



Faculty of Arts Strategic Plan: Listening Phase Report

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THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
Faculty of Arts

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*Link to [Appendices A-I](#), referenced in the report.

Land Acknowledgement

The University of British Columbia Vancouver campus is located on the traditional, ancestral, unceded, and occupied territory of the hə́ŋqəmíhə́ŋ-speaking Musqueam peoples.

Unceded means these lands were never sold, traded, or given up through treaty or other agreements. The University's location and history requires that we critically reflect on the ongoing effects of settler colonialism and structural racism, and question what it means to teach, learn, and conduct research on occupied lands.

1. Executive Summary

In October 2023, the UBC Faculty of Arts embarked on a transformative strategic planning journey for 2025–2030, Re-envisioning Arts. The new strategic plan aims to be an equity-centered and forward-looking plan that reflects the collective aspirations and values of its diverse community, while adapting to changing needs and emerging opportunities (see Appendix A for Faculty of Arts Strategic Plan Progress Report, 2019–2024).

The Listening Phase of this process, which ran between February and April 2024, centered justice, equity, and inclusion (JEI) to ensure that members of historically, persistently, and systemically marginalized (HPSM) communities were heard and meaningfully engaged. This included advancing Indigenous reconciliation by actively collaborating with Indigenous communities, particularly the Musqueam people, on whose traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory the university is situated. This process involved acknowledging past injustices, integrating Indigenous perspectives and knowledge into our planning, and committing to ongoing dialogue and partnership with Musqueam and Indigenous communities.

The primary objective of the Listening Phase was to gather input from across Arts to inform the Arts Strategic Plan Framework. As such, community engagement focused on three key questions:

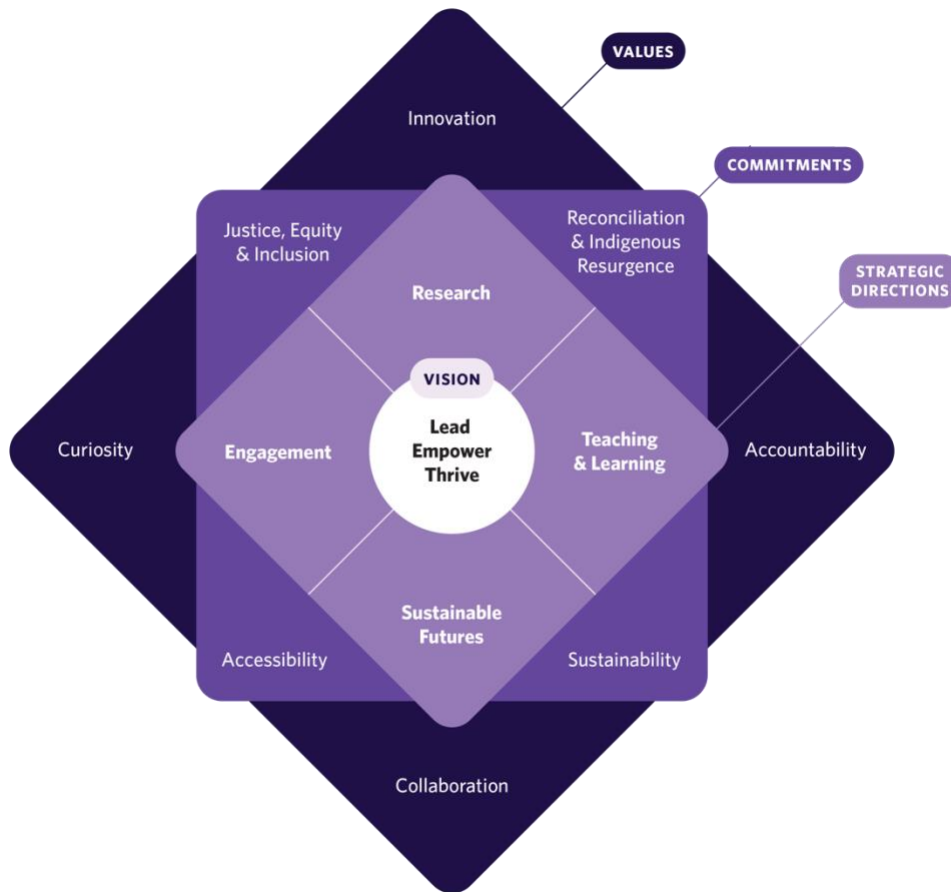
- What core values should guide the Faculty of Arts at this unique moment in time, and on this unceded Musqueam land? What fundamental purpose do you believe the Faculty of Arts should serve in society?
- What do you think the Faculty of Arts needs to do to achieve its Justice, Equity, and Inclusion statement and goals?
- Thinking five to ten years out, what does a thriving future for the Faculty of Arts look like to you? What are the top things the Faculty of Arts should be known for, and why?

In total, 289 students, faculty, staff, and community members participated in 18 general and 8 focus-group sessions, specifically intended for members of the following communities: Musqueam, Indigenous, Black, racialized, 2SLGBTQIA+, and Disabled Persons/Persons with Disabilities, held at UBC Vancouver. In addition, 355 people provided input via online surveys.

This report marks a significant milestone in developing the new strategic plan. It serves not as a draft of the full strategic plan but rather a synthesis of the common themes and key findings from initial community discussions about the future of the Faculty of Arts at UBC.

Informed by community input from the Listening Phase and a landscape review, including a peer review (see Appendix B), this report details the emerging Arts Strategic Plan Framework. This emerging framework includes our vision and mission statements, guiding values, commitments, and strategic directions. It establishes the foundation for further conversations specific to the emerging vision, mission, values and strategic directions and will shape the development of specific goals and strategies in the common months.

The emerging strategic plan framework includes:



Vision

Lead. Empower. Thrive.

The Faculty of Arts, grounded in its commitment to place, knowledge, and Musqueam-led stewardship of the land, will lead innovation in research and education, empower individuals and communities to thrive, and advance a more informed, just, and sustainable world.

Mission

The Faculty of Arts' mission is to:

Foster and mobilize research, knowledge, and practice across disciplines within the Faculty of Arts and beyond on both local and global scales.

Prepare students for the future and empower them to contribute positively to society through teaching and learning across our disciplines, using human-centered, critical, and creative approaches.

Elevate the impact of our work by addressing complex societal challenges and actively engaging and collaborating with communities at UBC, Musqueam, and beyond.

Cultivate a sustainable, respectful, and inclusive working and learning culture by advancing justice, equity and inclusion, and promoting situated relationships, decolonization, and Indigenous rights.

Values

Values underpin and guide all our activities, interactions, and decisions. They are enduring and act as a compass and lens for how we work.

Our four core values are Curiosity, Innovation, Collaboration, and Accountability.

Commitments

Our commitments serve as our contract with society and ourselves. We embrace our responsibility to build a just, equitable, and inclusive community for all—striving to foster an environment of compassion and respect and elevating the voices of members of historically, persistently, or systemically marginalized (HPSM) communities to address systemic injustices. We emphasize the importance of weaving decolonization and Indigenous resurgence; justice, equity, and inclusion; and accessibility and sustainability into our work and the fabric of our communities. These commitments are cross-cutting and enhance both the impact and the interconnectedness of our strategic directions (see Appendix C for a Glossary of Key Terms).

While the Faculty of Arts has made notable strides in addressing these issues and has been recognized for its ongoing efforts and progress, we acknowledge that there is still work to be done. We remain committed to advancing our efforts and striving for meaningful changes.

Our four cross-cutting commitments are:

- Reconciliation, Decolonization, and Indigenous Resurgence
- Justice, Equity, and Inclusion
- Accessibility
- Sustainability

Our four strategic directions are to:

- Excel in research and creative practice
- Deliver transformative education
- Engage communities for greater impact
- Generate sustainable futures

Several major themes emerged from the cross-faculty input during the Listening Phase:

- **Theme 1: Commitment to Academic Excellence.** Participants envisioned a future for the Faculty of Arts distinguished by a commitment to academic excellence across both research and teaching, and embracing innovative pedagogies and new avenues of inquiry.
- **Theme 2: Advancing Indigenous Reconciliation and Decolonization.** Participants emphasized the importance of advancing Indigenous reconciliation and decolonization by integrating Indigenous knowledge and perspectives into research, curriculum development, community engagement, and operations.
- **Theme 3: Advancing Justice, Equity, and Inclusion (JEI).** Participants expressed a strong desire for the Faculty of Arts to advance JEI through actionable initiatives that model inclusive excellence.

