

# Assessing Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion at UBC Department of Athletics & Recreation

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March 2020

This report was produced as part of the UBC Sustainability Scholars Program, a partnership between the University of British Columbia and various local governments and organisations in support of providing graduate students with opportunities to do applied research on projects that advance sustainability across the region.

This project was conducted under the mentorship of the Department of Athletics and Recreation staff. The opinions and recommendations in this report and any errors are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Athletics and Recreation or the University of British Columbia.

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## Summary of Current Landscape – Executive Summary

UBC Athletics and Recreation is committed to fostering equity, diversity, and inclusion. To assess the department's progress in striving towards their strategic goals associated with these three areas, a department-wide survey on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) was launched.

This survey supports Goal 3.0, Capacity Building, in UBC's Inclusion Action Plan (University of British Columbia, n.d-a). In alignment with this goal, Athletics & Recreation aims to enhance departmental and individual capacities and skills to succeed in and advance equitable, diverse, and inclusive environments. This survey also supports the Social Connection and Inclusion targets in the Wellbeing Strategic Framework, where community members feel their beliefs, identity and experiences are valued at UBC (University of British Columbia, n.d-b). This report would also support UBC's Focus on People 2025 Catalyst 1 *I am part of a diverse, safe, inclusive, and vibrant workplace* (University of British Columbia, n.d-c).

In conducting this survey, the department ought to understand staff perceptions about the state of EDI, including knowledge, culture and broader human resources practices. Secondly, it sought to compare the perceptions of different demographic groups and divisions within the department. These will allow the department to:

- Have a more accurate picture of the EDI related areas that the department needs to work on
- Take concrete steps forward to identify and remove barriers to EDI in the department
- Help share the department EDI initiatives and education for the coming year and beyond

The EDI Survey measured staff perceptions of how well the Department of Athletics & Recreation performs in four EDI factors – Raising Awareness, Providing Equal Access, Supporting Growth & Success, and Accountability. 15 survey statements were mapped to these four EDI factors. Responses to all questions were captured using a five-point Likert scale, which ranged from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree” and allowed the option to check “neither agree nor disagree.” The survey also included three open-ended questions to allow staff to provide comments about the department's equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts.

The EDI Survey was offered to all staff and student staff in the Department of Athletics & Recreation in January 2021. The anonymous survey was completed online after email invitations were sent and respondents were asked to voluntarily provide some demographic information to contextualize responses. 162 staff and student staff members in the Department of Athletics & Recreation at UBC completed the EDI Survey. There were 144 complete responses and 18 partial responses (which provided demographic information only).

Of the four factors, Supporting Growth & Success showed the lowest favorable ratings, followed by Providing Equal Access. Results from the 15 EDI statements pointed to gaps in incorporation of diversity issues into staff meetings and training activities as well as gaps in effective recruitment, hiring, and retaining of diverse staff. Results from these statements also identified key strengths in the department. 91% of respondents expressed that they know how their own behaviour can make a difference in

promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion and 88% agreed that they make proactive efforts when working with peers to support an equitable and fair working environment for a diverse group of colleagues.

The survey also highlighted that on average, 7.4% of staff have experienced discrimination during their time at UBC Athletics & Recreation. Sex, age, and ethnic identity were the most common reasons associated with discriminatory events. Close to a quarter of all respondents have experienced discrimination because of their sex, and more than one-in-six have experienced discrimination because of their age.

Hourly staff generally had more favorable responses to the EDI statements compared to salaried staff and there were only two statements for which they had less favorable responses compared to their salaried counterparts. Hourly staff were less likely to agree that the department promotes information and resources related to EDI and had lower awareness of initiatives and practices in the department aimed at promoting EDI.

When comparing perceptions of specific demographic groups, the EDI survey found that minority groups generally have more favorable perceptions of EDI within the department compared to their counterparts, apart from sexual minorities.

