EDI Benefits, Barriers, and Best Practices in Canadian Academe:

A Review of the Literature Making the Case for Inclusive Excellence

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Introduction

Within the last decade, many Canadian universities have reinforced their commitments to equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI). To translate these intentions to actions and successfully launch and sustain robust organizational change efforts, administrators must be able to persuasively articulate why a focus on EDI is a strategic priority integrally linked to the academic mission. Widespread communication and comprehension of the 'case for EDI' is, therefore, an essential higher education EDI leadership and administration issue. This paper provides a review of the evidence available to support three assertions underpinning the case for EDI in the academy: (1) that the presence of a diversity of peoples and perspectives, when meaningfully engaged, benefits academic, educational, and organizational excellence; (2) that systemic barriers to equal opportunity persist in the academy and impede access and inclusion of particular groups of people and particular perspectives, and (3) that evidence-based best practices suggest the need to attend to structural and cultural, as well as personal and interpersonal, barriers and change strategies across the entire university eco-system. The paper aims to serve as a contemporary evidentiary supplement to institutional EDI strategies and action plans to advance inclusive excellence, demonstrating that EDI is mission critical and mobilizing the academic community to advance EDI efforts across the complex bureaucratic-managerial and democratic-collegial governance context within higher education.

Method

Following the guidelines proposed by the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis (Page et al., 2021), records were identified through three information sources searched in 2021: the authors' university library databases for relevant electronically available full-text documents, articles, or chapters in books; the web for relevant electronically available reports; and citations within records that were assessed for inclusion in the review. The search of databases and the web was narrowed by using keywords that related benefits, barriers, and best practices in relation to advancing EDI in universities. Works were included in the review if they provided evidence of one of the three assertions underpinning the case for EDI in the academy listed in the Introduction of the paper. Sixty-six sources of information were included in the systematic review: forty peer reviewed journal articles including studies, fifteen scholarly books or monographs, nine research reports or proceedings, and two research reviews. The relevant characteristics and outcomes of the works were summarized. In some cases, works that thematically supported a particular paraphrased finding were listed for the reader to further explore, and, in other cases, a more detailed description of the study and/or finding was discussed when the details were particularly illuminating or edifying. The aim of this review was to locate and synthesis early seminal works as well as more contemporary research relevant to the aim of compiling an evidentiary supplement to make the case for advancing EDI in academe. While the paper is not intended to provide an exhaustive review of the existing and growing body of evidence, it is expected to act as a primer for Canadian administrators to sufficiently demonstrate the case for EDI to both allay any concerns about mission misalignment and to compel ongoing strategic action.

Defining EDI

Before proceeding, it is important to describe the meaning of the concepts of equity, diversity, and inclusion and, thereby, establish an understanding of the goals desired when advancing EDI. Lee Gardenswartz and Anita Rowe (1998) advance a broad four-layer model that describes organizational *diversity* as the composite of several intersecting dimensions of difference across personal attributes, sociocultural group membership, and organizational status. In the context of EDI in higher education, Jeffrey Milem (2003) refers to the *compositional diversity* or the "numeric and proportional representation" (p. 129) of different peoples in the institution across sociocultural group identities. According to William Little (2006) *inclusion* can be described as a sense of belonging to the in-group – arguably the group with the most access to social and political power and with the strongest voice. A sense of inclusion relates to and is a consequence of *interactional diversity* or, according to Milem (2003), the extent to which community members engage with different "information and ideas through the interactions that they have with diverse people" (p. 129). Thus, a climate of inclusion is made possible through intentional and ongoing development and active application of what Janet Bennett (2014) describes as individual affective, cognitive, and behavioural competencies needed to enhance interpersonal and intergroup relations. Foundational to fostering inclusion is ensuring that all community members experience equal opportunity to access, fully participate, and thrive in the life and work of the university free from discrimination (CHRA, n.d.). *Equity* may be considered both an approach and a process whereby proactive interventions to mitigate and remove barriers due to personally mediated biases as well as systemic barriers due to inequities imbedded in policies and everyday practices across the academic ecosystem (Henry & Tator, 2010).

Review and Discussion

The Benefits of Diversity

The first assertion in making the case for diversity is that the presence of a diversity of peoples and perspectives, when meaningfully engaged, profoundly benefits academic, educational, and organizational excellence.

Over two decades ago, a monograph on campus diversity issues published by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (McTighe Musil et al., 1999) made the case for diversity based on insights from five institutional initiatives. The second chapter, "Centrality of Diversity to the Academy's Educational Mission," Caryn McTighe Musil (1999) presented five compelling arguments that institutions of higher learning should take more intentional steps to diversify both the student and faculty body:

1. The moral argument says that supporting diversity is the right thing to do and that historical inequalities have produced current inequalities in the institution.

2. The civic argument says that democracy depends on an educated citizenry that is accessible to all.

3. The demographic argument says that, to build capacity for a diversifying nation, it is only natural that higher education must also diversify.

4. The economic argument says that, since educational attainment is directly related to income, diversifying higher education will lead to educational prosperity and diminish the income gap.

