Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

JANUARY 2021

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Territorial Acknowledgement

NAIT respectfully honours and acknowledges that it is located on traditional Treaty 6 territory and an important trading center for the Métis people.

Connecting the Four Directions

Through Connecting the Four Directions, we endeavour to bring Aboriginal ways of knowing to NAIT's promises. We believe in the essential contributions of Aboriginal people and communities. We acknowledge our responsibility to develop opportunities with Aboriginal people and to accurately represent and include Aboriginal cultures, histories and systems of knowledge relevant to Aboriginal communities and concerns.

Use of the term Aboriginal

In this strategic plan NAIT has used the term "Aboriginal" in the spirit of its use in section 35 [2] of the Canadian Constitution, to refer inclusively to members of First Nations (status and non-status, treaty and non-treaty), Métis, and Inuit Peoples in Canada. NAIT recognizes and respects that many people prefer the terms that are specific and traditional to their communities.

Key Terms

Equity

Equity is actively and intentionally ensuring justice and fairness in outcomes for all people.

Diversity

The many shared and different individual and group experiences, values, beliefs, and characteristics among people.

Inclusion

The active and intentional promotion of a sense of belonging and dignity that ensures all people are safe, respected and valued.

NAIT Community

Refers to the Board of Governors, management, faculty and staff, contractors, vendors, tenants, volunteers, and students (current and prospective) of NAIT.

Barrier

Anything that prevents or blocks people from participating in society fully and equally.

Marginalization

Disadvantaging or excluding some communities, individuals and aspects of identity in relation to others. People who experience marginalization may or may not also view it as part of their personal identity.

Discrimination

The unjust or prejudiced treatment of people based on aspects of identity.

Oppression

The unjust or cruel exercise of power or authority resulting in one group benefitting at the expense of another. People who experience oppression may or may not also view it as part of their personal identity.

Systemic

Occurring, reproduced and reinforced at an institutional or societal level.

Intersectionality

A way of understanding the many overlapping and interconnected aspects of identity that shape how people exist and are perceived, especially as related to marginalization.

Message from the President

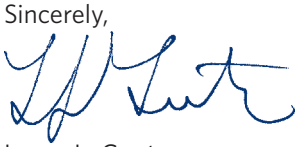
NAIT's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy represents a powerful way forward for our polytechnic and I am proud to champion this direction. NAIT values equity, diversity and inclusion and this strategy demonstrates our commitment to creating environments on our campuses that reflect these values every day. Although we are in the formative stage of our journey, and we have a long road ahead of us, we are committed to listening, learning and evolving.

We take pride in NAIT's culture — it draws students, staff, and industry and community partners to our polytechnic. We have a duty to evolve and strengthen this culture to ensure all people feel safe, respected and valued. Advancing equity, diversity and inclusion ensures we have the best possible place to work and learn, where everyone can participate and feel they belong. Bringing diverse perspectives and ideas to the table across NAIT will deepen our culture of innovation and transformation which is critical for our future success.

NAIT is an economic driver in Alberta, serving industry and providing the skilled graduates needed for a prosperous future. However, our impact can be much greater. We also have the ability—and the responsibility— to be a leader in social change. Industry needs a workforce that understands and appreciates equity, diversity and inclusion and they expect this from our graduates. We believe cultivating these values in our community is key to Alberta's prosperity and this strategy will be the roadmap that guides the way for NAIT.

Everyone in our community plays an essential role in making NAIT more equitable, diverse and inclusive. It will require continuous effort by all in order to see meaningful change at NAIT and beyond. I invite everyone to reflect on their role in advancing this strategy and to participate as the strategy is implemented. As a community, we can learn from one another as we rise together.

Sincerely,



Laura Jo Gunter

Staff and Student Endorsements

AUPE

AUPE LOCAL 38 is dedicated to NAIT's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and the stated commitments and actions, which will help us work toward inclusion for students, staff and faculty on our NAIT campuses.

We will support efforts to remove barriers for marginalized groups; develop and review policies and procedures using the lenses of equity, diversity, and inclusion; and to create spaces and places that promote equity. Our recruitment practices show a commitment to diversity, with the intention of creating an inclusive campus where staff and students alike, feel welcome and equal. We celebrate the great diversity we have in the NAIT Community.

We support that the strategy aligns with AUPE's Statement of Equality and the Duties of the Human Rights Committee recognizing a lot of the same factors. We recognize that the commitment we're making together requires examining progress and lessons learned to ensure that resources we're investing are based on the best available evidence and contributing to a more inclusive space to work, learn, and live. We look forward to working and learning with you through the implementation of NAIT's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy.

AUPE LOCAL 38

NAITSA

NAITSA stands with NAIT in its commitment to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, moving together towards a campus where opportunities for excellence and success belong to everyone. Every NAIT student should feel supported, included, and valued by having access to the programs, supports and academic flexibility to reach their goals.