In comparing male and female respondents, the largest differences were seen in the following areas:

- Male respondents were 13% less likely to agree that the workload is fairly and equitably distributed in their unit.
- Female respondents were 12% less likely to agree that they know what actions to take should they observe, or experience bullying, harassment, or violence compared to their male counterparts.
- Female respondents were 12% less likely to agree that they are aware of initiatives and practices in the department aimed at promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Visible minorities had more favorable responses to 12 out of the 15 statements compared to those not identifying as visible minorities and the largest differences were seen in the following areas:

- Visible minorities were 17% more likely to agree that diversity issues are incorporated into staff meetings and training activities
- Visible minorities were 15% more likely to agree that rewards for work performance are fairly and equitably distributed in their unit.

The largest differences between individuals identifying as having a disability and individuals not identifying as having a disability were seen in the following areas:

- Respondents self-identifying as having a disability were 27% more likely to agree that the department holds individuals accountable for promoting EDI in the workplace
- Respondents self-identifying as having a disability were 25% more likely to agree that the department promotes information and resources related to EDI.

Based on quantitative data, individuals self-identifying as sexual minorities generally had less favorable perceptions to those not identifying as sexual minorities about EDI in the department. Sexual minorities were 24% less likely to agree that the department holds individuals accountable for promoting EDI in the workplace and 22% less likely to agree to that the department has good procedures to address conflicts that arise related to perceived inequity or unfairness. On the contrary, they were 19% more likely to agree that rewards for work performance are fairly and equitably distributed in their unit than their counterparts who do not identify as sexual minorities.

Qualitative data collected via the survey supported the EDI gaps found in the quantitative data. Responses to the open-ended questions were organized based on emerging themes. Respondents identified hiring and diversity as the key areas/themes requiring more attention by the department. And education and training were highlighted as the most successful EDI initiatives.

# Peer Institution Environmental Scan

## Introduction

In 2018, the University of British Columbia started the process of developing The Inclusion Action Plan as an opportunity to create global influence through equitable, diverse, and inclusive campuses. UBC Athletics and Recreation is aligned with this plan and commits to fostering equity, diversity, and inclusion within the department.

This environmental scan supports Goal 3.0, Capacity Building, in The Inclusion Action Plan (University of British Columbia, n.d-a). It aims to enhance institutional and individual capacities and skills to succeed in and advance inclusive environments and work to sustain and continually evolve that capacity as skills and capabilities are increased. This scan supports the Social Connection and Inclusion targets in the Wellbeing Strategic Framework, where community members feel their beliefs, identity and experiences are valued at UBC (University of British Columbia, n.d-b). The scan also supports UBC’s Focus on People 2025 Catalyst 1 *I am part of a diverse, safe, inclusive, and vibrant workplace* (University of British Columbia, n.d-c). The findings of this environmental scan, combined with the *EDI Survey Comprehensive Report*, can be used to inform the department’s strategic planning and decision-making processes in regards to EDI.

The primary objective of this scan was to describe the breadth of EDI-related initiatives in the Department of Athletics & Recreation of peer institutions across Canada.

## Methodology

The scan identified 38 universities across Canada with any EDI related initiatives within their Athletics & Recreation departments. The Athletics and Recreation websites of these institutions were analyzed to determine what EDI related initiatives are in place. These initiatives were then organized into the following EDI related themes: Education & Training, Gender inclusivity, Age inclusivity, Accessibility, and Accountability.