5. The academic argument says that diversity is deeply linked to insuring academic excellence.

Thus, the rationale for increasing diversity in higher education was positioned as related to individual, institutional, and societal imperatives: to protect individual human rights and equal opportunity in education and employment, to improve institutional innovation and impact through inclusion of diverse ideas and ways of knowing, and to advance societal sustainability through social equity.

Five years following the publication of that 1999 monograph, the AACU commissioned a series of three papers to support the multidimensional case for diversity and advance the concept of *inclusive excellence*. The papers were authored by Jeffrey Milem, Mitchell Chang, and Anthony Lising Antonio (2005), Damon Williams, Joseph Berger, and Shederick McClendon (2005), and Georgia Bauman, Leticia Tomas Bustillos, Estela Mara Bensimon, Christopher Brown II, and RoSusan Bartee (2005). In the first paper, entitled "Making Diversity Work on Campus: A Research-Based Perspective", the authors describe empirical evidence demonstrating the educational benefits of diverse learning environments (Milem, Chang, & Antonio, 2005). Contributing to this paper, was a review of the emergent literature undertaken by Jeffrey Milem (2003), which described studies on the benefits of diversity to colleges and universities in the United States. Milem (2003) reinforced that diversity benefits three dimensions: individuals, institutions, and society:

> *Individual benefits* refer to the ways in which the educational experiences and outcomes of individual students are enhanced by the presence of diversity on campus. *Institutional benefits* refer to the ways in which diversity enhances the effectiveness of an organization or institution. *Societal benefits* are defined as the ways in which diversity in colleges and universities impact quality of life issues in the larger society. (p. 128)

This paper will focus on the individual and institutional benefits of diversity.

Individual Benefits – Enhancing Educational Outcomes

With respect to individual benefits, Milem's 2003 review summarized a significant body of evidence demonstrating the benefits of diversity to the enrichment of the individual and collective learning experiences in educational contexts. He cited his own and other scholarship, which demonstrates the individual benefits of diversity to student learning outcomes (Astin, 1993; Gurin, 1999; Milem, 1992, 1994; Pascarella, et al., 1996; Villalpondo, 1994 as cited in Milem, 2003). He also described studies that demonstrate the positive correlation between an inclusive campus climate and student learning outcomes (Gillard, 1996; Hurtado, 1990, 1992, 1994a, 1994b; Hurtado et al, 1998, 1999; Kuh, 1993; Pascarella, et al., 1998; Smith, 1995; Smith & Associates, 1997 as cited in Milem, 2003). As well, he referenced studies on the impact of integrating diverse content into the curriculum on learning outcomes related to global citizenship and democracy, intercultural engagement and efficacy, critical and active thinking, and intellectual and academic motivation (Gurin, 1999; MacPhee, Kreutzer & Fritz, 1994 as cited in Milem, 2003). Finally, he cited evidence that students working in more diverse group settings were positively influenced by the perspectives of FDGs and showed enhanced complexity of thought processes as a result (Antonio et al., 2004, as cited in Milem, 2003).

Also, in relation to the individual benefits of diversity within the classroom context, the American Council of Education in collaboration with the American Associate of University Professors commissioned three research studies on diversity in the U.S. collage context and published the series in an article entitled "Does Diversity Make a Difference" (ACE & AAUP,

2000). Geoffrey Maruyama and José Moreno (2000) surveyed faculty in research intensive institutions in the U.S. on the question of whether and how the ethnic and racial diversity of students was beneficial to the teaching and learning process. They found that "campus diversity is seen widely as desirable and as beneficial to all students and teachers" (p. 23). Roxane Harvey Gudeman (2000) undertook a study to examine whether the educational priorities of selective liberal arts colleges in the U.S. to diversify the faculty and student body are validated by the experiences of faculty members in one such college. She found that "the educational value of a diverse learning environment to *all* students [was attested to by] expert scholar/teachers who themselves do not teach about diversity in their classes" (Harvey Gudeman, 2000, p. 53), though these faculty expressed frustration with institutional and sector-wide barriers to diversity the student and faculty body as well as the curriculum. Patricia Marin (2000) examined "the experiences of faculty members and students, the teaching methods and course content, and the characteristic classroom dynamics" (p. 62) in interactive, multi-racial/multi-ethnic classrooms. She concluded that "classrooms must be not only diverse, but they also must be structured and conducted in a way that takes advantage of diversity. Either condition without the other limits the potential educational outcome" (p. 71).

Institutional Benefits – Enhancing Organizational Vitality and Viability

With respect to the institutional benefits, a large body of research has emerged to demonstrate how innovation and excellence are enhanced by diversity and inclusion in the corporate sector, and while these studies are relevant to the higher education sector, scholars have, in the last fifteen years, begun to specifically study the benefits of diversity to institutions

of higher learning. While it is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss the expansive evidence on the organizational benefits of diversity in universities, below are some notable highlights.

