

Allyship Action: Fill SFU's [Questionnaire](#) with this Template

Re: New Vice-President, People, Equity and Inclusion Search

What's Happening?

After much labour from marginalized students calling for systemic equity and anti-racism at SFU, the University is establishing a [new Vice-President, People, Equity and Inclusion \(VP PEI\)](#). However, currently the role as drafted excludes empowering students directly from its scope of responsibilities, with a primary focus on Faculty Relations and Human Resources. This is deeply concerning, as **students are the largest stakeholders at SFU**, and excluding marginalized folks from EDI governing processes creates an incredibly colonial approach to Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion at SFU.

The current PhD attribute for the role should remain an asset - **NOT a requirement**, which would automatically exclude many qualified candidates, especially Black and Indigenous, who as we know are extremely [underrepresented](#) in academia, from being considered. By requiring a PhD for this role, SFU would exclude a whole pool of candidates who may bring lived experience to the role. This should stay this way to open the candidate process for folks with organizing and equity-based community organizing experience, and not to go towards a corporate EDI pool, as folks in scholarship or in an intersectional organizing experience in community would still be preferred.

Mission For TODAY - FILL IN THE SURVEY (Deadline: March 5 @ 11:59 PM)

We **need** your help to make sure that this VP PEI role creates a **broad anti-oppression strategy** at the University that focuses on **working with** and **empowering marginalized students**.

SO, The VP PEI Search Committee is looking for public feedback for the development of the role. This is the **only time** community feedback **will help shape the candidate profile**, a document that will be used in the recruitment and evaluation of candidates. So, to make this process easier, we have an easy **template** you can follow **down below** when answering the survey.

Your Call to Action - Supporters/Allies:

1. **Open the online questionnaire:**
<https://www.surveymonkey.ca/r/sfuvppei>

2. Copy and paste the responses down below **in red** into each question's response.
3. Send this message **in green** below to at least 3 friends to complete the survey
 - a. Prepared message you can send around:
Hey, SFU is establishing a new Vice-President, People, Equity and Inclusion Search (VP PEI) role, and I need 5 minutes of your time to help make sure the role is centred around empowering marginalized people, including students - NOT be another Faculty Relations and HR role!

YOUR ACTION ITEM: COPY & PASTE these templated responses and fill out the SFU VP PEI Search Committee's questionnaire to provide feedback on what's important for the VP Equity role.
Questionnaire: <https://www.surveymonkey.ca/r/sfuvppei>

COPY & PASTE THESE RESPONSES:
bit.ly/SFU-VP-EQUITY
4. Click share on your social media platforms:
 Twitter - <https://twitter.com/BalgeesJama/status/1367928314325839874>
 Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/balgees.jama/posts/10217202743095522>

Copy and paste the **responses in red** into each blank in [the questionnaire](#);

Question 1. What are a few of the key challenges and opportunities facing the VP PEI over the next 3-5 years?

Challenges for VP PEI role:

Challenge 1:

Students Not Being Centred in the VP PEI's Responsibilities

- With the currently drafted VP PEI candidate profile, it will be hard to launch an intersectional anti-oppression strategy at the University that focuses on working with and empowering marginalized students. The role is set up to explicitly exclude students as part of its focus, as the role's focus is on Faculty Relations and Human Resources. The VP PEI's [position description](#) describes the role "the leader of SFU's People Planning and Faculty Relations". While there is also brief mention of VP PEI collaborating with Student Services, it is not central, and we have also seen Student Services inability to support marginalized students adequately. Relying on Student Services as the only connection to students would be ineffective.

Challenge 2:***PhD Asset Made as a Requirement for VP PEI Candidates***

- Mandating that candidates for the VP PEI have an asset like a PhD as a requirement forms an immediate colonial barrier that excludes qualified candidates without a PhD from even being considered for the role, which are often the most marginalized folks - especially Black and Indigenous EDI professionals that face heightened barriers in academia.

Challenge 3:***Gaslighting and Institutional Barriers to Carrying Out Anti-Oppression & Anti-Racist Frameworks at SFU***

- Historically, marginalized people who hold the equity roles across institutions face barriers to being effective in their duty to carry out wide-scale anti-oppression initiatives. Systemic barriers as seen at other institutions include lack of oversight and governance power and lack of resources being allocated to EDI positions. Decisions at portfolio level are safeguarded (failsafe mechanism). Ultimately, it is essential that safeguards are put in place at the portfolio level to avoid gaslighting and limiting the VPPEI's abilities to carry out anti-oppression and anti-racism initiatives at SFU.