In sharing this commitment with NAIT, and the NAIT community, NAITSA will continue to offer services, resources and programs that endeavour to meet EDI principles, and continue to listen, learn, and grow.

NAIT's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy is an important step towards recognizing that while the student has a responsibility for their own success, the institution, and community, is responsible for creating an environment where every student has the same opportunities to succeed.

NAIT Students' Association

NASA

As President of the NAIT Academic Staff Association, I believe in and support NAIT's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy.

NAIT's Academic Staff Association (NASA) believes wholeheartedly in building community with strong values. Faculty is committed to the ongoing the work required to progress from tolerance to inclusion. We envision that we will rise together as an institute and as a society

Garry Wilson RSE
President, NAIT Academic Staff Association

Acknowledging

There are various experiences with and perceptions of equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) at NAIT. NAIT's stated approaches to equity, diversity and inclusion are not and will not be reflective of all peoples' lived experience. We use the pronoun "we" throughout this strategy to engage every member of the NAIT community and emphasize that this is collective work. However, NAIT earnestly acknowledges that some people have not had and do not have equitable or inclusive experiences at and with our institution. In many cases, this collective "we" has yet to be fully realized.

NAIT is in the formative stages of its equity, diversity, and inclusion journey. As these conversations become part of our institutional practice and more members of the NAIT community are engaged, the social, political, and economic nature of this work must be acknowledged. We will need to think critically about ourselves, our learning, our work and our institution. We will need to have difficult conversations. We will need to listen. We will need to re-evaluate. We will need to change. This work is hard. There will be uncomfortable moments as we turn outward to build new relationships, but also as we challenge our own assumptions, worldviews and biases. There will be times when we make mistakes and times when we fall short. It is through this difficulty, this discomfort and this failure that we can become resilient and make progress. Our future success lies in the shared, continuous, iterative and often complex work of translating this strategy into meaningful change.

Aspiring

As we approach this work, we must acknowledge that there is no finish line. NAIT's commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion encompasses a journey, not a destination. As a community, we strive to continuously practice the learning, reflection and work critical to progress. We aspire to engage and support all people and all facets of the institution in opposing oppression and discrimination on a continuous basis.

Call to Action

NAIT is at a crossroads. While this strategy has been in development for several years, we are publishing it during a time of upheaval. Participating in significant institutional transformation, working through a global pandemic, and serving as eyewitness to broad social reform, change has never been more within reach. Communities have come together to share what a more just, equitable, and fair society can look like. The work of these groups, often marginalized populations, proves what is possible when action is taken by a critical mass of people. The success of this strategy relies on that same investment from individuals across our institution. The NAIT community must become that critical mass of people investing in matters of equity, diversity and inclusion at and for NAIT.

The nature of polytechnic education attracts passionate, dedicated, and curious staff and students. The NAIT community has demonstrated an exemplary commitment to supporting one another; we celebrate achievements and milestones, and we also lift each other up in times of hardship and comfort each other during tragedy. We must demonstrate this same commitment to advancing equity, diversity and inclusion. We must ensure all people can access, participate at and experience a sense of belonging within NAIT.

Every one of us plays an essential role in making NAIT a more equitable, diverse and inclusive community. Your community.

Principles

NAIT's actions and attitudes around matters of equity, diversity and inclusion are guided by four principles. These principles are the foundation from which we will R.I.S.E. together as a community.

Resourced

An institutional commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI)requires resources. NAIT considers equity, diversity and inclusion institutional priorities. Recognizing that change occurs at various levels and scales across the institution and that resources are always finite, we are mindful of equity, diversity and inclusion as we allocate time, effort, budget and other resources. Equity, diversity and inclusion play a vital role in our work and learning and there are exciting opportunities to impactfully and sustainably integrate associated philosophies and practices into all that we do.

Iterative

The EDI strategy is a continuous project and a living document, evolving with the NAIT community and our knowledge. The dynamic horizons of this work mean we must ensure NAIT remains relevant and accountable through engagement, assessment, learning, understanding, collaborating and adapting, as institutional approaches and strategic plans develop in dialogue with the NAIT community. To truly be a living document, this strategy and the action it inspires from each of us must evolve over time.

Shared Responsibility

NAIT appreciates both the capacity for and influence of personal and institutional change. To inspire meaningful action, NAIT must engage and empower every person to shape our institution at every level. Likewise, all individuals across NAIT are accountable for equity, diversity and inclusion. While leadership must be invested and involved in the work, becoming an institution that champions and lives the values of equity, diversity and inclusion is not a “top down” process, but happens in all directions, at all scales.