Milem (2003) points to the extensive research on diversity in corporate sector organizations conducted by Taylor Cox (1993), who suggests that there are three drivers that should motivate organizations to effectively engage diversity. Cox describes these goals as being related to "moral, ethical, and social responsibility, legal obligations of organizations, and economic performance" (Cox, 1993, p. 131, as cited by Milem, 2003). Milem (2003) highlights research supporting the notion that diverse teams in the workplace promote creativity and innovation, and this research has identified five indicators that diversity enhances organizational efficacy: "(1) attracting and retaining the best available human talent, (2) enhanced marketing efforts, (3) higher creativity and innovation, (4) better problem solving, and (5) more organizational flexibility" (Cox, 1993; Reskin, 1998, as cited by Milem, 2003).

In a study that used mathematical modelling to examine the performance of problem-solving team, Lu Hong and Scott Page (2004) found that "a random group of intelligent problem solvers will outperform a group of the best problem solvers", suggesting that the diversity in the team can improve the collective decision whereby the approach of the individual problem-solver "may be more relevant than [individual] ability" (p, 16389) in a group context. Cedric Herring (2009) studied the value of gender and racial diversity in a U.S. sample of for-profit business organizations from two seemingly opposing perspectives: (1) the "value-in-diversity perspective", which makes the business case for diversity improving creativity, innovation and organizational performance; and (2) the "diversity-as-process-loss perspective", which argues that diversity brings intergroup conflict and discomfort that diminishes group cohesion and team processes (p. 208). The findings of this study support the business case for gender and racial

diversity, demonstrating that gender diversity correlates with more sales revenue, customers, relative profits, while racial diversity correlates with these above listed performance indicators and greater market share. In conclusion, Herring suggests that a paradox exists with respect to benefit of diversity:

> …greater diversity is associated with more group conflict *and* better business performance.
>
> This is possible because diverse groups are more prone to conflict, but conflict forces them to go beyond the easy solutions common in like-minded groups. Diversity leads to contestation of different ideas, more creativity, and superior solutions to problems. In contrasts, homogeneity may lead to greater group cohesion but less adaptability and innovations. (p. 219)

More recently, McKinsey & Company commissioned a report entitled "Why Diversity Matters", which summarized the correlation between diversity and improved business performance of large private sector companies (Hunt, Layton, & Prince, 2015). Many of these findings in the business sector are transferrable to large educational institutions, however, there are studies that focus on the unique academic environment.

Indeed, in the higher educational context, a body of research amassed over the last two decades demonstrates that the compositional diversity of faculty is one critically important driver of inclusive excellence in higher education. Through the 1990s and 2000s, several studies explored the benefits of compositions diversity in higher education. Mwenifumbo and Renner (1998) explored the interplay between faculty compositional diversity (a component of inclusive excellence) and institutional financial health (a component of operational excellence). The study analyzed institutional data on gender diversity, age profile, and salary projections of full-time

faculty from nine Canadian universities to make a case for diversifying the faculty. The authors

argued that compositional diversity was connected to academic innovation and, therefore,

institutional adaptability and responsiveness to the social and economic realities of the time.

Milem (2003) studied the contributions of minoritized faculty in higher education and found that

having greater numbers of women and racialized[1] faculty benefits the research, teaching and

service missions of the university by affording "more student-centred approaches to teaching and

learning", "more diverse curricular offerings", "more research focused on issues of race/ethnicity

and gender", and "more women and faculty of colour involved in community and volunteer

service" (p. 158).

Jakob Lauring and Jan Selmer (2013) conducted a study in Denmark analyzing the

relationship between academic staff diversity and their EDI related competencies (Lauring and

Selmer, 2013). The study collected self-reported data from 489 professors, associate professors,

and doctoral students. The authors found that cultural and linguistic diversity among academic

staff was strongly associated with non-discriminatory attitudes towards diverse peoples and

tolerance for diverse opinions, worldviews, and cultural practices. This study supports the

argument that compositional diversity can foster inclusive mindsets and behaviours, which, in

turn, can foster a culture of inclusion. Richard Freeman and Wei Huang (2015) examined the

ethnic identity of U.S. based authors in over 2.5 million scientific papers written between 1985

and 2008. They found a substantive trend in the similarity of ethnic identities – homophily – of

coauthors of scientific papers, suggesting a considerable degree of homogeneity in the

composition of research teams. They also found that "homophily is associated with papers with

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[1] The term racialized is a more contemporary term used in Canada and preferred over "visible minority", which is defined by the government of Canada in the Employment Equity Act as persons, other than Indigenous peoples, who do not identify as Caucasian, European, and/or White in race, ethnicity, origin, and/or colour, regardless of birthplace or citizenship.

lower impact factors and fewer citations" (p. S313). Freeman and Huang (2015) posit that a "greater diversity and breadth of knowledge of a research team contributes to the quality of the scientific papers that the team produces" (p. S313).

In their book entitled "An inclusive academy: Achieving diversity and excellence", Abigail Stewart and Virginia Valian (2018) describe the evidence-based benefits of inclusive and collaborative teams in the academic context. They reinforce the "importance of diversity and inclusion for innovation and better theories", describe the "development of innovative solutions to scholarly and public policy problems and deeper understanding of intellectual issues" as key research values, and caution that "institutional leaders and agencies supporting all scholarship, including those supporting scientific advancement need to be concerned about arbitrary restrictions on who pursues scholarship in order to maximize the likelihood of innovations" (p. 61).

