StEAR Inventory Supplementary Report

October 2024

UBC Equity & Inclusion Office

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

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Executive summary

Overview

- Information submitted through the Strategic Equity and Anti-Racism (StEAR) inventory is a valuable component of the StEAR evaluation approach, deepening our understanding of how the system is changing to advance equity and anti-racism.

- Despite a number of barriers and challenges, there are many courageous exemplars among units, departments, portfolios, and Faculties at UBC who are finding ways to advance equity and anti-racism in their own contexts: those who are doing the work of testing and trying, moving forward without having a guaranteed "formula" for success.

- Units, departments, portfolios and Faculties are able to learn from each other's efforts and adapt that learning to initiatives in their own contexts (e.g., recruitment, curriculum change and communications).

- As more units, departments, portfolios and Faculties are able to accomplish and sustain initiatives in particular areas of equity and anti-racism (e.g., curriculum change and recruitment), other areas require institutional attention to support units to address the more subtle underlying structures that recreate inequities in the system (e.g., accessibility and data structures).

Insights and next steps

- To discover the patterns of action that are most effective at shifting the system in the direction of equity and anti-racism, strategic learning is essential: in the next StEAR inventory process, there will be an increased focus on what units, departments, portfolios and Faculties are learning and/or seeing change as a result of their actions.

Introduction

UBC's Strategic Equity and Anti-Racism Framework recognizes the role of both central and decentralized efforts to advance equity and anti-racism across the university. While the strategic actions in the StEAR Roadmap for Change account for institution-wide interventions, StEAR's evaluation approach is informed by a systems change lens, which recognizes that seemingly disparate parts of the system are interconnected, and events in one part of the system affect all other parts of the system. For that reason, it is also important to understand the decentralized efforts and changes underway.

The StEAR Inventory: Mapping UBC's Decentralized Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Practices & Initiatives was designed to help build a picture of the types of decentralized interventions that Faculties, portfolios, units and departments (hereafter referred to collectively as "units") are engaging in, as well as the barriers that units face to undertaking further decentralized efforts. This information contributes to our strategic learning about how change is unfolding at UBC, and what more needs to be done.

In the 2024 StEAR Progress Report, a quantitative summary of inventory responses was provided. This 2024 StEAR Inventory Supplementary Report provides analysis and illustrative examples of those efforts from the large volume of rich qualitative information that was also submitted.

Methodology

All UBC Faculties and Vice-President (VP) portfolios were invited to participate in the pilot StEAR inventory from December 2023-March 2024. Faculties and VP portfolios were given the option of submitting at Faculty or portfolio level or submitting multiple responses from their sub-units and departments.

In total, 111 Faculty, portfolio, department and unit-level contacts were identified to complete the inventory and 95 submitted a response. Due to this flexibility in the definition of a "unit" for the purposes of the inventory, it is not possible to provide a clear denominator of the total number of "units" that could potentially have provided a report; however, both academic and administrative units are well represented, as are units from each of UBC's main campuses.

Table 1: Inventory responses

	Academic Faculty / Department	Administrative Portfolio / Unit	Total
Okanagan Campus	7	13	**20**
Vancouver Campus	41	28	**68**
Both campuses	1	5	**6**
Total	**49**	**46**	**95**

For each of the 18 StEAR Roadmap objectives, inventory participants were asked to provide:

- Required:

  - The status of their engagement in this area of work (e.g., not started, planning, underway, completed/sustainment);

- Optional:

  - A short description of their recent or ongoing initiative in this area;

  - Initiative contact information, if different from the inventory contact;

  - Any challenges or barriers that prevent or hinder work in this area; and

  - Any additional comments or explanation in relation to above answers.

The vast majority (88 per cent) of participating units answered at least one non-required question.

Qualitative comments

For each objective, there were two optional, open-text boxes in which units could provide qualitative comments. One was designated for "descriptions" of initiatives while the other was designated for any additional information. In practice, units used these two boxes in a variety of ways. All told, we received over 1,400 distinct pieces of information through the open-text boxes. To support our analysis, comments were coded as follows:

- Included in analysis (1,268):

  - 453 "initiatives": examples of unit-led efforts that were time bound and had clear outputs or deliverables.

  - 355 examples of applying EDI lens / promising practices: examples of unit-led efforts using generally established equitable practices or holistically applying an equity lens to areas of their work

  - 165 general comments: comments about EDI work or context that did not fit any of the other categories

  - 100 examples of participation in central UBC / EIO initiatives: examples where units shared how they were accessing and taking advantage of resources and programs to advance EDI that were created elsewhere at UBC

  - 46 examples of barriers / gaps in equitable practices: specific mentions of barriers faced by units or self-recognized gaps in their EDI practices, to be analyzed alongside the quantitative questions about barriers

  - 149 comments that did not contain enough information to meaningfully classify them among the other categories, but still contained information about units' practices that could be analyzed thematically

- Excluded from analysis (157):

- 90 ISP-specific examples: as per the instructions in the inventory form, examples that focused exclusively on the Indigenous Strategic Plan (ISP) or Indigenous issues were not included in the StEAR analysis, but will be made available to those leading ISP work
- 67 repeat references: Cases where units mentioned the same project or initiative under multiple StEAR objectives

Submissions deemed appropriate for inclusion in our analysis were coded thematically, with particular attention to a number of questions:

- What are UBC's areas of strength when it comes to decentralized efforts? Where are there gaps or a need to build additional momentum?