## Results

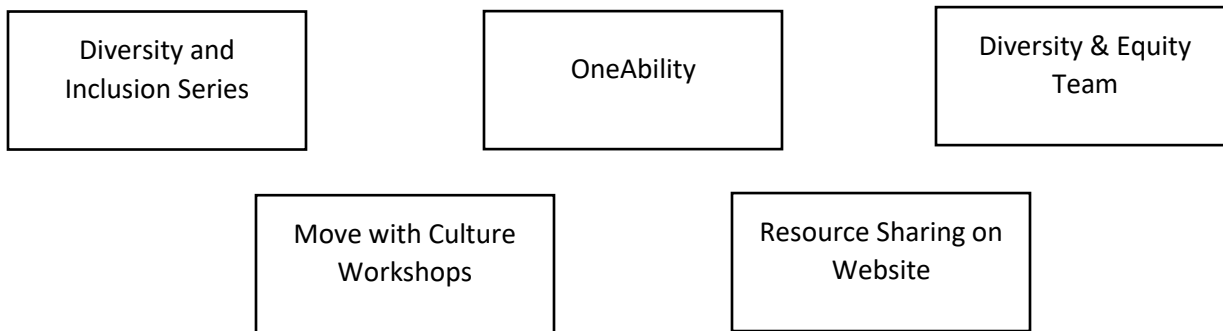
This report will conduct an analysis of the environment focusing on EDI related initiatives within Athletics & Recreation departments across Canadian peer institutions. The # initiatives refers to the total number of EDI promoting initiatives that fall within each category and # universities refers to the number of different universities that offer EDI promoting initiatives of a specific category. Some universities offer multiple EDI promoting initiatives for a specific category.

<b>EDI Promoting Initiatives</b>	<b># Initiatives</b>	<b># Universities</b>
EDI Education	6	5
Gender-specific Initiatives	68	19
Age-specific Initiatives	10	8
Accessible Programming	67	17

Accessibility in Facilities	90	19
Accountability	9	9

### EDI Education

As a part of the environmental scan, we reviewed Athletics & Recreation websites of all public universities in Canada to identify initiatives providing education related to EDI. The following initiatives emerged from the analysis:



- **Diversity and Inclusion Series** – Featured on *We Are the Cougars* podcast, this four-part series provides education on diversity and inclusion, cultural competency, unconscious bias, and unpacking privilege (Mount Royal University Recreation).
- **OneAbility** – This community-wide collaboration led by the University of Victoria offers resources for inclusive sports and recreation including workshops and webinars about inclusive physical literacy and inclusive fitness as well as an Inclusive Fitness Handbook for fitness professionals (OneAbility).
- **Diversity & Equity Team** – Sport & Recreation's Diversity & Equity team at the University of Toronto implements events and projects related to sport and physical activity that promote diversity, equity, inclusivity and physical/mental health (University of Toronto Recreation).
- **Move with Culture Workshops** - Organized by University of Toronto Sport & Recreation's Diversity & Equity team, these workshops are designed to educate on, and engage students in cultural dance from racialized and Indigenous communities from around the world (University of Toronto Recreation).
- **Resource Sharing on Website** – The *Equity, Diversity & Accessibility* page at University of Windsor Athletics & Recreation website provides education on: Race Talk, NIRSA Leaders in Collegiate Recreation, Racial Equity Tools, and How to be an Ally (Windsor Lancers) . Similarly, the *Human Rights & Equity page* on Brock University's Athletics & Recreation website links to the university's Human Rights & Equity website (Brock Badgers).

Note that the above list includes educational initiatives offered by Recreation departments for the general community only and does not include any initiatives for staff members.



Gender-specific Initiatives

As a part of the environmental scan, we reviewed programs, classes, events, and camps that target specific genders and promote inclusivity within recreation. The following categories of initiatives emerged from the analysis:

Women’s Only Initiatives <sup>a</sup>	# Initiatives	# Universities
Kickboxing & self-defence	6	4
Swimming	16	8
Fitness hours & fitness zone	5	5
Training & workouts	12	7
Yoga & dance	3	2
Other sports	14	8
Events & empowerment initiatives	6	4

a. These initiatives are targeted towards all individuals identifying as women

- **Kickboxing & self-defence** – There are six women’s only kickboxing & self-defence programs and classes offered by recreation departments of four different universities across Canada.
- **Swimming** – In total, there are 16 women’s only swimming initiatives offered by recreation departments of eight universities in Canada. These include registered programs, swimming lessons, and drop-in programs.
- **Fitness hours & fitness zone** – Fitness centres in five universities offer Women’s only hours or women’s only fitness zones.
- **Training & workouts** – Seven recreation departments across Canada offer fitness classes, registered activities, drop-in programs, and group courses specific to women’s weight training, conditioning, workouts, bootcamps, and cycling.
- **Yoga & dance** – A total of three women’s only dance and yoga programs are offered.
- **Other sports** – A variety of women’s only recreational sports programs are offered by eight universities across Canada. These include a climbing program, squash, hockey camp, volleyball academy, soccer camps and conditioning, and basketball drop-in programs and camps.
- **Events & empowerment initiatives** – There are six initiatives offered by Athletics & Recreation departments that celebrate the accomplishments of women or promote discussion for self-identified women on a variety of health topics.

