



**Advancing the Status of Women in Scholarship and University Leadership Initiative  
Draft document for framing this initiative  
by Charlotte Yates March 2017**

(Thanks to the many faculty, staff and students who offered feedback on this document)

The University of Guelph is committed to excellence, equity and diversity. Over the last few months, the University of Guelph has developed an inclusion framework that articulates the values, goals and strategies for building a more inclusive campus for everyone, irrespective of culture, circumstance, race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, language, abilities, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, socioeconomic status, and place of origin. An inclusive campus is an environment where every member is a valued contributor. It is a campus that anticipates and encourages diverse perspectives and leverages these perspectives to drive creativity, excellence and innovation. Fostering a culture of inclusion is a process that begins with acknowledging the diversity among us and the fact that some members of our community experience barriers to education, employment, and full participation due to systemic factors.

In Canada, the current Prime Minister, the Ontario Premier and their governments have led initiatives to improve the role of women in society and their involvement in decision-making. Yet women in Canada and around the world continue to be underrepresented in science labs, corporate and public leadership, and continue to be paid less on average than men. The fields in which women dominate are often devalued, thus playing into stereotypes about women and their place in society and the economy. Women continue to face violence and discrimination in society. These inequities and the systemic barriers that hinder positive change run even deeper for women from traditionally underrepresented groups. Because of our unique role as a public educational institution, the University of Guelph can play a leadership role in advancing the status of women both within and beyond the walls of the University. We can trigger a cultural change throughout the University institution that will ensure we continue to create and foster the supports, structures and procedures to encourage those who seek to play a leadership role within the University, wherever they may be within the institution.

As part of building an inclusive campus, led by the Provost and Vice President Academic with the support of the Offices of Human Resources, Office of Faculty and Academic Staff Relations, Student Life, and Human Rights and Diversity, and the Office of the Vice President of Research, the University of Guelph is embarking on a strategy to advance the status of all women on campus. Our strategy starts from an understanding of the intersectional differences amongst women based on race, indigeneity, ethnicity, religion, abilities, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, social class and place of origin, and the greater risks of encountering violence and harassment at work, in the home and in public space. By accelerating our commitment and resources behind achieving equity, we can fully realize our potential as a research intensive, educationally innovative institution with a responsibility for advancing Canada and the place of



Canadian peoples on the world stage. In so doing, we can advance each of the goals articulated in the [University's 2016 Strategic Framework](#): Inspiring Learning and Inquiry; Connecting Communities; Catalyzing Discovery and Change; Nurturing a Distinctive University Culture; Stewarding Valuable Resources. This work is complementary to the work being done on campus to identify and pursue employment equity goals.

**Strategy:**

We are committed to engagement of the University community in a conversation on a strategy for change focused on advancing the status of all women on campus, with a particular focus on preparing and supporting women to take on leadership roles at the University and in our communities of interest. Our strategy starts from an understanding of the intersectional differences amongst women based on race, indigeneity, ethnicity, religion, abilities, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, social class and place of origin, and the greater risks of encountering violence and harassment at work, in the home and in public space. Mapping diversity across campus and recognizing this diversity and its effects on faculty, students, and staff, the University commits to engage women on campus to help in identifying goals and expected outcomes that allow us to accelerate progress towards equity, particularly in leadership roles. Resulting courses of action will be outlined with timelines for progress.

**Preparing the Ground:**

The University will begin this process with a kick off event, a celebratory dinner to mark International Women's Day. Students, faculty and staff leaders who identify as women will be invited to launch this initiative with an opening conversation that identifies the challenges we face and the opportunities and strategies for positive change.

This celebratory dinner is intended to kick start a broader set of conversations about women and equity between and amongst women of multiple identities, backgrounds and circumstances, transgender people and men. These conversations about equity, leadership and change will help map out the University's action plan for accelerating women's equity.

**Step One: Beginning the Conversation**

***Advisory Group:***

The Provost and AVP Human Resources will work with members of the campus community to constitute an Advisory Group constituted of faculty, students and staff with the following responsibilities:

- Preliminary advice to the University leadership on next steps, including feedback on ongoing initiatives
- Develop a draft strategy for moving forward
- Develop, comment upon and approve annual reports
- Communicate with the broader University community on progress towards identified goals.



**Deadline:** Formation of Advisory Group and terms of reference by April 2017

***Campus Conversations:***

Following the kick off event, the Provost with advice from the Advisory Group will encourage and facilitate meetings of groups across campus to engage in discussions about equity on campus, women's aspirations for recognition, success and a role in leadership, the impediments they face in achieving their goals and the possible solutions to systemic barriers to equity for all women on campus. Included in these discussions will be some consideration of what is meant by leadership. Some preliminary goals have been identified; they appear at the end of this document. Campus conversations will help in identifying additional goals and how our work aligns with the University's Strategic Framework.

