

Item #8: Report from the Vice-President, Equity Issues

I. Context of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Praxis

Equity, diversity and inclusion are complementary pursuits of 21st century institutions of higher education. The 2011 Equity Issues Portfolio (EIP) activities are occurring in a dynamic national environment, shaped by globalization, migration, diversity and métissage. Across institutions there is an effort to advance next generation thinking on equity, diversity and inclusion in a plural society. “The world we seek is not a world where difference is erased, but where difference can be a powerful force for good, helping us to fashion a new sense of cooperation and coherence in our world, and to build together a better life for all” was how His Highness the Aga Khan articulated this vision in the 10th annual Lafontaine-Baldwin lecture (15/10/2010). Paradoxically, diversity is seen both as a “gift that can enrich our lives” and that can inspire and transform our world and, at the same time, can be frightening, engendering enclaves, division and even conflict. Bridging such divides and boldly confronting the stubborn persistence of inequities is precisely the kind of big thinking praxis we can – and must – expect from the Federation, as from the broader social sciences and the humanities community in Canada.

As Liz Coleman, president of Bennington College, eloquently noted in a recent speech on reinventing the liberal arts, “deep thought matters when you are thinking about things that matter.” Yet, when it comes to transformation, “the academy is more likely to engender a learned helplessness than to create a sense of empowerment” (Ted.com, 19/05/2009). Our continuing challenge in 2011 is to engage in deep thinking about equity matters, to actively promote the inclusion and advancement of women, Aboriginal peoples, racialised minorities, persons with disabilities and LGBT and Two-spirited individuals in ways that model a commitment to fundamental fairness in educational equity, access and outcomes.

II. The Work of the Equity Issues Portfolio

This report updates the Board and the AGM on the activities of the EIP as follows: First, on the extraordinary success of the Fedcan Equity Matters, which I proposed in November 2009. It was launched in January 2010 with my post “Equity (Still) Matters” and in January 2011 with my post “Leading on equity and diversity matters.” Second and related, as VP Equity I was one of some 20 scholars interviewed by University Affairs for its online and November 2010 cover story, ‘Racism in the academy’ <<http://www.universityaffairs.ca/racism-in-the-academy.aspx>>. Racism and social exclusion are not easy topics to cover. UA and its editor Peggy Berkowitz are to be commended for taking on a subject that many shy away from, but that we must take seriously in an ever more diverse Canada. Third, this report offers an overview of the EIP’s activities for the 2011 Congress at University of New Brunswick and St Thomas University under the theme, “*Transforming the Academy: Indigenous education.*” Fourth, working closely with the Director of Programs Alison Faulknor, this year I am pleased to report that I was able to secure sponsorship for EIP activities by four university members as well as partnerships with scholarly associations. Fifth, in the lead up to Congress, I initiated a series on the EM Blog on Indigenous knowledge and education <<http://blog.fedcan.ca/tag/indigenous-education/>>. This series complements the Congress programming. It has deepened the web of conversations on Indigenous knowledge, identifying innovative policies and best practices to achieve excellence in Indigenous education.

A. Equity 2.0 – Fedcan Blog – Equity Matters



Recent reports in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and *Inside Higher Education*, as well as a December 2010 study “Social Media and Research Workflows” (CIBER, U of London), all highlight the power and importance of social media and social networks for academic communications, collaborations, teaching and learning, and research and its dissemination. Social science and humanities researchers, in particular, have gravitated to social media (blogs, podcasts, Twitter, Flickr, YouTube, Facebook, Mashable, livestream, etc). In Canada, the Federation is among the leaders of these socially innovative trends. For the past three years, the EIP has built up its digital archive of podcasts and videos from the 2009 Congress (*Royal Commission on Equality in Employment 25 Years On*, with Big Thinking EI keynote Justice Rosalie Silberman Abella), 2010 Congress (*Royal Commission on the Status of Women 40 Years On*, with Big Thinking EI keynote Donna Brazile), and the 2010 AGM (on mentoring). These digital materials of over 40 leading scholars and policymakers are available on the ‘Experience Congress’ and the Federation’s web sites for equity awareness, public education and for teaching and learning.