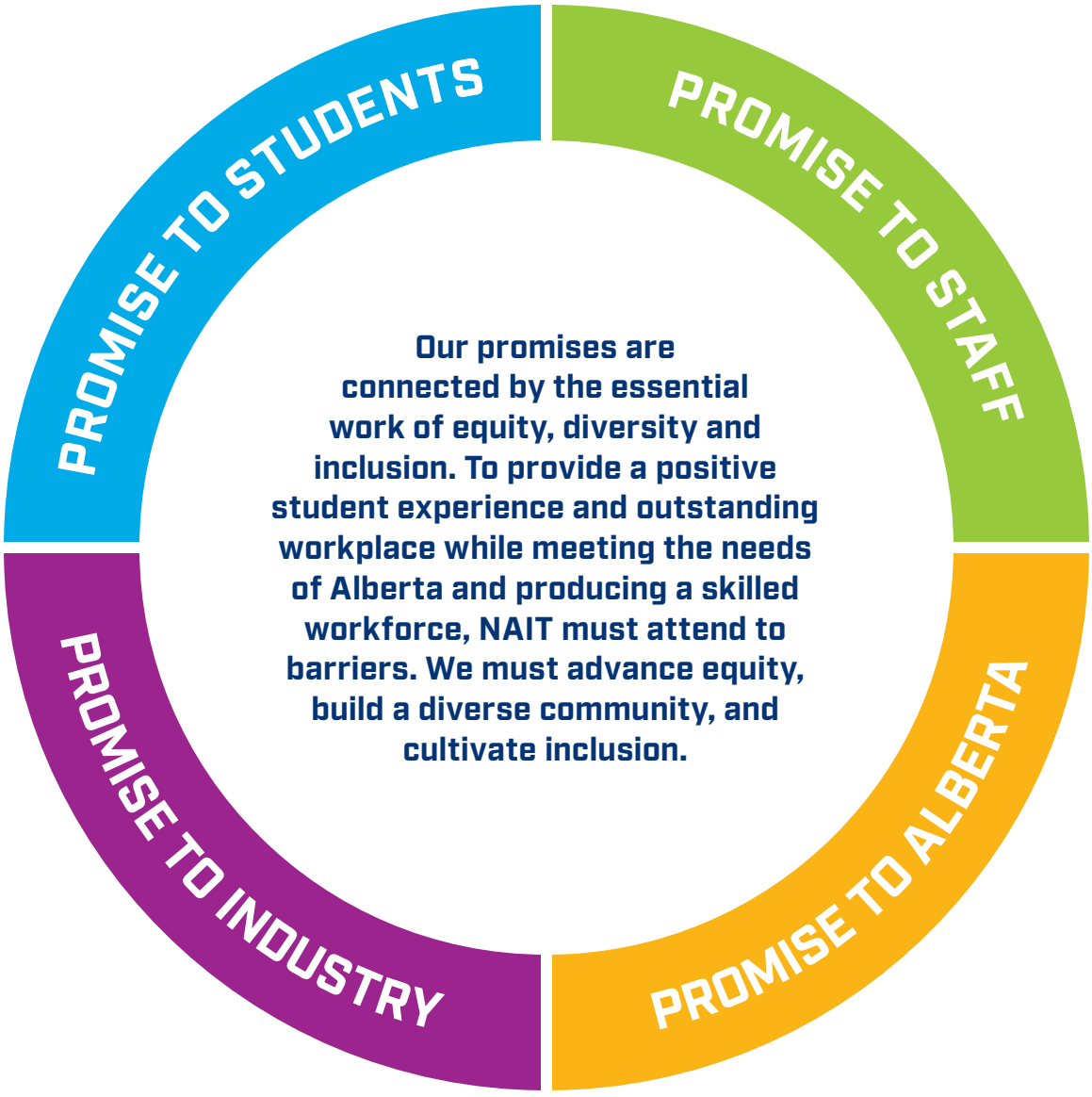
Empower

Considering we all play a role in equity, diversity and inclusion, NAIT must provide all community members with the tools and ability to drive meaningful change. Implementation of the EDI strategy will require collaboration as NAIT engages individuals and groups to identify opportunities, implement strategy and ensure accountability in ways that are meaningful to their learning, work and areas of influence. Champions of equity, diversity and inclusion throughout NAIT must be supported and empowered.

Understanding

NAIT is a diverse community, with many unique intersectional identities and experiences represented throughout. This strategy is informed by the NAIT community, for the NAIT community. The approaches within this strategy are supported by surveys, discussions, and engagement with NAIT students and staff. Much of the community's feedback is validated by a rich foundation of equity, diversity and inclusion research and best practices.

