providing Indigenous people with digital skills training, the organization hopes to address the under-representation of Indigenous people in B.C.’s growing technology sector.16 However, Williams expressed concern that the occupational spaces Indigenous people move into after PSE are not inclusive or perpetuate the continuation of harmful systems. She said, “it is terrifying that our young people rise up and compete in spaces that are institutionalizing racism.” In her own experience as a young, Indigenous woman, she experienced systemic racism.

Williams noted how when interviewing potential employees, the tech sector asks interview questions that are not relevant to Indigenous culture. Interview questions emphasize a need to show individual drive, rather than a desire to benefit one’s community. However, ideas about the shared economy, the circular economy, and the green economy all have connections to Indigenous cultural values. Williams shared her hope that Indigenous people will be the disruptive innovators who will lead to a more responsible and socially minded economy.

Creating a More Diverse Workplace
Addressing implicit bias within organizations needs to start with leaders who understand that a failure to do so is an ethical issue and is detrimental to the long-term performance of an organization. To address implicit bias, organizations must implement specific policies along with

16 Hui, “First Nations Technology Council Aims to Help Aboriginal People Gain Tech Skills.”
targets and tracking tools. The implementation of diversity policies has a real impact on recruitment and retention efforts if it is done in a meaningful way. For example, a global survey of companies found that 71 per cent of those who adopted diversity practices indicated a positive impact on their recruitment efforts. The diversity practices seen to have had the greatest impact were: establishing gender diversity recruitment targets; delivering diversity/implicit bias training to interviewers; establishing equity policies; actively focusing on having an inclusive talent brand; and requiring mandatory diverse slates for open positions.\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{17} Flood, \textit{Winning the Fight for Female Talent}, 11.
CHAPTER 5

Toward Gender Equity: Key Take-aways

Chapter Summary

- In the current sociopolitical climate, it is essential that we avoid normalizing attitudes of intolerance and continue to strive for greater gender equity.

- Several lessons emerged from the presentations and discussions outlined in this report. This chapter highlights steps that PSE institutions and other organizations can take toward improving gender equity, diversity, and inclusion.

- PSE institutions, in their role as educators and birthplaces for innovation, have an invaluable role to play in achieving greater gender equity on and off campus.
Gender Equity in the Age of Trump

The Right Honourable Kim Campbell, Founding Principal of the Peter Lougheed Leadership College at the University of Alberta, and former Prime Minister of Canada, provided the closing keynote for the event. Campbell noted how our brains create frameworks to function in a complex world, including societal expectations for being a male or a female. From the time children start school, they have a very nuanced and complex understanding of gender roles based on the landscape in which they have grown up.

Campbell emphasized that cognitive bias colours how we see others in society and may lead us to exclude others. Cognitive bias helps explain why men are consistently overrated and women are underrated by their co-workers, bosses, and themselves. Men and women differ in their leadership styles—women tend to be more interactive leaders, while men tend to be more controlling. Some progress has been made concerning women in leadership roles. There is an increasing expectation that boards of directors include women, and research has shown that including women on boards is favourable for profitability. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's decision to have gender parity in cabinet was also a positive and necessary step to ensure the visibility of women in leadership roles.

Campbell argued, however, that the election of President Donald Trump in the U.S. poses a significant challenge for gender equity. She spoke forcefully against the language of misogyny and what she called the "Trumpian mentality that you have the right to be rude." Campbell noted Trump has helped to mobilize individuals to fight for gender equity. She emphasized the need to find ways to build bridges and understanding, and make emotional connections in ways that are affirming and non-threatening.
Protest marches, such as the women’s marches held in cities worldwide, can be effective tools to contribute to gender equity. They create public solidarity and reassure people who are anxious or frightened that they are not alone. However, Campbell noted that protest marches must be part of a broader, multi-faceted approach. It is also important to put pressure on people in positions of power, including members of Congress, senators, and journalists. The collective goal, argued Campbell, is to do everything we can to avoid normalizing the behaviour exemplified by the current U.S. President.

Key Take-aways

Several key themes, lessons learned, and best practices emerged from the presentations and discussions. These take-aways reaffirm the importance of gender equity and diversity for Canada’s economic and social prosperity. They also highlight steps that PSE institutions and other organizations can take to help all students and employees reach their full potential.

