



WE BELONG. **TOGETHER.**

INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN 2025 – 2030



THE OC INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN

We all belong here, together.

At Okanagan College, we have a vision of welcoming everyone as partners into an inclusive community where all of us are supported to thrive through sustainable growth, creativity, and innovation. The Inspire Strategic Plan responds to our contemporary social environment and future community visions by committing to create a culture of inclusivity for learners and employees; using principles of equity, diversity, inclusion and social justice to ensure that access and success is available to everyone; and demonstrating such distinction in our efforts that the community recognizes us as leaders.

Guided by the Inspire Strategy and the Board of Governor's 2022 Statement, our Inclusive Community Plan (ICP) demonstrates our commitments to *belonging here together* and outlines our investments in the development phase of this work. The vision is our compass, and as we act, the next steps in our journey will emerge.

This plan aims to enhance the sense of belonging for everyone at OC: learners, employees, leaders, community partners. Our vision of a culture of inclusion recognizes how important it is to **gather** as a community, **grow** through learning and teaching, **share** knowledge that we gain through our actions, and **hold** personal and institutional responsibility for making these commitments a reality. These four pillars shape our actions to build a truly inclusive community.

Our commitments guide our actions.

We understand that this work is not achieved in isolation, but rather is threaded through everything we do together, as an integrated core of ethos, planning, function, and practice. By prioritizing strategic pillars that build collective belonging, develop our competencies by scaffolding learning and growth, share our emerging knowledge, and establish personal and institutional accountability, we are aligning our Inclusive Community Plan to broader goals of an organizational culture of togetherness.

We understand that the principles of equity, diversity, inclusion, and social justice are essential to reaching our vision of a culture of inclusion for everyone. We use these principles to identify barriers to full and equitable inclusion, such as cost, access to transportation and technology, social dynamics, and systemic patterns and the availability of services, supports, and resources in formats that meet diverse needs. Understanding the differential impact of these barriers guides our efforts to ensure that access and success are available for all our learners and employees.

We understand that our Inclusive Community Plan is a living and learning document. We are committed to evidence-based practice and have structured time for evaluation, redevelopment, and extension after the first two years of developmental action items. The feedback loops we develop, and the new practices and knowledges we create, will help transform lives and communities by transforming how we learn, teach, work, and connect with each other.

We understand that culture change happens through both personal and institutional commitments. We centre inclusion in our decision-making, and we supplement protocols for developing equitable, accessible, and inclusive policies and procedures with initiatives oriented towards belonging as something we build together and benefit from together.

We understand that innovation, creativity, and ongoing learning enables us to play a leadership role in sustainable excellence in post-secondary education. Our actions are rooted in our identity as an institution of knowledge and community, with deep roots and a compelling future.

Let's begin, together.

The Inclusive Community Plan is our shared path to belonging. It guides our institutional and personal responsibilities to each other and our communities, investing in organizational structures, concrete initiatives and relational opportunities that support all of us to thrive here. By gathering, growing, sharing and holding each other accountable, we create a community that reflects our values and supports everyone to thrive. Inclusion is how we show up every day, with care and respect. Success depends on all of us. We invite you to help shape the culture we want to belong to.

Together, we will build an inclusive future at Okanagan College.

“Where can we open space for inclusion today?”

Acknowledgement

To belong is to feel rooted not just to each other, as a community, and our places and times of significance, but to our lands and waters. In speaking of belonging, therefore, we honour the First Nations lands in which Okanagan College resides, and we affirm our responsibility to walk together and learn together in a good way.

OUR COMMITMENT

Okanagan College's Board of Governors recognizes that a strategic focus on equity, diversity, inclusion, and social justice is essential to the well-being of the College and all its members. Our mission is to transform lives and communities. We are committed to imbuing the principles of equity, diversity, inclusion, and social justice into every corner of the College and thus into every possible aspect of how we can fulfill that mission.

We are committed to educating ourselves on what and how we can do better by being vulnerable and through our continuous commitment to learn, unlearn, and re-learn. We are persistent in planning how we can build upon the steps taken in the past and present. The Board commits to embrace the principles of equity, diversity, inclusion and social justice in its deliberations and decisions and through the process of appointing members to the Board.