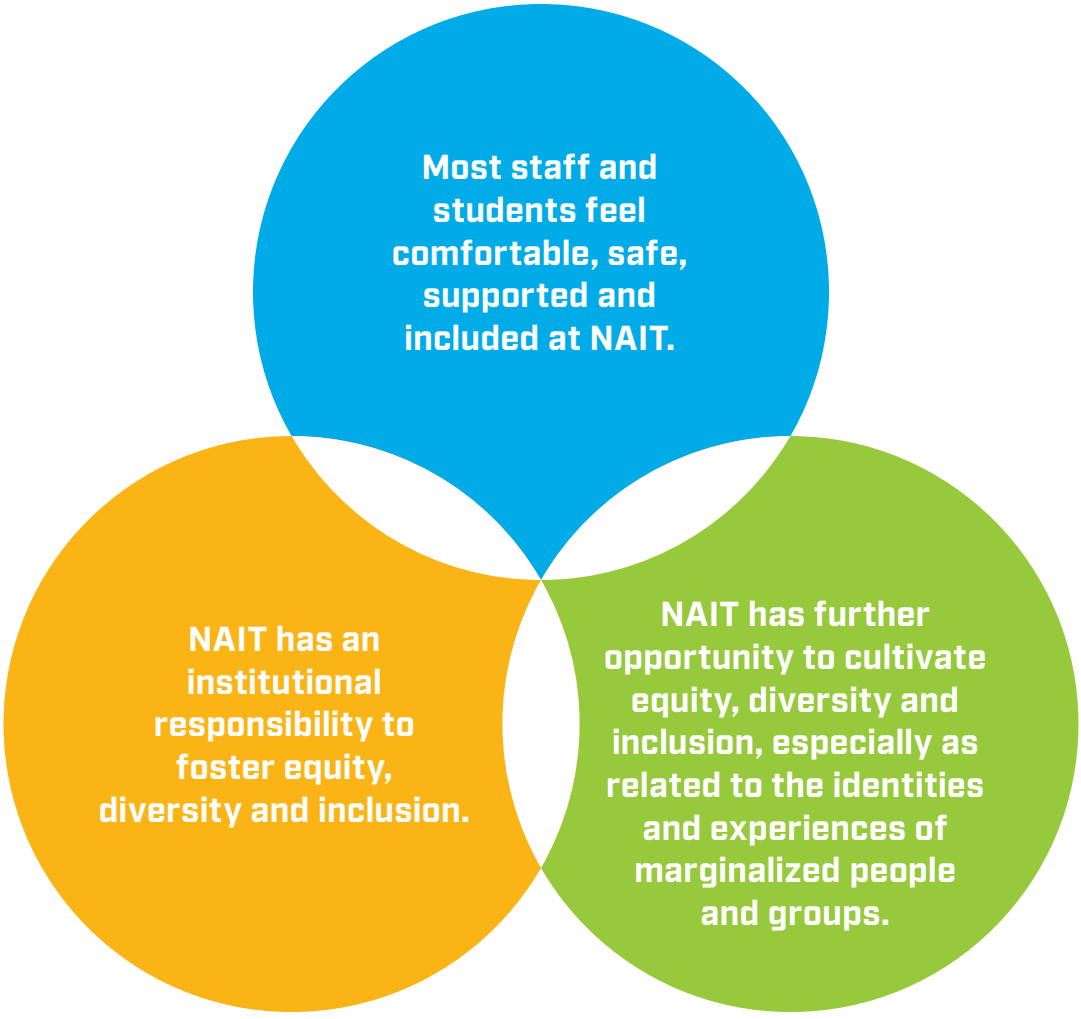
How does centering equity, diversity and inclusion impact the NAIT community and our environment?



How do equity, diversity and inclusion relate to NAIT's values?

What does the NAIT community say about equity, diversity and inclusion?

In 2018, NAIT delivered a diversity and inclusion survey to all staff and students. This survey explored the community's perceptions, experiences, and beliefs about equity, diversity and inclusion, and provided insights around the diversity of the NAIT community. While the results of the survey were encouraging, they also showed opportunities for improvement and growth.



NAIT Community Engagement Details

Topic	What is working?	What can we improve?
Comfort	Most NAIT students and staff are comfortable being open about their identities	Some NAIT students and staff are not comfortable being open about marginalized, stigmatized or underrepresented aspects of their identities
Safety and Inclusion	Most NAIT students and staff feel safe and included at NAIT	Less students than staff perceive themselves as members of the NAIT community Minority populations are more likely to feel excluded at NAIT
Judgement	Most NAIT students and staff do not feel frequently judged or stereotyped by others	Approximately half of NAIT students and staff feel that they are sometimes judged and stereotyped Minority populations are more likely to feel judged at NAIT
Discrimination	The majority of NAIT students and staff rarely experience or witness discriminatory comments or actions	Discrimination does occur and presents itself in various ways, at various levels of the institution
Institutional commitment and culture	The majority of NAIT students and staff view NAIT as an inclusive and welcoming community that provides effective diversity and inclusion services and resources	Minority populations are less likely to view NAIT as committed to inclusion
Institutional responsibility	NAIT students and staff strongly believe that NAIT should accommodate difference and foster diversity and inclusion	A variety of qualitative and demographic data offers valuable insights into how NAIT can further equity and inclusion

What do research, best practices and proven strategies say about equity, diversity and inclusion?

