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INSTITUTIONAL REPORT - CANADA RESEARCH CHAIRS PROGRAM

GENERAL INFORMATION

Institution:	University of Saskatchewan
Reporting period:	April 1, 2024 – March 31, 2025
CRC Senior Official:	Phani Adapa Director, Research Acceleration and Strategic Initiatives, OVPR

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3. EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

Research demonstrates that achieving an equitable, diverse, and inclusive work environment leads to increased excellence, innovation, and impact. A diversity of experiences, perspectives and voices is fundamental to achieving excellent research.

1. a.) Key institutional actions in support of EDI in the CRCP

Key EDI action #1

- Describe the key action that was undertaken.

The University of Saskatchewan has successfully implemented the EDI Champions Program, a two-module EDI workshop, to support the leads of search committees in delivering on EDI goals. However, discussions with the search leads have indicated that while there is greater understanding and awareness of the importance of EDI as a principle of excellence, there remains a gap in effectively operationalizing the concept across all aspects of the search – development of indicators of success, moving to a proactive approach for candidate identification, designing interview and ‘recruitment’ meetings to include culturally-appropriate events, etc. Thus, USask committed to hiring a new EDI strategist who could provide tactical and expert support to search committees to address this gap. The EDI strategist will play a key role in maximizing EDI opportunities for the CRC program through the development and maintenance of leading best practices for EDI, including EDI in research design and research practice.

- Did this action relate to an objective named in your CRCP EDI Action Plan?

☒ _Yes. Briefly describe the related objective.

☐ No

Objective #s 4.0: Promote diversity, inclusion, and equity at each stage of planning for, recruiting, hiring, and retaining diverse faculty in the CRC positions and #5.0 Support retention and inclusion for members of the four designated groups.

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- Describe outcomes and impacts this action supported during the reporting period.

During the reporting period, USask searched for a Senior Research EDI Strategist. The position was filled, with the Strategist starting in the role in April 2025. They will cultivate relationships and collaborate with internal and external experts to deliver EDI training in support of the CRC program. The Strategist will proactively identify strategies to apply and embed DORA (San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment) principles to enhance existing procedures for CRC recruitment and strengthen CRC nominations. In the upcoming year, the Strategist is facilitating a series of training opportunities (webinars and workshops) for CRCs focused on EDI in research design and research practice, as well as supporting CRCs in strategically planning their research in relation to EDI opportunities and considerations. Training opportunities for search committees and research administrators supporting the CRC program are also planned and will focus on EDI in the research landscape in support of CRCs, the CRC program, and the broader campus community.

Outcomes and impacts will be reported in next year's progress report.

- Describe any challenges encountered in undertaking this action, and any mitigation strategies that were employed.

We initially had challenges recruiting a Senior EDI Strategist, which delayed our implementation of these supports.

- Was funding from the CRCP Stipend for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion used for this action?

☒ Yes

☐ No

3. b) CRCP Stipend for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Rate the importance the CRCP Stipend for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion has had on your institution in making progress in implementing measures to address systemic barriers:

☐ Not important

☐ Somewhat important

☐ Important

☒ Very important

☐ Do not know

☐ Not applicable

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3. c) Other EDI initiatives

Provide an example of an EDI initiative underway at the institution – that is broader than those tied to the CRCP that is expected to address systemic barriers and foster an equitable, diverse and inclusive research environment.

For example, are there projects underway that underscore the importance of EDI to research excellence? Is there additional training being offered to the faculty at large? Are there initiatives to improve the campus climate? Please provide hyperlinks where relevant in the box below. URLs should include <https://>. Note that collecting this information is a requirement of the 2019 Addendum to the 2006 Canadian Human Rights Settlement Agreement (clause 39.e) and provides context for the work the institution is doing in addressing barriers for the CRCP.

As stated in USask's 2020 EDI Policy (<https://policies.usask.ca/policies/equity/equity-diversity-inclusion.php>), the university's goal is to "create and nurture a diverse and inclusive university community that encompasses our legal, moral, and ethical responsibilities. USask has implemented many initiatives to address systemic barriers and foster an equitable, diverse and inclusive academic and research environment.

In July 2022, USask implemented the *deybwewin | taapwaywin | tapwewin* policy, which provides a framework for the implementation of Indigenous membership/citizenship verification with documentation at USask. USask is committed to safeguarding the cultures and integrity of Indigenous peoples, Indigenous values, and Indigenous languages within university business or activities. This policy applies to all members of the university community including, but not limited to, students, researchers, post-doctoral fellows, staff, faculty, institutional leadership, members of governing bodies, Elders, Cultural Advisors, and Knowledge Keepers, and any person participating in university business or activities. Due to the success and uptake of the policy, in May 2025, implementation has shifted to full implementation in all aspects of USask rather than a phased approach (<https://indigenous.usask.ca/indigenous-initiatives/deybwewin-taapwaywin-tapwewin.php>).

The 2023-2027 USask Faculty Association (USFA) Collective Agreement requires that faculty intending to participate on collegial processes attend an anti-racism and unconscious bias training session (<https://careers.usask.ca/agreements/usfa/usfa-7-non-discrimination.php>). This reflects a shared action between the USFA and USask to address the commitments associated with the *ohpahotân | oohpaahotaan* (<https://indigenous.usask.ca/ohpahotan-oohpaahotaan/index.php>) and the university's EDI framework for action (<https://plan.usask.ca/edi/index.php>). More than 400 faculty have attended the sessions so far.

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