

**Employment Equity Plan
June, 2013**

**Prepared by:
Employment Equity Committee
a joint committee of the Board of Governors of Acadia University
and the Acadia University Faculty Association**

Employment Equity Committee Members:

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PREAMBLE

The mandate of the Employment Equity Committee (EEC), established under Article 3.60 of the Thirteenth Collective Agreement, is to “identify discriminatory barriers to employment equity.” In order to carry out that mandate, the EEC has developed a confidential Employment Equity Self-Identification Form, developed and conducted a Workforce Survey (2011 and 2012) and undertaken an Employment Systems Review of current policies and practices to determine whether they pose barriers to employment equity.

An important means of achieving equity in hiring, renewal, tenure, and promotion are the Employment Equity Workshops as described in Articles 10.53 (a) and 12.01 (b). These workshops are a good first step towards achieving employment equity; they serve to keep the principle of employment equity in people’s minds and provide a starting point for discussions on why employment equity is important and how to achieve it.

Despite a good start towards achieving employment equity, we, as a community, do not yet have full understanding of, or commitment to, employment equity practices. To further the principle of employment equity, which “ensures opportunities in hiring, renewal, tenure, promotion, and appointment to Head and Director positions, for members of the [designated] groups, and ensures that no systemic barriers exist to the full participation of these groups in the workplace of Acadia University” (Article 3.20), the EEC has been charged under the Collective Agreement, Article 3.61 (d), with developing an employment equity plan that aims to reduce the barriers that restrict the hiring and promotion of the designated groups, taking into account the results of the Workforce Survey and the Employment Systems Review.

The following are the principal barriers that the EEC has identified. Each barrier is followed with action items that aim to eliminate the barrier.

BARRIER 1: The small number of authorized full-time searches has created a barrier to working towards the goal of promoting the principle of employment equity.

ACTION ITEM 1: Departments and Schools will ensure that as new positions are authorized, there is a commitment to promoting the principle of employment equity while working within the criteria for appointment as described in Article 10. Departments will develop strategies to better solicit applications from the designated groups.

BARRIER 2: The EEC recognizes that the role of the Equity Officer encompasses more than employment equity and extends to other constituents of the University not covered by this plan. Nonetheless, the lack of a full-time Equity Officer (the current Equity Officer only works one day a week) and the lack of clarity concerning the role the Equity Officer should play in advancing the goal of employment equity severely limits the time the Equity Officer can devote to employment equity issues.

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ACTION ITEM 2: Establish a joint committee of BoG and AUFA representatives to review the role of the Equity Officer, clarify the reporting structure of the position within the University, and ensure that this role includes the promotion of the principle of employment equity.

ACTION ITEM 3: Convert the position of Equity Officer to full-time status and take the necessary steps to fill the position.

ACTION ITEM 4: Include an overview of the role of the Equity Officer as a required component of the orientation for new faculty.

BARRIER 3: There is a lack of provisions for ensuring that qualified members of designated groups are included on the short list of candidates for full-time and part-time positions.

ACTION ITEM 5: Make explicit to job candidates and selection committees how the confidential Self-Identification Form shall be used.

ACTION ITEM 6: Make explicit the process short-listed candidates should follow to request that accommodations be made during the interview process. The provision of appropriate supports and accommodations is guided by the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act and Canadian Human Rights Legislation.

ACTION ITEM 7: Revise, by September 15, 2013, Article 10.53 (b) to include new wording as indicated by the following underlined text: “With reference to the criteria in Article 10.60, and in keeping with the principle of employment equity in Article 3.20, the Selection Committee shall establish a short list of candidates which shall be made available to the members of the Department(s). If self-identification forms (Article 10.52 (b)) were submitted by any of the applicants for the position, a rationale must be included explaining why these applicants were not placed on the short list.” These revisions are subject to the provisions of Article 3.64.

BARRIER 4: While the criteria for appointment are identified in Article 10.60, and Article 10.53 (d) (ii) gives directions to the search committee about how to proceed in cases where candidates are otherwise equal, there is a lack of provisions to ensure that the requirements of Article 10.53 (d) (ii) are carried out.

ACTION ITEM 8: Revise, by September 15, 2013, Article 10.54 by adding: “The letter shall also include the rationale of the candidate’s suitability in relation to other candidates. If any of the short-listed candidates belongs to one of the designated groups identified in Article 3.2, the letter shall also state how the provisions of article 10.53 (d) (ii) were applied.” These revisions are subject to the provisions of Article 3.64.

ACTION ITEM 9: Revise, by September 15, 2013, Article 10.55, to include the following underlined text: “The President or Vice-President (Academic) or the Dean(s) may request the Department(s) or School(s) to reconsider the proposed appointment, giving reasons for the request based on the criteria in Article 10.61 and the provisions of Article 10.53 (d) (ii).” These revisions are subject to the provisions of Article 3.64.

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BARRIER 5: The lack of criteria and transparency for initial placement on the salary grid, seniority towards tenure, tenure and/or sabbatical, and appointments with tenure, as well as uncertainty about how start-up funds are distributed, make it difficult to monitor progress toward the stated goal of promoting the principle of employment.

ACTION ITEM 10: Heads will be encouraged to consider all relevant professional experience, as well as previous teaching and post-doctoral experience, when making the initial recommendation. To facilitate this, organize jointly-hosted (AUFA and Administration.) workshops on salary grid placement, with representatives from all three faculties present, so that everyone is aware of the practices common in other faculties, and develop a guideline document for appropriate salary grid placement.