- What barriers do units face to activating EDI work?

- What scaffolding is needed at a central level to support decentralized initiatives? What kinds of initiatives are advancing independently?

- How can we characterize the decentralized efforts underway at UBC that are aimed at particular historically, persistently, or systemically marginalized (HPSM) communities?

Limitations

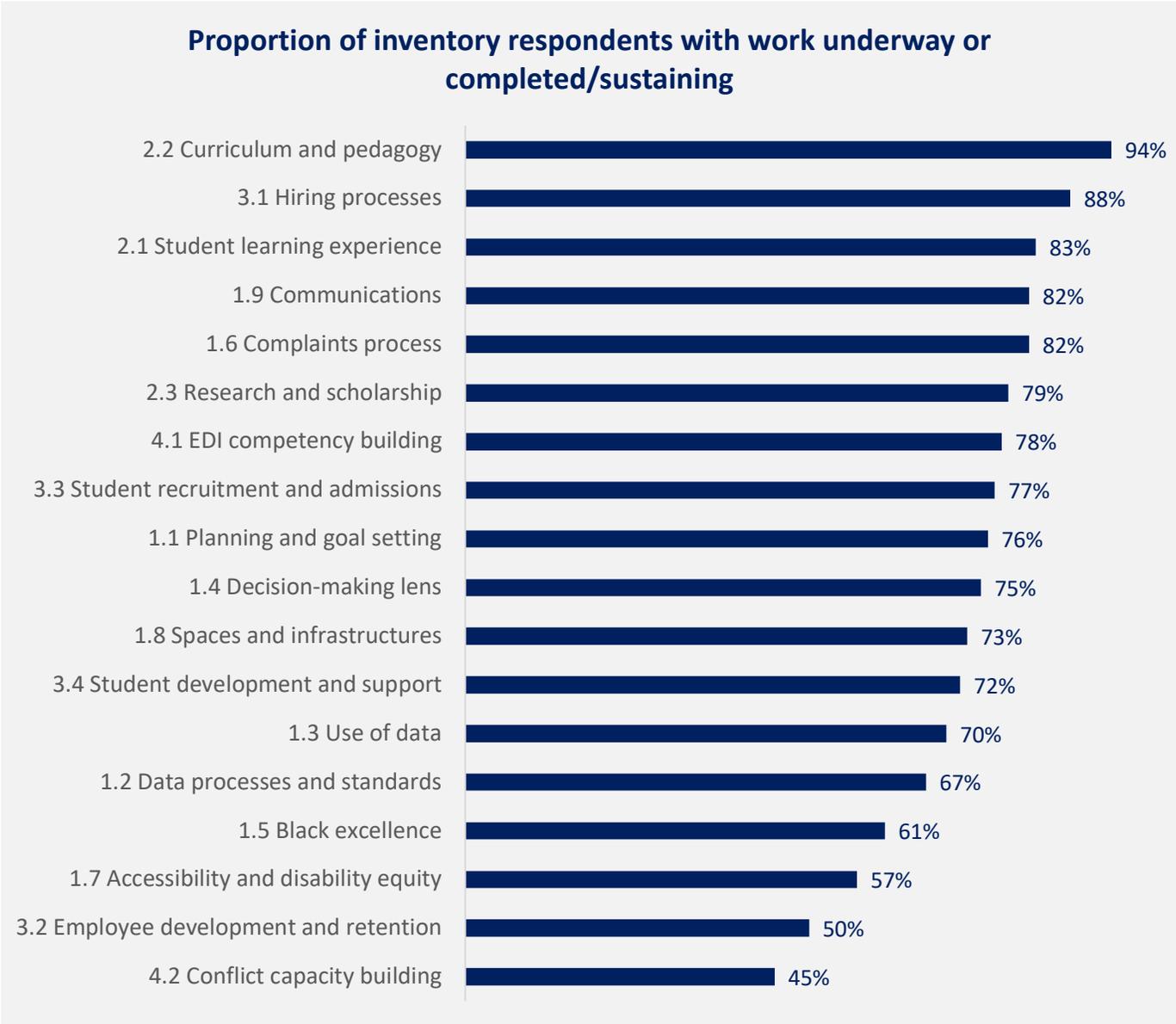In conducting this analysis, we are aware of a number of limitations to the conclusions that can be drawn from it:

- **Self-Selection Bias:** The 2024 inventory was communicated to units as an optional, pilot exercise. Because of this, we do not consider the results reported below to represent the entirety of UBC's decentralized units and departments. Inventory respondents are likely more highly engaged with EDI and anti-racism work. The results, therefore, provide a picture of engagement and barriers faced by decentralized EDI champions and leaders who likely have an above-average commitment to advancing EDI and anti-racism at UBC.

- **Diverse ways of reporting:** Limited instructions were provided to units about how to structure their responses. Some units endeavored to submit an exhaustive list of all EDI work happening within the unit, while others selected only a few highlights. Some units provided detailed descriptions of work, while others offered brief mentions of areas of work but with fewer details. In particular, it is important to note that the differentiation between the coding categories of "initiatives", "examples of applying an EDI lens/ promising practices", as well as "not enough information" may be more related to how participants chose to describe their efforts than to the substance of the efforts themselves.