When Equity Matters <<http://blog.fedcan.ca/category/equity-matters/>> was launched on 8 January 2010, it became what is believed to be the first Canadian blog dedicated to matters of equity. In one year it has achieved astonishing success, accounting for two-thirds of the some 22,126 visits and 32,321 page views of all blog content. Readers are located primarily in Canada (17,767), followed by the US, Europe, Asia, Africa, Oceania and South America, with much room for innovation and growth as we shift to web 3.0 and envision web 4.0. There now are some 80 entries on the site. Topics include mentoring, teaching equity matters, Indigenous education, pluralism and tolerance, gender equity, anti-racism, LGBT and Two-spirited experiences, bullying, and human rights. Contributors are leading SS/H scholars from across Canada and internationally.

As Vice-president Equity I am pleased that the EIP is among the leaders on this front. The feedback has been superfluous, especially the blog’s open access. Equity Matters posts frequently are circulated on listservs, among human rights and human resource practitioners, and included among university and associations equity and human rights e-resources. It quickly has established itself as the go-to site for content reflecting the best SS/H research, as a credible resource for our university and association members, as well as for enhanced conversations with our diverse publics outside academia. In the lead up to the 1st Annual Conference on 26 March, for example, I invited leading scholars and public intellectuals from across Canada, the US and Europe to contribute entries on pluralism, multiculturalism and interculturalism, with entries from Kwame Anthony Appiah (Princeton), Frank Furedi (Kent), Irene Bloemraad (Berkeley), Phil Ryan (Carleton), Tania das Gupta (York), Avigail Eisenberg (Victoria), among others <<http://blog.fedcan.ca/tag/interculturalism-and-pluralism/>>. We will continue to improve its content with timely entries on equity and diversity matters and by adding features to the blog.

B. Equity@Congress2011 – Transforming the Academy: Indigenous education

One of the best opportunities to network and collaborate with the Federation’s university and scholarly association membership and broader publics is at Congress. It is one of the main sites for face-to-face networking and the sharing of the best research, policies and practices on equity, diversity and inclusion in academe. Collaboration and partnerships ensure a broad and diverse audience and the best use of space, time and resources. Building on the successes and lessons learned from previous Congresses the EIP’s 2011 programming will include an unprecedented level of university sponsorships and scholarly association partnerships. ‘*Transforming the Academy: Indigenous education*’ sessions (with Big Thinking EI keynote Chief Shawn A-in-chut Atleo) will be co-sponsored by four universities and embedded in the annual meetings of at least six scholarly associations, to whom we are immensely grateful for their collaboration. On behalf of the EIP, I extend my heartfelt thanks to the Provost/VP-Academics at the U of Alberta, U of Victoria and Athabasca U, the Provost/VP Academic and VP Research/International Relations as well as the Deans of Humanities, Social Sciences and Health Sciences at The U of Western Ontario for their generous sponsorship of 2011 Congress EIP events. These sponsorships and partnerships reflect the relevance of equity issues programming for universities, scholarly associations and the broader publics.

B. 1. Congress Equity Events at a Glance

Big Thinking Keynote: Assembly of First Nations Chief Shawn A-in-chut Atleo: First Nations Education: Can we afford to miss out?

Monday, May 30, 12:15 to 13:20

National Chief Shawn Atleo will speak to his recent call to action on Aboriginal education and to innovations and leadership in Indigenous knowledge and education in Canadian universities.

