



Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

2022-2027



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Land Acknowledgement

At Lambton College, we are always very grateful for the land we live on, for the land we teach and work on, for the land we play and compete on and for the land we learn on.

It is with this gratitude in our hearts that we are always very proud to acknowledge that Lambton College is located on the beautiful homeland that is the traditional territory of the Ojibwe, Potawatomi and Odawa First Nations. These three individual Nations make up the traditional Three Fires Confederacy.

We acknowledge the grace and the welcome they have offered to all students, staff and guests at Lambton College.

Message from the President

It is with great pride that I share Lambton College's first Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy. Students, staff, faculty, and other members of the college community have contributed to the creation of this strategy through their thoughtful input to the Inclusivity Assessment.

I want to personally extend my thanks to those who participated in the surveys, focus groups, and interviews. Your ongoing involvement is key to the success of this work. Your input has helped shape our understanding of the uniqueness and diversity of the Lambton community and what more needs to be done to foster a more inclusive, equitable, and diverse organization in the coming years.

We have been recognized as community leaders in diversity and inclusion in Sarnia, and this strategy will build on the important work that we have done to date. As we take the next steps, we have the responsibility to ensure that all members of the Lambton community are supported to be their full and authentic selves—as the strategy calls on us to embrace the entire community—including those from diverse cultures, races, religions, abilities, genders, and sexual identities.

To move forward, we invite every Lambton College community member to place equity leadership at the forefront of our everyday work and studies. Each step we take to be more inclusive will bring us the benefits of enhanced innovation and excellence, more creative approaches, and realities reflective of global priorities.

We are partners in crafting the college's future. We hope that you will join us in embracing the assessment findings and recommendations of the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, and add your voice to help us chart our course to an inclusive future.

It is with great enthusiasm that I share the Inclusivity Strategy with you, as we all contribute to making the college a more welcoming and inclusive place for all members of the Lambton College community.

Rob Kardas, President & CEO



Introduction

In the fall of 2021, Lambton College embarked on an Inclusivity Assessment to identify any issues and barriers for equity groups at the college and to propose strategies to mitigate barriers in order to foster a more inclusive community. The assessment, conducted by Turner Consulting Group, was intended to illustrate where things stand with equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility at the college and to develop recommendations to address identified issues in both the working and learning environments.

With a focus on the experiences of Indigenous Peoples, international students, LGBTQ2S+, persons with disabilities, racialized people, and women, the assessment included:

- A policy review
- A review of hiring practices
- Consultations with administrators, staff, and faculty through focus groups and an online survey
- One-on-one interviews with senior leaders, union representatives, and human resources staff
- A student policy review
- Consultations with students through focus groups and an online survey
- A campus visit, and
- Consultations with stakeholders.

The intention of the assessment was to inform the development of an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy, set a path for areas of improvement, and inform the development of the organization's annual operational plans by:

