Equity, Diversity and Human Rights Committee Report for 2008-9

The Committee met regularly during the past year. It continued to focus on measures to implement the extensive list of recommendations that the Employment System Review made and that were adopted by Faculty Council in Spring 2007.

It has rewritten the Terms of Reference based on the goal of focusing the Committee’s work. Committee members felt that the provisional Terms of Reference were somewhat too extensive, particularly goal (b) “a tracking system” about differentials/disparities in career progression among faculty and staff.

The original and revised terms of reference are attached. They are called “EDHR provisional terms” and EDHR Terms Fin”.

A sub-committee of members investigated the issue of career progression based upon gender in the Faculty. After considerable clearing of the ground, including applying for funding for a research assistant, gaining permission to use confidential personnel material, etc. the sub-committee determined that personal career information was incomplete in such areas as service loads and that therefore a report would not be any more informative than previous internal studies.

The Committee has begun a review of departmental equity reports and plans with the aim of offering advice to the Dean on implementation of several of the Employment System Review provisions aimed at strengthening recruitment and support staff diversity.

To that end, the Committee invited Dr. Carol Agocs, from the University of Western Ontario, to give a public talk and a workshop for Heads. Dr. Agocs’s work has focused on equity in the academic workplace. Dr. Agocs was in the faculty on February 2nd and 3rd and met with the Committee, the Dean, the University Equity Officer and gave a well-attended public lecture, entitled, “Employment Equity: From Policy to Practice in the University”. She reviewed the legal requirements of the Federal Contractors’ Programme and the general goals and impact of employment equity in her workshop with Heads on February 2nd.

For 2009-10, the Committee plans to invite a second visitor, Lynette Chappel-Williams, from Cornell University, who specializes in employment equity particularly related to support staff matters. Ms. Chappell-Williams is the Director of Cornell’s Office of Workforce Equity, Diversity and Life Quality.

Finally, the Committee will write on behalf of the Committee to the University Environmental Health & Safety Office (EHSO) prior to year-end in order to conduct a Safety Audit of the Arts Complex area of Fletcher Argue, Isbister & Tier.

B.Ferguson on behalf of the Committee