GATHER

WE GATHER

Community and Culture

Careful, collaborative approaches to conferences, events, workshops, and other modes of gathering establish engagement, dialogue, cultural learning, active listening, and mutual respect as our community norm, so that everyone’s experiences and capacities add richness and value to belonging at OC.

2025-26 ACTIONS

Partner with learners and their representatives to pilot initiatives that engage students in defining, shaping, and creating a meaningful culture of inclusion, including StudentWorks and Community Conversations (on & off campus connections)

Create, resource and implement framework for Employee Resource Groups (ERG) that create employee-led opportunities to gather and generate a culture of participation, connection, and inclusion

2026-27 ACTIONS

Extend partnerships with learners and their representatives into regular Community Conversations, on campuses and online, to connect academic leadership and diverse student communities

Annual review of ERG workplans and alignment to ICP matrix

WHERE WE’RE HEADING

We imagine an OC where learners are not just welcomed, but actively shape the culture of inclusion, on every campus and in every learning space. Employees collaborate across teams and roles, and with external partners where appropriate, to foster belonging, and those efforts are supported and celebrated. As we listen and learn from one another, we work to identify and remove barriers that prevent full participation in college life. Through gatherings, partnerships, and shared moments – big and small – we make our commitment to inclusion real and visible, inside the college and across the communities we serve.



GROW

WE GROW

Learning and Teaching

Intentional focus on what and how we learn and teach supports everyone in the community to grow and contribute to our culture of inclusion, through curriculum and universal design for learning, professional development, targeted supports for learners and instructors, and community-engaged learning.

2025-26 ACTIONS

Collaborative PD delivery to support inclusive learning and teaching, including inaugural Celebration of Teaching Conference and Community of Practice framework

Gap/needs analysis and scoping for foundational equity, accessibility, and inclusion learning for all employees (formal and experiential)

Framework, ToR, and process for Curriculum Resource Table (incl. TLI/ Indigenization/AD, EDI)

2026-27 ACTIONS

Framework for annual Teaching Excellence program for new and existing educators

Learning framework for employees: program vision and foundational knowledge

Pilot Curriculum Resource Table (incl. TLI/ Indigenization/AD, EDI)

WHERE WE'RE HEADING

As we learn from our actions, OC becomes a place where everyone grows through inclusivity: where diverse knowledge systems are reflected, universal design for learning makes education accessible to all, and learning expectations are carefully scaffolded. Employees across every role are supported to understand and live out our commitments to equity and belonging, so that inclusive community becomes a shared responsibility. We want people to be proud of being part of OC. When barriers to growth or access arise, we respond, because everyone deserves to have their place here. Learning requires the safety to try new things and make mistakes along the way, and we value the courage it takes to show up with a learner's mindset. Through consistent, community-rooted learning, we develop a culture that values reflection and unlearning as much as expertise, until we are known for how we learn together, not just what we teach.



SHARE WE SHARE

Knowledge in Action

Strategic initiatives and partnerships within OC and in community trial innovations, build academic, professional, and industry networks, and mobilize knowledge to advance evidence-based, relational, participatory approaches to inclusion, so that our strengths as a post-secondary applied research institution guide us and our partners.

2025-26 ACTIONS

Evaluation Plan, Phase 1: develop framework for gathering, storing, evaluating, sharing data (DAR and SEM for baselines and metrics); trial and refine

Co-create pilot leadership resource and support network with community partners

Develop framework and protocol for workshops/conferences/ symposia, to clarify strategic priorities and strategic partnerships, and roles, responsibilities, and resources, to advance OC as a leader in inclusive community

2026-27 ACTIONS

Evaluation Plan, Phase 2: systematic application of data gathering processes; partnership development (AR, ABA: CRE; Social Service, etc)

Scope applied research and knowledge mobilization funding to extend impact and evaluation

WHERE WE'RE HEADING

At OC, knowledge isn't static - it moves with us as we move forward. As we renew processes, programs and curricula, we'll integrate applied knowledge of inclusion, so that people experience learning that reflects the world they live in and the world they're shaping. We'll create feedback systems that track what's working and make space for learning when it's not, so our culture evolves alongside our insights. Inclusive knowledge will be gathered from many places: research, community stories, classroom innovations, collaborations, and lived experiences. And inclusive knowledge will be shared just as widely, celebrating the wisdom in all of it. In partnership with others, we'll mobilize what we've learned by supporting knowledge-sharing initiatives to help build stronger, more inclusive communities beyond our campuses.