Nevertheless, the information that was shared provides valuable insight into decentralized EDI efforts at UBC.

Overview: Decentralized engagement with EDI at UBC

An overview of decentralized engagement with EDI at UBC is provided in the 2024 StEAR Progress Report. Inventory respondents reported a high degree of engagement in the areas of the StEAR Roadmap's objectives, as seen in Figure 2 below.

Figure 1: Proportion of inventory respondents with work underway or completed/sustaining

Proportion of inventory respondents with work underway or completed/sustaining

Category	Percentage
2.2 Curriculum and pedagogy	94%
3.1 Hiring processes	88%
2.1 Student learning experience	83%
1.9 Communications	82%
1.6 Complaints process	82%
2.3 Research and scholarship	79%
4.1 EDI competency building	78%
3.3 Student recruitment and admissions	77%
1.1 Planning and goal setting	76%
1.4 Decision-making lens	75%
1.8 Spaces and infrastructures	73%
3.4 Student development and support	72%
1.3 Use of data	70%
1.2 Data processes and standards	67%
1.5 Black excellence	61%
1.7 Accessibility and disability equity	57%
3.2 Employee development and retention	50%
4.2 Conflict capacity building	45%

Barriers

The 2024 Progress Report also reports on the barriers that units cited to their decentralized efforts. Across all areas, lack of time and lack of funding were the most commonly cited barriers. More detailed information on barriers cited is available in Appendix E of the 2024 StEAR Progress Report (p. 75-77).

Figure 2: Most frequently cited barriers: all objectives

Most frequently cited barriers: all objectives

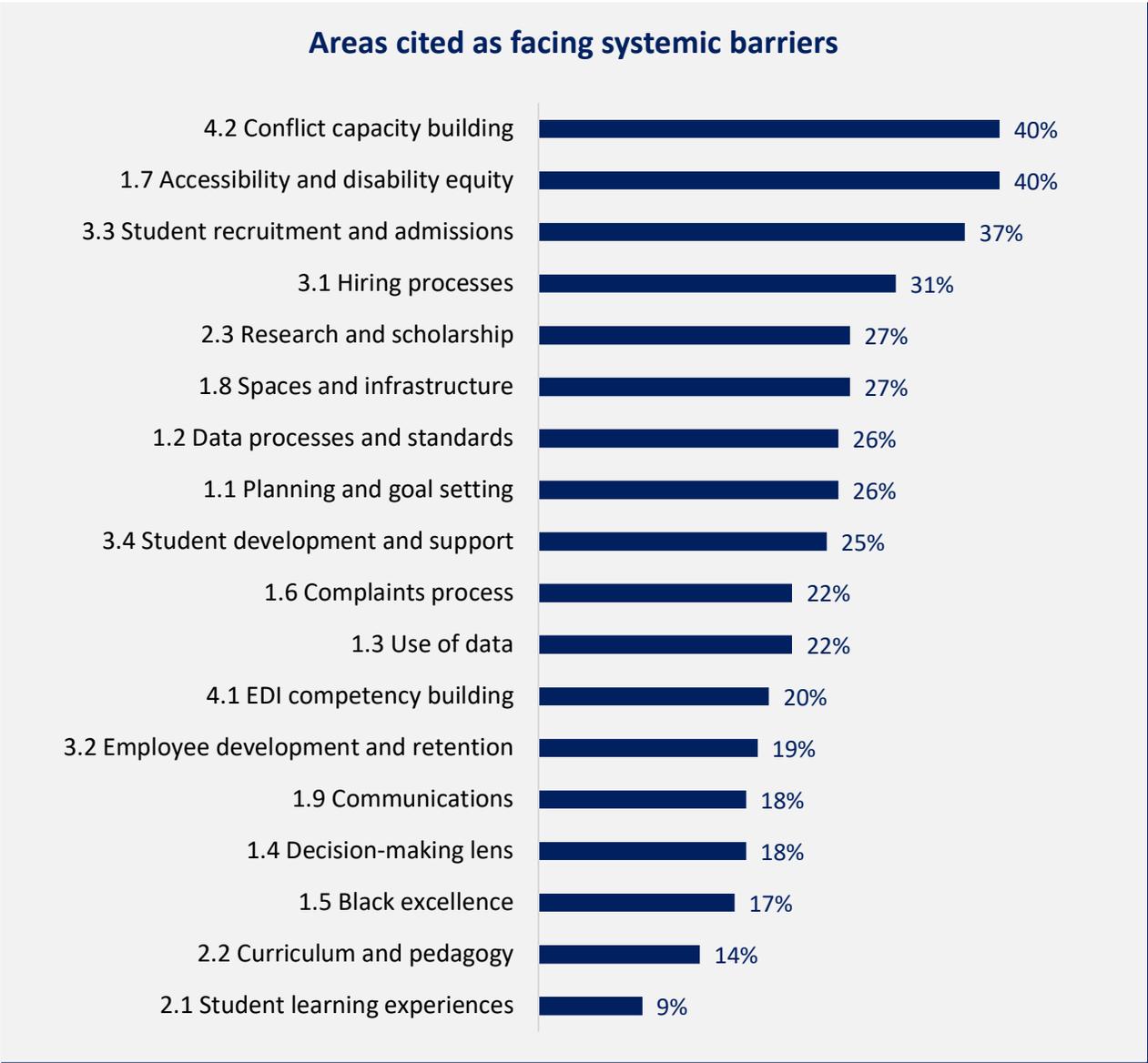| Barrier	Percentage
Lack of time (staffing/workload capacity)	54%
Lack of funding (financial resources)	39%
Competing priorities	31%
Lack of supporting policies and structures (systemic barrier)	24%
Lack of knowledge/skill (expertise)	23%
Lack of internal community engagement (cultural barrier)	14%
Waiting for enabling work to be completed elsewhere	13%
None	11%
Other	2%