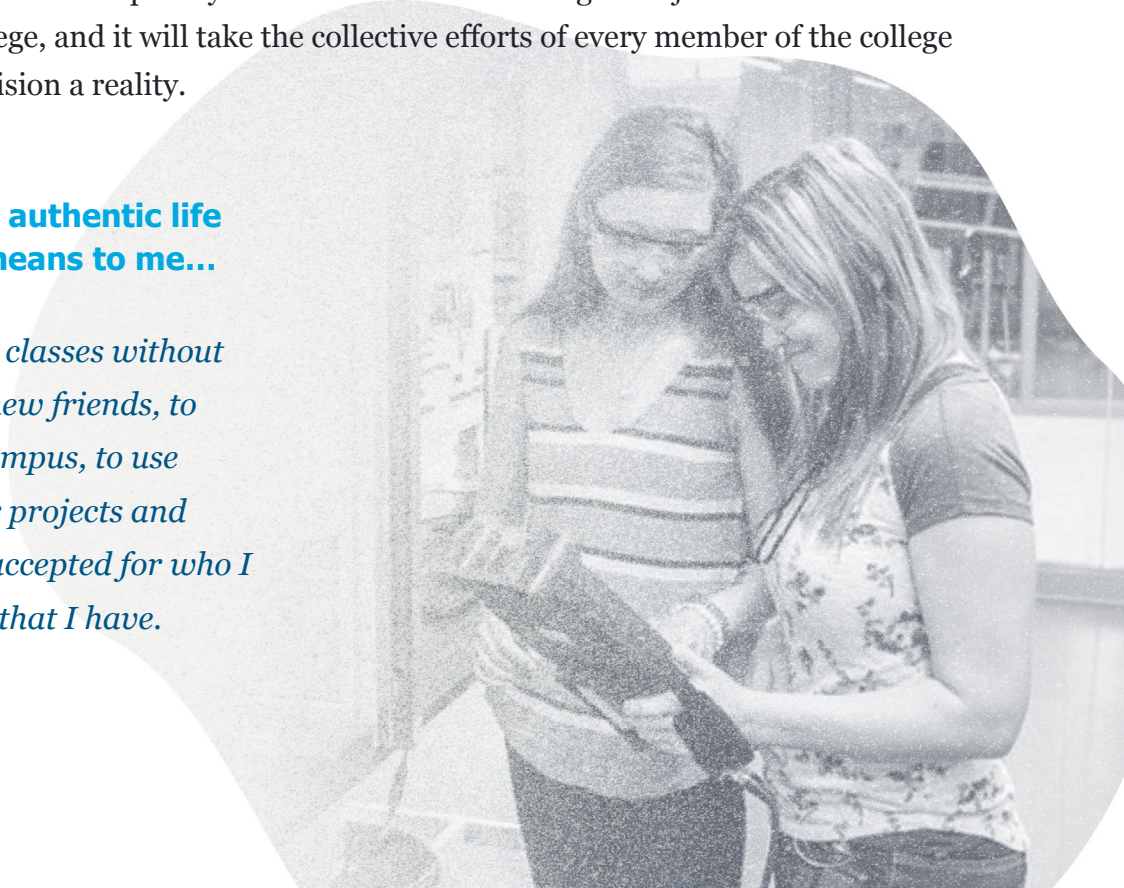
- Supporting the understanding of the issues involved in implementation of the recommendations
- Conducting an analysis that provides Lambton staff with insights into the reasons for the gaps and that suggests alternative practices to support equality of opportunity for all employees
- Building momentum throughout the organization on Indigenization, inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility
- Establishing a baseline for future improvement
- Better positioning the organization for the future, and
- Providing realistic recommendations that will support lasting change.

The following strategy outlines the pillars and actions that will assist us in continuing to grow the equity work at Lambton College and to support everyone to achieve their true and authentic selves in the workplace and in the classroom.

Any EDI Strategy must be a work in progress in order to be responsive to identified issues and to position us to be responsive in real time to issues that evolve in our community. With this in mind, the strategy must be reassessed frequently to ensure that it is meeting its objectives. EDI is a priority for Lambton College, and it will take the collective efforts of every member of the college community to make the vision a reality.

What living a full and authentic life at Lambton College means to me...

The ability to attend classes without hindrance, to meet new friends, to study together on campus, to use college resources for projects and learning, and to be accepted for who I am and the abilities that I have.



Why Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Matter to Lambton College

Lambton College is an innovative leader in applied research and education, providing a personalized, high-quality educational experience with the declared mission of student and community success. This mission highlights the interconnectedness of our students, our broader college community, and the Sarnia-Lambton community. The success of our students is bound up with the success of our staff and faculty. The success of the Sarnia-Lambton community is also tied to a thriving college community.

We therefore recognize the need to cultivate working and learning environments that respect, support, and celebrate all members of the college community. We want to foster environments in which all members of the college community are able to bring their full selves to the college and live full and authentic lives as students or employees of Lambton College.