- **Theme 4: Fostering Collaboration and Connection.** Participants emphasized the need for a future where fostering collaboration and connection, both within our community and with external partners, are essential components of a thriving Faculty of Arts.
- **Theme 5: Elevating Influence and Impact.** Participants aspire for the Faculty of Arts to elevate its influence and more effectively convey its impact on individuals, the university, and society, cultivating intellectual curiosity, critical thinking, and ethical leadership to address pressing societal issues.
- **Theme 6: Encouraging Innovation and Risk-Taking.** Participants highlighted the need to cultivate a culture of innovation, experimentation, and risk-taking to achieve transformative outcomes in research, teaching and community engagement.
- **Theme 7: Prioritizing Wellbeing and Sustainability.** Participants indicated the desire to focus on wellbeing and holistic sustainability across financial, environmental, and social dimensions, and to foster a supportive and sustainable environment where people and communities thrive.
- **Theme 8: Promoting Disability Justice and Accessibility.** Participants advocated for Disability Justice, inclusion, and accessibility, removing barriers to access and creating an inclusive and supportive environment for our community members.
- **Theme 9: Developing Equitable Systems and Policies.** Participants envisioned a future where the Faculty of Arts thrives through the development of equitable structures, systems, policies, and processes that facilitate creativity, adaptability, and innovation.

2. Message from the Dean

Our world is rapidly evolving, with significant political, social, economic, and digital changes influencing every aspect of our lives. In these transformative times, it is important for the Faculty of Arts to chart a clear and purposeful path forward. The new Faculty of Arts Strategic Plan will serve as a guiding document, helping us navigate these complexities and articulate our shared values, goals, and priorities.

Over the past few months, I have had the privilege of hearing your thoughts, aspirations, and enthusiasm for the future of Arts. Your insights are instrumental in shaping our new strategic plan, ensuring it is responsive to our collective aspirations and values, while adapting to emerging opportunities. We value all perspectives and strive to honour the diversity of our community. In our strategic planning process, we have intentionally sought out and included perspectives that are not traditionally represented, recognizing that a truly inclusive and forward-thinking plan reflects the full spectrum of voices within our community. This approach not only strengthens our vision but also reaffirms our commitment to equity and inclusion, and helps us better understand the needs of our diverse community as we move forward together.

The Faculty of Arts is uniquely positioned to innovate and provide global leadership in research and teaching. We will collectively seize opportunities to create and mobilize knowledge, embrace innovative pedagogies, interdisciplinary approaches, and new avenues of inquiry. Recognizing and being accountable to the land on which we are situated, we aim to drive academic innovation and respond responsibly to our increasingly complex, rapidly changing, and digitally transformed world.

Building strong partnerships within and beyond the Faculty of Arts and fostering a culture of innovation and risk-taking are essential for achieving transformative outcomes. We will elevate the impact of our research and education, clearly articulating its value, and amplifying its relevance in a diverse and rapidly evolving world. Our contributions to higher education – creativity, adaptability, service, ethical leadership, critical thinking, intercultural awareness, interdisciplinarity, and more – address critical societal challenges and enrich our society.

Fostering and supporting an organization where people can thrive is paramount. We will promote the wellbeing, connectedness, and sustainability of community members across financial, environmental, and social dimensions. Our commitments to justice, equity, inclusion, reconciliation, decolonization, Indigenous resurgence, and accessibility ensure our pursuit of knowledge and excellence is inclusive and equitable. We are dedicated to taking actionable steps to model inclusive excellence.

This report summarizes what we heard during the Listening Phase. It aims to capture the diversity of perspectives within the Arts community and highlight the breadth of possibilities for our future. However, we recognize that we will not be able to address everything outlined in this report. We will need to make strategic choices, prioritize our efforts, and align with our goals and resources. As we move forward, we will focus on making thoughtful and informed decisions to advance our shared vision.

The new Faculty of Arts Strategic Plan is an opportunity to define our hopes and ambitions, guiding us to lead with purpose and focus our resources on shared strategic directions. Together, we will build a thriving future that upholds our shared values and aspirations for all members of our community.

Thank you for your continued dedication and support. I look forward to continuing working with you all to develop concrete goals and strategies in the coming months.

3. Introduction

3.1 Purpose of the Report

This report synthesizes key findings from recent consultations and presents the emerging strategic plan framework (including vision, strategic directions, mission, values, and commitments), highlighting major themes across the Faculty of Arts. These will guide the next phase of strategic planning process, focusing on developing specific goals and strategies for the years ahead.

3.2 Strategic Planning Process Overview

The strategic planning process aims to engage all members of the Arts community. It is iterative and structured in six phases, occurring between November 2023 and May 2025. The process began with establishing a planning team and agreeing on an approach (Phase 1: Planning), followed by cross-faculty conversations to develop and validate the strategic framework (Phase 2: Listening). Next, working group discussions will be held to develop and refine goals and strategies (Phase 3: Development). The process will culminate in the development of a compelling narrative and implementation plan (Phase 4: Drafting), leading to the publication of a final report and the formal launch of the Arts Strategic Plan in Spring 2025 (Phase 5: Launch). Continuous feedback and re-prioritization will help to ensure sustained implementation (Phase 6: Implementation).

Strategic Planning Process

PHASE 1 Planning	PHASE 2 Listening	PHASE 3 Development	PHASE 4 Drafting	PHASE 5 Launch	PHASE 6 Implementation
Nov 2023- Feb 2024	Feb-Jul 2024	Aug-Dec 2024	Jan-Mar 2025	Apr 2025	May 2025
Establish the “team” Agree on approach and process	Facilitate cross-faculty conversations Develop and validate strategic plan framework*	Facilitate pillar-specific discussion Develop and validate goals and strategies	Develop a compelling narrative Agree on implementation approach and roadmap	Finalize and launch plan	Implement and sustain
Ongoing validation and consultation throughout the process					

*Includes mission, vision, values and pillars

3.3 Relationship to Other Institutional Plans

The Faculty of Arts is committed to aligning its strategic goals with broader institutional objectives, including those articulated in the Indigenous Strategic Plan (ISP), and the Strategic Equity and Anti-Racism (StEAR) Framework. This includes integrating principles of reconciliation, decolonization, equity, and anti-racism into the Faculty’s operations.

The Faculty of Arts’ strategic planning process is taking place in parallel with work currently underway to refresh the UBC Strategic Plan: *Shaping UBC’s Next Century*, ensuring that the Faculty’s efforts are not only aligned but also complementary to UBC’s overarching efforts to celebrate and build upon its successes,

apply lessons learned, adapt to a changing higher education landscape, and continue its trajectory of transformation, propelling UBC to even greater heights.

3.4 Report Development Process

The development of this report involved a multi-faceted approach to ensure accuracy, comprehensiveness, and quality. The initial drafting was co-created by UBC Strategy and Decision Support (SDS), the Equity Diversity Advisor, the Musqueam Engagement Advisor, and the core project team, which is comprised of representatives from Faculty of Arts leadership, as well as faculty and staff.

The draft report underwent a thorough review process, including input from general and HPSM focus group facilitators, and feedback from the Faculty of Arts leadership team to ensure the findings and themes were accurately captured and articulated.

Throughout the development process, continuous feedback loops were established to refine and enhance the report, ensuring it remains aligned with the overall objectives and responsive to emerging insights and perspectives. This approach has helped to ensure the report can serve as a robust foundation for the next stages of the strategic planning process, guiding our collective efforts in creating a focused, forward-looking, and inclusive strategic plan.

4. Emerging Strategic Plan Framework

4.1 Vision

The Faculty of Arts, grounded in its commitment to place, knowledge, and Musqueam-led stewardship of the land, will lead innovation in research and education, empower individuals and communities to thrive, and advance a more informed, just, and sustainable world.

4.2 Mission

The Faculty of Arts' mission is to:

- Foster and mobilize research, knowledge, and practice across disciplines within the Faculty of Arts and beyond on both local and global scales.
- Prepare students for the future and empower them to contribute positively to society through teaching and learning across our disciplines using human-centered, critical, and creative approaches.
- Elevate the impact of our work by addressing complex societal challenges and actively engaging and collaborating with communities at UBC, Musqueam, and beyond.
- Cultivate a sustainable, respectful, and inclusive working and learning culture by advancing justice, equity, and inclusion, and promoting situated relationships, decolonization, and Indigenous rights.