In addition to Women’s only initiatives, the analysis identified the following initiatives for trans, gender non-conforming, non-binary, and two-spirit people:

	# Initiatives
Kickboxing for Women, Two-Spirit, Trans, Gender Non-Conforming only	1
Trans + Gender Diverse Swim	3

Fitness discussion for all women, trans and non-binary people	1
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### Age-specific Initiatives

The environmental scan identified 10 initiatives for individuals of older ages in recreation departments across Canada. The majority of these are fitness programs and group classes tailored to needs of specific age groups, such as individuals close to or over the age of 55. In addition, one university offers an older adults badminton program and one offers a swimming program for individuals aged 50 and over.

Age-specific Initiatives	# Initiatives	# Universities
Fitness	8	6
Badminton	1	1
Swimming	1	1

### Accessible Programming

The environmental scan identified the following types of accessible programming in Athletics & Recreation departments:

Accessible Initiatives	# Initiatives	# Universities
Swimming	10	8
Fitness & exercise	18	12
Inclusive recreation sports	16	6
Inclusive recreation sports– Youth only	16	11
Events & promotions	7	3

- **Swimming** – There are 10 accessible swimming programs, including private lessons, for individuals with disability, impairment, or special needs.
- **Fitness & exercise** – There are 18 accessible fitness and exercise programs in peer-institutions. These include fitness programs for individuals with disabilities and para-athletes, exercise programs for individuals with osteoarthritis, rehabilitation and fitness programs, and strength training for visually or cognitively impaired.
- **Inclusive recreation sports** – Six Athletics & Recreation departments offer inclusive recreation programs, tournaments, and community involvement opportunities for a variety of sports, including wheelchair basketball, blind soccer, adaptive climbing, dance, and more.
- **Inclusive recreation sports– Youth only** – 11 Athletics & Recreation departments offer inclusive recreation programs, camps, and community-based initiatives for children with disabilities, special needs, or developmental delays. A variety of sports are offered, including indoor soccer, sledge ball hockey, wheelchair basketball, adapted climbing, adaptive gymnastics, and more.

- **Events** – Three universities hold events that highlight adapted sports and recreation. Examples include showcasing wheelchair basketball demos at basketball half-times, featuring wheelchair sports try-it sessions, representation at Paralympic Games, and others.

#### Accessibility in Facilities

The following types of accessibility features were identified in Athletics & Recreation departments:

Accessibility Feature	# Features	# Universities
Gender inclusive/universal change rooms	15	12
Wheelchair accessibility	36	12
Elevator accessibility	9	8
Lifts/ramps	11	10
Adaptive equipment	5	4
Aids for visually impaired	7	4
Support persons/devices	7	4

- **Universal change rooms** – 12 of the 38 universities reviewed in this scan have inclusive change rooms in their facilities that welcome all genders.
- **Wheelchair accessibility** – 12 of the 38 universities offer wheelchair accessibility in their Athletics and Recreation facilities. These include wheelchair accessible change rooms, showers, doors, washroom stalls, drinking fountains, ramps, locker rooms, parking, equipment, pool, spectator seating, and water wheelchair availability.
- **Elevator accessibility** – 8 universities have elevators in their Athletics and Recreation facilities.
- **Lifts & ramps** – 10 universities offer motorized or staff-assisted lifts and ramps in their facilities, particularly the Aquatic Centre.
- **Adaptive equipment** – 4 universities contain adaptive equipment in their facilities, such as adaptive equipment in the Climbing Centre and accessible equipment at the fitness centres.
- **Aids for visually impaired** – these aids include braille signage, colour contrast edging around pools, and high contrast signages.
- **Support persons and devices** – 4 universities permit support persons, animals, or assistive devices in their aquatic and recreation facilities, free of charge.