Students and staff benefit from diverse higher education environments

- Diverse interactions decrease bias
- Diverse interactions further critical thinking and problem-solving abilities for students
- Diverse interactions improve academic performance for students
- Diverse interactions prepare students for life in society
- Learning and working environments that encourage diverse ways of thinking and diverse relationship-building foster resiliency
- Diversity provides opportunities for staff to experience and participate in meaningful change
- Diversity improves the work environment

Institutions benefit from intentional approaches around equity, diversity and inclusion

- Institutions that provide formal (curricular) and informal opportunities for diverse interactions more readily prepare their students for positive relationships with classmates and future colleagues
- Prioritization of equity, diversity and inclusion improves organizational climate and culture
- Diversity leads to increased institutional creativity and innovation

Marginalized people and groups encounter more barriers

- Stereotyping and microaggressions toward marginalized groups occur within post-secondary environments
- Marginalized populations tend to be underrepresented in post-secondary student and staff populations
- Historical injustices contribute to educational challenges
- Discrimination occurs in different ways and at different levels, from interpersonal interactions to the very structures and systems that make up post-secondary institutions
- Barriers limit student access and participation
- Identity is layered and complex, and people can be marginalized based on various aspects of identity

Meaningful diverse interactions require intentional institutional efforts

- Diversity alone is not enough
- Institutions should create facilitated opportunities for positive diverse interactions
- Staff and leadership should include marginalized populations
- Integrating diversity and inclusion philosophies into classroom or curricular approaches is recommended
- Equity, diversity and inclusion resources should be made available to staff and students
- Engagement is important to creating inclusive campuses
- Institutions should engage marginalized people and groups in identifying problems and defining solutions
- Non-marginalized populations should be involved in forwarding equity, diversity and inclusion
- Institutions should consider and improve equity, diversity and inclusion strategically
- Institutions should seek to understand their own populations and environments

Diverse staff and student bodies are essential to inclusive post-secondary

- Diversity is a precursor to inclusion
- Diverse perspectives further equity and inclusion

Resources are necessary to help students and staff navigate diversity and inclusion

- Resources for staff and students help them navigate diversity and foster equity and inclusion
- Lack of resources is a common barrier to post-secondary equity, diversity and inclusion efforts

A diversity and inclusion lens should be used to assess and improve institutional planning, process and policy

- Equity, diversity and inclusion should be embedded into all institutional operations and strategy
- Historical discrimination must be recognized and considered
- Equity, diversity and inclusion efforts should be viewed as an ongoing process
- Transparency around equity, diversity and inclusion approaches is recommended

Equity, diversity and inclusion should be stated and proven as institutional priorities

- Successful equity, diversity and inclusion efforts employ an intentional, holistic and continuous approach
- Equity, diversity and inclusion efforts not being seen as an institutional priority is a common barrier

What do these understandings mean to NAIT?

NAIT's EDI Strategy celebrates diversity and builds community around the common purposes of equity and inclusion. This work is an essential component of sustainability and success. While community feedback indicates NAIT is largely on the right path, the current NAIT community is not necessarily representative of the diversity of our province. The NAIT community has also indicated the importance of this work and provided crucial insights around what progress looks like. A strategic, holistic, intentional and continuous institutional commitment to equity and inclusion will allow us to understand and actively improve NAIT's relationship with diversity.

A Strong Case for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

NAIT believes we have an inherent responsibility to foster diversity and further equity and inclusion. There are also many substantial proven benefits to doing so.

Equitable and inclusive education ensures the success and well-being of marginalized students (Benefits of institutional diversity, 2013; Long & Mejia, 2016; Benson, Heagney, Hewitt, Crosling, & Devos, 2013), and all students benefit from diverse learning environments (Chen, 2017; Student benefits of equity, inclusion & Title IX, n.d.; McBride, 2017; Denson & Bowman, 2013; Hoover, 2017). Further, diverse and inclusive organizations empower staff to participate in equity, diversity and inclusion efforts and experience better organizational outcomes (Ruebain, 2012; Azziz, 2015; McBride, 2017). Undoubtedly, NAIT is strengthened by the diverse perspectives that enrich our learning and working environments.

Involving NAIT's full community in diversity efforts, removing institutional barriers and providing support for marginalized groups builds an empathetic culture in which all people are empowered to succeed (Denson & Bowman, 2013; Hoover, 2017). We believe NAIT is exceptionally positioned to advance opportunities, skills and knowledge related to equity, diversity and inclusion in ways that benefit those at NAIT and beyond.