Our community of students, staff, and faculty include people from all ages and backgrounds; Indigenous Peoples, descendants of settlers, more recent immigrants, and international students; people from various racial, ethnic, linguistic, and religious groups; people from a range of socio-economic circumstances; people who are Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and other identities under the 2SLGBTQ+ umbrella; people who live with visible and invisible disabilities or enduring health conditions; and people who are single or partnered, with or without children. We are all influenced by our backgrounds and identities and the various ways in which they intersect. The college community also benefits from the rich diversity of members of the college community.

A strategy that recognizes and supports Indigenization, inclusion, equity, diversity and accessibility is no longer an option for Lambton College, but is instead a key consideration if we are to continue to be successful. We must therefore become more cognizant of the benefits that will flow from moving Indigenization, inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility to the heart of our institution.



Academic Imperative

It's about academic and research excellence

While a commitment to the ideal of meritocracy should remain foundational in the academy, not all people are on “equal footing” when it comes to access and inclusion in post-secondary institutions. We recognize that it is essential to apply an equity lens to all institutional policies and practices in order to create equal opportunities and foster inclusive learning communities for those who have been marginalized and underserved by our education system.

We also recognize that continuing to rely on limited disciplinary canons and ways of learning and teaching, and hiring from limited pools, will limit access to expertise and knowledge. Increasing diversity and opening up space for Indigenous and other ways of learning and teaching will enhance institutional creativity, innovation, and excellence.

Fostering diversity will also help ensure that we continue to be leaders in research, innovation and education. It enriches the breadth and relevance of the research questions that we ask and the approaches we take to answer these questions. It will also make our research activities more attractive to more diverse pools of talented staff and student recruits, and to organizations seeking innovative research partners.



Demographic Imperative

It's about accessing all the talent available to us

The data clearly shows that the population of Ontario is changing dramatically. Residents of Ontario are a dynamic mix of cultures, races, religions, abilities, genders, and sexual identities. Students and employees from diverse communities, backgrounds, and identities bring different life experiences, cultural understandings, language abilities, and ways of thinking that add to the richness of our college community. Restricting this diversity means that we are restricting the talent available to us.

Furthermore, if Lambton College is to remain relevant and effective within the context of an increasingly diverse population, we need to ensure that our programs and services are relevant to a diverse student population and an increasingly global labour market.



Legal Imperative

It's the law

The Ontario Human Rights Code and Occupational Health and Safety Act places specific obligations on organizations as well as employees and students to treat their colleagues fairly and create environments that are free from discrimination, harassment, and violence. The Accessibility for Ontarians With Disabilities Act also requires that all organizations remove barriers to employment and services for persons with disabilities.



Social Imperative

It's the right thing to do

As a major employer and community partner in the Sarnia-Lambton community, Lambton College plays an important role in fostering a community that continues to be a great place to live and work. It is also critical that the college develops citizens who are conscious of the diversity, complexity, and richness of the human experience, and who are thus able to contribute thoughtfully, creatively, and positively to the society in which they live and work.



Human Imperative

It's about people

A culture that successfully recruits and retains diverse staff and students will inevitably also increase personal satisfaction and deepen people's commitment and sense of belonging to the organization. Just as important is fostering a culture that values all staff and students in order to reduce incidents of bullying and harassment and contribute to good mental health.

Centring inclusivity will make us a smarter, healthier, friendlier and more productive organization. Valuing people, their experiences, and their contributions will also benefit everyone at Lambton, either directly or indirectly.

Guiding Principles

These principles of EDI have guided the development of this strategy and will drive its implementation.

1
STRIVE FOR
BELONGING

2
ACKNOWLEDGE
INEQUALITY EXISTS

3
INCLUSIVE
LEADERSHIP

4
COLLECTIVE
RESPONSIBILITY

5
ACCOUNTABILITY
AND TRANSPARENCY

6
CULTURAL
RESPONSIVENESS

7
INTEGRATED
APPROACH

8
COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS
AND PARTNERSHIPS

9
ONGOING
JOURNEY

1

Strive for belonging

We strive to ensure that all students, staff, and faculty feel safe and valued and are able to bring their full and authentic selves to all Lambton's learning and working environments.