Barriers to Equal Opportunity Impeding Access and Inclusion

The second assertion in the case for inclusive excellence is that systemic barriers to equal opportunity persist in the academy and impede access and inclusion of particular groups of people and perspectives.

In Canada, four *federally designated groups* (FDGs) have been identified as historically and contemporarily underrepresented and underutilized in the workforce: women, Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) peoples, persons belonging to racialized communities, and persons with disabilities. While EDI efforts are meant to redress barriers experiences by all FDGs, most research undertaken to understand the persistence of inequities in higher education has been focused on gendered and racialization experiences and processes, with few addressing

additional dimensions of social identity and inequity, let alone the intersectional nature of these processes and experiences.

This paper highlights some select examples of the seminal and more recent research that has explored gender and racial inequities in the recruitment, engagement, and retention of FDG faculty (Ahmed et al., 1999; Donaldsen & Emes, 2000; Dovidio et al., 2002; Spafford et al., 2006; Hughes, Horner & Ortiz, 2012; Ramos and Li, 2017; Sensoy & DiAngleo, 2017; Wijesingha & Ramos, 2017; Momani, Dreher & Williams, 2019; Eaton et al, 2020; Wijesingha & Ramos, 2017;) and senior leaders (Wolfe & Dilworth, 2015; Banks, Gary Hopps and Briggs, 2018) in Canadian and U.S. schools. Academic associations have commissioned the publication of briefs and brochures that summarize the literature in a manner that is more readily accessibility to academic leaders and scholars. For example, a 2009 brief on unconscious bias in faculty and leadership recruitment was prepared for and published by the Association of American Medical Colleges (Corrice, 2009), a 2012 brochure on bias and assumptions in the review of employment applications was prepared for and published by the Women in Science and Engineering Leadership Institute (Fine & Handelsman, 2012).

Individual Biases

According to Őslem Sensoy and Robin DiAngelo (2017), individual biases, whether conscious and explicit or unconscious and implicit, are transmitted through social processes and become firmly implanted in the organizational structure and culture, reproducing discriminatory systems. Over the years, several studies have demonstrated the powerful effects of individual biases, which reproduce systemic inequities in the evaluations of merit. The discussion below

provides some examples of the seminal and more recent research that is relevant to diversifying the gender and racial composition of the professoriate.

Gender Bias. With respect to the evidence for gender bias in the evaluation of faculty capabilities and recommendations for hiring and compensation – across disciplines – some relevant studies conducted over the last twenty-five years are briefly discussed below in chronologic order of their publication.

In the medical research context, Christine Wennerås and Agnes Wold (1997) found that reviewers required a higher standard of publications to determine the same level of competency when they perceived the researcher to be a woman as compared to when they perceived them to be a man. Specifically, women were found to need to publish three times more articles in the *Nature* or *Science* journal, or twenty more articulates in specialist journals. In the context of the field of psychology, Rhea Steinpreis, Kris Andres, and Dawn Ritzke (1999) found that reviewers of identical curricula vitae included "cautionary comments" four times more frequently for applicants when they perceived the applicant to be a woman as compared to when they perceived them to be a man. In a seminal study on gender bias in orchestra auditions, Claudia Goldin and Cecilia Rouse (2000) found that, when women identified musicians could not be seen by judges, they were 50% more likely to advance in the audition.

Alice Eagly and Steven Karau (2002) found that women are generally perceived and evaluated less favourably as potential leaders than are men, and that women are specifically perceived and evaluated less favourably when they enact behaviours typically prescribed as being aligned with leadership roles. They proposed a "role congruity theory" to describe this phenomenon whereby gender bias results from perceived incongruencies in expected

stereotypical gender role characteristics and behaviours. A decade later, Silvia Knobloch-Westerwick, Carroll Glynn, and Michael Huge (2013) designed a study to "test whether author gender and gender stereotypes associated with research topics affect perceptions of publication quality and interest in scholarly collaboration" (p. 604) within the field of science communication. Their findings demonstrate the manifestation of gender bias in a manner they describe as convergent with gender role congruity theory. They report that, "male authors' contributions were indeed associated with greater scientific quality, even though the actual content had been carefully rotated to avoid any confounding impacts", and that the perception was amplified when the contributions "pertained to male-typed topics" (p. 619).

Frances Trix and Carolyn Psenka (2003) found that reference letters for women were shorter, less precise, and less focused on research than those for men. Specifically, the reference letters for women used on average 12% fewer words than those for men. As well, when the candidates were women, referees were four times more likely to comment on the candidate's compassionate nature or ability to relate to others, almost four and a half times less likely to comment on the candidate's accomplishments or achievements, and just over two times less likely to use the term "successful". Madeline Heilman and Tyler Okimoto (2007) present fictional male and female managers who are successful in a male-dominated job to undergraduate students and find that the students assess the women a less likeable, more interpersonally hostile, less competent, and less desirable as bosses than the men.

