



ASPER SCHOOL OF BUSINESS  
COMMERCE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION  
CREATE YOUR LEGACY

A Toolkit for Student Leaders

# **EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION IN ACTION**

"Leadership is an action, not a position."

*- Donald McGannon*

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Together with the Asper School of Business, the Commerce Students' Association is committed to fostering a learning environment that embraces and values the involvement of all members of our community. We take great pride in the diversity of our students, faculty, and staff.

We seek equity for all groups subject to historical discrimination including on the basis of race, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity, and disability. We seek a fully inclusive and equitable environment in our school, through what we label systemic inclusion. This involves embedding practices, principles, and values of equity, diversity, and inclusion into our educational programming and our organizational culture.

This Toolkit was developed with the intention of putting Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion into action. Our goal is to come together with other student leaders to:

- Understand why EDI is important to every student at the Asper School
- Understand what EDI means within the context of student leadership
- Define inclusive leadership
- Understand how students can help create systemic inclusion

This toolkit is the culmination of contributions from students, faculty, and staff. It is incredibly important for the Asper School to continue to come together and collaborate on issues of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.

## Equity

The guarantee of fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all students, faculty, and staff, while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of marginalized groups.

## Diversity

Includes all the ways in which people differ. It encompasses all of the characteristics, personal experiences, values, and worldviews that make one individual or group different from another individual or group.

## Inclusion

The process of creating an environment in which any individual or group can be and feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued to fully participate in all the opportunities afforded by the University.

## Intersectionality

The complex, cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination (such as racism, sexism, and classism) combine, overlap, or intersect especially in the experiences of marginalized individuals or groups.

*[Intersectionality | Definition of Intersectionality by Merriam-Webster](#)*

## Inclusive Leadership

The capacity to manage and lead a heterogeneous group of people efficiently, while respecting their uniqueness in an empathetic, bias-free way. It's an authentic leadership style that rules out discrimination, bias and favor based on color, race and other protected characteristics and allows (team members) to feel valued for their own input.

*[What is inclusive leadership? \(incl. definition and best practices\) - Workable](#)*





# THE CURRENT STATE OF AFFAIRS

There is a saying that goes: “There is always room for improvement”. This is true of any organization, club, or institution. No matter how successful a project is, or how profitable a business is, it’s always important to look back and assess where improvements can be made – whether that’s increasing efficiency, reducing costs, improving communication, or boosting team morale.

The student experience at the Asper School, no matter how exciting and illuminating, can also be improved. A proactive approach to improving the student experience helps to ensure each student has an equally fulfilling experience throughout their time at Asper, one that grants them equitable opportunities, helps them realize the diversity of their community, and makes them feel included.

So, how can we, as student leaders, assess where improvements need to be made? Where do we currently stand, and where do we need to go? This is what some of our fellow students think of the current state of affairs at our school...

**“There are a lot of promotions for different resources and opportunities, but not enough follow-through during the year.”**

*“A lot of the groups on campus are like an old boys club where you need to know someone to get in and to be welcomed in, and that can be a very difficult barrier for international students and others.”*

“There's still some work in terms of how information is passed. Some social media apps aren't as popular within communities compared to others, and the most effective way to include someone is through word of mouth, so having people personally reach out will go a long way.”

**“Groups expect students to come to them, but they should be the ones to reach out to students.”**

*“Getting involved can seem like a big commitment that can't be balanced with other aspects of life. There are trade-offs between wanting to get involved and having personal responsibilities.”*

“We all have our own friends at Asper and not a lot of people want to branch out and meet new people. Not a lot of people want to take initiative to meet and interact with other cultures. Being more open with other people and not being closed off will definitely help this issue.”

**“Every single student within the faculty has a different story. As much as we like to praise new and innovative ideas, we often stick with things that are familiar to us. So being within our little bubbles, we don't notice or think about the struggles some students may be having in varying lenses.”**

# HOW CAN LEADERS MAKE A DIFFERENCE?



How does reading those perspectives make you feel? Can you relate to or empathize with your fellow peers? This is only a small collection of student perspectives on issues related to equity, diversity, and inclusion. What other issues should we be considering?

Reading the student experiences on the previous page, it's evident that there are several aspects of the student experience that could be improved. From communication and marketing for student clubs to having more inclusive events, there are areas where we're not quite being equitable or inclusive.