4.3 Values

Curiosity: We serve society by cultivating curious minds, fostering intellectual enquiry, and promoting critical thinking. We acknowledge that the freedom to research, teach, and express ourselves comes with the shared responsibility of fostering respectful dialogue.

Innovation: We promote creative thought and expression, encouraging experimentation, risk-taking, and bold actions. We promote a respectful environment where new ideas and innovative approaches can flourish, embracing change as an opportunity to meet the challenges of tomorrow. We recognize challenges as catalysts for transformation.

Collaboration: We create a culture of collaboration rooted in respect, relevance, reciprocity, and responsibility. We encourage interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary exchange, foster partnerships that transcend traditional boundaries, and embrace diverse perspectives and collective knowledge. We care about the wellbeing and connectedness of our students, faculty, and staff. Through this profound sense of collegiality and belonging, together, we create community.

Accountability: We hold ourselves responsible for fulfilling our commitments with integrity and transparency, and for maintaining the highest standards of moral and ethical conduct. By fostering a culture of accountability, we build trust and credibility, and demonstrate authenticity and intentionality in our endeavors. We acknowledge our location on x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam) land by centering Musqueam history, ways of knowing, and the land's significance into our research, learning, and engagement.

4.5 Commitments

Reconciliation, Decolonization, and Indigenous Resurgence

We acknowledge the role the Faculty of Arts continues to play in entrenching colonial ways of knowing, learning, and expertise recognition. Through this strategic plan, we are committed to taking meaningful, measurable, and sustainable actions to support and advance the rights and needs of Indigenous students,

staff, researchers, and faculty. We are committed to actively engaging with Musqueam and honouring the unique knowledge and systems that Musqueam hold. Through partnership and reciprocity, we will support and uplift Indigenous voices and perspectives, ensuring that our accountability to the land informs our work. We are committed to doing this work guided by descendant communities—in the ways and with the support asked of us, and to prioritize true and genuine relationships in the work that we do.

Justice, Equity, and Inclusion

The Faculty of Arts recognizes that it has played a role in reinforcing racism, and other forms of exclusion, and that Indigenous, Black, racialized and 2SLGBTQIA+ members of the Faculty of Arts continue to face systemic inequities every day. Our commitment to justice, equity, and inclusion must embed actions to advance racial equity, anti-racism, and gender equality into the goals of the Faculty of Arts. This means commitments beyond aspirations and awareness, namely, changing the foundation of systems, operations, and structures to work towards a better Faculty of Arts.

A commitment to justice, equity, and inclusion is first and foremost about redefining excellence. An equitable and inclusive Faculty of Arts creates a space where faculty, staff, and students are empowered to imagine and explore new possibilities for the future—whether in research, teaching, or the broader community and society. This commitment allows us to push beyond the boundaries of what we currently know, creating opportunities for innovation and transformation.

Accessibility

The Faculty of Arts strives to build an accessible community where students, staff, and faculty can thrive. Our commitment begins with identifying and aiming to reduce barriers to access, and to combat stigma and ableism. We strive to proactively embed equity and accessibility into our culture and practices, recognizing that disability is shaped by environmental and attitudinal barriers. We work towards creating solutions to address these barriers, ensuring that everyone can participate fully in our community. We are committed to being allies in supporting Disability Justice at UBC, endorsing and supporting initiatives that promote the inclusion and empowerment of persons with disabilities. We encourage open, critical discussions and informed education about accessibility and equity. By continuously challenging and refining our approaches and practices, we aim to promote deeper understanding and foster a culture of respect and dignity for all.

Sustainability

We are committed to sustainability across environmental, social, and financial dimensions. We prioritize responsible stewardship of resources, foster thriving communities, and ensure long-term holistic sustainability through forward-thinking and innovative solutions. We aim to integrate sustainability into our work and operations, and promote resilience, innovation, and ethical leadership within our community and beyond.

5. Overview of the Listening Phase

5.1 Purpose of the Listening Phase

The Listening Phase aimed to gather a diverse and broad range of perspectives, aspirations, and ideas from our community. This input was crucial in developing the draft strategic plan framework, which will continue to evolve through iterative community conversation and feedback.

Centering Musqueam

The purpose of centering Musqueam during the Listening Phase was to honour Musqueam perspectives, knowledge, and aspirations in our strategic planning. By engaging with Musqueam administration staff and community members, including current UBC students and alumni, we aimed to understand their priorities, values and contributions towards our shared goals.

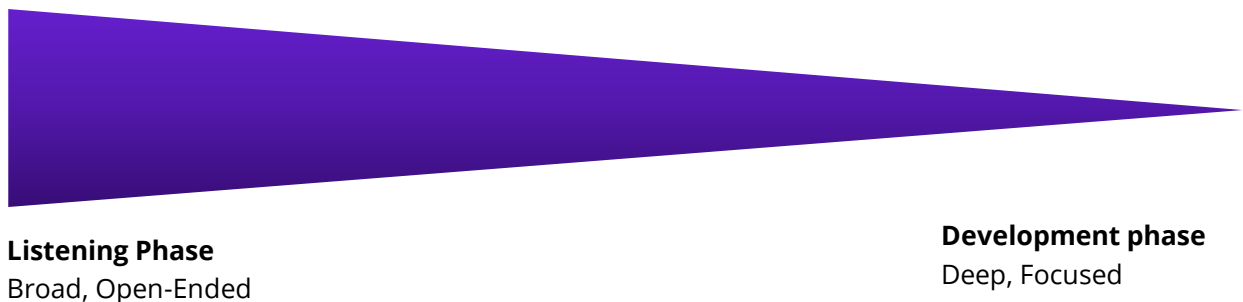
Centering Equity

The purpose of centering equity during the Listening Phase was to ensure that the voices and perspectives of members of HPSM communities would be heard and elevated. This phase focused on identifying goals, aspirations, and barriers to equity within our community, as well as developing strategies to promote fairness, inclusion, and belonging.

5.2 Approach to Engagement

5.2.1 NATURE OF THE CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

The consultation process for the Faculty of Arts Strategic Plan is designed to be iterative and increasingly focused. It starts with open-ended questions to gather broad input from the communities and gradually moves to obtaining structured feedback on draft proposals.



The questions guiding the Listening Phase aimed to uncover the foundational vision, mission, and values that will guide the Faculty of Arts over the next five years, with a particular emphasis on the Faculty's role on unceded Musqueam land and its broader societal purpose. This phase explored actionable steps that Arts can take toward fulfilling its commitments to JEl, focusing on decolonization and unlearning entrenched biases. Additionally, the questions encouraged envisioning a thriving future for the Faculty of Arts, identifying key areas of excellence such as research, teaching, and community engagement, and establishing a clear path forward.

During the Listening Phase, the Faculty of Arts engaged with a wide range of community members through focus groups and surveys. Each method of engagement was guided by the following open-ended questions:

- **Core Values and Purpose:** Reflecting on what makes your work in the Faculty of Arts meaningful to you, what core values should guide the Faculty at this unique moment in time and on this unceded Musqueam land? What fundamental purpose do you believe the Faculty of Arts should serve in society?
- **Justice, Equity and Inclusion:** According to our Arts Justice, Equity, and Inclusion statement, “Arts is committed to decolonize our research, teaching, and organizational systems. We aspire to uphold the ethics and principles of social justice, equity, and inclusion at every stage in the work we do. This necessitates listening and learning but also unlearning.” What do you think FoA needs to do in order to achieve its Justice, Equity, and Inclusion statement and goals?
- **Vision for the Future:** Thinking five to ten years out, what does a thriving future for the Faculty of Arts look like to you? What are the top things the Faculty of Arts should be known for, and why?

5.2.2 OVERVIEW OF ENGAGEMENT

Our approach to engagement emphasized inclusivity, respect, and meaningful dialogue. We aimed to involve as much of the Arts community as possible, creating spaces where participants felt valued and heard.

- **Principles of Engagement:** To ensure a productive and respectful engagement process, we established clear principles to guide interactions. These principles were introduced at the start of the focus group sessions and included active listening, fostering curiosity and openness, creating safe spaces for conversation, encouraging equitable participation, and promoting respectful dialogue.
- **Focus Group Facilitator Training:** Recognizing the importance of effective facilitation in fostering productive discussions, facilitators underwent training, which focused on creating supportive environments, guiding discussions effectively, and promoting inclusivity by encouraging all participants to share their views. This training ensured the principles of engagement were upheld and the overall quality and inclusiveness of the community engagement process was enhanced.