2

Acknowledge inequality exists

We acknowledge the historical and contemporary impact of all forms of oppression that have created unwelcoming education environments and contributed to many communities being marginalized and under-served by educational institutions.

3

Inclusive leadership

We will articulate and demonstrate an authentic commitment to this work, challenging the status quo, holding ourselves accountable, and making Indigenization, inclusion, diversity equity, and accessibility priorities.

4

Collective responsibility

All members of the college community are responsible for addressing inequity and challenging the status quo.

5

Accountability and transparency

We commit to being open, transparent, and accountable in our implementation of this strategy, which will include meaningful engagement and thorough and timely reporting.

6

Cultural responsiveness

We will foster an environment where students are fully seen in all aspects of their identity through a holistic, trauma-informed and anti-oppressive approach to programs and service delivery.

7

Integrated approach

We are committed to building Indigeneity, inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility into all that we do, recognizing that this work should be an “add-in” to our work, not an “add-on.”

8

Community connections and partnerships

We recognize the impact we can make when we advocate for equity and social justice. We will actively seek out ways to work with vendors, contractors, employer partners, and other members of the Sarnia-Lambton community to ensure that services and opportunities meet the diverse needs of our students and employees.

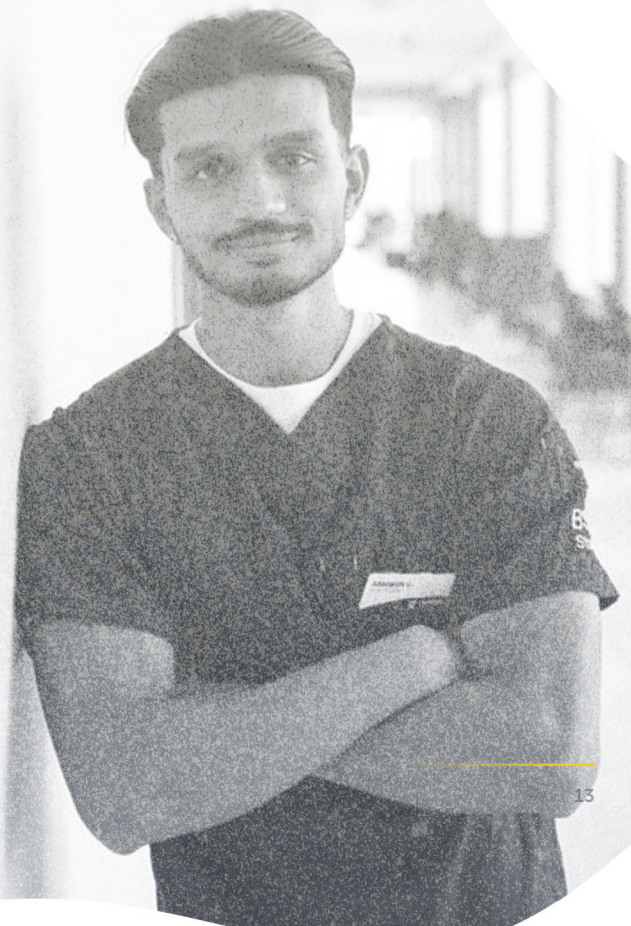
9

Ongoing journey

We recognize that this is an ongoing journey for individuals and the organization, requiring us to engage in ongoing self-reflection and learning.

What living a full and authentic life at Lambton College means to me...

No matter what you're here for, no matter what you're working for, stay true to yourself. Your goals, your life, who you are, and always put yourself first. If you don't take care of you, how do you expect to take care of anything else? You matter. Stay true to yourself, be yourself, don't ever lose yourself chasing something that doesn't serve your purpose.



Strategic Pillars and Actions

1. We will Indigenize and decolonize our spaces

Given the enormous importance, historical structures, and complexity of the issues identified in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's final report, and building on Lambton College's partnership with local First Nations, Lambton College commits to Indigenize and decolonize our learning and working environments in ways that are credible within both Indigenous communities and the academic community. These commitments are in addition to the important work that the Truth and Reconciliation Committee will recommend.