HOLD WE HOLD

Shared Accountability



We embed our commitments to inclusive community, rooted in equity and accessibility, into our systems, processes, and practices; we have protocols for ensuring inclusion-focused leadership guides our work; and we have mechanisms to remove barriers and address concerns, so that we hold ourselves accountable for our actions.

2025-26 ACTIONS

Governance Framework Protocols for EDI leadership in planning; and implementation/change management taskforce

ERG organizational framework and 'Gather' event framework

Accessibility Plan 2026-2029

Trial and evaluate accessible feedback mechanisms for OC

Support Portfolios/Departments to develop priorities, plans and responsibilities

Sign Dimensions Charter; prep for LOI

Inclusive Integrity Framework

2026-27 ACTIONS

Defined community and culture gatherings integrated into ERG and departmental workplans

Pilot structured feedback mechanism for OC community

Support Portfolios/Departments to implement and manage their Inclusive Community priorities and plans

LOI for Dimensions program support; prep for application

WHERE WE'RE HEADING

Inclusion is a responsibility we all hold and share, and we can only achieve it together. We will build governance and decision-making structures that invite all of us - engaging as learners, educators, colleagues, and leaders - to shape what inclusive education looks like, making the college more responsive and welcoming for all. Every team and role will carry clear commitments to equity, accessibility, and respect, empowering each other to act and holding each other accountable. Inclusion-centred perspectives will be integrated into planning and decision-making, through both EDI leadership roles and shared competencies. We'll create safe, accessible channels for feedback and concerns, ensuring real change happens and trust grows as we address real barriers, such as discrimination, bias, affordability, and access to spaces, services, and processes. Our systems and partnerships will be designed so inclusion is not only practiced within OC, but becomes a shared value throughout the communities we serve.

How will we work?

Our commitments to equity, inclusivity, and accessibility are guided by the OC Vision and Mission. Our strategic pillars intersect with the four quadrants of the Inspire Plan to shape our long-term vision for sustained and meaningful impact, as outlined in this matrix [link]. The six core values at Okanagan College are essential to a culture of inclusion. They guide how we act and how we evaluate our efforts.

LEARNER FIRST: We welcome all learners and create a sense of belonging for everyone, in all campus spaces and learning environments, by building meaningful relationships, celebrating strengths and diversities, supporting accessible and equitable access to all our programs and services, and pursuing excellence in teaching and learning in response to student needs.

COMMUNITY: We embody inclusive community by fostering collaborative structures where inclusion is a shared responsibility. We set expectations, build relationships, prioritize communication, and develop evidence-based action plans.

RESPECT: We respect and affirm the dignity and worth of all members of the College and broader community by holding space for different backgrounds and contexts. We respect the continuous work required to sustain inclusive community by recognizing and rewarding efforts, celebrating our community successes, and maintaining meaningful structures of accountability.

COURAGE: We act with courage that is rooted in the strength of our relationships and our shared responsibility to inclusive community. We are brave enough to engage in self-reflection and ongoing learning/unlearning, raise questions, and address differences with kindness, empathy, and respect.

RELATIONSHIPS: We place relationships at the centre of our inclusive community, creating a rich and dynamic cultural environment for learners, employees, and partners. We prioritize trust, value curiosity, and promote mutual understanding. We foster space and time for community by supporting the dialogues and experiences that connect us to each other.

DISTINCTION: We build a culture of distinction that aligns with our culture of inclusion by making everyone accountable for embracing diverse perspectives, which leads to innovation and continuous improvement.

What do we mean by equity, diversity, inclusion, and social justice?

Okanagan College has defined our words carefully and collaboratively, and our efforts to ground our Inclusive Community Plan in these principles align with the commitment from our Board of Governors.

EQUITY: Equity is the concept of fairness, acceptance, and belonging.