5.2.3 EQUITY APPROACHES IN THE LISTENING PHASE

Recognizing that feedback is important to ensuring that the strategic plan’s vision, mission, values, commitments, and strategic directions are informed by a diverse set of stakeholders, the Listening Phase aimed to adopt approaches that would prioritize the voices of HPSM communities. This included designing the engagement process to include both general and HPSM focus group sessions, to support equitable access and prioritize dialogue, ideas, and perspectives from HPSM communities.

The strategic planning core project team developed a community engagement plan with various mechanisms to accommodate participants' differing levels of interest, preferred formats, and capacities. The consultation methods included:

General Focus Groups

These sessions aimed to explore the Faculty’s identity, values, vision, and distinctive traits through respectful dialogue and diverse perspectives. Facilitated by Associate Deans, Core Project Team members, and members of the SDS team, sessions were held both online and in-person at various UBC Vancouver locations and were scheduled throughout the day to accommodate participant schedules. Materials and session details are available in Appendix D of this report.

Musqueam Engagement Session

On May 2, 2024, an engagement session with the Musqueam Indian Band was held to gather Musqueam's input for the Arts Strategic Plan. The session was attended by staff from various Musqueam administration departments as well as former and current UBC students who are also Musqueam community members. The group spoke openly about their individual and collective challenges and hopes as members or staff of a First Nation who have a longstanding relationship with UBC. They provided concrete examples and ideas that should be implemented over the next five years to ensure the Faculty of Arts continues to serve Musqueam, the First Nation on whose unceded land the UBC Vancouver campus is located.

HPSM Focus Group Sessions

As part of the Listening Phase, we held separate focus group sessions specifically for HPSM participants, so they could engage in discussions within their own communities, fostering a greater sense of safety and affinity with their community. For the purposes of the strategic planning process, the following groups were identified by the Arts Leadership team:

- Indigenous communities
- Racialized communities
- Black communities
- 2SLGBTQIA+ communities
- Disabled Persons/Persons with Disabilities

The HPSM focus group sessions aimed to create safer spaces, where individuals could participate as their whole selves, in an environment with a higher level of cultural competency and familiarity with the ways in which their lived and professional experiences intersect with their identities. The Listening Phase utilized a relationship model with facilitators who were affiliated with or part of the same community. This model supported the strategic plan process by leveraging connections and building on existing relationships that provided trust and familiarity. Each session included the three Listening Phase questions and more nuanced contexts to capture participants' unique perspectives and experiences. Additional considerations for the HPSM focus group sessions included specific accommodations; providing monetary compensation to facilitators for their time, expertise, and connections to support the strategic plan process; providing additional administration and logistical support; and customizing discussion methods and environments to best support the HPSM communities.

All-Staff, Heads and Directors, and Faculty Council Sessions

These dedicated sessions were designed to engage each group—all staff members, department Heads and Directors, and Faculty Council members—separately in discussions about the Faculty's purpose, vision, values, and efforts to advance JEI. The all-staff sessions ensured that the voices of staff members were heard and considered. The Heads and Directors sessions focused on gathering leadership perspectives from department Heads and Directors. The Faculty Council sessions incorporated insights from Faculty Council members into the strategic planning process.

Listening Phase Survey

The survey, featuring the same three broad questions as the focus groups, served as an alternative engagement method to complement insights from these consultations. Promoted across multiple channels

from March 28 to April 19, 2024, the analysis of the survey responses, alongside insights from focus groups, provided a holistic view of the Arts community's collective vision and priorities.

Post-Session Evaluation Survey

Following the focus group sessions, a post-session evaluation survey was conducted to assess the effectiveness of the discussions and gather feedback on the process. This survey included questions on participant satisfaction, providing valuable insights into the impact of the focus groups and identifying areas for potential improvement. It also featured an open-ended question inviting participants to share further insights or reflections on the three questions discussed during the focus groups, offering an additional platform for further feedback.

Faculty of Arts Undergraduate Student (AUS) Survey

The AUS Experience and Feedback survey was conducted by the Arts Undergraduate Society to gather perspectives and insights from undergraduate students on AUS services, governance, and to identify the challenges that Arts students face in their academic and professional journey. The online survey covered a broad range of topics, including two specific questions related to the Faculty of Arts Strategic Plan:

- How would you like to be engaged in this process to contribute to shaping the development of the Arts Strategic Plan?
- What's important to you from a student's perspective as the Faculty of Arts undertakes the new strategic planning process?

Individual Email Submissions

Members of the Arts community submitted individual responses and reflections outside of structured focus group sessions. These submissions provided an opportunity for community members unable to participate in scheduled focus group sessions to contribute their perspectives and ideas. Email submissions were accepted via the Dean's Office and included written reflections, suggestions, and insights related to the strategic planning themes. Each submission was reviewed and integrated into the consultation process to help ensure comprehensive representation of diverse viewpoints within the Faculty.

5.2.4 LIMITATIONS OF ENGAGEMENT METHODS AND MITIGATION STRATEGIES

Acknowledging potential limitations of the various engagement methods, strategies were implemented to help mitigate challenges:

Balanced Focus Group Participation

Facilitators employed various techniques to ensure balanced participation in the discussions. Techniques such as round-robin sharing were used to give each participant an equal opportunity to speak, thereby amplifying quieter voices and fostering equitable engagement from all attendees.

Building Trust and Understanding

For the HPSM focus group sessions, facilitators with affiliations to the communities they were engaging with were specifically chosen. This approach aimed to build trust and mutual understanding among participants. Intentionally smaller group sizes offered a safe and comfortable environment, promoting deeper engagement and meaningful dialogue. This strategy was intended to support sharing perspectives and experiences amongst a community with similar lived and professional experiences.

Ensuring De-Identification in Reporting

Anonymity was strictly maintained in the reporting of findings from focus group sessions. This practice was crucial in fostering an environment where participants could be open and honest, knowing their identities would be protected. However, in some cases—particularly with Indigenous student participants—students noted that it was important for them to be named as a practice of accountability to their communities. This feedback was respected and incorporated, ensuring their contributions were acknowledged in a manner that honoured their preferences.

Flexible and Accessible Sessions

To accommodate diverse preferences and access needs, sessions were offered both online and in-person at various UBC Vancouver campus locations. This hybrid approach was complemented by flexible scheduling to overcome geographical constraints and scheduling conflicts. The intention was to maximize participation by making it as convenient as possible for all community members to engage.

Survey Participation

Extensive promotion of the Listening Phase Survey was conducted through diverse channels including direct emails, newsletters, social media platforms, and faculty meetings, fostering broad community engagement. Open-ended questions in the survey enabled participants to provide nuanced responses and enriched the analysis, offering a comprehensive view of diverse perspectives. The design of the survey prioritized accessibility and ease of completion, supported by reminders and technical assistance to overcome potential barriers, such as low response rates and technical issues. These strategies collectively aimed to ensure comprehensive participation, thus deepening understanding across the Arts community.

5.3 Participation: Who We Engaged

5.3.1 FOCUS GROUPS

Community engagement in the Listening Phase of the strategic planning process consisted of 18 general focus group sessions and 8 HPSM focus group sessions which engaged a total of 289 participants between February 26 and April 17, 2024.

- 18 general focus groups engaged a total of 163 participants
- 7 HPSM focus groups engaged a total of 45 participants
- 1 Musqueam focus group session engaged a total of 9 participants

Additional focus groups dedicated for all staff, Heads and Directors, and members of Faculty Council engaged a total of 72 participants (17 staff, 55 faculty). See Appendix E, Table 1.

5.3.2 SURVEYS

Listening Phase Survey

The Listening Phase Survey, available from March 28 to April 19, 2024, garnered 284 valid submissions. Faculty* and Students** provided the greatest number of responses (68%) with a smaller number of staff (14%) also taking part (see Appendix E, Table 2).

Arts Undergraduate Student (AUS) Survey

The AUS conducted an online survey, including questions on AUS services, governance, and two questions relating to the Faculty of Arts Strategic Plan. The first question asked students how they want to be involved and what matters most to them in the strategic planning process. In total, 43 students provided responses to the question. The responses provided key insights into student priorities for the strategic plan.

Post-Session Evaluation Survey

Of the 163 general focus group session attendees, a total of 76 faculty, staff and students participated in the post-session evaluation survey, with a 46.9% response rate. Not all participants responded to every question. Of the 56 respondents who answered the question about rating their overall experience in the session, 86% rated their experience as “positive” or “very positive” (see Appendix E, Table 3).