Opportunities for VP PEI role:**Opportunity 1:**

Oversee the creation of policy and establishment of equity supports within all other VP portfolios and subsequent sub departments. There needs to be a focus on meaningful actions displayed in the portfolio that approach all sectors of student services with a culturally, racially and intersectionality sensitive approach. Additionally, the VP PEI person needs to consult with students and equity seeking groups regularly, taking in their concerns and translationally ensure that all Student Services, and university wide changes to policies, programs and practices adopt an equitable, anti-oppressive and anti-racist lens. Furthermore, a focus delegated to constructing a decolonial and anti-oppressive educational curriculum, EDI student programs (eg. anti-racist workshops for students, cultural and racial awareness training), and improving spaces for equity seeking groups.

Opportunity 2:

Advise or participate on SFU governance committees, as appropriate, to educate and to ensure that policies and governance practice consider and support the University's legal and moral responsibilities related to human rights, inclusion and equity.

Opportunity 3:

- Ensure that the office gives direction and coordinates consultation across faculties, departments of the university to consult and guide policy and programme development with equity seeking groups, ie that the VP PEI have jurisdiction to be ensure consultation in reviews of all programs

- Oversee the establishment of the Equity and Inclusion framework that staff, faculty, students can give input and grievances on current policy and programmes, coordinate and fund resources to support the proliferation of anti-racist and decolonial education training, supports and programming

Question 2. What are the three most important qualities, attributes and types of experience you feel the VP PEI should possess?

1. Lived experience as a Black, Indigenous or Person of Colour
2. Experience with Anti-Oppression and Anti-Racism Work with a Focus on Intersectionality (In regards to disability justice, LGBTQIA+, centres Black and Indigenous empowerment.)
3. Previous experience or work in advocacy or student centered organizations that aim to improve outcomes for marginalized folks with an intersectional analysis

Question 3. How accurately does this document reflect the current requirements for SFU's VPPEI?

The candidate profile does not accurately reflect some of the requirements for the EDI mandate, however here are some mechanisms that can be added to ensure that the EDI mandate specifically deals with issues not currently captured, examples:

***The Candidate profile needs to*:**

- Center the pervasive lack of response in tackling racism on campus
- Include experience in “redressing” instead of “addressing”, the systems, practices and policies which result in exclusion and marginalization, as well as marginalization that are typically erased in EDI, such as anti-Black racism.
- Needs to do more to ensure that Black and Indigenous people will be centered and intersectional experiences centered
- Needs to talk about intersectional leadership
- Address racism in classroom settings
- Include the ability to consult with Indigenous faculty, staff and students alongside advocating
- Respect and be aware of Indigenous systems of governance and representative groups currently involved in the University

The Candidate profile lacks some nuance on how the job should execute the Employee relations mandate

- Need to be more thought on how its going to work and that the VP Equity has jurisdiction to work through the senate to work towards increasing representation in the various departments and faculties
- Needs to add that shall work to increase file does not capture the "Connection to Students" that is required and more should be representation of racialized faculty and faculty of the varied equity seeking groups

Below are adjustments of a more accurate, important and consistent reflection based on the sections in the document:

Qualifications:

Strategic and Visionary:

- Ability to collaboratively formulate, articulate and implement a shared People Planning, Faculty Relations and EDI vision and strategy for SFU.

Values and Community Centered Leader:

“Experience successfully managing controversial issues in an academic environment”

- Change this to be an asset

- **Add subsection:** "Experience doing anti-oppression work in equity-deserving consulting organizations and advocacy groups is an asset."

Relationship and Trust Building:

“Culturally sensitive and internationally aware.”

- **Add:** “Culturally and **racially** sensitive, and internationally aware.”

“Experience working with and providing leadership in a student-centered environment”

- **Add:** "...or similar environment such as advocacy involvement"

- **Reasoning of above:** lot of folks doing this work typically has not had the chance prior in student-centered roles so shouldn't be a requirement so add advocacy to ensure we get people in the candidate pool who have done work in community

Administrative Experience and Management Acumen

Demonstrated success in organizational leadership, policy and program administration and project management, especially relating to anti-racism, anti-oppression and EDI.

- **Amend to read:** Demonstrated success in organizational leadership, policy and program administration and project management relating to anti-racism, anti-oppression and EDI and other areas

Academic Qualifications

- **Replace “Academic Qualifications” with “Academic Assets”.**

Clarify confusing language. Calling assets qualifications makes them a requirement when they are not.

“Experience with scholarship and research in the areas of EDI (including a PhD) is an asset.”

