

## **Land Acknowledgement**

**We acknowledge that the lands on which Memorial University's campuses are situated are in the traditional territories of diverse Indigenous groups, and we acknowledge with respect the histories and cultures of the Beothuk, Mi'kmaq, Innu and Inuit of this province.**

## **Labour Acknowledgement**

**We acknowledge the province of Newfoundland and Labrador's connection to and participation in the Transatlantic Slave Trade including the building of slave ships and the selling of cod, deemed unfit to be sold to Europeans, for enslaved Africans' consumption.**

## **1. Introduction**

Memorial University has had an increasing interest and commitment to educate and learn on equity, diversity, inclusion, anti-racism (EDI-AR) and indigenization. The idea of EDI-AR conference was created to bring together students, staff, researchers, faculty, community leaders, and industry professionals from around the globe to share their success stories and achievements, and to learn about innovative and creative ways to design and implement EDI-AR programs and policies in post-secondary institutions, community groups, associations and not-for-profit agencies. The conference was one of its kind and had its ever-lasting impact locally, nationally and internationally.

## **2. Mandate**

After huge success at the inaugural conference in 2024 and increasing requests for more spaces like this be created. Office of Vice-Provost (EDI-AR) will be hosting an annual two-day conference in 2025. The purpose of this event is to bring everyone under one roof to be able to share their experiences, ideas, research, and other matters related to EDI-AR.

## **3. Composition of Working Group Members**

Call for composition of working group members for the EDI-AR was shared with university community with the purpose of having representatives of all equity-deserving groups amongst all Memorial campuses. Call was generated for two sub-committees – Call for Submissions and Logistics. In total, we received fourteen members interested to participate in call for submissions and four members for logistics group. Members varied from faculty, students, staff and researchers. Main purpose to have call for working group was to create capacity building within Memorial, especially for students. However, one individual from out of province approached the Office of Vice-Provost EDI-AR to be part of the logistics group as they wanted to partake in the EDI-AR conference that was first time being organized by a Canadian University.

Both working groups had different roles and responsibilities. All members of the working group had equal status during meetings and discussions and had following responsibilities:

### **3.1 Submission Working Group Members Expectations**

- a)** Review submission guidelines and discuss changes during meetings – in person or via email.
- b)** Orientation was provided by Dr. Mullings prior to reviewing the submission abstracts. Intention was to create capacity building and skills development. Majority of submissions were accepted with few submissions that needed guidance that was approached by the Vice-Provost (EDI-AR).

c) Due to high volume of submissions, working group members were divided in teams to review abstracts and provide feedback effectively.

### **3.2 Logistics Working Group Members Expectations**

- a) As there are many moving parts that the logistics members need to orchestrate including: venue selection and venue logistics like capacity, layout, and set up.
- b) Managing catering and dietary requirements, accessibility needs.
- c) Technical considerations for all guests and speakers attending, including organizing interpreter for the event. Visual equipment, parking etc.
- d) Creating detailed timelines and schedules for event day.
- e) Contingency plans for potential issues and changes.
- f) Managing ticket sales and event budget.
- g) Creating and managing volunteer contacts and schedule.
- h) Collaborating with external stakeholders.

## **4. Event Attendance and Feedback**

As an inaugural EDI-AR hybrid conference was being hosted at Memorial for the first time approximately 250 individuals attended from across the globe. Out of 250 attendees, approximately 50 attended (including presenters) virtually. Keeping audience in mind, different price points were chosen to accommodate everyone – in person, virtual attendance, students, unwaged and underemployed. There were certain circumstances where complimentary tickets were issued to accommodate attendees and make it as accessible as possible.

Throughout the event, attendees (in person and virtually) had the opportunity to provide feedback regarding the event. Feedback included (verbal and survey):

- 4.1 “Great event”
- 4.2 “Amazing list of presenters and effective discussion”
- 4.3 “Not enough time for presenters. Would like to hear more about their work.”
- 4.4 “Next year’s conference has to be more than one day”.
- 4.5 “More time to be assigned for networking”
- 4.6 “Methodologies applied by presenters were very informative”
- 4.7 “Networking session with presenters”
- 4.8 “Outstanding choice for Keynote Speaker”

Considering effective feedback from this year’s event. Office of Vice-Provost EDI-AR will be hosting day and a half conference in 2025 – Thursday, May 22 and Friday, May 23.

## 5. Challenges

Throughout the conference planning there were challenges and limitations that made an impact pre and post event. Some of these challenges included:

**5.1** Budget constraints – Office of Vice-Provost EDI-AR received funding only from Office of Research (Conference Fund \$2,500.00). This put lot of pressure and risk taking to sell event tickets in order to breakeven.

**5.3** Limited resources – leading to big conference. EDI-AR office was short staff with no access to marketing and communication advisor and executive assistant to assist with event promotions and other related tasks. This resulted into delaying the processes involved with getting materials ready for the conference and communications with attendees.

**5.4** Post event marketing and communications have not been effectively met due to absence of marketing and communications advisor. Uploading event videos and sharing 2025 event information with attendees has been delayed due to limited resources.

## 6. Conclusion

Overall with such a positive experience had by the attendees, more resources are required to sustain and maintain conference planning. With increase in demand for conference to be extended to day and a half provides presenters and attendees an opportunity to share their experiences and opportunities related to EDI-AR. 2025 being the 100<sup>th</sup> commemoration for Memorial University provides a platform for attendees to be on campus and partake in other activities happening on campus around that time.