Actions

- 1.1** Create a plan to implement the Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission through Lambton's Truth and Reconciliation Task Force
- 1.2** Continue to seek out and respect local Indigenous Nations' expertise when developing specific actions to increase Indigeneity at Lambton College
- 1.3** Prioritize the hiring of Indigenous staff and faculty through cluster hiring to increase the numbers to a level that is representative of the provincial population
- 1.4** Work with the Foundation to expand the scholarships and incentives available to Indigenous students
- 1.5** Embed, where relevant, intellectual and cultural traditions of Indigenous Peoples throughout the curriculum and approaches to teaching and learning
- 1.6** Increase supports to Indigenous students through Indigenous-centred holistic services and learning environments

- 1.7** Enrich the Lambton campus landscape with a stronger Indigenous presence
- 1.8** Recruit and retain more Indigenous students
- 1.9** Create a resource that outlines best practices and procedures for recognition of territory, engaging Elders, hosting events, and incorporating cultural practices and knowledge
- 1.10** Create professional development opportunities for employees to increase their awareness and understanding of Indigenous Peoples and cultures
- 1.11** Create programs and services for all students to increase their awareness and understanding of Indigenous Peoples and cultures
- 1.12** Develop and include Indigenous protocols and practices in college ceremonies and functions such as convocation, academic conferences, and facility openings
- 1.13** Create supports for Indigenous employees through relevant initiatives such as an Indigenous Employee Resource Group

2. We will foster more inclusive, equitable, diverse, and accessible working and learning environments

An organizational culture that values diversity and aims to be inclusive must be built on equity, accessibility, and respect for all individuals. This requires that we be sensitive to shifting societal norms and clear in our messaging and training on behavioural expectations and our commitment to zero tolerance for harassment and discrimination. It also requires that we effectively deal with harassment and discrimination when they do occur, and requirements through the AODA standards for Post-Secondary Education to create accessible learning environments.

Actions

- 2.1** Create a plan to meet the AODA standards for Post-Secondary Education through the AODA Steering Committee
- 2.2** Provide mandatory professional development for all staff and faculty, including training on accommodation and human rights

- 2.3** Strengthen the College's equity infrastructure, including allocating resources to investigate complaints and address issues when they occur
- 2.4** Partner with students to develop campus-wide campaigns that help to create a more inclusive environment, including Safe Space and anti-racism campaigns
- 2.5** Support employees through the creation of Employee Resource Groups dedicated to equity populations, making links to students' groups where relevant (e.g., shared engagement in cultural celebrations)
- 2.6** Continue and expand engagement in campus-wide celebrations and acknowledgement of culturally significant days, including Pride Month, Black History Month, Asian Heritage Month, Indigenous Awareness Month, and others
- 2.7** Update policies to ensure compliance with equity-related legislation
- 2.8** Embed EDI expectations into the performance plans of all people leaders to ensure they are visibly championing and operationalizing this strategy
- 2.9** Create an Accessibility Advisory Committee that includes student representatives, with the intent of: creating a campus that is barrier free to all individuals with disabilities; establishing a shared commitment on campus to accessibility issues; making accessibility awareness part of the collective conscience, thereby ensuring that regard for accessibility becomes an inherent component of all daily operations and planning initiatives across the college; and providing input into the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.
- 2.10** Conduct an accessibility audit to assess the accessibility of all learning and working spaces
- 2.11** Conduct a campus safety audit, through an equity lens, to identify safety concerns for students and employees from diverse communities, backgrounds, and identities
- 2.12** Ensure employers are creating respectful and accessible work placement opportunities for students
- 2.13** Diversify key elements of student life, such as cultural and Pride events, posters, and student clubs
- 2.14** Improve access to accommodations for students, staff, and faculty based on all human rights protected grounds

3. We will increase the diversity of staff and faculty

We will enhance the richness of the College community by supporting the recruitment and retention of staff from diverse communities, backgrounds, and identities at all levels of the organization to reflect the diversity of the labour market. We will also remove any barriers to hiring and advancement by ensuring that our processes are bias free and merit based while valuing the benefit that diversity brings to the College.