- Supporting this staying as is. It is important to keep this as an asset versus a requirement as it will disproportionately exclude folks (Specifically, the Black and Indigenous community) who have not had the opportunity, space or capacity. This should stay this way to open the candidate process for folks with organizing and equity-based community organizing

experience, and not to go towards a corporate EDI pool, as folks in scholarship or in an intersectional organizing experience in community would still be preferred.

Question 4. Are there any qualities, attributes or experience currently missing from the candidate profile?

- Lack of emphasis on selection based on racialized person
- Centred around experiences regarding anti-oppression and anti-racist initiatives and work (Reflecting focus on disability justice, LGBTQIA+, and Black & Indigenous supports and empowerment.)
- Ability to consult with Indigenous faculty, staff and students alongside advocating (Respect Indigenous systems of governance and representative groups currently involved in the University)
- Previous experience or work in advocacy or student centered organizations that aim to improve outcomes for marginalized folks.

Question 5. Do you have any suggestions about potential candidates for the position of VP PEI? Note for ally: *You can add any other names you find best fit for question #5*****

- June Francis - <https://beedie.sfu.ca/profiles/JuneFrancis>
 - Stephanie Allen - <https://www.hogansalleysociety.org/about-hogans-alley-society/>
 - Malinda Smith - <https://www.ronfanfair.com/home/2020/10/29/7rxqqmyxjfk9m888io6861gjd6ttxb>
 - Marcia Guno - <https://www.linkedin.com/in/marcia-guno>
 - Joy Walcott-Francis - <https://www.linkedin.com/in/joywalcottfrancis>
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Extended Resources:

- **VP PEI Position Description & Candidate Profile**
<https://www.sfu.ca/pres/executive-searches/Search-for-VP-People-Equity-and-Inclusion/VPPEI-Position-Description-Candidate-Profile.html>
- **March 3 VP PEI Virtual Forum Recording**
<https://www.sfu.ca/itservices/technical/webcasting-and-video-recording/webcast-archi/ve/2021/03/2021-03-03-po/>
- **Special Advisor to the Provost on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion – Final Report to SFU Executive re Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Initiative (Sept 2018)**
https://www.sfu.ca/content/sfu/edi/reports/_jcr_content/main_content/download_364921202/file.res/EDI_Report-Sept-20-2019.pdf
- **SFU EDI Recommendations - Need Actions:**
[https://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/edi/reports/SFU Recommendations 2016 to 2020.pdf](https://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/edi/reports/SFU%20Recommendations%202016%20to%202020.pdf) SFU 2019 EDI report

- **SFSS BIPOC Committee Recommendations for SFU Anti-Racism Efforts**
https://sfss.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Briefing-Note_SFSS-BIPOC-Committee-on-SFU-Anti-Racism-Efforts-1.pdf

Background:

- **SFU's next president, Joy Johnson, plans to advance reconciliation and inclusion**
<https://www.straight.com/news/1343946/sfus-next-president-joy-johnson-plans-advance-reconciliation-and-inclusion> - Displaying the *initial* priorities around student focused portfolio, which we want to see in the role - why this survey is so essential
 - Language used in article:
 - “As for her top priorities, she mentioned the importance of strengthening student services so they can have vibrant experiences inside and outside classrooms.”
 - “A second goal is to have campuses that are as inclusive as possible. We are thinking about issues related to equity and diversity for faculty, staff, and students. That makes for an excellent university.”
 - “She acknowledged that students face financial strains. And she expressed a commitment to address the role that stress might be playing in their lives.”
 - ‘She’s also hoping that SFU will deliver on its commitments around reconciliation with Indigenous people. The university created an Aboriginal reconciliation council to move forward on recommendations issued by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. “There’s still some work to be done on that file, so I’d like to see progress being made there,” she said.’
- **VP Equity Question at Senate:**
<https://www.facebook.com/gabe.liosis/videos/1049952758775054> - commitment to possibly looking at VP position as opposed to a AVP
- **Announcement From Joy Johnson | New executive position: Vice President, People, Equity and Inclusion**
<https://www.sfu.ca/dashboard/faculty-staff/faculty-and-staff-communications-archive/faculty---staff-email-archive/2020/fall-2020/new-executive-position--vice-president--people--equity-and-inclu.html>
- **'It's the right thing to do': why SFU President Joy Johnson wants to talk with you about equity, diversity and inclusion - SFU News - Simon Fraser University**
<https://www.sfu.ca/sfunews/stories/2021/01/-it-s-the-right-thing-to-do---why-sfu-president-joy-johnson-want.html>