It is also instructive to examine systemic barriers in particular, as the StEAR Framework and Roadmap may be particularly well positioned to influence systemic barriers. The areas where units were most likely to cite systemic barriers to advancing EDI and anti-racism are conflict capacity building, accessibility and disability equity, and student recruitment and admissions.

Figure 3: Proportion of units citing "systemic barriers (lack of supporting policies/structures" for each objective area

Areas cited as facing systemic barriers

Area	Percentage
4.2 Conflict capacity building	40%
1.7 Accessibility and disability equity	40%
3.3 Student recruitment and admissions	37%
3.1 Hiring processes	31%
2.3 Research and scholarship	27%
1.8 Spaces and infrastructure	27%
1.2 Data processes and standards	26%
1.1 Planning and goal setting	26%
3.4 Student development and support	25%
1.6 Complaints process	22%
1.3 Use of data	22%
4.1 EDI competency building	20%
3.2 Employee development and retention	19%
1.9 Communications	18%
1.4 Decision-making lens	18%
1.5 Black excellence	17%
2.2 Curriculum and pedagogy	14%
2.1 Student learning experiences	9%

Audience

Looking specifically at "initiatives" that units submitted, we can see that initiatives may be aimed at a number of different audiences. Initiatives in the structural domain are more likely to be aimed at the "whole unit", while initiatives in the curricular and compositional domain are most likely to be aimed at students. The audience of the initiatives in the interactional domain is more evenly spread among the whole unit, staff, and faculty.

Figure 4: Audience of initiatives by StEAR domain
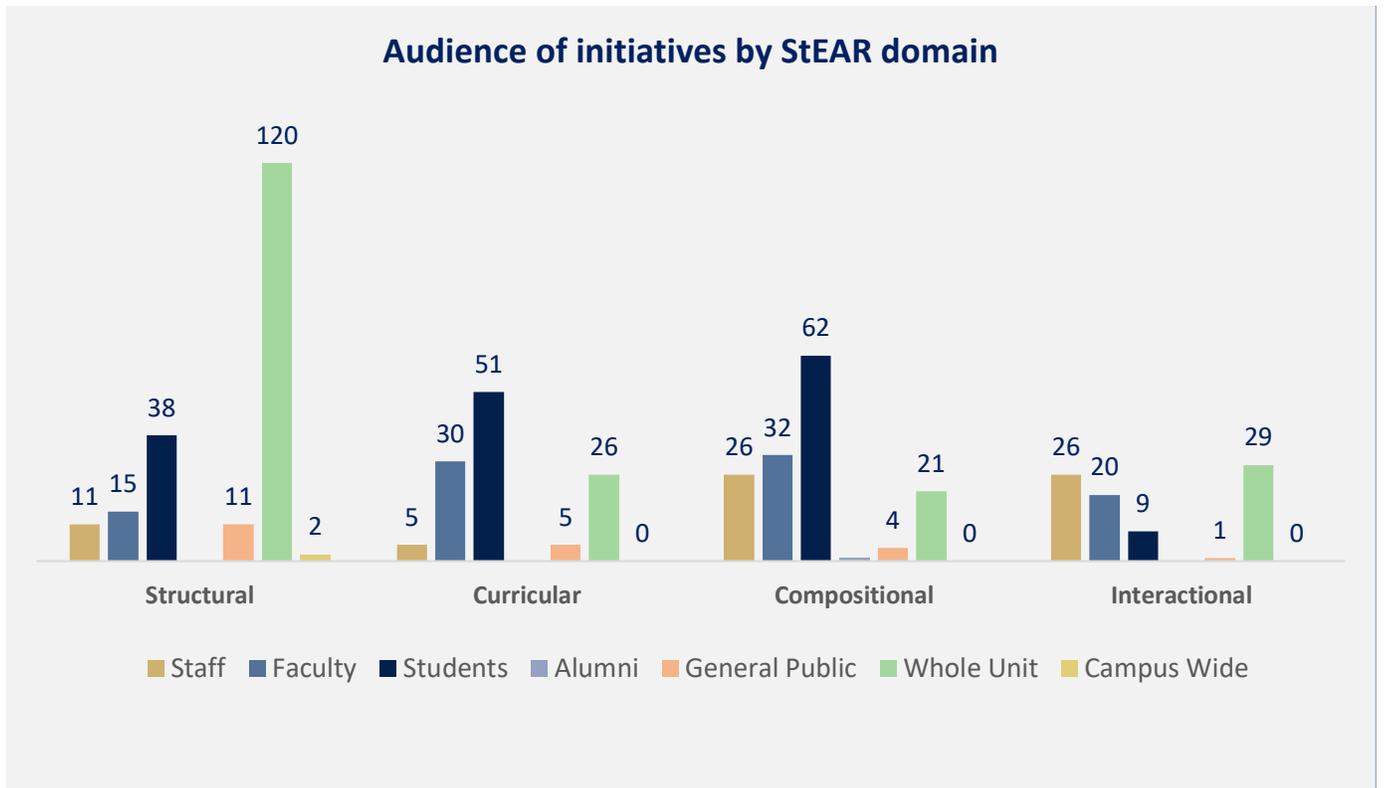
Structural domain