“This was a really fantastic session and I deeply appreciate being able to attend. I felt like the facilitation was excellent – each member of the group was able to participate in a meaningful way, and the facilitators helped guide folks to elaborate on important points they were making.”

Table 1: Total number of participants who responded to the Listening Phase questions, by affiliation

	Faculty	Staff	Students	Community Members	Not Specified	TOTAL
General Focus Group Sessions	55	92	15	1		163
HPSM Focus Group Sessions*	18	17	10			45
Musqueam Community Members			1	8		9
Staff Only		17				17
Faculty Council	23	2	3			28
Heads and Directors	27					27
Listening Phase Survey	134**	39	59***		52****	284
Post-Session Evaluation Survey	13	14	1			28*****
Arts Undergraduate Survey			43			43*****
TOTAL	270	181	132	9	52	644

* Includes: Indigenous communities; Racialized communities; Black communities; 2SLGBTQIA+ communities; Disabled Persons/Persons with disabilities.

** Includes: UBC educational leadership (professor of teaching, associate/assistant professor of teaching) (12); UBC lecturers/sessional lecturer (20), and UBC research stream (full/associate/assistant professor) (102).

*** Includes: Undergrad Students (42) and graduate students (17)

****Includes: Prefer Not to Say (17), Not Specified (32), and Other (3)

*****Includes only the number of participants who responded to the question: *Please feel free to share any further insights or reflections on the three questions (refer to the section “focus group questions” on the website) that were discussed during the focus group session.*

*****Includes only the number of participants who responded to the question: *As a valued member of our community within the Faculty of Arts, what’s important to you from a student’s perspective as Faculty of Arts undertakes the new strategic planning process?*

5.4 Key Insights: What We Heard

5.4.1 WHAT WE HEARD ACROSS ALL GROUPS

Through our comprehensive review of focus groups, online surveys, and email responses, several recurring themes emerged. It is important to note that input from Musqueam and HPSM communities has been integrated into the "what we heard across all groups" themes, ensuring that their unique insights are reflected in this section. While the following thematic headings are not exhaustive of all feedback gathered during our consultations, they highlight the key areas where participants' observations and perspectives converge, demonstrating a strong consensus. See Appendix F for an overview of the methodology used for analysis, and Appendices G-I for a summary of themes emerging from the Listening Phase.

Theme 1: Participants envisioned a future for the Faculty of Arts distinguished by a commitment to academic excellence across both research and teaching, embracing innovative pedagogies and new avenues of inquiry.

- **Academic excellence and freedom.** Participants underscored the significance of achieving excellence in teaching and research to advance and preserve knowledge. They highlighted the need to protect freedom of expression and academic inquiry, promote respectful discourse, and explore diverse perspectives and ideas.

“We do not know where the inquisitive nature of our excellent researchers, teachers, and students will take them. The freedom to explore leads to better outcomes than trying to channel and trim that inquisitive nature.”

- **Innovative and inclusive pedagogy.** Participants envisioned a future for the Faculty of Arts distinguished by its commitment to embracing innovative pedagogies that foster meaningful learning opportunities. This included experimenting with new and creative teaching methods, rethinking learning structures and schedules, providing learning opportunities involving digital technologies and methods, and exploring creative and inclusive teaching strategies that cater to diverse learning needs, such as developing flexible syllabi. Participants also identified the need to focus on developing pedagogical approaches that go beyond traditional models, encouraging curiosity and preparing students for future educational landscapes. Some participants noted that administrative support would be crucial to enabling these experimental pedagogies and enhancing the overall student experience, including adjustments in funding, faculty structures, and course credits.

“The Faculty of Arts should remain at the forefront of educational innovation, continually adapting its curriculum to meet the evolving needs of students and society.”

“By embracing a culture of excellence in research and teaching, we inherently contribute to the principles of social justice, equity, and inclusion, ensuring that our work benefits all segments of society.”

- **Championing diverse disciplines and creative endeavours.** Participants expressed a strong commitment to recognizing and promoting the diverse disciplines within the Faculty of Arts, including the humanities, social sciences, and creative and performing arts. They envisioned the Faculty of Arts

offering dynamic undergraduate and graduate programs across all disciplines, allowing students to explore a wide range of interests and career pathways. In addition, participants advocated for innovative and flexible learning paradigms, such as reimagining the traditional four-year education model, exploring new approaches to curriculum design, providing students with digital skills, and addressing the unique needs and contributions of both humanities and social sciences as well as interdisciplinary opportunities. There was a focus on fostering an environment that supports a range of creative and intellectual endeavours. This included providing opportunities for students and faculty to engage in practical applications of their skills through projects, exhibitions, performances, and publications. Emphasis was also placed on creating spaces and resources for diverse creative endeavours, such as workshops, media productions, and public presentations, to contribute to a vibrant and transformative academic community.

“The value of diversity and complexity in Arts is what we should be celebrating.”

“Highlight the breadth and diversity that exists within the Faculty of Arts and share that with the rest of the UBC community.”

- **Redefining merit, productivity, and assessment methods.** Participants emphasized the need to broaden our understanding of merit and excellence, advocating for a shift away from traditional grading systems and evaluation methods, including conventional exams and grades. This included rethinking how grades are used and their impact on student learning and wellbeing. For example, some participants encouraged the Faculty of Arts to explore alternative assessment methods, such as "ungrading" or "grading for growth," that align with decolonizing efforts. In addition to revising assessment methods for students, there was a strong push to redefine how merit is awarded across all campus roles. Some participants proposed adopting more inclusive metrics that recognize diverse forms of scholarly and professional contributions, including community partnerships, service work, decolonization efforts, and emotional labour. Participants also highlighted the importance of ensuring that inclusive and equity-focused practices are integral to merit, promotion, and tenure decisions. This included creating assessment frameworks that accommodate diverse needs and contributions.

“Current methods of evaluating ‘merit’ and ‘excellence’ are outdated and inherently ableist. The FOA needs to re-define how it measures INCLUSIVE academic excellence, embracing novel and innovative expressions of scholarship, embracing interdisciplinary work and work beyond the traditional restrictions of outdated academic models.”

“Critically assess and amend grading systems to mitigate biases and promote equitable evaluation of student performance.”

- **Advancing inclusive academic excellence.** Participants underscored the importance of creating a supportive and inclusive academic environment where diverse viewpoints were embraced, and conventional wisdom was questioned. For some participants, this included:
 - Ensuring that course content and research incorporate a broad range of perspectives, including racialized, feminist, and Indigenous viewpoints.
 - Recognizing and integrating non-traditional forms of knowledge, such as lived experiences and Indigenous knowledge systems, alongside conventional academic knowledge.
 - Encouraging students to question established norms and embrace multiple perspectives, including promoting independent thinking and engaging students in discussions that challenge conventional wisdom.

- Creating space for diverse viewpoints to support students in developing a well-rounded and critical understanding of complex issues.
- Actively updating and diversifying course materials to reflect contemporary issues and challenges, and enhancing the relevance and impact of our educational offerings, integrating topics such as climate change and historical contexts of inequality.
- **Striving for international influence and recognition through academic achievements.** Participants expressed a desire for the Faculty of Arts to maintain its global standing as a leading institution. They suggested leveraging academic accomplishments to enhance the Faculty's international reputation and gain respect across academic disciplines at UBC through notable contributions and achievements.

“The Faculty of Arts should be known for its impact on Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences domestically and internationally. By setting up students for success in their chosen career paths and supporting the work of its existing faculty and staff in these areas, the Faculty of Arts can build a positive and widespread reputation for its programs.”

Theme 2: Participants emphasized the importance of advancing Indigenous reconciliation and decolonization by integrating Indigenous knowledge and perspectives into research, teaching, learning, community engagement, and operations.

- **Reconciliation and Indigenous resurgence as core commitments.** Participants emphasized the need for a genuine commitment to reconciliation and Indigenous resurgence, moving beyond performative statements and taking meaningful action. Highlighted initiatives included decolonizing the curriculum, hiring more Indigenous faculty, upholding Indigenous sovereignty, and respecting Indigenous right to self-governance and land stewardship. While land acknowledgements are important in foregrounding the Musqueam peoples who are the rightful owners and stewards of the land the Point Grey campus is situated on, they can also cause harm if not done with intentionality. Musqueam recommended that staff and faculty participate in facilitated one-day workshops to move beyond acknowledgement and into action, including taking action to better understand the history, meaning, and power of land acknowledgements and to integrate them into their specific course content.

“Core values should be a nurturing of the relationship with Musqueam through support of their initiatives and connection to the University.”