Julie Phelan, Corinne Moss-Racusin and Laurie Rudman (2008) found that highly competent women were assessed as lacking social skills in contrast to highly competent men, and that evaluations of social skills predicted hiring decisions than did evaluation of competency for these women. This is among the studies in which the finds suggest implications on the career

progression and leadership opportunities for women. In the context of science faculty

appointments, Corinne Moss-Racusin, John Dovidio, Victorica Brescoll, Mark Graham, and Jo

Handelsman (2012) found that, reviewers of identical CVs for a lab manager role offered

candidates a higher salary and more mentorship, and they rated them as more "competent" and

"hireable", when they perceived the candidates as men rather than women. The average salary

women were offered represented 87.6% of the average salary men were offers. Moss-Racusin et

al. (2012) argued that overcoming the profound effects of implicit unconscious bias on gender

inequity in the context of faculty hiring would only be overcome by more transformative

recruitment and retention efforts.

In 2016, Iris Bohnet authored a book called *What Works: Gender Equality by Design* in

which she compiles evidence of the pervasiveness of unconscious bias and its impact on gender

inequality of opportunity. The author discusses examples of research-based solutions to

addressing gender bias. In 2018, sponsored by the League of European Research Universities

(LERU), Jadranka Gvozdanović examined the role of implicit bias in contributing to the

sustained loss of talent among women in academia – the "leaky pipeline" phenomenon.

Underpinning the examination is the definition of implicit bias, which they describe as human

judgements and behaviours that have "experience-based associates and preferences (or

aversions) without being consciously aware of them" (p. 3). Referencing this report by the

League of European Research Universities (Gvozdanović, 2018) and a report by the Council of

Canadian Academies (Expert Panel on Women in University Research, 2012), Cheryl Pritlove,

Clara Juando-Prats, Kari Ala-Leppilampi, and Janet Parsons (2019) affirms that "women remain

disproportionately less likely to receive faculty appointments, obtain leadership positions, earn

comparable wages, receive grant funding, and are more likely to leave the academy prematurely"
(p. 502).

With respect to the evidence for gender bias in letters of recommendation, Juan Madera,
Michelle Hebl, Heather Dial, Randi Martin, and Virginia Valian (2019) examined hundreds of
letters of recommendation for faculty and found that particular kinds of doubt raisers in letters of
recommendation have negative outcomes regardless of gender, however, referees, regardless of
gender, use more doubt raisers in their reference letters for women as compared to men. The
authors suggest these findings have implications on raising awareness of referees and reviewers
of letters of recommendations to these biases, and on developing strategies to mitigate these
biases.

Arguably, women have made the most gains with respect to progress on closing diversity
representational gaps among in higher education; however, women continue to experience
barriers which are particularly pronounced in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics
(STEM) fields and in progressively more senior academic ranks and administrative roles.
Although women represent 47.4% of the Canadian population, only 21.9% of the Canadian
STEM workforce are women (Statistics Canada, 2008).

Racial Bias. With respect to racial inequity, a growing body of research demonstrates
that both personally mediated bias and systemic barriers hinder equal opportunity for members
of racialized communities in the academy (Henry et al., 2017; Henry, Kobayashi, & Choi, 2012).
Studies find that racialized women face compounding effects of biases and barriers to and
through employment in higher education, influencing their underrepresentation within the
Canadian professoriate (Dua & Bhanji, 2012; Kobayashi, 2006, 2009). Below is a brief

discussion of some of the relevant research in the last fifteen years within a U.S. and western European context.

Sharon Segrest Purkiss, Pamela Perrewé, Treena Gillespie, Bronston Mayes, and Geral Ferris (2006) conducted an empirical study to examine sources of bias in employment interviews. They chose this site of intervention to study "because more than other selection devices, the interview presents considerable opportunity for the influence of subtle cues and perceptual and judgement to affect decisions" (p. 162). The study found that introducing ethnic cues, such as a perceived ethnic names and accents, triggered differences in the judgements of applicants' characteristics. Specifically, "the most unfavourable judgments of the applicant were triggered by the combination of ethnic name and accent" (p. 162). Furthermore, the study supported theories advanced from previous studies demonstrating that "efforts by ethnic minorities to increase similarities between themselves and the majority group are associated with more favourable evaluations" (p. 162).

Marianne Bertrand and Sendhil Mullainathan (2004) responded to help-wanted ads with an equal number of fictional high or low-quality resumes assigned to common Black/African American names and common White/European-American names. They found that, overall, resumes with the White/European-American names were 50% more likely to receive a callback. For the higher-quality resumes, White-/European-Americans where 30% more likely to receive a callback among White/European-American applicants, whereas higher-quality resumes for Black/African American applicants generated 9% more callback among Black/African American applicants. Eden King, Saaid Mendoza, Juan Madera, Michelle Hebl and Jennifer Knight (2006) found that when White/European-Americans identified men rated the fictional resumes of racialized and non-racialized men, their overall evaluation of intelligence, motivation and

likelihood to be hired was least positive for Black/African American candidates and most positive for Asian-Americans. Their evaluation of the suitability of the candidates for various jobs that were categorized as high or low-status jobs revealed that Asian-Americans were rated most suitable for high-status jobs, whereas Mexican Americans were rated most suitable for low-status jobs; White/European-Americans were rated least suitable for the low-status occupations.