There Is Both an Ethical and Business Case for Increasing Gender Equity

• Organizations that successfully recruit and retain a diverse pool of workers benefit from a broader and deeper talent pool. Evidence shows that measures like implementing gender-based recruitment targets, providing interviewers with diversity/implicit bias training, and requiring mandatory diversity slates for open positions can have a positive impact on recruitment efforts.

• When workplaces put pressure on women to alter their behaviour to act more like men, they inhibit their employees from performing at their best.

• Implementing equity measures can contribute to an organization’s sustainability, as gender bias can prevent merit from rising to the top.

• Organizations that are diverse and inclusive are more innovative and better at recognizing potential risks. Research shows that including women on boards is favourable for profitability.

• PSE institutions have an important role to play in increasing diversity, in part because of their role in educating future leaders.
Efforts to Increase Diversity and Inclusion Must Begin at the Top

- For diversity initiatives to be successful, they must be championed by an organization's leaders.
- Commitments to diversity and equity must be incorporated into university mission statements and strategic plans.
- Initiatives to improve diversity must not be siloed or stratified within an organization. They must be incorporated into organizational culture.
- Conversations about increasing diversity and inclusion must happen at all levels of an organization—for example, by university senate, union, and student association leadership, as well as by deans, faculty, and students.
- Collaborate with human resources departments to address obstacles to equitable representation and opportunity. Middle management has an essential role in effecting change.
- Leaders must ensure the development of diversity policies is an inclusive, democratic process that does not replicate existing structural inequalities.
- Organizational leadership should launch a review of institutional contracting practices, collective agreements, and related policies to identify unintended impacts or implicit biases that may not be immediately obvious.
- Organizations must champion gender equity in a way that engages both genders.

Students and External Forces Put Pressure on PSE Institutions to Become More Diverse and Inclusive

- PSE institutions will continue to face demands to become more inclusive, including addressing gender bias in curricula and the delivery of student services.
- Students are important advocates for change in PSE institutions—as the student body becomes more diverse, expectations for inclusion will increase.
- Social protest is a valuable tool.
Take Steps to Reduce Implicit Bias in PSE Institutions

• While organizational policies do not explicitly discriminate against women and under-represented groups, everyday actions and processes continue to perpetuate inequalities.
• Women in leadership roles are at a disadvantage to men. It is more difficult for women to rise to leadership positions, and once in those positions, they often face greater and harsher criticism.
• PSE institutions should take steps to educate faculty, ancillary staff, and students about implicit bias and its impacts.
• Hiring processes can be structured to reduce the implicit bias—for example, by ensuring a diversity of reviewers on panels and by altering resumés so they don’t reveal gender or race.
• Specialized task forces can help transform organizational culture by working outside of formal structures.

Design-Based Solutions Can Play a Significant Role in Addressing Implicit Bias

• Discrimination cannot be addressed by diversity training alone. Organizational processes can also be designed to help combat implicit bias.
• To effectively address gender inequity, design thinking must consider gender as it intersects with race, class, and other social categorizations.
• When designing solutions, use agonistic dialogue and strategic foresight to capture a multiplicity of perspectives and to challenge entrenched values, beliefs, and structures.

Diversity Initiatives Must Include Targets and Measurement of Progress Toward Targets

• Successful diversity and equity initiatives establish clear benchmarks and measure progress at regular intervals.
• When possible, progress toward targets should be publicly reported.
• Specific areas for targeting and measurement include the diversity of faculty and university leadership (including women, racial minorities, and Indigenous people); the diversity of the student body; and women in STEM (both students and faculty).
• PSE institutions should evaluate the working environment for under-represented groups (e.g., women, racial minorities, Indigenous people), and put in place concrete plans to remedy implicit bias and discrimination.