ACTION ITEM 11: Heads/Directors, Deans and the Vice-President (Academic) will be required to review all recommendations for placement on the salary grid and for start-up funds to ensure consistency and fairness. If the Dean or the VPA does not find that the recommended salary grid step or recommended start-up funds are appropriate, the Head/Director shall be asked to reconsider before the recommendation goes forward.

ACTION ITEM 12: Article 10.53 (c) requires job candidates to meet with a representative of AUFA during the interview process. Develop guidelines for these representatives to ensure that salary grid placement and start-up funds, including negotiations about both, and all other special conditions of appointment are discussed with each candidate.

ACTION ITEM 13: Encourage the Parties to negotiate changes to Article 39 in the 14th Collective Agreement to ensure that anomalies are addressed in a systematic way every three years, following a triennial pay equity study, and that all Employees hired during the previous three years be included in the study.

BARRIER 6: The 13th Collective Agreement included both the lecteur/lectrice and the PAD lecturer for the first time together under Article 10:03. They are unique appointments coming from the same department and there is a lack of process outlined in the Collective Agreement regarding their hiring process and the other details related to their appointments.

ACTION ITEM 14: Strike a committee made up of members of the relevant Department to carefully go through the current Collective Agreement and suggest wording concerning lecteurs/lectrices and PAD lecturers that could be added in all relevant sections, such as the articles on hiring procedures, course loads, and working conditions. This wording, following review and discussion within the unit, shall be proposed to AUFA for consideration for inclusion in the 14th Collective Agreement.

ACTION ITEM 15: The Department continues its review of hiring procedures, selection criteria, and teaching assignments for all of these positions.

BARRIER 7: There is a lack of information about why members of designated groups resign from their positions at Acadia.

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ACTION ITEM 16: The Equity Officer will invite all faculty members who resign from their positions to give an exit interview. Interview data will remain confidential upon request. With permission of the faculty member who has resigned from her/his position, the Equity Officer shall report the results of these interviews, keeping identities confidential, to the members of the Employment Equity Committee and to the President.

BARRIER 8: While the overlap among teaching, scholarly activity, and service is valued at Acadia University, it is not clearly understood. There is, in particular, a lack of clarity in the Collective Agreement about how to evaluate service, making it difficult to monitor progress toward the stated goal of promoting the principal of employment equity.

ACTION ITEM 17: During Collective Bargaining, revise Appendix I of Article 12 to include more detail on the types of activities that can be considered in the service category. In the spirit of providing professors the opportunity to develop unique career paths, review Article 12:85, specifically the reference to “relative emphasis” as indicated in their order in Article 12:83 to ensure there is no inconsistency with the reference in Article 12:96 that distinction can be defined in three ways.

BARRIER 9: There is a lack of training and adequate training resources for conducting Career Development (CD) meetings to ensure consistency of process in the evaluation of Teaching, Scholarly Activity, and Service, making it difficult to monitor progress toward the stated goal of promoting the principal of employment equity.

ACTION ITEM 18: Hold annual workshops for Heads/Directors and for department members outlining best practices and expectations for the CD meeting. The first of these annual workshops shall take place no later than March 1, 2014.

ACTION ITEM 19: Develop a sample letter, or a template for CD letters, to be used during the annual workshops, in order to ensure that Heads/Directors assess all areas mentioned in Article 15.61.

BARRIER 10: There was a low response rate on the confidential Workforce Survey, making it impossible to accurately identify gaps in representation of designated groups

ACTION ITEM 20: Conduct subsequent Workforce Surveys as required by Article 3.61 (b). All faculty members will be encouraged to submit the confidential Workforce Survey. Employees may choose not to answer the questions on the survey, but they will be encouraged to submit it. Prior to the distribution of the Workforce Survey, details as to the measures to ensure confidentiality of, and uses of, the survey will be communicated.

BARRIER 11: There is unclear communication about the purpose and importance of the Employment Equity Workshops.

ACTION ITEM 21: Explanations related to the purpose of the Employment Equity Workshops will be included with the announcement of the workshops. Heads/Director and Deans will all

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engage in discussions at the unit and faculty level about the importance of employment equity and how the workshops relate to our institutional goals.

ACTION ITEM 22: Both parties will consider, during the next round of Collective Bargaining, framing the requirement to attend the workshops, as stated in Articles 10 and 12, with a rationale as to why they are important. Consideration should be given to the idea that faculty members are required to complete the workshops as a condition of employment enabling the workload of serving on search committees and DRCs to be distributed equitably across departments/schools.

ACTION ITEM 23: Create a list of faculty and administrators (through an open call for volunteers) who have relevant expertise and encourage these people to take a more active role in the workshops.

ACTION ITEM 24: Develop an exit-evaluation for workshop participants to further refine workshop material.

ACTION ITEM 25: Develop a modular approach to ensure relevant details of the Collective Agreement are integrated into the exploration of employment equity in the workshops. Include online resources.

BARRIER 12: There are many regularly occurring meetings (Senate, Faculty, AUFA, and some faculty meetings), which often occur late in the afternoon, making it difficult for those with family responsibilities to attend.

ACTION ITEM 26: Designate a 90-minute timeslot, to be in use no later than the 2014 – 2015 academic year, where neither classes nor laboratories are scheduled.

POSTSCRIPT

In establishing the Employment Equity Plan, the EEC was also required to develop, implement and monitor procedures to review progress and results (Article 3.62 (d)). To that end, one final action item is proposed.

ACTION ITEM 27: Establish a standing Employment Equity Committee to monitor the implementation of the Employment Equity Plan by reviewing progress and reporting results to the Parties on an annual basis, no later than June 30 of each year.