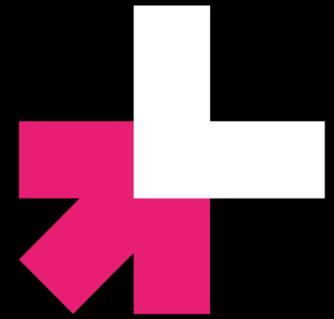


**Proven
Solution**

Equal Representation At Leadership



HeForShe

University of Waterloo **Pathways to leadership:** **increasing gender** **diversity in the academy**



Global Context

Today, less than 30 percent of Canadian university presidents identify as women according to a recent report on the 2019 national survey of Canadian universities. Over three decades, unequal representation of women-identified leaders at the top of academic organizations has remained largely unchanged.

Similar challenges exist for women-identifying faculty members, particularly for women-identifying individuals within and across equity-deserving groups. The United Nations global HeForShe IMPACT commitments made by 10 universities, and subsequent outcomes already seen, demonstrate that by making gender equity a priority at the most senior levels of academic leadership, real and sustained progress can be realized.

University of Waterloo (UW) made a commitment to advance gender equity goals among faculty and its senior leadership, and has made considerable progress on both fronts in a short amount of time. At UW today,

women-identifying faculty now make up 30.4 percent of total full time faculty members, and 50 percent of the most senior academic administrators (Vice-Presidents and Deans) are women-identifying.

“As a HeForShe Champion, I am proud of the important steps UW has taken to ensure gender equity is and remains a priority throughout the organization. Through leadership, embedded HREI structure, equitable hiring and recruitment strategies, and creating a culture of equity through allyship, a foundation is now in place – the results of which are already seen and felt around our campus community.

Pursuing gender equity is an active and ongoing process, which benefits all men and women-identifying students, faculty and staff at University of Waterloo. This shared belief and commitment is what will ensure a thriving culture of equity continues for the next generation of campus community members.”

Feridun Hamdullahpur, President and Vice Chancellor



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Key Stages of Implementation

1

Step 1 Leadership at the highest level

Visible and vocal leadership at the most senior level was required to set the tone. Tangible action such as actively participating in equity discussions and forums, and hiring an advisor on women and gender issues, set the tone across the organization. This consistent support sent a strong message that equity was not a nice to have, but was a must have.

Today, 50 percent of its most senior administration are women-identifying. In the same time period, UW saw a 4.5 percent increase of women-identifying full time faculty to 30.4 percent across the institution.

At the start of Dr. Hamdullahpur's tenure as UW President in 2011, women made up just 20 percent of its most senior administration. Today, 50 percent of its most senior administration are women-identifying. In the same time period, UW saw a 4.5 percent increase of women-identifying full time faculty to 30.4 percent across the institution.

The leader of the organization must be a visible and vocal champion, not only setting a tone of inclusion, but actively and strategically advancing gender equity goals.

Step 2 Embedded Structure

In 2016, with the support of the President, the position of Associate Vice-President, Human Rights, Equity and Inclusion (HREI) was created. Today this position leads a thriving team focused exclusively on equity, sexual violence response and prevention, conflict management and human rights, Indigenous initiatives, and education and training.

Tangible high impact initiatives by HREI included creating space and opportunity for women within the academy to form networks through women-only events, which focused on speaker series and writing workshops. Focused efforts on addressing sexual violence and creating a consent culture on our campus were supported by senior leaders at the highest level.

Equity and diversity require dedicated attention and strategic action of an individual and office that is accountable at the highest levels of leadership within the organization.

2

Step 3: Equitable Hiring Policies, Practices and Processes

To develop an equitable recruitment strategy, HREI created a committee to review all hiring policies and procedures.

We began by doing a pilot review using the **Canada Research Chairs (CRC)** and **Canada Excellence Research Chairs (CERC) Equity Action Plan** as the framework for conducting an employment review. We analyzed data from 2017 onwards to examine the gender breakdown of candidates shortlisted for

interviews and the successful applicants for faculty positions. This data was presented to the President to highlight gaps and areas for further focus. We then reviewed language within job descriptions at the institution, and revised language for CRC and CERC positions to prioritize candidates who identify as women. These positions are in areas where women have historically been underrepresented.

By starting with a small test study, we were able to present gaps to senior leadership and implement wider, cross-campus equitable hiring training. The Equity Office developed an Equitable Hiring toolkit that is used widely across campus. Given that language is never static, this document has continued to be updated since its creation.

To develop a more equitable hiring process, establish strategies to set benchmarks, make adjustments, and address unconscious bias among hiring panels, including at the most senior levels

3



Allyship was further advanced through the development of Men's Circle workshops, which explores how men can be leaders in creating a safer and thriving campus. Research on gender equity was encouraged through the awarding of HeForShe equity research grants. One such grant contributed to research that was used to negotiate more equitable parental leave policy at the institution.

Allies are an effective way to further model, prioritize and reinforce equity on the ground, across an organization.

Step 4 Creating a Culture of Equity Through Allyship

Using an advocacy model and framework, HREI recruited allies in each Faculty of the institution. These Faculty Advocates organized events, workshops, trainings, speaker series, and other initiatives. They met as a group twice each semester to share progress, challenges and ideas to overcome barriers, further advancing common goals of gender equity. HREI provided practical communications and engagement support to Faculty Advocates. Achievements in this area included student-directed communications through faculty, which focused on how to create and support gender and sexual identity within the classroom.

Resources

 [Men's Circle workshop framework](#)

 [Equitable Recruitment and Selection](#)

We offer a training module to supplement the **in-person training**, along with a **virtual version**, and also provide a **toolkit** to assist in the entire process of equitable hiring.

Contact

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