INCLUSION: Inclusion is an organizational effort and practice ensuring different groups and/or individuals having different backgrounds are culturally and socially accepted and welcomed.

DIVERSITY: Diversity acknowledges that each person is unique and their individual differences are respected.

SOCIAL JUSTICE: Social justice is the recognition that systems were built to perpetuate the power and influence of select groups or individuals and will continue to do so without conscious effort to actively break down these systems.

How will we know if our efforts are working?

The Inclusive Community Plan is the heart of our shared culture of belonging. It guides our institutional and personal responsibilities to each other and our communities, investing in organizational structures, concrete initiatives, and relational opportunities that support everyone to thrive here. We are committed to a living, learning, evidence-based approach to building inclusive community for everyone. In practice, during our development phase, our ways of working will be both structured and exploratory, scaffolded to support experimentation and learning from what works and what doesn't. We will design our actions to gather information before, during, and after, and partner with DAR and SEM to establish and gather both the quantitative metrics and qualitative feedback that are necessary for effective evaluation. In Year 3, we will undertake a comprehensive assessment of impact to date and develop longer-term action items based on the evidence that emerges over the first two years. This approach acknowledges that change can be complex and uneven, and that subjective experience is a valid part of understanding impact. In taking this approach, we are consistent with evidence-based practice in post-secondary institutions in Canada.

How was the Inclusive Community Plan created?

This plan has been developed through consistent collaboration and targeted engagement with employees, students and their representatives, and community members. The focus on voice, participation, co-creation, and continual validation sets the foundation for the work to come, particularly the work to engage more broadly as we move through our development phase and prepare to go forward into the future.

EDISJ Steering Committee: Gill Henderson (Chair), Jenn Goodwin, Roen Janyk, Stephen Speers, Alison Gibson, James Coble, Anthony Grzegorzewski [former members: Sakura Hirata, Laura Thurnheer]

EDISJ Strategy Working Group: Delacey Tedesco (Lead), Kelly Brochu, Youry Khmelevsky, Tiana Langedyk, Kisun Kim, Sara Cousins [former members: Shannon Hawthorne, Gaylene Turner, Gitan Rakhra, Kirsten Hearne]

Anti-Racism Working Group: Rachel Adair (Lead), Terry Bridges, Kennidi Rushton, Megan Gray, Charlene Waddell, Margaret Scharf, Ladi Bil, Sora Chang [former members: Jade Bethune, Ifeoma Obianwu, Sakura Hirata, Sarah Lefebure]

Employee Learning and Recruitment Working Group: Jacqui Noftall (Lead), Roen Janyk, Amanda Langhorn, Elizabeth Stankiewicz, Kara McIntyre, Chantale Hutchinson, Delaney Ross, Shahid Wazed

Policy and Procedure Working Group: Samantha Sandhu (Acting Lead), Charlene Waddell, Helena Jordo, Sasha Johnston, DeAnna MacArthur, Youry Khmelevsky [former members: Shani Herath]

2sLGBTQQIA+ Working Group: Delacey Tedesco (Lead), Chandra McCann, Eva Gavaris, Frithjof Petscheleith, Stephen Holmes [former members: Angie March, Carlyn Young, Cassidy Acheson, Heather Carson, Jillian Garrett, Shannon Stewart]

EDISJ Vision to Action workshop series

Invited participants: Executive; EDISJ Steering Committee; all Working Group members; Strategy Leads

Foundations - November 27: Facilitated visioning session with Executive Team

Session #1 - November 28: Facilitated visioning session with all other invited participants
OCSU Equity Committee and VSA-OC Student Council: Visioning session feedback
Session #2 asynchronous preparatory work: Existing EDISJ initiatives mapped onto Inspire Quadrant

Session #2 - March 25: Where have we been and where are we now? (1.5 hours/online)
In-session polls: Feedback questions and answers
Session #3 asynchronous preparatory work: OC core values as priorities for EDISJ work
(card sort - employees)

Session #3 - March 31: Workshop documentation; Certainty/Agreement matrix; Outcome-Based Plan
OCSU Equity Committee and VSA-OC Student Council: OC core values for EDISJ work
(card sort – students) On Campus April 8-10: End of term student engagement in collaboration with
OCSU and VSA-OC – responses