Actions

- 3.1** Conduct a Staff Census to understand the composition of our current workforce and identify areas of underrepresentation and potential barriers to hiring and advancement
- 3.2** Ensure diverse representation on the Lambton College Board of Governors and Foundation Board
- 3.3** Strengthen recruitment and selection policies and practices to build in actions that promote hiring, advancement, and retention of equity group members
- 3.4** Embed assessment of candidates' knowledge of and ability to work with students and colleagues from diverse backgrounds into hiring processes
- 3.5** Provide training for hiring managers to support their understanding of equity and bias-free hiring and their support for hiring and supporting staff and faculty from diverse backgrounds
- 3.6** Offer an anonymous exit survey to employees to understand their reasons for leaving the college

4. We will develop inclusive curriculums and support the ability of faculty to teach students from diverse backgrounds

Lambton College will develop inclusive curriculums that will attract, engage, and support students from all backgrounds and identities and that will foster innovation and creativity. Interactive teaching and teaching based on inclusive research will see diversity as an asset and allow students to bring their unique identities into the classroom as part of the group's learning experience.

Actions

- 4.1** Develop a framework to review programs and curriculums through an equity lens
- 4.2** Provide ongoing training and supports to faculty to ensure they feel confident and competent in teaching about issues of diversity, equity, and social justice and addressing issues relevant to students from diverse communities, backgrounds, and identities
- 4.3** Provide faculty with training and ongoing supports that enable them to create safe learning environments and address issues when they do arise
- 4.4** Embed equity-related performance measures into performance evaluations and department planning and reviews

5. We will provide more responsive student programs and services

In order to ensure that our students have the supports they need for academic success and well-being, student programs and services must be designed and delivered in ways that meet the diverse needs of students. Services will also be increased to ensure timely access to needed supports.

Actions

- 5.1** Ensure that designated spaces for multi-faith prayer are adequate and inclusive of people from various religions and faiths
- 5.2** Enhance mental health services and supports for students and ensure they are appropriate and responsive to 2SLGBTQ+, Indigenous, and international students
- 5.3** Ensure that counsellors participate in annual professional development that helps them understand the impact of oppression on student mental health and well-being and incorporate trauma-informed, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive approaches into their practices
- 5.4** Increase the services available to students to address growing needs due to the COVID-19 pandemic

6. We will ensure that community connections and partnerships meet the needs of our diverse college community

Lambton College will be a leading voice on issues of Indigeneity, inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility, both within the Sarnia-Lambton community and within the post-secondary education sector. We will also widen the influence of our commitment to inclusivity by ensuring that it forms part of our relationships with the suppliers, subcontractors, and employers that provide work placements for students.

Actions

- 6.1** Advocate and partner with those in the Sarnia-Lambton community to raise awareness of and address racism, homophobia, transphobia, and other forms of oppression within the broader community
- 6.2** Continue to work with landlords to increase access to safe and affordable housing for international students
- 6.3** Continue to work with municipal partners to improve transportation to and from the college

- 6.4** Continue to work with employers to ensure that students have access to safe work placements and needed accommodation
- 6.5** Ensure that contracts with service providers (e.g., residence, security, food services) address the needs of students from diverse communities, backgrounds, and identities

7. We will strengthen research excellence through embedding Indigeneity, inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility considerations throughout the research process

Lambton College is an innovative leader in applied research and education. By embedding considerations of Indigeneity, inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility throughout the research process, we will strengthen our ability to conceptualize and complete even more innovative and impactful research.