- **Engagement with Indigenous communities and building trust.** Participants emphasized the importance of authentic engagement with Indigenous students, faculty, elders, and community members. This engagement was viewed as essential for gaining insights into UBC's relationship with Indigenous lands and fostering collaborative efforts towards reconciliation. Participants noted that Musqueam's time and efforts must be fairly compensated to ensure Musqueam's sustained engagement and to respect Musqueam's needs.

“I would be grateful to have more contact with the Musqueam, to hear from Musqueam members and elders about their views of UBC, their interactions past and present with the university, their thoughts on how the university is managing the land, etc.”

- **Building on existing relationships and programs.** Building trust through sustained and meaningful engagement that honours Indigenous knowledge and does not impose burdens on Indigenous communities were highlighted across both general and HPSM focus group sessions. Members of the Musqueam community noted that there are several UBC Faculty of Arts programs, departments, and faculty who have a history of truly collaborative work with Musqueam. These existing relationships should be attended to and highlighted, for other UBC Faculty of Arts departments and programs to benefit from their successes and lessons learned. In short, UBC Faculty of Arts has a strong history of working collaboratively with Musqueam and should build on that history to inform future endeavours.
- **Decolonizing “expertise”.** Participants in the Musqueam engagement session noted a need for the Faculty of Arts to develop and institute means of formally recognizing (1) the experience and knowledge Musqueam community members hold and (2) the academics and researchers who work outside the university’s typical model to meet the needs of the community. To address these needs, participants recommended that the Faculty explore means of formally recognizing Musqueam knowledge and expertise and evaluating faculty and researchers beyond the typical criteria of works published or courses taught, and to allow for other success indicators for those working collaboratively with Musqueam. It was noted these evaluation criteria should be determined in collaboration with Musqueam.
- **Making Arts programs accessible and attractive.** Members of the Musqueam engagement session noted that there are substantial opportunities for UBC to integrate land-based learning into course offerings in a meaningful way, including integrating existing land-based learning certifications into program delivery and expanding existing programs (e.g. UBC Indigenous Critical Studies Land-based learning program, UBC Department of Anthropology Archaeological field schools). As well, participants in the engagement session noted the importance in hosting programs at Musqueam for non-Indigenous faculty and students to become more familiar with the community and recommended all Arts faculty and staff to participate in a tour of and orientation to Musqueam. Across general and HPSM focus group sessions, participants emphasized the importance of centering Indigenous perspectives within the educational framework. This involved incorporating diverse Indigenous voices, teachings, and knowledge systems into the curriculum across various departments, and underscoring the responsibility of all community members to actively participate in Indigenous education.

“Instructors need to learn how to bring Indigenous ways of knowing into our classes (what does this mean, what does this look like, are there disciplinary differences in this regard?). Currently, I don't actually know what it means to decolonize research and teaching.”

“In each department we can develop some practices for incorporating Indigenous ways of knowing.”

- **Supporting Indigenous students, faculty, and staff.** Participants underscored the need to effectively support Indigenous students, faculty, and staff. Participants advocated for concrete initiatives to attract and retain Indigenous students, such as full scholarships to eliminate tuition fees for all Indigenous students in British Columbia. Comprehensive support systems tailored towards Indigenous students' needs, including cultural safety plans and trauma-informed practices, were highlighted. Participants emphasized the importance of creating supportive environments to attract and retain Indigenous faculty and staff, offering professional development opportunities and

ensuring equitable treatment. They emphasized the need to avoid burdening Indigenous faculty and staff with the sole responsibility of representing Indigeneity.

“Hire Indigenous faculty members, but they can’t just be called upon to represent Indigeneity. That would be an inequitable service for them.”

- **Advancement of Indigenous studies and Indigenous rights.** Participants emphasized the need to enhance Indigenous studies within the Faculty of Arts. This commitment included augmenting support programs and departments that specialize in Indigenous studies, with a particular focus on Pacific and West Coast Indigenous perspectives, including Critical Indigenous Studies and the Indian Residential School History and Dialogue Centre. The Faculty of Arts was also encouraged to deepen its engagement with Indigenous languages and cultures, acknowledging the pressing need for their preservation and revitalization.

“[Support] Indigenous Studies: the connectedness with First Nations communities at UBC cannot be understated.”

“I think it's great to emphasize learning and teaching about colonialism and land and power. We should do more of that.”

Theme 3: Participants expressed a strong desire for the Faculty of Arts to advance justice, equity, and inclusion through actionable initiatives that model inclusive excellence at all levels. This included fostering a culture where JEI principles are actively exercised and integrated into the Faculty’s operations and interactions.

- **Justice, equity, and inclusion as core commitments.** Participants identified justice, equity, inclusion, and anti-racism as core commitments. They emphasized the need to promote diversity, respect individual dignity, and advocate for Disability Justice and inclusion in education. Participants emphasized the importance of embracing diversity of people and perspectives, ensuring fairness, fostering a sense of belonging, and advocating for social justice and inclusivity in all aspects of the Faculty of Arts, encompassing its systems, processes, operations, and broader initiatives.

“Equity as a core value is the belief and practice of fairness in our personal and systemic relationships. We embrace it as the framework guiding our obligations and interactions with others.”

“Diversity strengthens the university experience for the community. We have to go through discomfort. I want us to celebrate this more visibly.”

- **Clarify and prioritize commitments to JEI.** Participants emphasized the need to foster diverse and inclusive environments that promote mutual respect and ensure all students, faculty, and staff are welcomed and supported. They highlighted the importance of integrating JEI throughout the Faculty’s operations, allocating resources to JEI initiatives, and supporting members of HPSM communities. There was a strong emphasis on clarifying the Faculty of Arts’ commitment to JEI, including defining terms like “decolonization” and “equity” clearly, and emphasizing their practical applications in research and teaching. Participants also underscored the need for the Faculty of Arts’ JEI statement to

reflect diverse identities and address specific forms of racism and oppression, calling for achievable goals to advance JEl.

*“Foundational knowledge is important for direction.
I see a lot of the language and what does this actually mean?”*

- **Actionable steps for a values-driven Faculty.** Participants emphasized the need to translate the Faculty of Arts’ JEl Statement into actionable steps, stressing the importance of moving beyond symbolic gestures and integrating JEl principles into daily practices. Critical self-reflection and ongoing learnings were highlighted, urging acknowledgment of past shortcomings and systemic biases, alongside continuous learning and unlearning. Participants called for the Faculty of Arts to lead and consistently champion JEl initiatives at all levels, demonstrating empathy and humility through its work and interactions, and applying evidence-informed practices to effectively address pressing issues.

“After reading the Arts statement—How do they uphold and demonstrate their goals? What actions are they taking? What does this look like? Is this happening? What steps [is] the Faculty of Arts taking to decolonize research teaching, and organizational systems?”

- **Confront colonial legacies and model JEl practices.** Participants advocated for systemic changes to confront colonial legacies and integrate JEl principles across all areas of work. Discussions focused on the need to critique institutional and societal structures that perpetuate exclusion, inequity, and injustice. This included re-examining tenure and promotion processes, and exploring multiple ways to recognize academic contributions and achievements. Participants also highlighted the importance of dismantling entrenched hierarchies to foster collaboration and inclusivity. Reviewing hiring practices and admissions processes, redefining scholarly evaluation metrics, and reassessing ceremonial practices for inclusivity were identified by the participants as potential opportunities for advancing JEl within the Faculty of Arts. Emphasis was placed on the need for incremental change with realistic timelines to advance JEl efforts meaningfully, while acknowledging that change within a large, entrenched system is challenging and must be approached with care to avoid potential harm. There was a strong feeling that simply adding JEl initiatives on top of existing work was insufficient. Instead, JEl principles need to be deeply integrated into the Faculty’s operations.

“Change certain aspects of the university structure in order to deal with decolonizing at UBC, etc. Tenure perpetuates hierarchical structures and does not speak to values of equity discussed within the Faculty.”

“Eventually the faculty should reflect our community in terms of gender, race, ability, etc. So, we need hiring policies that push that along.”

“The biggest question I get is how do we make student recruitment inclusive and accessible while still being rigorous? How do we weigh different kinds of life experiences?”

- **Support faculty and staff success and wellbeing.** Participants underscored the importance of managing faculty and staff workloads to prioritize wellbeing and create time and space to meaningfully engage in JEl initiatives. They emphasized the need to attract and retain diverse talent by providing mentorship and career development opportunities for members of HPSM communities to support their retention and advancement. Valuing both staff and faculty, ensuring job security, and providing equitable compensation for all faculty, staff, and students, including contract faculty and

graduate students, were identified by the participants as essential for fostering an equitable environment within the Faculty of Arts.