Best Practices in PSE and Beyond

Throughout the meeting, participants elaborated on actions their organizations were taking to further gender equity and diversity for students, faculty, and staff. Best practices highlighted include:

• To minimize the effects of implicit bias, the recruitment firm HRx Technology omits information on gender, age, and name from the resumés it provides to employers.
• The University of British Columbia conducts surveys on the working climate for its science faculty and reports the results publicly. When the 2012/13 survey revealed that female faculty were at numerous disadvantages relative to their male peers, the university identified concrete steps it could take to improve the work environment and make it more equitable.
• PwC has set a goal for 50 per cent of its partnership admissions to go to women by 2020. In 2017, about 22 per cent of new partners were women, and this is expected to rise to 34 per cent in 2018.
• BCIT’s Diversity Circles initiative uses an Indigenous approach to assist post-secondary teachers and staff in engaging student and community diversity, focusing on mentoring, networking, and knowledge sharing.
• OCAD University’s Suzanne Stein and Prateeksha Singh used card games to guide ICT sector leaders’ discussions on strategic, tactical, and cultural interventions they could employ to improve inclusivity in their organizations.¹
• EY implemented its Just Ask program—a reverse mentoring program that matched Generation X, Generation Y, and LGBTQ2S individuals with senior staff—to help address differences, build bridges, and increase inclusiveness for LGBTQ2S individuals.

¹ Games used include Ceilings and Ladders by Mithula Naik; Fem-LED’s Grow-A-Game by Emma Westecott and Paula Gardner with Suzanne Stein; and The Feminist Theorist Card Game by Emma Westecott, Paula Gardner, and Suzanne Stein, each at various stages of development. Stein and Singh, “Gaming Our Way to Understanding the Barriers Faced by Women in Tech.”
Conclusion

This report summarizes insights from the February 2017 Quality Network for Universities meeting on gender equity and PSE. Presenters emphasized the importance of increasing gender equity and diversity, both for ethical reasons and to enhance organizational performance. However, while this meeting continued the critical discussion on equity and inclusion in Canada, the conversation is far from over. PSE institutions, as educators and birthplaces for innovation, have an invaluable role to play in achieving greater gender equity on and off campus, but achieving real change will require collaboration on the part of all stakeholders. It will require answers to questions such as: How do we incentivize positive policy change and shifts in organizational culture?; Who is responsible for what?; and What mechanisms can we use to hold institutions and decision-makers accountable?

As a national, non-partisan organization, The Conference Board of Canada is ideally placed to convene key stakeholders on this issue. Future Conference Board research will examine evidence-based strategies to further gender equity and diversity in Canada’s PSE system.

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APPENDIX A

Bibliography


APPENDIX B

Meeting Agenda

February 1–3, 2017
University of British Columbia, B.C.
On Campus:

February 2—St. John’s College (2111 Lower Mall, Vancouver, B.C.)

February 3—Cecil Green Park House (6251 Cecil Green Park Rd., Vancouver, B.C.)

Accommodations: Sheraton Vancouver Wall Centre (1088 Burrard St., Vancouver, B.C.)

Objectives:
To examine trends and challenges in gender equity, inclusion, and diversity on university campuses and in the private sector.
To discuss what can be done to improve culture and leadership practices around gender equity, inclusiveness, and diversity.
To develop a Conference Board of Canada report containing the findings from this meeting, replete with recommendations for decision and policy-makers in PSE and government.

February 1—Café One, Sheraton Vancouver Wall Centre
7:00 pm Informal Welcome Dinner
Welcome Remarks:
Angela Redish, Provost and Vice-President, Academic, UBC

February 2—St. John’s College
8:30 am Welcome and Opening Remarks
Eric Eich, Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President, Academic Affairs, UBC
Matthew McKean, QNU Network Manager, The Conference Board of Canada
8:45 Opening Keynote: Change Requires a Creative Tool Kit
Sara Diamond, President and Vice-Chancellor, OCADU
Chair: Gillian Siddall, Vice-President, Academic and Provost, OCADU

9:45 Panel Discussion: Applying Design Thinking to Gender Inequality
Chair and Moderator: Gillian Siddall, Vice-President, Academic and Provost, OCADU
Sara Diamond, President and Vice-Chancellor, OCADU
Ron Burnett, President and Vice-Chancellor, Emily Carr University of Art + Design
Bonne Zabolotney, Vice President, Academic and Provost, Emily Carr University of Art + Design