#### Accountability Initiatives

A number of peer institutions have initiatives in place for the accountability of Athletics & Recreation departments. These include:

- Professional Code of Conduct for Coaches – to prevent and address maltreatment in sport, guided by an external working group established by UVic that includes current and former members of the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport, BC Games Society, and the Coaching Association of Canada (University of Victoria Varsity Athletics).
- Strategic Plan – one of the guiding principles in the strategic plan is emphasis on inclusion and quality experience of everyone (Mount Allison University). And some of the strategic

imperatives include: excel at the delivery of a broad based and inclusive set of intramural sports, and offer engaging, inclusive and competitive club sport program.

- Student-Athlete Advisory Council – A committee made up of student-athletes from every varsity team assembled to provide insight on the student-athlete experience (Saint Francis Xavier University). The committee is also involved in increasing racial diversity in varsity athletic programs, establish avenues for education and mentorship to enhance the experiences of BIPOC student-athletes. The executive board includes two Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Chairs to ensure the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion are represented in the council and department.
- Varsity Council – consists of one member from each varsity sport team with an emphasis on gender equity (Algoma University).
- Coaches' Manual – holds the coaches responsible to ensure that everyone is treated equally regardless of demographic factors (Laurentian University).
- Code of Conduct for Student Athletes – holds student athletes responsible for treating everyone with courtesy and respect within the context of their sport, regardless of sociodemographic factors (McMaster University).
- BIPOC Varsity Association – holds the University of Toronto and Varsity Blues program accountable for actively combating their history of systemic racism and supporting their BIPOC student-athletes (University of Toronto). This includes listening to the voices and stories of BIPOC varsity athletes, considering them and using them as a medium for change. The association also creates community work to support BIPOC athletes, educates Varsity Blues governing body on anti-racism and anti-oppression, and increases BIPOC representation in the department.
- Coaches' Code of Conduct – holds coaches responsible for treating everyone fairly within the context of their activity regardless of their sociodemographic factors (Wilfred Laurier University).
- Strategic Plan – as a part of the strategic plan 2025, department is preparing an annual Gender Equity in Huskie Athletics Report and upon completion of the report, the department will develop goals and strategies for achieving EDI (University of Saskatchewan).

## Recommendations to support equity, diversity, and inclusion needs of UBC Athletics and Recreation

The informational interviews identified nine gaps in equity, diversity, and inclusion within the department of Athletics and Recreation at UBC. These gaps are gender inequity, financial inequity, alignment between different units, training, accountability, education, hiring and onboarding, diversity, accessibility. The following are some recommendations to address these gaps.

- Create educational and training opportunities to increase staff and athlete awareness of unconscious bias, power, and privilege. Embed awareness sessions for current policies and programs related to equity, diversity, and inclusion within the department for all staff and student staff.
- Provide tangible and specific tools to program coordinators on delivering, modifying, and adapting to needs of diverse individuals. Give program coordinators exposure to real life scenarios through case studies and role-play and offer strategies to deal with complex situations.
- Develop and offer educational materials on employment equity to all staff members, particularly those involved in hiring and onboarding of new employees. Offer practical solutions for increasing BIPOC representation and increasing professional development opportunities and mentorship opportunities for minority groups.
- Build consistent connection between Varsity and Recreation and other units within the larger department. Share work done by and action plan of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee with the wider department. Build staff knowledge of equitable and inclusive practices within the department by sharing successes and challenges via different modes of communication, such as newsletters and townhall meetings.
- Hold staff members, athletes and coaches accountable for ensuring equity, diversity, and inclusion are practices and promoted within the department. Create a student athlete handbooks and coaches' manual with detailed sections for accountability.
- Develop an exit survey for all staff and student staff who are terminating their employment. The survey would ask about reasons for departure and staff experiences of equity, diversity, and inclusion during their time in the department. Findings from this survey can help identify further areas of improvement within the department.

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