Dan-Olof Rooth (2010) conducted an empirical study to examine the relationship between implicit (automatically activated) bias, explicit attitudes and stereotypes, and discriminatory behavior in a real hiring situation in a western European country. Results demonstrated "strong and consistent negative correlations" (p. 529) between implicit bias and interview invitations to job applicants with Arab-Muslim sounding names – and particularly those with names such as Mohammed or Ali. Results also indicated that "there are recruiters who implicitly discriminate, but who would not explicitly do so" (p. 529). These findings demonstrate that recruitment behaviour is affected by implicit prejudice rather than explicit discrimination, but it also supports and is supported by a larger body of scholarship that confirmed implicit and explicit attitudes and behaviours coexists, albeit emerging from "distinct neural systems" (p.529) which require different interventions to remediate. With respect to individual biases and systemic inequities factoring into the assessment of grants awards as a proxy for research excellence, Donna Ginther, Walter Schaffer, Joshua Schnell, Beth Masimore, Faye Liu, Laurel Haak, and Raynard Kington (2011) found that research proposals submitted by Black/African Americans were less 13% likely than those submitted by White Americans to be awarded funding from National Institutions of Health awards, after controlling for educational background, country of origin, training, previous research awards, publication record, and employer characteristics.

Attending to the intersectional nature of bias and inequity is important. A study undertaken by Asia Eaton, Jessica Saunders, Ryan Jacobson, and Keon West examined how gender and racial biases and inequities intersect to influence assessments of post-doctoral students applying at eight large public U.S. research universities. The study found that racialized women and men experience additive adverse effects on their access and advancement within STEM disciplines (Eaton et al., 2020). Most marginalized among faculty in STEM fields are women of colour – and particularly Black and Latinx women. These women were found to share some common patterns of bias and inequities experienced by white women, however, they also reported additional unique patterns of bias and inequities that thwart their admittance to the professoriate and advancement through the faculty ranks.

Nearly ten years ago, Moss-Racusin et al. (2012), argued that overcoming the profound effects of implicit unconscious bias on gender inequity in the context of faculty and leadership hiring would only be overcome by more transformative efforts to recruit and retain women. More recently, in a 2019 Lancet article entitled "The good, the bad, and the ugly of implicit bias", Pritlove et al. (2019) asserted that "Implicit bias training has had some success in changing individual-level beliefs and actions, but meta-analyses suggest it is largely ineffective in diminishing institutional inequities" (p. 502), reinforcing the need to address personally mediated (individual) biases *and* work to remove systemic (structural and cultural) barriers to equity.

Systemic Inequities

In their recent book entitled *The Equity Myth: Racialization and Indigeneity at Canadian Universities*, Francis Henry, Enakshi Dua, Carl James, Audrey Kobayashi, Peter Li, Howard

Ramos, and Malinda Smith (2017) – a team of Canadian anti-racist scholars – provide an invaluable contemporary examination of the under-representation and underutilization of minoritized faculty in the academy. They provide quantitative and qualitative evidence of differential experiences and outcomes of faculty, which point to persistent systemic inequities. Two chapters in the book are devoted to providing empirical evidence demonstrating the underrepresentation (Ramos & Li, 2017) and underutilization (Wijesingha & Ramos, 2017) of faculty across gender and racial demographics in the academy. These authors assert that arguments about a limited "pipeline' or pools of qualified candidates among racialized prospective faculty members are often overstated. In the early 90s, Alison Wylie countered a similar pipeline argument that not enough women doctoral students or prospective faculty were available (Wylie, 1995). While research on the actual availability of viable applicant pools must continue to be expanded through the systematic data collection efforts of Statistics Canada, as well as augmented efforts by academic and professional associations, the over-reliance on this argument must be interrogated as a form of denial of the multiple ways that individual biases and systemic inequities in hiring processes continue to act as barriers to diversifying the professoriate.

In a review and analysis of the literature on racism in the Canadian university, Francis Henry and Carol Tator (2010) reveal what they refer to as the all-encompassing existence and evolving forms of everyday, cultural, systemic, institutional, democratic, discursive, and epistemological racism. They identify and discuss ten discourses representing "myths, explanations, codes of meaning, and rationalizations that have the effect of establishing, sustaining, and reinforcing" (p. 11) dominant narratives in relation to diversity, thereby acting as discursive barriers to antiracist organizational change. In other words, these discursive barriers

reveal grand narratives related to EDI, and they are informed by and inform dominant beliefs, ideas, values, and behaviours which become imbedded in university structures (policies and written rules) and permeate the culture (everyday taken-for-granted practices and unwritten rules). The ten discursive barriers are the discourses of denial, binary polarization, blaming the victim, tolerance, traditionalism, colour-blindness, equal opportunity, decontextualization, balkanization, and political correctness. It follows that these kinds of diversity discourses exist in relation to gender identity, sexual orientation, and ability, as well as ancestry, colour, race, and ethnic origin. Such discourses are underpinned by worldviews that passively or actively reject the evidence demonstrating the effects of individual biases and systemic inequities on FDGs, and thereby, they undermine inclusive excellence goals.