(Partnership with CSSHE, co-sponsored by Athabasca University)

Equity Issues Reception

Monday, 13-20-14:20 Co-sponsored by the Offices of the Provost/VP Academic and VP Research/International Relations, The University of Western Ontario)

Plenary: National Aboriginal Leaders in Conversation on Indigenous Education

Monday, May 30, 14:30 to 16:00

• Jeannette Corbiere Lavell, President of the Native Women's Association of Canada (invited) • Betty Ann Lavallee National Chief, Congress of Aboriginal Peoples • Udloriak Hanson, Special Advisor to the ITK President Mary Simon • Marie Battiste, U of Saskatchewan • Jo-Ann Archibald, University of British Columbia • David Newhouse, Trent U.

(Co-Sponsored by the Deans of Arts and Humanities, Social Science, and Health Sciences, The University of Western Ontario, and organized in partnership with the Canadian Society for the Study of Education and the Canadian Association for the Study of Indigenous Education)

EI Roundtable Discussion: Indigenous Knowledge and Indigenizing the Academy

Tuesday, May 31, 17:00 to 18:30

This roundtable will examine two interrelated issues, Indigenous knowledge production and dissemination and the challenges and opportunities of Indigenizing the academy.

• Kiera Ladner, Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Governance, Political Science, U of Manitoba • Dwayne Donald, Education, U of Alberta, President, Canadian Association for Studies in Indigenous Education • Roland Chrisjohn, Director of Native Studies, St. Thomas U • Andrea Bear Nichols, Chair in Studies in Aboriginal Cultures of Atlantic Canada, St Thomas U • Chair: Shanne McCaffrey, Supporting Indigenous Learners Knowledge & Skills, U of Victoria.

(Co-sponsored by the Office of the Provost/VP Academic, University of Alberta and the Office of the Provost/VP Academic, University of Victoria, and organized in partnership with the Canadian Association for the Study of Indigenous Education and the Canadian Sociological Association)

EI Roundtable Discussion: Mentoring the Next Generation of Aboriginal Academic Leaders

Wednesday, June 1, 15:15 to 16:45

This roundtable will discuss what has been done and what needs to be done to ensure Aboriginal success in higher education and to enable the next generation of Aboriginal academic leaders.

• Susan Aglukark, OC, U of Alberta Distinguished Scholar in Residence • Maria Campbell, OC, writer, poet, filmmaker, Adjunct Prof, Athabasca U, and Trudeau mentor • Patricia Doyle-Bedwell, Mi'kmaq, Director, Transition Year Program, Dalhousie and Chair, Nova Scotia Advisory Council on Status of Women • Pam Ward, Provincial Aboriginal Coordinator, New Brunswick Community College • Chair: Tracy Bear Coon, Special Advisor to the Provost, Aboriginal Initiatives, U of Alberta.

(Co-sponsored by Athabasca University and the Office of the Provost/VP Academic, University of Alberta, and organized in partnership with the Canadian Sociological Association)

EI Roundtable: Equity in Times of Economic Crisis

Thursday, June 2, 12:15 to 13:30

This roundtable will explore the challenges and opportunities of achieving equity in times of economic crises.

• Alope Chatterjee, Associate Prof, Law, UNB • Wendy Johnson, Policy and liaison officer, New Brunswick's Advisory Council on the Status of Women • Len Findlay, FRSC, Professor, English, U of Saskatchewan • David Perley, Mi'kmaq-Maliseet Institute, UNB (invited) • Chair: Malinda S Smith, VP, Equity Issues.
(Co-hosted by the Association for Nonprofit and Social Economy Research)

