Canadian Association of Geographers / Association Canadienne des Géographes
Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee
Terms of Reference
Version 1.0: June 7th, 2023

This is a living document that will be updated to reflect
changing needs and priorities for the CAG.

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1. Introduction

a. Defining EDI

Equity is about everyone having access to opportunities and resources that will make everyday experiences and events more equal, allowing people to flourish. An organization committed to equity starts by recognizing the diverse and different circumstances that shape our backgrounds, experiences, and encounters. This also means actively opposing oppressive structures and reflecting on how all individuals may act to counter inequity. It means allocating resources and opportunities to achieve parity in policy, process, and outcomes for historically and currently underserved, excluded, or disadvantaged people and groups.

Diversity and inclusion are values that reflect a world where differences in lived experiences and perspectives are recognized. Welcoming, respectful, supportive, and positive opportunities for participation are ensured through planning, policy, and practice. Some aspects of intersectional identity include, but are not limited to, race, ethnicity, gender, age, national origin, religion, disability, sexuality, class, education, and language. This is also accompanied by an acknowledgement that 'difference' has been constructed/maintained to uphold systems of power, oppression, and exploitation. Attention to EDI represents a commitment to oppose harmful processes of differentiation and to take actions for improved policies, processes, practices, and outcomes.

b. Guiding EDI principles for the CAG

The CAG and its membership must commit to equity, diversity, and inclusion as fundamental to its mission. This means enhancing diversity, promoting equity, and fostering a more inclusive culture in its organizational culture and practice, the mobilization of geographic research, the promotion of geographic education at all levels, and the recognition of excellence through an equitable awards process. Foremost, it means grounding EDI principles in the ways the CAG defines itself, operates, and serves its membership. A more just, equitable, and anti-oppressive CAG will provide greater opportunities for members and aspiring members, especially those from disadvantaged and racialized backgrounds, to participate in CAG activities, meetings, publications, and governance.

This journey will be hard: "It requires exploring sometimes painful subjects and experiences of exclusion, while also digging into our own thinking and behaviours that may be maintaining

oppressive systems. No one is exempt from their participation in the institutional reproduction of oppression and marginalization."[1]

2. Mandate

    a. Recognize areas where inequities have already been identified and system change is needed, and identify opportunities to advance EDI efforts;

    b. Support and strengthen EDI work already being done by Canadian geographers and CAG working groups (e.g., Decolonizing & Indigenizing Standing Committee and Feminist Intersectionality Solidarity Group);

    c. Build capacity within the CAG to increase participation in EDI work and help initiatives flourish. This is collective work, not to be shouldered by "equity deserving" or "minority" people or groups, but requires interest and accountability from those in positions of power;

    d. Create safer spaces to discuss and engage with EDI topics as part of CAG processes, such as the Annual National Conference, Annual General Meetings, and Executive Meetings;

    e. Help to maintain intentionality and accountability for EDI initiatives.[2]

3. Goals

    a. Promote EDI training sessions for CAG leadership and members to ensure that members are not contributing to oppressive environments;

    b. Develop a framework that advances EDI, through identification of priority issues and projects;

    c. Develop a Code of Conduct for all members, leadership, and conference attendees as an anti-discrimination policy;

    d. Support the CAG in designating an external ombudsperson and/or anonymized reporting structure for instances of discrimination, bullying, and harassment and for people to share their feedback with leadership;

    e. Promote equity of access through recommendations for sliding scales in membership and conference fees;

    f. Promote EDI principles within Annual National Conference Planning Committees;

    g. Establish a CAG Award for Inclusion and Diversity to recognize leaders who have worked to create a more diverse and inclusive geographic discipline over several years;

    h. Encourage and create incentives for participation from marginalized or racialized backgrounds to join the CAG;

    i. Maintain a record of efforts so that future members can recognize and build upon work previously done; and

    j. Routinely monitor and report on the CAG's progress towards fulfilling the EDI mandate, and to make these reports publicly available on the CAG website.