Inclusive Community Plan review

April – June: informal feedback/validation and formal consultation schedule



Appendix: Acronym Key

2sLGBTQQIA+: Two-spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, Asexual Plus (other identifications)

ABA: CRE: Applied Bachelor of Arts: Community Research and Evaluation

AD, EDI: Associate Director, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

AR: Applied Research

CEC: Community Engagement and Careers

CR: College Relations

DAR: Data Analytics and Reporting

EDISJ: Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Social Justice

ERG: Employee Resource Group

ICP: Inclusive Community Plan

LOI: Letter of Intent

OC: Okanagan College

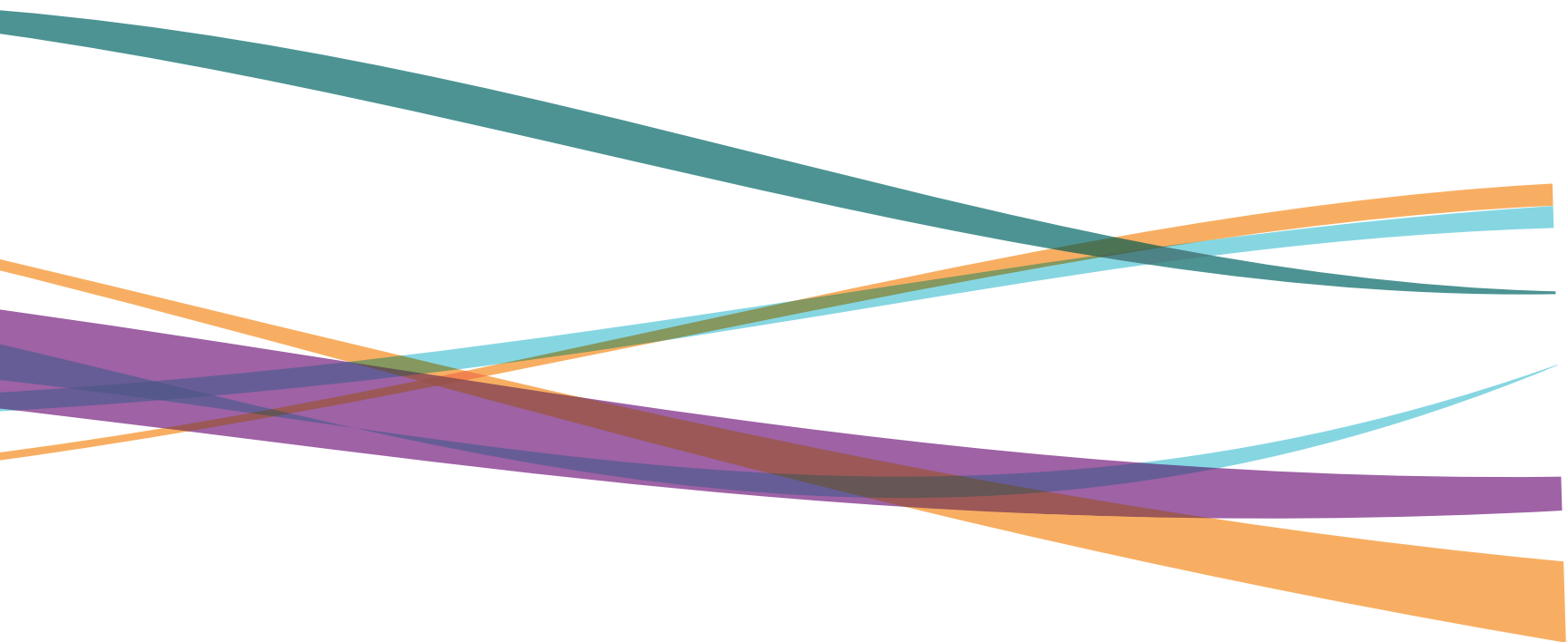
OCSU: Okanagan College Student Union

PD: Professional Development

SEM: Strategic Enrollment Management

TLI: Teaching and Learning Innovations

VSA-OC: Vernon Student Association of Okanagan College



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