Individual, Institution and Environment

NAIT recognizes the interplay between community members, our institution as a whole and our external environment. Our approaches must respect the intersectional nature of identity, while acknowledging that marginalized groups and individuals experience barriers internal and external to NAIT. We must also acknowledge the importance of context.

Considering the richness of personal identity, NAIT is committed to addressing distinct challenges and needs within the NAIT community. We must respect the intersectional nature of identity to avoid umbrella solutions and generalizations. We will seek to understand and act on matters of equity, diversity, inclusion, marginalization and barriers as they relate to all marginalized people and groups at NAIT. We must recognize that individuals are not distinctly "marginalized" or "non-marginalized", but simultaneously experience discrimination and hold privilege based on how the intersections of their identity are positioned in society (Shields, 2008; Robinson, Cross-Denny, Kyeunghae Lee, Werkmeister Rozas, & Yamada, 2016).

Equity, inclusion, marginalization and barriers occur at systemic and personal levels, and everywhere in between (Long & Mejia, 2016; Benson, Heagney, Hewitt, Crosling, & Devos, 2013; Seelman, 2014; Denson & Bowman, 2013). We must promote both the individual and institutional advancement of equity and inclusion for NAIT community members, as well as collaboration with external people and groups. NAIT will take a comprehensive approach to equity, addressing barriers in all forms, at all scales, at all levels of the institution.

We must also understand the importance of context when considering matters of diversity (Benson, Heagney, Hewitt, Crosling, & Devos, 2013; Vaccaro, 2010). Acknowledging how history informs our current reality helps us move intentionally and informedly into the future. NAIT will keep our eyes on the past, present and future as we do this work.

Learning from the Minority

Not all people have like experiences and, for some, the stigma of marginalized identities creates challenges that NAIT is committed to understanding and addressing. We must listen to and learn from marginalized people and groups.

Institutional decisions are often guided by and designed for the majority (Ruebain, 2012; Understanding Institutional Diversity, 2013; Seelman, 2014; James & Taylor, 2008). This marginalizes the minority (Ruebain, 2012; Seelman, 2014; James & Taylor, 2008). In our efforts to further equity, diversity and inclusion at NAIT, we keep our commitment to all people top of mind. While most students and staff believe NAIT is an equitable, diverse and inclusive environment, the minority reflects the margins. This is important.

In considering institutional data and approaches, opportunities to advance equity, diversity and inclusion arise from listening to and driving meaningful change with marginalized populations (Azziz, 2015); (Benson, Heagney, Hewitt, Crosling, & Devos, 2013; Seelman, 2014; Caplan & Ford, 2014); (Kezar, 2007). To make NAIT an equitable and inclusive place for all community members, we must strive to understand, empower and foster equitable and inclusive interactions and environments for marginalized people and groups, regardless of population representation.

Meaningful Action

In matters of diversity, what we do is more important than what we say. NAIT's EDI Strategy inspires and is informed by action across all levels of NAIT on an ongoing basis.

Equity, diversity and inclusion are active practices (Azziz, 2015; Chen, 2017; Kezar, 2007). To put it simply, incorporating them into all aspects of our business is crucial to success (Long & Mejia, 2016; Ruebain, 2012; Azziz, 2015; Chen, 2017; Kezar, 2007). The existence of this strategy is not the same as its application.

Further, NAIT recognizes the need for ongoing assessment as part of our ongoing commitment. Responsible data collection empowers inclusion and being attuned to the diversity and experiences of the NAIT community enables us to build positive and constructive relationships (Benson, Heagney, Hewitt, Crosling, & Devos, 2013; Chen, 2017).

NAIT's EDI Principles, Commitments and Strategic Actions have been developed with meaningful impact in mind. In dialogue with the NAIT community, the EDI Strategy will adapt as we listen, learn and grow.

Committing

What are NAIT's EDI commitments and associated actions?

NAIT has made three commitments to equity, diversity and inclusion and identified the institutional strategic actions to be taken under each. NAIT's EDI Strategy is largely visionary, outlining our understanding of and commitment to an ongoing state of excellence in equity, diversity and inclusion. We acknowledge that these commitments and actions reflect our ideal state, not our current one.

1. We advance equity

NAIT's outlook, culture, plans, operations and approaches should create equivalent outcomes for all people. We work to dismantle systemic oppression and discrimination.

a. We remove systemic barriers for marginalized populations

Systemic barriers occur when institutional plans, processes and operations create unequal access and participation for marginalized individuals and groups. To advance equity, we work collaboratively with those affected by systemic barriers to identify, understand and ultimately eliminate these barriers within our institution.

b. We develop and review policies and procedures through lenses of equity, diversity and inclusion

To ensure policies and procedures do not remain or become systemic barriers, we actively consider and approach institutional administration with goals of equity, diversity and inclusion in mind.

c. We use lenses of equity, diversity and inclusion in the creation and allocation of space and place

Accessibility and safety are essential to equity, diversity and inclusion. NAIT designs and maintains our learning and working environments (physical, communal and virtual) in a way that does not create barriers or disadvantage for marginalized groups.