4. Membership Composition

The EDI Committee will strive for a mix of perspectives and expertise to ensure committee is diverse in all ways possible. This means intentional distribution of representation from the CAG to include students, post-doctoral students, faculty, sessional instructors, and professional geographers outside academia. The Committee will be led by Co-Chairs that have been nominated from within the Committee who will serve one-year terms. Committee members will be invited to self-identify their service and will not serve more than three consecutive one-year terms. The Committee will be comprised of 8 members, and CAG President (ex officio). Membership will be comprised of at least three member groups (i.e., students, post-doctoral students, faculty, sessional instructors, professional geographers), and include at least two student members.

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[1] University of British Columbia (2020), *Activating Inclusion Toolkit*, p. 13.

[2] Williams, D. A. (2013). Strategic diversity leadership: Activating change and transformation in higher education. Fairfax, VA: Stylus.

5. Committee Work: Labour, Recognition, and Roles

The EDI Committee intends to make space for and recognize the work that marginalized members do alongside required actions.[3] Challenging EDI takes skills, expertise, and emotional labour and should be made visible through a variety of means, through compensation and recognition from the CAG. Recognition and roles for the Committee are as follows:

    a. Participation from students and non-salaried members will be compensated through a one-year CAG membership, in addition to letters of appreciation from Co-Chairs;
    b. Participation by non-salaried members will be compensated through a one-year CAG membership;
    c. *Roles and responsibilities of Committee Co-Chairs*: scheduling meetings (designated during the CAG Annual Conference) and circulate meeting agendas;
    d. *Roles and responsibilities of Committee Members*: participation in meetings and review of agendas, minutes, and actions. If members (including the Co-Chairs) miss more than two consecutive meetings, they will be asked to consider stepping down to make room for new membership to maintain Committee momentum;
    e. *Roles and responsibilities of Committee Secretary*: recording and circulating minutes one week after the conclusion of the meeting. The Secretary will be identified by volunteer or at request of the Co-Chairs and will be a rotating position within the Committee.

6. Committee Processes

    a. The EDI Committee will meet at least four times annually, and Co-Chairs will establish the schedule during the CAG Annual Conference;
    b. Agendas will be developed through open calls to the EDI Standing Committee and CAG membership, and through issues brought forward at Annual General Meetings and through Study Groups;
    c. Meetings are open to full CAG membership, but only EDI Committee Members will vote on committee items. A quorum of five committee members is needed for decisions to be taken;
    d. Meetings will use facilitation approaches that aim to be accessible, address and mitigate risk to any participants, and foster participation from all present. This may be done through the use of creative decision-making methods (e.g., anonymous surveys, dotmocracy voting, roundtables) to reflect differing communication and thinking styles;
    e. One meeting per year will include review of the ToR to reflect the work of the EDI Committee and the changing landscape of the CAG.

7. Accountability & Reporting Structure

A sense of trust with the CAG membership, Executive Committee, and Study Groups will be facilitated through transparency in EDI Committee outputs and reporting. A sense of trust will also be generated by ensuring anonymity and confidentiality, when necessary, to create safer spaces for engagement and dialogue:

    a. Annual reports will be submitted to the CAG President, Executive, and AGM;
    b. The EDI Committee will share communication on activities and progress beyond this direct reporting relationship through the listserv, web content, and social medias;
    c. Meeting agendas and minutes will be made available by request;
    d. Open and constructive dialogue with CAG members will be used to gain support for strategies and recommendations made by the EDI Committee.

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[3] Henry, F., Dua, E., James, C. E., Kobayashi, A., Li, P., Ramos, H., & Smith, M. S. (2017). The equity myth: Racialization and indigeneity at Canadian universities. UBC Press.

8. EDI Committee Data

Data storage: all meeting agendas and minutes will be stored with the CAG Executive Director

9. Resources
   a. American Association of Geographers (2021) 3-Year Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategic Plan
   b. Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences (2021) Charter on Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Decolonization in the Social Sciences and Humanities
   c. University of British Columbia (2020) Activating Inclusion Toolkit

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