Efforts in structural domain

In the structural domain, 94 units (84 per cent) reported initiatives or efforts underway or completed in at least one objective area. Efforts were more likely to be focused on the areas of Communications (82%) and processes for dealing with discrimination complaints (82 per cent). There was less emphasis on EDI planning and goal setting (76 per cent), applying an EDI lens in decision-making (75 per cent), ensuring inclusive spaces and infrastructures (73 per cent), using data (70 per cent) and establishing or following data processes and standards (67 per cent). Specific efforts to focus on Black excellence and accessibility/disability equity were the areas within the structural domain with the least amount of engagement (61 per cent and 57 per cent, respectively).

- **EDI planning and goal setting**: A large number of units described their efforts in the areas of EDI planning and goal setting, including establishing EDI committees, as well as identifying and documenting EDI goals in either standalone plans or the unit's overarching strategic plan.

- **Using EDI data**: Many units described how they make use of central data sources like Workday, Workplace Experience Survey (WES), and Employment Equity reports in their EDI initiatives. Units emphasized their awareness and compliance with UBC data governance standards, while some are engaging in unit-specific data collection where institutional data does not meet their needs.

> **Example:** One unit is reports using institutional EDI data regularly at faculty meetings to inform planning, including the ongoing development of Workload policies.

Barriers and gaps in the structural domain

Units highlighted that there are often competing priorities within units, or difficulties dedicating human and financial resources to EDI efforts. Service work and recognition policies may also need revision in some units to clarify that advancing equity is a core part of fulfilling UBC's purpose and mission.

There is also sometimes a lack of information about institutional processes and supports for various aspects of the structural domain, leaving units unsure what work they should tackle directly.

Some units highlighted challenges around using data to inform their EDI work. In particular, smaller units have difficulty accessing data due to limitations on the number of responses needed for reporting, both for unit-level WES reports and other institutional data.

Many units noted barriers in the areas of physical infrastructure and accessibility; these areas are often not fully within the control of the unit. It can be difficult to access information about how to make changes in these areas, in particular about budgetary sources for this work. Units expressed challenges with timelines and costs in executing changes.

Curricular domain

Efforts in the curricular domain

The curricular domain had relatively high levels of engagement, with 94 per cent of relevant units[1] reporting work was completed or underway in the area of curriculum and pedagogy, 83 per cent for student learning experiences, and 79 per cent for research and scholarship.

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[1] Because both academic and administrative units were included in the inventory, analysis of engagement in the curricular domain excludes units who selected "not applicable" for these areas.

Units cited efforts to use Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles, specific programs for first-generation university students, and development of mentorship programs as part of efforts to improve equity in student learning experiences. Many departments described the important role of courses that specifically addressed EDI issues within their discipline, some of which had been recently introduced while others are longstanding offerings. Departments have also reviewed aspects of their curricula such as case studies or examples to address EDI, including representation of diverse gender identities, relationship configurations, and ethnoracial identities, as well as addressing whether content contributed to stereotyping or reinforced common biases.

In the area of research and scholarship, some faculties and departments created specific grants or other incentives for faculty members to conduct research specifically about EDI as it relates to their discipline.

Example: One Faculty reported that they have introduced a process for faculty members to list their EDI activities over the past year as part of their annual review process.

Barriers and gaps in the curricular domain

Departments noted that curricular reviews are resource-intensive efforts and that there can be competing priorities even within a curricular review, such as the need to develop new courses or update existing courses in response to other ways that the discipline is changing.

Departments and faculties also noted that engagement with the curricular domain may take many different forms. As a result, even though departments reported high levels of engagement in efforts related to this domain, they cautioned that this does not necessarily mean they are close to achieving everything they would like to.

Example: The introduction of one course that focuses on a specific equity issue in the discipline is important engagement, but there may be opportunity for several additional courses focused on other aspects of equity.

Departments also noted a lack of supporting policies and structures in the curricular domain, for example around alternative assessment policies such as ungrading, pass/fail, or no final exam, that could promote greater equity and inclusion.

Compositional domain

Efforts in the compositional domain

In the compositional domain, 89 units (80 per cent) reported efforts or initiatives either underway or completed. The nature of these efforts varies significantly depending upon whether they are aimed at increasing diversity among employees or students.

Staff and faculty

- **Hiring practices:** Equitable hiring was one of the areas with the highest amount of decentralized engagement. Efforts include attentiveness to the diversity of hiring committees, requiring hiring committee members to engage in EDI training, and developing or revising hiring guidelines with an equity lens. Units reported using many equitable hiring practices as described in UBC's Guide to Equitable Hiring Practices. Units are also using restricted and preferential hiring processes to increase diversity of their faculty and staff where appropriate.

> **Example:** One unit reported utilizing short-form, long-list interviews to interact with more diverse candidates.