One particularly prevalent grand narrative in the academy that is buttressed by discourses of denial, 'colour/gender-blindness', decontextualization, and equal opportunity is the *myth of meritocracy* – the mistaken view that cultural biases and social inequities do not factor into the assessment of individual capabilities (e.g., intellectual aptitudes, academic qualifications, and professional qualities), as well as what constitutes merit in past accomplishments and future potential for excellence in teaching, research, and/or leadership. Stewart and Valian (2018) argue that, while a commitment to the *ideal* of meritocracy should remain a foundational higher educational virtue, in fact, a pure meritocracy does not exist as not all peoples are on an equal 'playing field' when it comes to access and inclusion in the academy.

In a study examining how women professionals in science, technology, and allied fields perceive and explain gender inequality in professional advancement, Erin Cech and Mary Blair-Loy (2010) find that, while 60 percent of respondents understand gender inequality in advancement to be a result of structural barriers, 14 percent believe women do not advance "due

to their lack of human capital", and 26 percent believe it is because of "women's lack of individual motivation" (p. 391). This study demonstrates the power and pervasiveness of the myth of meritocracy as it can manifest as internalized or within group bias. Those women among the 40 percent who did not perceive systemic barriers, tapped into discursive barriers such as denial, decontextualization, equal opportunity, and victim blaming discourses.

Aifric Gráda, Caitriona Ni Laoire, Carol Linehan, Geraldine Boylan, and Linda Connolly (2015) studies the effectiveness of various gender equity interventions within the academic context in Ireland to better understand the decreasing proportion of women represented at progressively higher ranks of faculty appointment and academic leadership. The study reinformed the failure of institutions "to address the structural context for gender inequality in academia" (p. 372) that contribute to barriers in women's career progression. The findings contributed to recomendatins for professional development training and mentoring for women "in a way that was underpinned by a gender equality agenda and by the principles of gender-awareness, empowerment, peer support and diversity-awareness" as well as "an understanding of the entanglement of individual agency, biographies and practices with gendered structures in the academic context" (p. 373).

The concept of inclusive excellence represents a paradigm shift from and counternarrative to the discourses that undermine efforts to introduce more expansive and accurate evaluations of merit. The inclusive excellence paradigm acknowledges the subtle and insidious effects of personally mediated biases (conscious and unconscious) as well as systemic barriers. The paradigm embraces an equity lens to mitigate, if not remove, these biases and barriers to enable the most expansive and inclusive practices to attract, more accurately assess, and benefit from the talent among the greatest diversity of students, scholars, and staff.

Best Practices for Transformative Change

The third assertion in the case for inclusive excellence is that evidence-based best practices must be adopted to remove structural and cultural barriers to diversity and inclusion across the entire university eco-system.

The shift to an inclusive excellence paradigm will require intentional, integrated, and institution-wide strategies to mobilize and sustain campus-wide transformative change. In her article entitled "Leadership, governance, and accountability: A pathway to a diverse and inclusive organization", Stephanie Creary (2008) asserts that achieving comprehensive organizational EDI change requires effective leadership, governance, and accountability, as well as an iterative process of continuous improvement. In other words, a robust EDI strategy, based on sound organizational EDI change management strategies and processes, as well as strong administrative drive and resourcing, will be essential to mobilizing and sustaining effective system-wide efforts.

The university is a social system, necessitating a socio-ecological approach that recognizes multiple nested subsystems (micro-, meso-, exo-, macro-, and chrono-system) within which organizational change operates (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Hurtado, 2012). Advancing inclusive excellence in the academy will, therefore, require a strategic multi-level organizational change effort. Realizing such comprehensive change will depend on the efficacy of strategic actions implemented and evaluated across interconnected individual, institutional, and systemic domains of the university. Henry and Tator (2010) remind us that change efforts must be intentionally holistic to influence personal, structural, and cultural change manifested in: individual values, beliefs, attitudes, knowledge, and skills; organizational systems, policies, and

programs; and community norms or "unspoken rules", everyday practices, and the university ethos.

In the early 2000s, Daryl Smith, Caroline Turner, Nana Osei-Kofi, and Sandra Richards (2004) constructed a study to examine departmental search processes and practices as a site for intervention. Their findings suggest the introduction of explicit diversity indicators or criteria in job descriptions is an effective strategy to attract greater numbers of racialized scholars.

Diana Bilimoria, Simi Joy, and Xiangfen Liang (2008) presented findings from a review of various interventions employed by nineteen U.S. universities that participated in the National Science Foundation's ADVANCE Institutional Transformation program to increase the representation of women and racialized faculty. Among the findings, the review identified several leading practices in academia: establishing a "transformation team composed of senior faculty leaders and administrators" (p. 435) to deploy and facilitate the change effort; engaging a variety of top-down and bottom-up change initiatives focused on removing barriers "at specific transition points" (p. 435/6) along the pathway to and through academia; enhancing the institutional and departmental climates; collecting and disseminating equity data and other resources to decision-makers; increasing campus community awareness of equity policies; and, systematically collecting and reporting on progress of institutional efforts.

Over a six-year period, Diana Bilimoria and Kimberly Buch (2010) analyzed the gender composition of applicant pools, short lists, and faculty hires in STEM departments at two U.S. universities. They concluded that for institutions to be more success in diversifying the professoriate, they must proactively adopt the following strategies: aggressively and continually pursuing diverse talent; ensuring search committee members receive bias training, monitoring

policy alignment and requiring process accountability such as evidence of diversity in the applicant pool before proceeding with a search (p. 30).