“Lots of this comes down to time, if we don’t have time, we fall back into the colonial structure. We don’t have time to listen, which means we get forced back into the colonial systems.”

Theme 4: Participants emphasized the need for a future where fostering collaboration and connection, both within our community and with external partners, are essential components of a thriving Faculty of Arts.

- **Community connection and collaboration as core values.** Participants underscored the significance of fostering a sense of belonging and shared purpose within the Faculty of Arts. They prioritized cultivating a respectful environment where individuals feel connected and comfortable expressing themselves. Effective communication and reciprocal relationships were seen as crucial for facilitating the active exchange of ideas, mutual learning, and cooperation. These efforts aim to enhance collaboration and engagement within the Faculty of Arts community.

“There isn’t enough attention paid to relationships. It’s not usually how we value the merit of an institution. This should change.”

“As a faculty we are so spread out here. We don’t have a space to get to know people. We do not have a facility to build relationships around. If there is some way to facilitate us coming together on a regular basis, we would be a better functioning organization.”

- **Promoting interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary collaboration.** Participants emphasized the importance of cultivating community and camaraderie within the Faculty of Arts through meaningful interactions. They advocated for initiatives to create spaces for conversations within and across departments, as well as between UBC faculties, to promote interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary collaboration and knowledge-sharing among faculty, staff, and students from diverse academic backgrounds. These efforts were aimed at enriching the educational experience within the Faculty of Arts.

“At a massive university, there is a tendency to become siloed, and this is happening at UBC. The Faculty of Arts could do more to connect its own areas actively, foster and support easy and attractive ways for areas to meet and exchange, and open itself to the rest of the university. In short, open up!”

Theme 5: Participants were eager for the Faculty of Arts to elevate its influence and more effectively convey its impact on individuals, the university, and society, cultivating intellectual curiosity, critical thinking, and ethical leadership to address pressing societal issues. They emphasized the Faculty’s role in addressing complex social issues through innovative, interdisciplinary approaches, and building collaborative partnerships to help translate academic knowledge into practical solutions for local, national, and international impact.

- **Cultivating intellectual curiosity and critical thinking.** Participants emphasized the importance of engaging in critical discourse and producing graduates capable of sharp criticism and deep analytical thinking. They highlighted the importance of encouraging students to challenge established norms, participate in critical debates on important issues, and speak truth to power, thereby advancing innovative ideas in societal conversations. Intellectual humility and curiosity were deemed essential, promoting open inquiry and a people-centric approach to education grounded in empathy and understanding.

“As an academic Faculty of Arts, our core values should be deeply rooted in the appreciation and promotion of liberal arts education. We should be committed to fostering intellectual curiosity.”

- **Elevating and articulating the value of an Arts education and degree.** Participants emphasized the need to elevate the perceived value of Arts degrees, noting that arts education equips students with critical thinking and practical skills, essential for navigating complex societal challenges. There was a strong call to shift the narrative away from existing perceptions of an Arts degree, such as viewing a Bachelor of Arts (BA) as a general default degree, towards recognizing its role in fostering a meaningful and successful life and career. Articulating and enhancing communication, both within the Faculty and to the broader community, was considered crucial to showcasing the significance of arts education, ensuring students, faculty, and the public appreciate its impact and relevance.

“I would like to see the Faculty of Arts remain at the center of the university's mission as a vibrant community of scholars and students dedicated to pursuing deeper understandings of the world in which they live.”

- **Empowering active and engaged citizens.** Participants emphasized the Faculty's role in equipping students with practical skills and hands-on learning experiences, such as co-op and work-learn programs, to enhance career readiness. They stressed the importance of nurturing creativity and artistic expression while providing robust career education and guidance. They underscored the need to empower graduates to become changemakers and leaders in their fields, equipped with the skills and mindset to effect positive social change. Additionally, participants highlighted the need to integrate real-world, experiential learning opportunities and ongoing support to help students become adaptable, innovative leaders, and successful contributors to society, whether pursuing advanced degrees or careers outside academia.

“FoA should be providing incubation to creative and innovative ideas to navigate the complexity of all the real-world issues. To hold space for students to think outside the box so that they can offer new ways of thinking to the world and stick with them as they meet resistance.”

“Foster confident graduates equipped to make impactful contributions across diverse domains.”

- **Ensuring that research, teaching and outreach activities remain relevant and responsive.** Participants indicated that the Faculty of Arts needs to ensure that its research, teaching, and outreach activities are responsive to societal needs and challenges, such as climate change and social justice. This involves aligning academic endeavors with real-world issues to maintain relevance and impact. There was a strong commitment to contributing positively to society through thoughtful research and working with communities to access and build off relevant knowledge bases. Bold leadership and initiative were encouraged, empowering individuals at all levels to take courageous

action in pursuit of positive change within the Faculty of Arts and beyond. This culture of proactive leadership was seen as crucial for advancing progress and achieving the Faculty's goals.

“Arts and its virtues and values can push the world forward into a better place. As the world is constantly changing and developing more advanced technologies, the Arts should be also highly valued to provide insights into the complexities of societies.”

- **Connecting with communities and facilitating knowledge exchange.** Participants expressed a strong desire to strengthen connections with local communities to address societal needs and enrich cultural and intellectual life. This included fostering respectful and reciprocal relationships and partnerships with Musqueam and other Indigenous communities, advocating for mutually beneficial cooperation and learning. There was also a focus on knowledge translation, learning from non-academic communities, and supporting reciprocal knowledge exchange with external community members.

“We want faculty to know what is going on in the outside world, to make sure that everyone’s work is reaching an audience outside the university. Knowledge to action frameworks are worth looking into.”

Theme 6: Participants highlighted the need to cultivate a culture of innovation, experimentation and risk-taking to achieve transformative outcomes in research, teaching, and community engagement.

They stressed the importance of adapting to evolving contexts, including technological advancements, and embracing new areas and creative solutions to remain dynamic, responsive, and forward-thinking.

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- **Innovation as a core value.** Participants emphasized the importance of fostering a culture of innovation within the Faculty of Arts. They highlighted the need for faculty, staff, and students to have the freedom to experiment and learn from failure. Cultivating creativity and entrepreneurial thinking were recognized as essential for solving complex problems and exploring innovative ideas. Participants emphasized the importance of encouraging flexibility and adaptability in the face of challenges and opportunities, fostering a culture that embraces risk-taking and views uncertainty and disruption as opportunities for new possibilities and catalysts for transformation.

“We need to encourage an environment of innovation.”

“We want to be known for innovative thinking.”

- **Encouraging experimentation and risk-taking.** Participants advocated for dedicated spaces and resources for experimentation, alongside strong support for innovative projects and initiatives. They stressed the importance of adaptability and agility to respond to an ever-changing environment. Embracing a culture of risk-taking and viewing failure as a learning opportunity were seen as essential, fostering an environment where staff and students feel encouraged to explore new ideas without fear of failure.

“I think all the values I wrote above have a common, or 'fundamental' theme, which is risk. The risk to try something new, risk of questioning, risk of new ways of doing and thinking, risks involved in deconstructing our legitimizing systems into decolonizing and indigenizing, risk of

dismantling and making new measurement systems, risk of figuring out something is not going to work no matter how perfectly we thought we worked out a solution – and knowing/accepting that is part of the process – to try and fail better next time, the risk to constantly change and update with the times, etc.”

- **Digital leadership and innovation.** Participants emphasized the integration of cutting-edge digital tools and strategies, including artificial intelligence (AI) and data analysis platforms, to improve teaching, learning, and operational efficiency. They stressed the importance of embedding digital literacy across disciplines to equip students for the digital age. This included embedding digital literacy as a core requirement and leveraging technology in research and teaching. There was also a focus on understanding AI's societal impact, teaching its responsible use, and integrating emerging technologies into both teaching and research. Participants highlighted the need to integrate humanities perspectives into technology initiatives, aiming to infuse technological advancements with humanistic and social science insights. They advocated for flexible teaching models and robust online platforms to support hybrid teaching and remote learning, along with ensuring equitable access to digital resources and support. Improving digital infrastructure, including enhancing tech support, providing updated software and equipment for staff, and investing in innovative technology resources, was identified as crucial for enhancing the educational experience.

“Arts might help to support technological innovation and change. We need to prepare students to navigate technology as well. How are we going to be agile as a faculty to navigate this?”