How can we improve this current state of affairs? This is what some Asper students had to say...

## **“Be the first person to take initiative to meet people.”**

“We think it's really important that for recruitment with case competitions, the CSA, committees, STAGs, and more, we should look more at (the) potential the type of person someone (has) as opposed to their faculty experience and 'who they know'. Students should be able to break in because of their individual characteristics, not their qualifications.”

## **“Offer and provide resources to international students (to help with) language barriers. Offer more resources to make it easier for international students to hear about what is happening at the university.”**

*“An improved community also starts with the creativity and ingenuity of people. People who want change and not just follow what others have done before them because it is easier.”*

## **“Encourage individuals to make themselves uncomfortable and confront their own biases.”**

“To improve the Asper community, definitely recruiting diversity is the number one step (i.e., race, ethnicity, social class, gender, sexuality, age, personality, etc.). Having a group of people who are different all around is better than a group of people who are superstars in every skill. Diversity allows teamwork since someone may have a skill that you don't have.”

## **“Each student leader needs to individually work on themselves, and also work together as leaders to hold each other accountable.”**

*“An improved state would involve deliberate actions to be more inclusive to all. It is important to look at specific problems and look at ways to address them instead of treating all gaps like they are the same. An improved state would include ways for all voices to be heard and helped.”*





# EDI IN ACTION

Throughout your time holding a position on a council, committee, or STAG, or even in an academic group project, you will have several opportunities to support equity, diversity, and inclusion in a proactive manner. You may also be faced with situations where the current lack of equity, diversity, or inclusion presents a leadership challenge. Here are some ways to become a proactive, inclusive leader and do your part in improving EDI at the Asper School. There are many ways to improve EDI other than those mentioned here, and we encourage students to do their research, ask questions, and provide their input and feedback.

It is important to note that not each and every suggestion can be enacted or adopted immediately. Our current student experience has evolved over many years to get to where it is today. Therefore, making changes to reach an ideal equitable, diverse, and inclusive student experience will take time. It's vital to act today and do what we can wherever we are able to. Gradually, with collaboration and input from as many students as possible, we can actualize our goal of improving EDI.



## ELECTIONS & CAMPAIGNS

When your term holding an elected student position has ended and it's time to pass off the torch to an incoming team, consider the following:

- When promoting the campaign and election period, are you ensuring that all members are emailed? Are your promotions reaching everyone they need to?
- Does the campaign and elections timeline give candidates enough time to prepare?
- Will everyone have equal access to candidate information?
  - Is a full and complete job description that accurately captures the nature of the job and skills required available to everyone?
- Are the criteria for becoming a candidate fair? If the criteria exclude certain students from becoming candidates, what are the reasons for that, and are they justified?
- Are your forms easy to access and comprehend?
- Do you have an unbiased, external elections officer to count votes and regulate the elections? Was your process for recruiting this individual equally accessible to everyone interested?
- How will you count votes? Will everyone who needs access have access to voting?
- How will you create transparency during the voting process or when announcing results?

**CONSIDER:**  
At every point of student involvement, students should learn how things work from public conversations instead of private conversations.



## TEAM LEADERSHIP

When leading a team and interacting with your peers throughout the year, consider the following:

- Do your team members have all the resources they need to complete their tasks?
- Are you creating an environment where your team members can reach out to you for help and advice without judgement or conflict?
- Do you encourage your team members to share their ideas with you? Do you respond to their ideas and work to bring them to life?
- How many avenues of communication do you have within your team? Are they efficient and effective?
- Do you put in effort to get to know all your team members? Are there barriers to forming positive relationships with them? If so, how will you focus your efforts on eliminating those barriers?
- Do you know what your implicit biases are and how you're addressing them? Are you challenging yourself to learn from others?