Actions

- 7.1** Integrate Indigeneity, inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility considerations into research policies, processes, indicators of excellence, and evaluation criteria
- 7.2** Increase equitable and inclusive participation in the research process, including on research teams
- 7.3** Diversify the employees who teach and conduct research at Lambton College
- 7.4** Provide training for researchers on incorporating equity-related principles into research and research proposals

What living a full and authentic life at Lambton College means to me...

Being able to walk through the doors each morning feeling completely like myself and not worrying about how that's going to be received.

Live how you want and express yourself how you want free of judgement, whether that be your race, religion, sexual orientation, etc. Be who you are at all times of the day.

A workplace that values who I am as a person, acknowledges my unique experiences and how they inform my behaviour, introduces me to new perspectives and ways of life, and values my growth.


Being comfortable coming to work and presenting however I feel comfortable. Being able to practise my faith or present my gender without fear of discrimination.



What living a full and authentic life at Lambton College means to me...

To be able to live proudly with any disability, race, sex, gender, religion, or sexual orientation, to be embraced and accepted by everyone at Lambton College, and to be given equal opportunity.

To live a full and authentic life as a student in Lambton College means I am safe in an environment I chose where I want to experience, not pretending someone I am not and fully embracing every culture the college has for me to know.



To live a full and authentic life as a student at Lambton College means I am free to be me and to be included. It means I am allowed to be excited for my future and take care of myself mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually in the process.

I aspire to a life of learning while being kind and courteous to others, and seek to contribute to a community of positive and diverse thought and practice. I'm inspired every day to work hard for our students and clients to support their journeys of self-improvement through education. It's incredibly rewarding to witness the progression of students—the knowledge and confidence they gain, the broadening of their perspectives, and the honing of their craft and critical thinking skills.

Definitions

Indigenization¹

Indigenization is a collaborative process of naturalizing Indigenous intent, interactions, and processes and making them evident to transform spaces, places, and hearts. In the context of post-secondary education, this involves including Indigenous perspectives and approaches. Indigenization benefits not only Indigenous students but all students, teachers, staff members, and community members involved or impacted by indigenization.

Indigenization seeks not only relevant programs and support services but also a fundamental shift in the ways that institutions:

- Include Indigenous perspectives, values, and cultural understandings in policies and daily practices
- Position Indigenous ways of knowing at the heart of the institution, which then informs all the work that we do, and
- Include cultural protocols and practices in the operations of our institutions.

Indigenization is not an “Indigenous issue,” and it is not undertaken solely to benefit Indigenous students. Indigenization benefits everyone; we all gain a richer understanding of the world and of our specific location in the world through awareness of Indigenous knowledge and perspectives. Indigenization also contributes to a more just world, creating a shared understanding that opens the way toward reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. It also counters the impacts of colonization by upending a system of thinking that has typically discounted Indigenous knowledge and history.

1. <https://bccampus.ca/2020/10/05/decolonization-and-indigenization/>

Inclusion

Education that is based on the principles of acceptance and inclusion of all Lambton College community members. Students and employees see themselves reflected in the curriculum, the physical surroundings, and the broader environment, in which diversity is honoured and all individuals are respected.²

Inclusivity

Inclusivity is the practice of providing equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized. At Lambton College, inclusivity includes all the concepts of Indigeneity, inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility.

Diversity

The presence of a wide range of human qualities and attributes within a group, organization, or society. The dimensions of diversity include, but are not limited to, ancestry, culture, ethnicity, gender expression, gender identity, language, physical and intellectual ability, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status³

Equity

A condition or state of fair, inclusive, and respectful treatment of all people. Equity does not mean treating people the same without regard for individual differences.⁴

Accessibility

Accessibility is an umbrella term for all aspects which influence a person's ability to function within an environment.⁵ It is a measure of how easily a person can participate in an activity or their environment.

2. <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/equity.pdf>

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Iwarsson, S., & Ståhl, A. (2003). Accessibility, usability and universal design—positioning and definition of concepts describing person-environment relationships. *Disability and Rehabilitation*, 25(2), 57-66.



www.lambtoncollege.ca