2. We build a diverse community

NAIT plays an active role in building and strengthening community by striving to ensure many shared and different individual and group experiences, values, beliefs and characteristics are inherent within it. Our commitment to a diverse community allows us to remain accountable, intentional and aspirational through equitable, inclusive and reflective practice.

a. Our student recruitment and retention practices reinforce our commitment to diversity

In considering the student learning journey, NAIT recognizes that barriers affect marginalized populations' entrance and progression through post-secondary institutions. Equitable and inclusive institutional approaches are vital to student success. We identify these barriers and revise our approaches to ensure diverse populations are represented, treated equitably and included at NAIT.

b. Our human resources practices reinforce our commitment to diversity

Staff diversity is essential to inclusive institutions, and NAIT recognizes that removing barriers to marginalized individuals and groups enriches all aspects of our work. Our human resource practices ensure underrepresented populations have access to and participate meaningfully within the NAIT workplace.

3. We cultivate an inclusive community

We actively and intentionally promote a sense of belonging and dignity that ensures all people are safe, respected and valued. NAIT recognizes the nature of community as being built and maintained through relationships between people. NAIT also believes it is our institutional responsibility to foster a culture and adopt approaches that support inclusivity throughout the NAIT community.

a. NAIT community members are equipped to support equity, diversity and inclusion

Acknowledging that every member of the NAIT community has a role in and responsibility to this work, NAIT provides the resources and support necessary for individuals to champion equity, diversity and inclusion and address barriers in meaningful ways.

b. NAIT community members foster inclusive learning and working environments

Our NAIT community is diverse, and our staff and students encounter diversity on a regular basis. Individuals play an active role in celebrating diversity and championing inclusion, and are accountable for their attitudes, words and actions. All community members aim to understand equity, diversity and inclusion, dismantle barriers and collaboratively support marginalized people and groups.

c. We celebrate the diversity of the NAIT community

NAIT values all people. The differences that make us unique are what make our institution exceptional. Our creativity, innovation and excellence are made possible through diversity, and our culture of celebration demonstrates pride in and gratitude for our diverse community.

Realizing

What does meaningful change look like for NAIT?

Our prioritization of equity, diversity and inclusion will foster compassion, fairness, innovation and rich learning environments. A culture of openness, collaboration, transparency and accessible dialogue are critical to diversity and inclusion efforts at NAIT. NAIT's EDI Strategy does not and cannot stand alone. By applying and actioning NAIT's EDI Strategy at all levels of the institution and engaging the full NAIT community, we will realize the comprehensive and widespread potential for change. Because this work does not have a finish line, we must pursue and recognize indicators of progress. For the NAIT community, meaningful change includes:

- Opportunities and support for the NAIT community to champion, inform and influence positive institutional change
- Identification and elimination of barriers that make NAIT inequitable or unwelcoming
- Challenge to and disruption of oppression and discrimination
- Fair treatment of marginalized community members, including equitable access to resources and opportunities
- Marginalized community members feeling welcome, valued, comfortable, accepted and celebrated at NAIT
- Full and meaningful participation of marginalized community members at NAIT
- Improved well-being for marginalized community members
- Provision of resources and fostering of a culture that positions equity, diversity and inclusion as priorities, shared responsibilities and universally beneficial
- A sense of community around equity, diversity and inclusion at NAIT
- Individual exposure to a multitude of diverse perspectives and identities that further personal and professional growth
- Accountable and transparent assessment to ensure equity, diversity and inclusion efforts meet the needs of marginalized people and groups
- An intentional state of continuous improvement
- Diverse perspectives are represented and respected within the NAIT community, fostering creativity and innovation in our work

To create this type of meaningful change:

The various types and presentations of oppression and discrimination must be acknowledged, seeking to understand how each shows up, within and outside of NAIT.

Dialogue, listening, learning and reflection must be nurtured as we disassemble barriers that create inequity.

Marginalized people and groups must be able to access, participate in and thrive at NAIT.

NAIT must act both responsively and proactively in our equity, diversity and inclusion efforts.

The lived experiences of marginalized people must be believed and honoured.

Marginalized populations must be engaged in defining solutions, and all of NAIT in realizing them.

Non-marginalized people and groups must be equipped to advance equity, diversity and inclusion.

NAIT must operationalize, apply and model the EDI Strategy across our institution, at all levels and scales.

What is the timeline of NAIT's EDI Strategy?

NAIT has taken many steps and had many conversations around equity, diversity and inclusion prior to the launch of this strategy. As NAIT engages the community in a path forward, it is important to share the steps that led to the creation of this strategy.