B.2. Indigenous education series on Equity Matters

Indigenous peoples are among the fastest growing demographic groups in Canada. Indigenous education and mentoring the next generation of Indigenous role models and academic leaders are among the most pressing national education priorities. It is an area of shared concern among universities and colleges, scholarly associations and community networks. In the lead up to Congress, I initiated an EM blog series on Indigenous education. Working with the Federation's policy analyst Karen Diepeveen, we launched the series in January 2011. Over two dozen scholars from multiple H/SS disciplines generously responded to my invitation to contribute. To date, seven entries have been posted, and nine more will be added before Congress. The series highlights historical, institutional and community dynamics that impact efforts to 'Indigenize the academy'. This novel series provides open access to leading SS/H research on Indigenous knowledge and education, profile renowned senior and new Indigenous scholars, and uses social media to disseminate knowledge in ways that respect Indigenous philosophies of access and builds on the Federation's strategic commitment to a scholarship of engagement. I believe these linkages make the Federation an important national partner in support for Indigenous education, and the Federation's web site among the best for accessing leading SS/H research and thinking on Indigenous education. The posts to date include:

<<http://blog.fedcan.ca/tag/indigenous-education/>>.

- Jeff Corntassel (U of Victoria): *Indigenizing the academy: Insurgent education and the role of Indigenous intellectuals*, 12 January 2011.
- Jean-Paul Restoule (OISE/U of Toronto): *Everything is alive and everyone is related: Indigenous knowing and inclusive education*, 25 January 2011.
- Dwayne Donald (U of Alberta): *On making love to death: Plains Cree and Blackfoot wisdom*, 1 February 2011.
- Jo-Ann Episkenew (U of Regina): *Indigenizing university administration or Tâwaw cî? (Take 2)*, 10 February 2011.
- Lynn Gehl (York U): *Indigenous knowledge, symbolic literacy and the 1764 Treaty at Niagara*, 15 February 2011.
- Chris Andersen (U of Alberta): *'I'm Métis: What's your excuse?': On the optics and misrecognition of Métis in Canada*, 22 February 2011.
- Onowa McIvor (U of Victoria): *Life and death of Canada's founding languages (and not the two you think)*, 2 March 2011.

III. Equity Outreach and Networking

Four major environmental factors impact the EIP's commitment to Inclusive Excellence and the strategic commitment to better integrate equity, diversity, inclusion and excellence: (i) diversity and shifting demographics, (ii) persistent societal inequities, (iii) political, legal and human rights dynamics, and (iv) work-force needs. To achieve institutional excellence, equity, diversity and inclusion initiatives have to reflect coherence, commitment, collaboration and cohesion. They must be woven into everyday policies and practices rather than exist as "islands of isolation." To achieve sustainable results, EIP initiatives also need to be 'bottom up', from the membership and community, as well as reflect leadership from the VP Equity and the larger Executive and Board. Outreach to scholarly associations and universities – as well as SS/H communities outside of academe – is important to deepening equity praxis. Outreach efforts have identified that almost all of the

large associations, and many small and medium ones, have a gender, equity or diversity committee, and a commitment to advancing diversity in the SS/H disciplines. I will continue to draw on these representatives to rebuild the Equity Issues Network to support the work of the Portfolio and the Equity Issues Steering Committee (EISC). The 2011-13 EISC includes an outstanding group of SS/H scholars and public intellectuals from across Canada: Sirma Bilge (Université de Montréal), James Deaville (Carleton), Kiera Ladner, Canada Research Chair (Manitoba), Gada Mahrouse (Concordia), Ashok Mathur, Canada Research Chair (Thompson Rivers U), and Dolana Mogadime (Brock).

As in previous years, I have been invited to speak at several Federation member universities, as well as scholarly association meetings, on various equity and diversity issues. These members include Simon Fraser U, York U and the U of Regina, and the Canadian Historical Association. The topics vary, from the status of women in the academy, to antiracism praxis and the under representation of racialised minorities, to the broad range of issues related to Indigenizing the academy. These invitations underscore the ongoing relevance of EIP and Federation's leadership on equity, diversity and inclusion. The persistence of inequities and social exclusion are anathema to the public good. Drawing on SS/H talent, socially innovative and sustainable policies and our creative energies we must demonstrate leadership in meeting the 21st century challenge of deepening diversity and advancing equity in the academy and broader society.

Respectfully submitted,

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