Dolly Chugh and Arthur Brief (2008) explore social inequities in higher education using a gateway/pathway framework, which proposes differentiating between barriers at gateways "to opportunity and diversity" and barriers through pathways "to success and effectiveness" (p. 318). They explore individual and organizational perspectives on gateway and pathway barriers, which have implications for the design and implementation of effective interventions targeting personally mediated behaviours and institutionally reproduced practices in these domains. According to this framework, minoritized faculty are concerned about barriers to getting in and moving through the academy: getting hired, getting heard, getting credit, and getting a fair shot at every possible gateway and through the pathway experience in their career progression. According to Chugh and Brief (2008), institutional structures like hiring policies and processes act as gateway barriers or enablers, while cultural norms of behaviour such as informal and formal grooming, recognition and advancement practices act as pathway barriers or enablers. The authors highlight the opaque and unpredictable nature of informal practices, which create vulnerabilities to bias and, therefore, are less likely to be equitable and responsible. They describe the profound impacts of these informal practices as many "seemingly minor ways in which an individual's chances for success are improved or worsened" (p. 320). Thus, they advocate for more transparency and consistency of practices, guided by principles and policies that promote fairness and accountability. Their work highlights three effective strategies: organizational responsibility for equity through strategic thinking, planning and management; moderation of and capacity to interrupt personally-mediated bias through training of decision-makers in particular; and reduction of social isolation of minoritized groups through programs

and supports that counter the effects of stereotype threat (i.e., the internalization of bias) and facilitate the navigation of social dilemmas caused by intergroup power relations.

Jessi Smith, Ian Handley, Alexander Zale, Sara Rushing, and Martha Potvin (2015) studied a three-step faculty search intervention employed within one U.S. university to increase the number of women faculty in STEM The three components of the intervention included the provision of a printed toolkit describing concrete strategies to support the search, the delivery of a 30-minute presentation on implicit gender bias, and the assignment of a peer faculty members to act as a support through the entire search process. The authors found that a significantly greater proportion of women were among applicants as well as among those shortlisted and interviewed. Moreover, …a search in the intervention condition was 6.3 times more likely to make an offer to a woman candidate than a search in the no-intervention condition…[and] women offered jobs were 5.8 times more likely to accept the offer from an intervention search" (p. 1086).

One of the most robust articles suggesting promising EDI interventions for increasing the representation of women and racialized faculty comes from Sensoy and DiAngelo (2017). These scholars examine the common narratives that constitute resistance to diversifying the faculty body. Through an analysis of the discursive barriers in hiring processes, they offer a series of counter-narratives or constructive alternatives to employ across five key steps in the faculty hiring process: drafting the job description, constituting the search committee, assessing the CV, conducting the interview, and making the hiring decision. In the job advertisement they encourage the following practices: speak to the commitment to diversity and follow up by establishing clear criteria against which to assess the commitment; incorporate language which signals an openness to critical theoretical paradigms rather than only a focus on the traditional

canons; avoid coded language that signals an uncritical worldview – rather, use equitable and inclusive language. When constituting the search committee, ensure there is a diversity of people and perspectives, assign a committee chair that is well equipped with the requisite understanding to facilitate an equitable and inclusive search process; engage EDI expertise of faculty and account for their extra service load. At the step of assessing applicant CVs, reinforce the importance of gender and race consciousness to counter the tendency to perceive application materials as gender or race neutral. At this stage, they recommend assessing research *input* as well as output – while the latter includes things like the number of publications, the former includes things like time for relationship-building needed to develop a research profile and productivity; and, when counting publications, be cognizant that not all will appear in Western journal indexes. They also recommend expecting and counting EDI-related competencies – such as multilingualism and relevant coursework taken – as a strength. During the interview, they suggest several practices: aim to integrate EDI-related content in a meaningful way across all questions, make commitments to EDI evident in formal and informal aspects of the interview process, be strategic about student involvement in interviews, be mindful and critical of responses to body language, facial expressions, tone, and other manifestations of affect. In the final decision-making step, they suggest revisiting several best practices: reflect on the bona fide qualification and interrogate any implicit bias that may be creeping into the deliberations; return to the institutional strategic priorities, mission, and vision statements; and, address any power dynamic surfacing in the committee group deliberation and decision-making.

Conclusion

As this review aimed to provide a sufficient breadth of evidence to serve as a primer for university administrators, it would not have captured the entirety of the scholarly work that may support the case for advancing EDI in the academy, nor any possible evidence-based counternarratives. That said, this paper has engaged some of the seminal research and extent literature that demonstrates a substantive body of evidence supporting the benefits of diversity, the barriers to inclusion of diverse peoples and perspectives, and the best practices for more equitable inclusion of diverse talent in higher education While this evidentiary summary will support the implementation of institutional strategic plans and the effective management of cultural change today, ongoing interdisciplinary research on EDI benefits, barriers, and best practices will be needed to ensure that institutional decision-makers and academic influencers have the most contemporary information.

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