# TEAM RECRUITMENT



If you need to recruit team members for your respective council, committee, or STAG, consider the following:

- Have you got a balance between 'wanting to recruit the best team' and 'providing the best opportunities'?
  - Are there positions in your team that are earmarked as 'entry-level'? If not, try creating some!
  - It is important to note that while past experience is helpful to have, there are several extracurricular opportunities where students do not need past experience.
  - We are able to teach our peers and help them learn how to do tasks and plan events even if they have minimal experience.
  - Participating in extracurricular activities is a learning opportunity (not a job) that should be open and available to all students, regardless of past experience. No one should be made to feel like access to these opportunities is restricted or biased.
- Are you providing varied interview slots to be accommodative of students' different schedules?
- Are your interview questions appropriate?
  - Are they clear and understandable?
  - Is each question for a clear purpose that relates to the job description? How do your interview questions test required skills?
  - Are you able to adjust your questions according to each students' unique qualities or circumstances? For example, if you can see from someone's resume that they don't have event planning experience, how fair would it be to ask them a specific question about booking an event venue? Would a more general question seem more reasonable in this situation?
  - Do your icebreaker questions provide students with ample opportunity to showcase their individuality and potential?
- How will you create an inclusive and welcoming interview environment?
  - How will you be a better listener?
  - How will you accommodate individual students' needs? For example, if a student has a speech disability, will you be able to provide them with more time to speak? Will you continue to encourage them and make them feel welcomed?
- During the process of your deliberations, are you taking steps to ensure that the final team you select reflects your applicant pool? For example, if 50% of your applicants were international students, do international students make up almost half of your final team members?

## CONSIDER:

What if your applicant pool isn't diverse to begin with? What if there are barriers that prevent some students from applying as compared to others? You may want to think of the following:

- Who are the voices that are doing classroom talks? How representative are they?
- How are you getting students to relate to your committee or STAG?
- Are you sharing how the involvement experience has impacted other students?

# EXHIBIT 1



POSITIONS AVAILABLE

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Director of Corporate Relations  
Director of Finance  
Director of Events  
Director of Mentorship  
Executive Assistant

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Application Period: June 29 - July 11  
Interview Period: July 12 - July 19

The Asper Students Cooperative Association (ASCA) created this visual, which clearly shows which positions are available and what the recruitment timeline looks like.



## Director of Finance

Monitor and analyze the budget to ensure ASCA's financial well being

Synergize with other executives to recommend efficient allocation of financial resources

Oversee and report all Finance related functions

Ensure the accuracy of financial reports

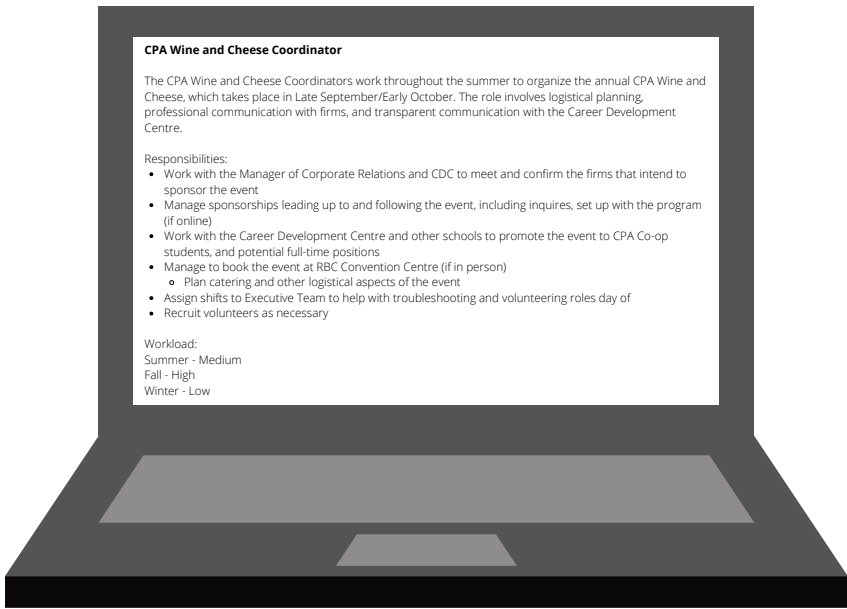
[www.ascaasper.squarespace.com](http://www.ascaasper.squarespace.com)  
[asca.uofm@gmail.com](mailto:asca.uofm@gmail.com)



In the same social media post, they then provided detailed job requirements for each position, along with contact information if students had questions.



# EXHIBIT 2



This is a role description for a CPA Wine and Cheese Coordinator role on the Asper School of Business Accounting Association's (ASBAA) Executive Team.

This description was made available to students during ASBAA's recruitment period. It includes:

- A description of the role and the event it pertains to
- A description of key responsibilities
- An outline of the workload over the course of the school year

This is a great example of creating equity - it provides everyone with the opportunity to learn about available roles and the level of commitment they require.

