

Faculty of Health

Student Success Framework

Proposed by the Equity & Inclusion Committee May 2022

Revised following June 2022 Faculty Council Meeting

Endorsed by Faculty Council with minor revisions Thursday 22nd September, 2022

This document articulates the commitments of the Faculty of Health regarding supports for students. As a collective of staff and faculty within and across our units, we endorse these commitments, which serve as both aspiration and accountability.

These commitments reflect our shared awareness that success of students, particularly from priority communities, is an intricate integration of community engagement and recruitment, institutional policies and practices, historical and contemporary harms, representation across roles in all settings, curricula, and pathways to employment. They are rooted in a deliberate recognition of student capacity, excellence, and contribution to our teaching and learning community.

Each commitment is defined below, followed by suggested actions which are offered for units to consider as ways to manifest that commitment. Recognition is given to the importance of the instructor and their own lived experience, diversity, and perspective. Suggestions for actions will continue to be added through regular review and sharing opportunities of Faculty Council and its standing committees and working groups.

Support through Access & Engagement

Commitment: The Faculty of Health increases its outreach, recruitment, on-going support, retention, and graduation of members of equity-seeking groups, especially those from historically under-represented groups.

Actions:

1. Increase focussed outreach to and recruitment of students from historically underrepresented communities into undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs, with particular emphasis on Mi'kmaq and African Nova Scotian students.
2. Enhance entrance and in-program needs-based bursary and merit-based scholarship offerings for students from historically under-represented groups, and examine implicit biases of existing bursaries and scholarships.

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3. Enhance academic transition and support services including advising, mentoring, and learning communities to meet the needs of students from under-represented and equity groups.
4. Reduce isolation felt by students from designated groups by creating safer spaces to gather, and by securing links with inclusive cross-campus supports, including those aimed at accessing accommodation/housing, culturally informed mental health services, and family support and caregiving.
5. Establish and continue to support field placements and residencies in sites serving or generated by members of equity-seeking groups. .
6. Enhance access to mentoring programs connecting learners in their programs with graduates and/or practitioners who are matched in terms of equity-seeking group membership/identity, including being mindful of intersecting identities.

Support through How and What we Teach

Commitment: The Faculty of Health prioritizes including diverse perspectives and pedagogies across all disciplines and teaching diversity, inclusiveness, and accessibility.

Actions:

1. Support and promote Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) which applies decolonizing, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive theories and practices in the design, teaching, and evaluation of courses.
2. Seek to become inherently accessible, by developing and addressing accessibility directly with attention to learners, instructors, and institutional facilities/supports.
3. Support and promote modalities for learning and applying Universal Design for Learning (UDL), a learner-centred framework, the core principles of which - “multiple means of engagement, representation, and action and expression” - are each situated, for every learner, within their cultural framework.
4. Develop initiatives that equip all instructors to infuse diverse issues, perspectives, knowledge, and ways of knowing and assessing learning into curricular and program development projects.
5. Perform regular ‘equity audits’ of curricula, examining the extent to which diverse content, perspectives and pedagogies are employed and where they can be enhanced.

6. Initiate education for instructors to enhance understandings that multiple ways of demonstrating skills and conveying knowledge acquisition are equally valuable, with no cost to academic or professional standards.

Support through Institutional Capacity and Commitment

Commitment: The Faculty of Health, together with the University, establishes and enacts organizational systems, structures, policies, and processes that mobilize and sustain Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (EDIA) commitments and resources through leadership, governance, and accountability.

Actions:

1. Develop and implement a comprehensive recruitment and retention plan to support the success of a diverse workforce with emphasis on historically under-represented and equity groups.
2. Incorporate EDIA objectives into systems, structures, composition of decision-making bodies, policies, and practices through, for example, training and professional development offerings, improved accommodation responsiveness, managing conflicts between advancing EDIA and established institutional policies and practices and a reward system for EDIA innovation and performance.
3. Adopt inclusive EDIA processes in the recruitment of personnel to provide comprehensive professional development offerings that enhance teaching and workforce/workplace effectiveness.
4. Monitor and evaluate EDIA initiatives and publish key performance indicators with the aim of institutionalizing a culture of equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility in planning and management.