POLICY 2.18

COUNCIL GOVERNANCE

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

POLICY INTENT

AUSU recognizes that it serves Members from diverse identities, experiences, and backgrounds. As such, AUSU acknowledges that those from intersecting identities often face systemic inequities in the form of visible and invisible barriers when pursuing higher education.

AUSU is committed to analyzing, identifying, and advocating on behalf of our Members who face these systemic barriers to ensure that they have a meaningful and positive online learning experience.

This policy serves to underpin all activities carried out by the AUSU Staff, Council, and the Executive Committee to ensure an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) lens is applied to all AUSU day-to-day activities.

This policy will guide the Executive Committee's and Council's ongoing advocacy and collaboration with Athabasca University and guide the Executive Committee's external advocacy with various levels of government and external stakeholders.

POLICY

Definitions

2.18.01   Equity encompasses, but is not limited to, actions, systems, processes, interactions, and treatment that result in the fair, respectful, and just treatment of all individuals and communities.

2.18.02   Diversity makes reference to the unique identities, characteristics, experiences, and environmental context of individuals and communities, including, but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, neurodiversity, age, size, social class, family and marital status, disability, language, religious or ethical values system, national origin, immigration status, and political beliefs.

2.18.03   Inclusion is the practice of integrating all individualsand communities into systemic structures, processes, systems, environments, and any other facet of the organization as appropriate.

2.18.04   Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) encompasses all the individual definitions of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion; often, this phrase refers to the application of these definitions to the organization in various ways.

2.18.05   Intersectionality is defined as a social justice theory that recognizes overlapping identities, oppressions, and privileges. These include but are not limited to, race, ethnicity, class, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, neurodiversity, age, ability, size, marital or family status, religion/faith, language, national origin, or immigration status.

2.18.06   Systemic Barriers are embedded within an organization's systems, processes, culture, or any other relevant facet that disproportionately present discriminatory or inequitable barriers to individuals or groups that restrict them from participating fully in any aspect of the organization.

2.18.07   Privilege refers to the unearned benefits and advantages of certain groups or individuals.

2.18.08   2SLGBTQIA+ is an acronym for the umbrella term that encompasses Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trangender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, as well as other ways individuals and communities self-identify.

2.18.09   Gender Identity is an individual's internal experience of gender along the gender spectrum, which may be different from their assigned sex at birth. These include, but are not limited to, Genderqueer, Non-Binary, and Transgender. An individual's gender identity is different from their sexual orientation.

2.18.10   Gender Expression refers to how an individual publicly presents their gender.

2.18.11   Racialized refers to processes where individuals or groups are ascribed ethnic and racialized identities to a relationship, social practice, or group. BIPOC is an acronym that refers to Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour.

2.18.12   Indigenous Peoples are a group of identities that belong to individuals and communities whose ancestors were the original inhabitants of the land they are originally from. In Canada, Indigenous Peoples collectively refers to First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples and communities.

2.18.13   Accessibility refers to the needs individuals or groups have in order to fully participate within society, including environments and culture, devices, products, and services, and the extent to which these provisions are available and usable to any individual.

2.18.14   Disability (both evident and non-evident) covers a broad range and degree of conditions and should be interpreted in broad terms. Disability is an evolving concept and may result in systemic barriers to full participation, such as attitudinal barriers and inaccessible environmental conditions.

2.18.15   Ableism refers to social attitudes devaluing and limiting the potential of disabled people.

2.18.16   Neurodiversity refers to the natural variations and range of individual brain function and behavioural traits.

Applications and Objectives

AUSU will:

2.18.17   Apply an EDI lens to reviews of all current and future policies and procedures to ensure these values are embodied in governing documents.

2.18.18   Improve the awareness and visibility of EDI as core values of AUSU, by providing an annual EDI Report and Recommendations to Council by the Vice President Community and Wellness (VPCW) with support from the Executive Committee and the EDI Committee, as well as a standard section in the executive's monthly report templates.

2.18.19   Promote and continue to build strong relationships with student-led initiatives that promote EDI values and enhance our online campus community.

2.18.20   Ensure AUSU Councillors, Executives, Members-at-Large, and AUSU Staff are provided with education and training on a variety of EDI topics (ex: unconscious bias training) to better equip them to support students.

2.18.21   Identify key areas of advocacy where current programming could be expanded to better support student needs.

2.18.22   Reaffirm our organizational commitment to supporting Members and Staff by adhering to Policy 2.12 Respect in the Workplace.

2.18.23   Continue with the EDI committee to identify the specific EDI needs of undergraduate students and to inform and support the Executive Committee's annual EDI Report and Recommendations. This EDI Committee will review this policy annually, along with Council, to ensure it remains relevant and meaningful to its Members.

2.18.24   Will apply an EDI lens to all communications, ensuring inclusive-language.

2.18.25   Will apply an EDI lens when hiring Staff and Contractors.

Accountability

2.18.26   AUSU Executive Committee and Council shall implement this policy.

2.18.27   AUSU Executives, Councillors, Committees, and Staff shall administer and adhere to this policy.

RELATED REFERENCES, POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND FORMS

This Policy References
Policy 2.12 Respect in the Workplace

This Policy is Referenced by
None

POLICY RESPONSIBILITY
Council

POLICY HISTORY

Original Approval Date:	February 17, 2021
Last Review Date:	February 16, 2023 (informal)
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