If you were preparing this role description, what would you change or improve? If you were thinking of applying for the CPA Wine and Cheese Coordinator role, would this provide you with everything you needed to know?

# MARKETING MATERIALS



When designing marketing materials or posting them on websites and social media, it may help to consider the following:

- Do the fonts and colors you choose to make it easy to understand the visual you designed?
- Are your graphics appropriate?
- Is your material more helpful to you than it is to the students you serve? What purpose does your marketing material serve?
- Are your graphics inclusive? For example, if your visual had a picture of a group of people, none of whom were people of color, your material may cause other students to feel excluded.
- Is your text easy to understand? We have many students in our faculty for whom English is a second language. Would they be able to understand your body of text? Would you be able to create an additional graphic in another language to reach more students?
- Are you promoting your event on multiple platforms to ensure more students have access to the same information?
- Are your platforms/websites kept up to date with relevant contact information and event updates?

## EXAMPLE:

*This visual was created by the University of Manitoba Actuarial Association (UMAC). Consider the simplicity and clarity of the graphics and text. Also note how the event itself (a barbecue) is inclusive.*





## FINANCE & BUDGETS

When budgeting for the year or for a specific event, or even while managing finances for your respective student group, it may help to consider the following:

- Are there areas in your budget where money is being wasted?
- Are all students charged for memberships appropriately? Do you have a refund policy, and if so, how fair and accommodative is it?
- Are you able to provide multiple ways of paying for an event ticket or membership?

## EVENT PLANNING

When planning any type of event, whether in person or online, it may be helpful to consider the following:



- Of all the events your team plans during the year, are there any that may not be inclusive of some students? For example, if all the social events throughout the year focus heavily on drinking or partying, students who don't drink may feel like they have no place at those events. What can we do to make them feel more included?
- Have all your event volunteers and attendees been provided with all the information they may need? (E.g. volunteer schedules, parking information, directions, etc.)
- Are there ways you can be accommodative of language barriers and accessibility requirements during your event?

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## REFLECTION POINTS

- After going through this toolkit, what's on your mind right now?
- Do you have a better understanding of what equity, diversity, and inclusion mean?
- Do you have a better understanding of why students need to work on fostering EDI?
- Have you been able to empathize with some of your peers regarding their experiences at Asper?

*The most important question of all:*

***How are you, as a student leader, going to put EDI into action?***

## EDI Taskforce

*If you're interested in learning more about EDI at the Asper School, or if you want to know more about how you can take part in EDI, you can reach out to the EDI Taskforce. You can also reach out to the EDI Taskforce if you have EDI related concerns and require help.*

Contact: [asper.edi@umanitoba.ca](mailto:asper.edi@umanitoba.ca)

*This is a dedicated EDI address for all EDI related concerns, issues, or ideas.*

## EDI Officer

*If you have questions or feedback about this toolkit, you can reach out to the 2021-2022 EDI Officer, Fajr Awan, who is a member of the Commerce Students' Association's General Council.*

*You can also reach out to the EDI Officer if you need help with or advice on an EDI issue related to student involvement in extra-curricular activities, such as a committee or STAG.*

Contact: [fajrawan@gmail.com](mailto:fajrawan@gmail.com)

## Student Support

*Student Support at the University of Manitoba provides support services for everyday life, health and wellness, and academic success. If you or your team need help in any of these areas, click the link below.*

[Student supports | University of Manitoba \(umanitoba.ca\)](https://umanitoba.ca)



## Upholding the Principles of EDI During Covid-19

*Click the link below to learn more about how to take part in fostering EDI during the Covid-19 pandemic. This resource also has general EDI related tips, definitions, and guidelines, as well as links to other useful resources.*

[Upholding the Principles of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion During COVID-19 \(umanitoba.ca\)](#)

## UMSU Student Clubs and Associations

*Do you need guidance regarding something cultural, social, or religious? Do you want to collaborate with a student group outside of Asper? Click the link below for a directory of various student clubs and associations on campus!*

[Student Clubs & Associations - UMSU](#)

## Have feedback? We'd love to hear it!

*If you'd like to provide the developers of this toolkit with feedback on how to improve it or what you liked about it, please fill out the feedback form below. All responses will remain anonymous.*

[EDI Tool Kit Feedback Form](#)