2017

- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy identified as an institutional priority
- Work begins on Diversity and Inclusion Staff and Student Surveys

2018

- Diversity and Inclusion Staff and Student Surveys distributed
- Audit of NAIT's current efforts
- Literature review
- Benchmarking of diversity and inclusion efforts at other institutions
- Strategy framework development begins

2019

- Diversity and Inclusion survey data interpreted
- Draft strategy framework completed
- Draft strategy framework validated against survey results and research
- NAIT community engaged around draft strategy framework
- Draft strategy framework revised as necessary

2020

- Launch the Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
- Draft EDI Strategy completed
- EDI Strategy approved by institutional stakeholders and senior leadership

BEYOND

- EDI Strategy launched
- Strategy implementation begins
- Provide strategic guidance and support to work units as they implement the EDI Strategy
- EDI Strategy informs actions, attitudes and process at all levels of institution
- Equity, diversity and inclusion resources supplement strategy
- EDI Strategy remains a living document

How will we implement NAIT's EDI Strategy?

Promoting equity, diversity and inclusion is a shared responsibility. NAIT seeks to understand and eliminate systemic and social barriers, at all levels of the institution and to foster positive individual and interpersonal interactions in matters of equity, diversity and inclusion. The Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (OEDI) provides strategic oversight of equity, diversity and inclusion efforts across NAIT but is not solely responsible for their implementation. Success for our colleagues, staff, and community relies on all of our heads, hearts and hands being attuned to the work. All members of the NAIT community contribute to equity, diversity and inclusion and support our collective progress. Our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Lens Toolkit supports individuals to implement meaningful change at all levels of the institution.

Insititutional Change

NAIT will consider dialogue, experience, data, research and best practices to fulfill our commitments around equity, diversity and inclusion. Senior leadership will be involved and invested in equity, diversity and inclusion efforts ongoing, with strategic guidance from equity, diversity and inclusion partners across the institution. NAIT will work with stakeholders, internal and external, to identify and eliminate barriers impacting marginalized people and groups.

NAIT is shaped by community. All community members are invited to consider and share feedback on how NAIT can fulfill our EDI strategy.

Departmental Change

NAIT leaders, with input and engagement from the NAIT community, will work with institutional equity, diversity and inclusion partners to identify, pursue and measure strategic actions that are most meaningful, relevant and realistic to their respective areas. All NAIT schools and departments are accountable to adopt the commitments and fulfill the high-level strategic actions identified within this strategy.

Similar to institutional change, many NAIT community members will have valuable insights as to how schools and departments can fulfill our EDI strategy and are encouraged to share them.

Individual Change

There are champions of equity, diversity and inclusion everywhere in our NAIT community. NAIT celebrates and encourages the independent steps these champions take to better our institution and the NAIT community. NAIT invites reflection, consideration and input on matters of equity, diversity and inclusion from all members of the NAIT community.

For those who would like to enhance their own understanding of, or work related to equity, diversity and inclusion, NAIT maintains a collection of tools and resources.

Assessing

How will we measure the success of NAIT's EDI strategy?

The EDI strategy uses metrics as measures of accountability instead of benchmarks of completion. While it is important to set benchmarks to measure success, the most effective strategies do not have fixed outcomes because they are living, continuous and accountable to their current reality and envisioned future.

The iterative and evolving nature of this work means the NAIT community will assess, review, evaluate and update these metrics on an ongoing basis as we integrate equitable and inclusive practices into how we work. The Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Lenses Toolkit empowers NAIT community members to positively contribute to these accountability metrics.

Outcomes and Indicators

We build a diverse community

- Diversity of our student population (at a school or program level) reflects that of Alberta
- Diversity of our staff population (in each employee classification group - AUPE, NASA, MAE) reflects that of Alberta

We advance equity

- The percentage of marginalized students graduating from NAIT and marginalized students entering NAIT is equal
- Increase in the number of marginalized individuals in non-traditional programs
- NAIT policies and procedures support the advancement of equity

We cultivate an inclusive community

- Decrease in percentage of marginalized students who stop out (or consider stopping out) as a result of feeling that they don't belong at NAIT
- Marginalized students and staff feel safe at NAIT
- Marginalized students and staff feel included at NAIT
- Marginalized students and staff feel like they belong at NAIT
- All staff and students feel safe at NAIT
- All staff and students feel included at NAIT
- All staff and students feel that they belong at NAIT
- Staff are equipped to support equity, diversity and inclusion

NAIT will further explore the experiences of underrepresented and marginalized groups within Canadian polytechnic education. This includes Aboriginal people, black people and people of colour, gender and sexual minorities (women and 2SLGBTQIA+), international students and immigrants, and people with disabilities. These groups were identified based on available Canadian data, but we know this list isn't all inclusive or reflective of all diverse lived experiences.

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