Students

- **Student recruitment:** Inventory respondents acknowledged the importance of considering EDI in student recruitment. Some departments are using targeted recruitment and outreach strategies, including holding targeted information sessions and ambassador programs aimed at attracting underrepresented students. Some units highlighted how their recruitment activities (particularly for graduate students) are connected to efforts to increase the diversity of faculty and researchers in the field over time.

- **Student admissions:** Departments are using a variety of tactics including tracking student demographic data to monitor equitable representation at different stages of the admissions process and reviewing admissions policies and decision-making processes with an EDI lens. Units are also introducing training for admissions committees and paying increased attention to the diversity of the committees themselves. Some units have introduced specialized admissions pathways for particularly underrepresented students.

- **Student development and retention:** Although fewer units mentioned specific initiatives aimed at student support and retention, some of the aforementioned recruitment and admissions efforts included ongoing supports such as mentorship or community connections once students are admitted.

Barriers and gaps in the compositional domain

In the compositional domain, there is a greater emphasis on recruitment (hiring in the case of faculty and staff, and admissions in the case of students) than on development and retention. Student recruitment and faculty hiring, in particular, have been the focus of a number of interventions, while staff hiring has seen less attention. Departments also did not report many details about whether or how they have adopted good EDI practices in the hiring of research assistants/associates or postdoctoral fellows. There were also more retention efforts focused on HPSM students than on faculty/staff.

Departments also noted that in some cases their recruitment efforts were hampered by a limited pool of candidates, due to inequities in access outside of the department's control.

Interactional domain

Efforts in the interactional domain

The interactional domain consists of two objectives – one around EDI competency building, and one around building capacity for healthy engagement in conflict. There is a large disparity in engagement between these two areas, with 78 per cent of units engaging in efforts or initiatives around building EDI competencies, and only 45 per cent of units having efforts underway or completed related to conflict capacity building.

Units have pursued a wide range of efforts to build members' EDI competencies, including accessing both UBC and external learning opportunities; developing bespoke workshops or modules specific to the unit's context; and supporting less formal learning such as book clubs and resource lists.

> **Example:** One EDI committee has developed a game-based learning card game, to be used as a resource to help moderate discussions on EDI topics, especially in a research lab environment.

Barriers and gaps in the interactional domain

There are fewer efforts focused on building capacity to engage in conflict effectively. Some units also noted that it can be frustrating to organize optional educational programming, and then be met with low uptake. Units also described uncertainty around whether or when it could be appropriate to introduce mandatory education opportunities.
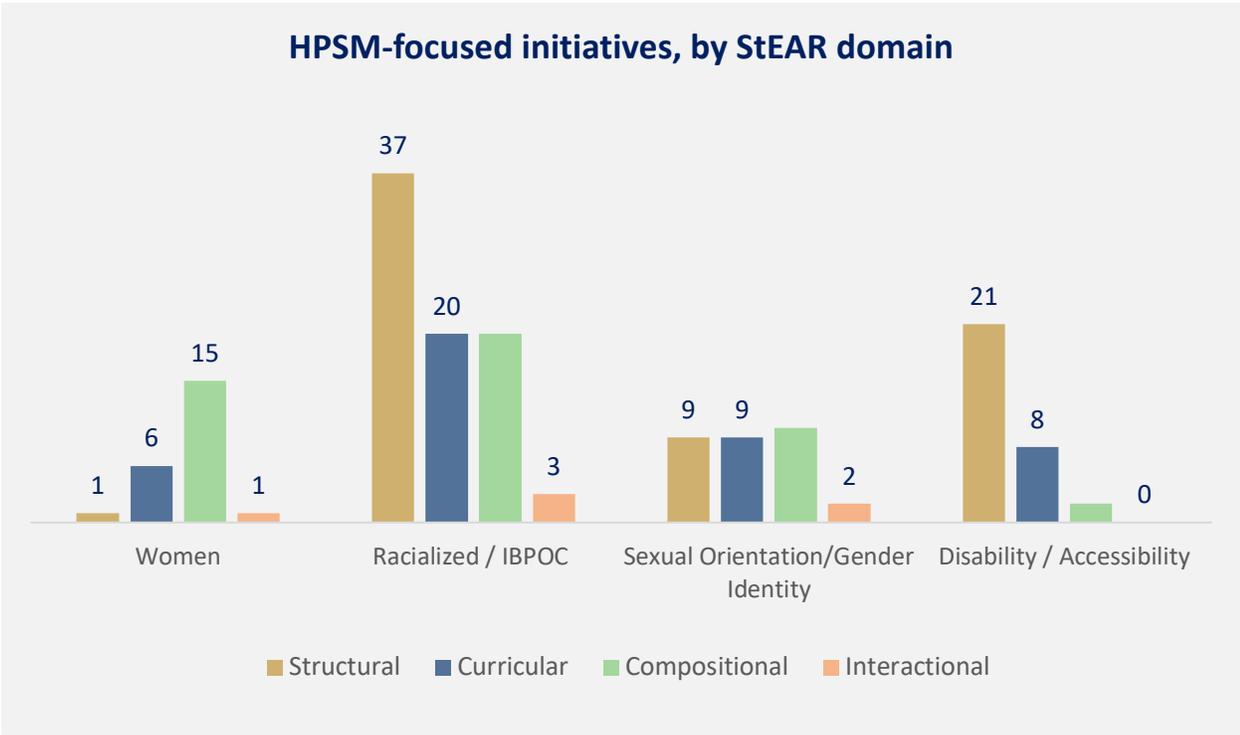
Efforts focused on HPSM communities

Many initiatives address EDI as a whole or are focused on all HPSM communities, however some initiatives are focused on specific HPSM communities. Where initiative descriptions mentioned specific target communities or audiences, these were coded into groupings based on designated employment equity groupings for analysis.