Conversations will be facilitated as follows:

***Faculty:*** through Council of Chairs, Senate; Town Hall. The Provost will raise this issue with faculty at regular departmental meetings that I attend.

***Students:*** Meetings with student groups, including Central Student Association, Student Senate Caucus, Graduate Student's Association, WISE campus chapter and other existing student groups. The Provost will also encourage Deans to engage in discussions with student groups at the College and Department levels around improving gender equity.

***Staff:*** Working with HR we will establish forums to facilitate discussions. As staff do not have the same opportunities for meetings across departments, we will facilitate a set of lunch discussions in the spring and fall of 2017.

**Deadline:** Fall 2017.

***Support and Research:***

The Provost will invest a portion of her research monies in support of a post-doctoral fellow (PDF) to provide administrative support and research on these issues. One of the responsibilities of this PDF will be to define what we mean by women's leadership.

**Deadline:** Hire as soon as possible

***Host a University Women's Leadership Seminar Series:***

This seminar series will include internationally recognized women who will be invited to share their research and experiences around the globe.

**Start Date:** Fall 2017



## **Step Two: Understanding the Problems, Challenges and Solutions**

This requires background research on the following:

- Update profile on the state of gender equity on University of Guelph campus, including those fields and courses in which women teach, research and are students.
- Analyze women's representation as students, faculty and staff on committees, and their mobility into leadership positions (chairs, associate deans, deans, manager and director positions, student leadership and so on). This will include discussion of how best to track this mobility.
- Analyze the numbers of women who hold research chairs, and other awards in recognition of their contribution to research excellence.
- Analyze gender patterns in research grant submissions, University support and granting success.
- Review T&P, hiring and succession planning policies and practices and identify any barriers to the participation of women in faculty and/or senior leadership.
- Review staff employment issues ranging from performance review, hiring practices, advancement opportunities
- Through statistical analyses, assess any potential gender wage gaps that may exist and address any identified salary anomalies
- Review the balance of student scholarships in male and female dominated fields, including those available for women athletes. Also review the gender balance of scholarship recipients.
- Work with other offices on campus to assess the culture of inclusion on campus, and tackle obstacles to building an inclusive campus.
- Scan the international environment for best practices on accelerating women's equity.
- Review available leadership programs at the University and beyond. Determine the best practices for promoting leadership behaviour, including formal mentoring and encouraging women to consider leadership roles.

Based on this research, identify and prioritize those areas in need of immediate attention and develop a plan with goals, measures of success and dates by which to measure progress.

**Deadline:** March 2018

Following upon the opening conversations, the work of this initiative will be broken into distinct groupings of faculty, staff and students in recognition of their different roles, aspirations and opportunities within the University.



### **Step Three: Identify Critical Goals and Measures to Track Progress to Address These**

Following initial conversations and statistical analysis of gender equity at the University, its structures and leadership profile, we will establish a series of short and long term goals, including strategies for change and the means for measuring progress. As part of this initiative, the University will explore how to improve data collection on gender. Without prejudging the outcome of our initial conversations, and our analysis, some of the likely goals that will be pursued following the initial statistical analysis are the following:

(Note: Not all goals apply equally to all groups of women. Deadlines for each of these goals will be set over the summer of 2017)

#### **Goal One:**

Set annual and longer term targets consistent with the University's employment equity plan for the proportion of women in senior leadership roles within the University.

#### **Goal Two:**

Increase the number of women and the recognition of women scholars in STEM and other fields where women are under-represented (for eg: Physics, Chemistry, Engineering, Economics). Improve the pathways for women entering into these fields. Recognize those fields in which women predominate and assess if and how gender shapes our valuation of work in these fields. Celebrate those fields and scholars where University of Guelph has led the country in terms of gender equity (eg. Math and Statistics).

#### **Goal Three:**

Actively improve the systems by which we recognize research and scholarship within the University, to remove any gender-based inequities.

#### **Goal Four:**

Identify and work to address work-life issues that impede women's equitable participation on campus

#### **Goal Five:**

Review and adjust University processes, practices and policies to encourage responsibility of University leaders for acting to close the gap on gender equity

#### **Goal Six:**

Establish an active mentoring program so that women have the support and skills needed to advance into leadership roles on an equal footing to their peers.



**Step 4: Reporting to the University Community**

We commit to an annual report on the status of women, including reporting on progress on achieving equity and inclusion targets.

This is a time for change and celebration of University of Guelph's excellence. Through this strategy we can accelerate women's equity and in so doing unlock tremendous energy and potential to advance U of G's place on the world stage.

**Deadline:** First report December 2017