10:45 Coffee and Networking Break

11:00 Gender Equality and Innovation
Chair: Joy Johnson, Vice-President, Research and International, SFU Innovates Leader, Simon Fraser University
Jill Earthy, Chief Growth Officer, FrontFundr
Greg Caws, President, Premier’s Technology Council, Government of British Columbia Government

12:00 Lunch: Catered
12:40 Luncheon Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Wilkinson, Minister of Advanced Education, British Columbia Liberal Party
1:00 Best Practices for the Retention and Advancement of Women in Organizations
Chair: Elisabeth Finch, PwC Partner, Tax Services, Transfer Pricing, BC Diversity and Inclusion Leader
Maureen Fitzgerald, Gender Diversity Advisor and Author
Jennifer Berdahl, Professor in Leadership Studies: Gender and Diversity, UBC Sauder School of Business

2:00 Economic Reconciliation and Indigenous Women
Chair: Deb Saucier, Provost, University of Ontario Institute of Technology
Karen Joseph, Chief Executive Officer, Reconciliation Canada
Chastity A. Davis, Chair, Minister’s Advisory Council on Aboriginal Women
Denise Williams, Executive Director, First Nations Technology Council

3:15 Coffee and Networking Break
3:30 Rethinking Gender Diversity on Campus
Chair: Philippe-Edwin Bélanger, Directeur, Institut national de la recherche scientifique
matt heinz, Founding Dean, College of Interdisciplinary Studies and Professor, Royal Roads University
Zaa Joseph, Diversity Circles Co-Creator, Director-at-Large, Faculty and Staff Association, Advisor, Aboriginal Services, British Columbia Institute of Technology
Shannon Kelly, Diversity Circles Co-Creator, Director-at-Large, Faculty and Staff Association, Program Head, Communication Department, British Columbia Institute of Technology

4:30 Into and Out of the PSE World: The Theory and Practice of Successful and Inclusive Recruitment
Chair: Elisabeth Finch, PwC Partner, Tax Services, Transfer Pricing, BC Diversity and Inclusion Leader
Debbie Amery, Vice President, National Talent Leader, PwC
Wyle Baoween, CEO and Co-Founder @HRxTech

5:30 Wrap-Up

6:30 The Boathouse Restaurant, Kitsilano (1305 Arbutus Street)

February 3—Cecil Green Park House

8:30 am Opening Remarks
Sal Ferreras, Provost and Vice-President, Academic, Kwantlen Polytechnic University

8:45 Opening Keynote: Gender Equity and the Way Forward
Fiona Macfarlane, Managing Partner, British Columbia, and Chief Inclusiveness Officer, Ernst and Young
Chair and Q&A Moderator: Susan Searls Giroux, Associate Vice-President, Faculty, McMaster University

9:30 Gender, Diversity, and University Leadership
Chair: Sara-Jane Finlay, Associate Vice President, Equity & Inclusion, UBC
Malinda Smith, Professor, Political Science, President, Academic Women’s Association, University of Alberta
Wendy Cukier, Professor, Information Technology Management
Ted Rogers School of Management, Director, Diversity Institute, Ryerson University
Elizabeth Church, Vice-President, Academic, Mount Saint Vincent University

11:00 Coffee and Networking Break
11:15 Women in STEM
Chair: Allison Sekuler, Strategic Advisor to the President and Vice-Presidents on Academic Issues, Canada Research Chair in Cognitive Neuroscience (2001–2011), Professor of Psychology, Neuroscience & Behaviour, McMaster University
Elizabeth Croft, Associate Dean for Educational and Professional Development, UBC, NSERC Chair for Women in Science and Engineering, B.C. & Yukon (2010–2015), and Director, Collaborative Advanced Robotics and Intelligent Systems Laboratory
Nanon de Gaspé Beaubien-Mattrick, President and Founder, Beehive Holdings

12:30 Lunch: Catered

1:15 Closing Keynote: Teaching Leadership in the Age of Trump
The Right Honourable Kim Campbell, Founding Principal, Peter Lougheed Leadership College, University of Alberta
Chair and Q&A Moderator: Martha Piper, Past President and Vice-Chancellor of UBC

2:00 Meeting Adjourned
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