In the structural domain, there is a specific objective related to Black excellence (1.5) and another related to accessibility and disability equity (1.7). This is reflected in the fact that units were more likely to report initiatives focused on these topics within the structural domain.

Initiatives focused on women were more likely to be in the compositional domain, while initiatives focused on sexual orientation and gender identity were more evenly spread across the structural, curricular, and compositional domain. Few initiatives within the interactional domain focused on a specific HPSM community.

Figure 5: Initiatives focused on specific HPSM communities by domain

HPSM-focused initiatives, by StEAR domain

	Structural	Curricular	Compositional	Interactional
Women	1	6	15	1
Racialized / IBPOC	37	20	20	3
Sexual Orientation/Gender Identity	9	9	9	2
Disability / Accessibility	21	8	2	0

Efforts focused on HPSM communities in the structural domain

The structural domain encompasses a wide range of topics. Efforts that are focused on particular HPSM communities use a variety of tactics and approaches:

- Efforts focused on racial equity and racialized communities within the structural domain include the creation of specific strategies or staff teams focused on racial equity in particular, especially in larger Portfolios and Faculties.

- Efforts in the structural domain that were specific to sexual orientation and gender identity often related to physical infrastructure such as washrooms and washroom signage. Communication also falls within the structural domain, and units emphasized efforts around improving and encouraging usage of chosen names and pronouns as part of their efforts in the structural domain.

- Disability-related efforts in the structural domain focused on improving the accessibility of physical and digital infrastructure, including improving wayfinding, conducting physical access audits, renovating classrooms and labs following Universal Design principles, improving washroom access, and updating websites. Units also described engaging in advocacy efforts when issues that impact accessibility for their communities are outside of units' control. Units also noted their efforts to use more accessible communications methods and channels, including in emails, documents, and signage. One unit is also piloting an "accessibility request box" as a feedback mechanism to better understand accessibility needs within their unit.

Efforts focused on HPSM communities in the curricular domain

In the curricular domain, units are using similar tactics even while their efforts focus on distinct communities:

- **Curriculum initiatives:** Units have engaged in curriculum audits, development of new curriculum content, syllabus templates, and materials for instructors, such as guidance on Universal Design for Learning or promoting gender-inclusive classrooms.

> **Example:** The Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences (UBC-V) launched a project called PRIDE-RX, which aims to equip future pharmacists with the knowledge and skills to provide better care to LGBTQ+ patients.

- **Grants and awards:** Many units have established grants and awards that are available to members of HPSM communities. At least ten units reported providing internal awards and grants specifically for IBPOC students or faculty.

Efforts focused on HPSM communities in the compositional domain

In the compositional domain, common tactics include:

- **Hiring initiatives**: Some hiring initiatives are focused on particular communities, for example units who participated in UBC's Black Faculty Cohort Hiring Initiative, or reviewing hiring processes with a specific focus on accessibility and disability equity.

- **Networking and community-building:** Units reported a focus on building networks and affinity groups among marginalized students, faculty, and/or staff, including groups specific to IBPOC women and non-binary people, as well as organizing events to celebrate days of significance to particular communities, such as Pride.

- **Mentorship programs:** Some units provide mentorship or professional development programs designed specifically for HPSM students.

Efforts focused on HPSM communities in the interactional domain

The most common tactics within the interactional domain include:

- **Workshops and training:** Although workshops, training, and events sometimes feature a broad or introductory EDI focus, at other times they are focused on particular topics such as anti-racism, accessibility, or SOGI inclusion. Units also engage with centrally-provided education on these topics, for example from the EIO, CTLT, or Human Resources.

- **Resources:** Units have created documents, toolkits, and other resources that support equity and inclusion of particular HPSM communities, such as accessible event planning guidelines.

Figure 6: Initiatives focused on specific HPSM communities, by audience

Initiatives focused on specific HPSM communities, by audience
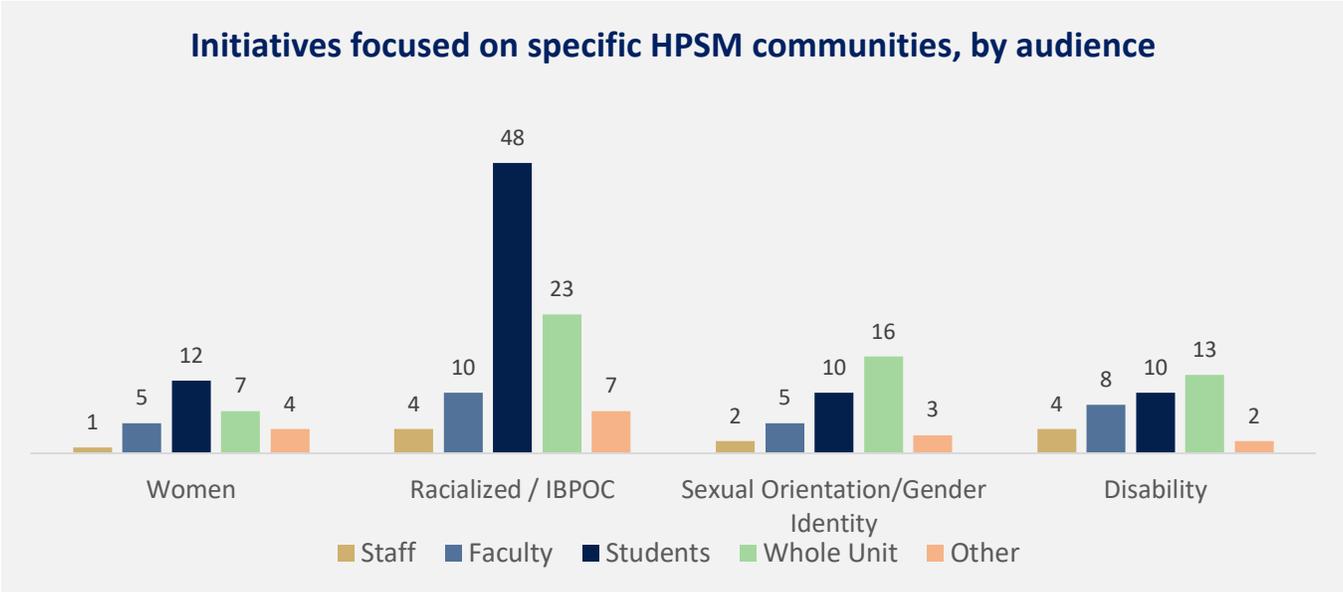
Challenges, barriers, and gaps in efforts focused on HPSM communities

In their efforts to advance equity and inclusion for specific HPSM communities, units also encounter unique challenges and barriers. For example, although units may deploy preferential and restricted hiring practices, they still may encounter ableist productivity norms, expectations around "fit", or other cultural barriers that are harder to change in the short term. Similarly, units note that they are less able to influence changes to UBC's physical and digital infrastructure that they operate within, for example to increase accessibility or better reflect the diversity of genders represented at UBC.

There are fewer initiatives focused on staff from particular HPSM communities, compared to both students and faculty members.

Insights and next steps

UBC's decentralized units are advancing EDI through a variety of means. Many look to UBC's central resources and supports and benefit from existing programs, while others build initiatives from the ground up with minimal central support. In doing so, they overcome many barriers and challenges.

Decentralized efforts to advance EDI and anti-racism are distributed unevenly across the landscape. Efforts are concentrated in certain areas of the StEAR Roadmap, especially in the curricular domain and in hiring processes, and among certain audiences, particularly students. Efforts that are focused on specific HPSM communities are also distributed unevenly.

In the pilot year of the StEAR inventory, the information gathered has enabled us to:

- Report on the landscape of decentralized engagement and barriers to further engagement, in different aspects of the StEAR Framework and Roadmap as part of the 2024 StEAR Progress Report;

- Publish a catalogue of selected EDI efforts and initiatives from units and departments across UBC, to facilitate information exchange and connection among units doing similar work;

- Provide more detailed information about decentralized efforts to advance Black excellence as part of reporting on our commitment to the Scarborough Charter on anti-Black racism and Black inclusion; and

- Inform the drafting of UBC's forthcoming Accessibility Plan.

The insights gained through this supplementary analysis further contribute to our evaluation of progress. Understanding the landscape of decentralized EDI efforts and the barriers that units encounter as they seek to advance EDI is important to inform our strategic learning on how to achieve our equity and anti-racism goals and objectives. The next step is to understand the collective impacts of these decentralized efforts.

The next iteration of the StEAR Inventory (2024-25) will invite units to select only 1-3 initiatives to describe in greater detail, with prompts to encourage units to consider what impacts, changes, or outcomes have been observed, as well as reflections on what factors have contributed to the initiative's success.

The updated StEAR Inventory will also provide an expanded list of potential HPSM communities that may be the focus of an effort or initiative, recognizing that this is a broader umbrella than employment equity designations.

The next round of the StEAR inventory will invite units to share initiatives focused on:

- 2SLGBTQIA+ communities; sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) equity

- Black communities; anti-Black racism; Black excellence

- Disabled communities; disability equity; accessibility

- English as an additional language communities (e.g., initiatives to address accent discrimination, or to enhance sociocultural literacy programming, etc.)

- First-in-family university students or former youth in care communities (e.g., pathways programs or scholarships for first generation or youth in care, etc.)

- Lower income and socioeconomically marginalized communities (e.g., initiatives to increase needs-based awards, or to improve financial access and affordability of services)

- Racialized communities; racial equity; IBPOC communities

- Religiously and spiritually marginalized communities (e.g., initiatives to enhance multifaith dialogue or inclusion, or to address religious intolerance, etc.)

- Trans and non-binary communities; gender identity equity

- Women (cis and trans); gender equity

- Other HPSM community, please specify: _____

Through reflection and sharing of the changes they observe as a result of their efforts, UBC's decentralized units can advance our collective knowledge about how best to advance UBC's equity and anti-racism goals and priorities. The StEAR inventory and the catalogue of decentralized EDI efforts can facilitate this cross-campus learning and collaboration. We invite units to refer to this analysis, alongside the catalogue, to draw ideas and inspiration, learn from one another's efforts, and adapt that learning to their own contexts.