“As artificial intelligence rises, we increasingly need arts and humanity to shape tech and frame [the] human component at this point with AI.”

“Embrace Gen AI and set the direction for how this can be embraced in an ethical way.”

Theme 7: Participants indicated the desire to focus on wellbeing and holistic sustainability across financial, environmental, and social dimensions and foster a supportive and sustainable environment where people and communities thrive.

- **Participants value holistic wellbeing and sustainability.** The consultations highlighted the need for the Faculty of Arts to be committed to holistic wellness and sustainability, including physical, intellectual, emotional, social, spiritual, financial, and environmental health. Ensuring individuals feel safe, comfortable, and able to be their authentic selves was identified as a priority, along with cultivating joy, fulfillment, purpose, and satisfaction in their work. Environmental sustainability was also crucial, focusing on responsible stewardship of physical resources. Financial sustainability was emphasized through efficient resource management, minimizing waste, and supporting inclusive and equitable growth. A future-focused approach to decision-making and planning, considering long-term impacts, was deemed essential.

“I would like to see the Faculty of Arts demonstrate a stronger commitment to a more sustainable future.”

“People [are] burnt out because [they are] not nourished and supported in a good way. [The] institution needs to support wellness, balance and care.”

“We should be branching out from a place of mind to a place of the full person and promoting student wellbeing.”

- **Focusing on holistic wellbeing for faculty, staff and students.** Participants discussed the need to support holistic wellbeing in all aspects, but particularly as it related to creating sustainable workloads for students, faculty, and staff. Key potential opportunities identified by the participants included enhancing mental health resources, financial aid, and counselling. Ensuring job security and equitable compensation for all faculty and staff, including contract and HPSM individuals, was underscored by the participants as a significant focus to foster a supportive and valued academic environment. Increasing scholarships and bursaries for HPSM students and improving communication on accessing funding were also highlighted. Continuing to contribute and strengthen our commitment to mental health – and address diverse challenges to mental health such as inflexibility and unsustainable workloads – emerged as a common theme.

“Current models of academia mandate significant amounts of unpaid, underpaid and unrecognized labour. This disproportionately affects disabled people, who are already taking on a massive burden of additional work to navigate ableist workplace structures. This needs to change. An approach to academia that exploits free labour has to be a thing of the past.”

“Something more tangible and in control would be focusing on student health wholeness and relationality. Disrupting the system by committing to the human beings. Consistent with Indigenous ways of knowing and [the] spirit of decolonization. Not decolonization in terms of fixing structures but supporting human beings.”

“Address overworking as a priority goal of long-term equitable inclusive sustainability.”

- **Conversations about wellbeing often focused on education access and affordability.** Participants also raised concerns about increasing costs, such as tuition, transportation, housing, and food insecurity, which pose barriers to talented and ambitious individuals who aspire to attend university. They emphasized the importance for the Faculty of Arts to take proactive measures to broaden access to education. Participants noted that the “Disability Tax” amplifies issues of affordability. Specifically, ensuring affordability for graduate students was highlighted as critical to ensure that they can thrive academically and professionally.

“Address financial challenges faced by students, such as the high cost of living in Vancouver and tuition fees, to ensure accessibility and affordability of education.”

- **Ensuring financial sustainability.** The consultations highlighted a strategic focus on increasing funding and resources within the Faculty of Arts, aiming to sustain educational programs, fund graduate students competitively, and enhance research activities. Examples included advocating for funding aligned with core values and developing robust fundraising strategies to diversify revenue sources. Strategic resource allocation involved embedding prioritization into organizational processes to manage resources effectively, focusing on long-term projects and impacts. Prioritizing and funding actions aligned with JEI values and establishing clear priorities to manage multiple initiatives effectively were identified by the participants as key strategies for advancing JEI within the Faculty of Arts.

“Equitable budget allocation to support the values and objectives of the Faculty and its different departments.”

“Units on campus are doing important work, needs to be fully resourced.”

Theme 8: Participants advocated for Disability Justice, inclusion, and accessibility, removing barriers to access and creating an inclusive and supportive environment for all community members. Participants expressed a desire to be an accessible community and meet the needs of diverse learners and employees.

- **Addressing ableism and precarity in the Faculty of Arts.** During the focus groups with Disabled Persons/Persons with Disabilities, all participants shared their experiences with ableism, highlighting its deep integration into the university's structures and practices. Participants reported needing to work harder than their peers to achieve the same recognition and often feeling compelled to demonstrate exceptional work to counteract the negative stigma associated with disability. The contract reappointment process, especially for sessionals and lecturers with disabilities, was noted as exacerbating these challenges and negatively impacting their physical, psychological, and emotional wellbeing. In turn, participants urged the Faculty of Arts to adopt equitable hiring, retention, and promotion practices; increase the number of Disabled individuals in permanent positions; create research opportunities and tenure track pathways specifically for Disabled contract faculty; and foster a culture committed to unlearning ableist assumptions and practices.

“Recognize that Disabled faculty are rare in the Faculty of Arts and when Disabled people are hired, they are hired into precarious and underpaid positions like sessionals and lecturers. There must be a pathway for contract faculty to gain access to tenure and equitable compensation for the work they are doing for the university.”

“[I] live in constant anxiety about whether I will get opportunities to teach next semester. We can't have full inclusivity this way.”

- **Reframing accessibility and barriers.** Participants underscored the importance of creating an accessible environment that anticipates and meets the diverse needs of all individuals. They noted that Disabled Persons/Persons with Disabilities face challenges in having their needs recognized and met. In response, there was a strong call for the Faculty of Arts to play a proactive role in advocating for a more inclusive and supportive process for accessing accommodations across the institution. By centering accessibility and adopting practices like Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and access to online teaching and learning, the Faculty of Arts can also enhance the experience for all members of the university community.

“For the FOA to become the centre and a trailblazer for fully inclusive, universally accessible teaching, research, and learning.”

“The brokenness of the university hits us harder [because] we [the Disabled community] are already so disadvantaged.”

“UBC is out of date on accommodation and disability inclusion.”

- **Increasing institutional support and allyship.** A central theme was the desire for the Faculty of Arts to be a stronger ally to Disabled people. Participants highlighted the significance of institutional

leadership in advancing disability inclusion and addressing academic ableism within the Faculty of Arts. Suggestions included enhancing accessibility in the built environment, establishing a Disability Taskforce, developing an accommodations policy for faculty and staff, and supporting calls for the meaningful implementation of the Accessible British Columbia Act. These initiatives aim to establish the Faculty of Arts as a leader in inclusive academia by integrating Disabled perspectives across disciplines and advocating for equitable treatment within UBC and the broader community.

- **Disability as an area of academic and research excellence.** Participants recommended that the Faculty of Arts develop Disability Studies as an area of research excellence by creating a Disability Studies program. They emphasized a critical need to enhance understanding and awareness of disability within the Faculty of Arts, spanning the need to integrate Disability as an academic discipline to supporting educational initiatives that amplify Disabled perspectives. Additionally, participants advocated for allocating financial resources to support Disability Justice efforts, ensuring accessibility for staff, faculty, and students.
- **Integration of universal design, remote and hybrid opportunities, and proactive approaches to disability inclusion.** Participants identified the need to implement UDL principles, transitioning to universal accessibility in course materials and offering hybrid work/learn options. They noted that the experience of COVID-19 underscored the effectiveness of hybrid and remote teaching and learning opportunities in meeting access needs. Participants expressed frustration with the current trend of restricting or removing online work options across the institution, which are vital for many, particularly those requiring disability accommodations. By embracing remote work and learning as essential components of accessibility, and challenging restrictive policies, participants noted that Faculty of Arts can create an environment where diverse abilities are valued and supported, promoting inclusive academic practices. Through education and partnerships aimed at reducing disability stigma, the Faculty of Arts can lead in reimagining academia to support all members of its community.

“We need to move away from individual accommodation and move towards universal accessibility. It should be automatic.”

- **Reframe merit, productivity and excellence.** Across all focus groups, participants encouraged the Faculty of Arts to redefine excellence by eliminating ableist biases and rethinking current practices related to productivity, promotion, and merit. Participants noted that Disabled faculty and staff face more significant barriers in achieving recognition compared to their non-disabled counterparts. Concerns were expressed about implicit disability bias affecting inclusion and opportunities across awards, contracts, grants, scholarships, tenure, and promotion. Consequently, participants advocated for the Faculty of Arts to redefine “inclusive academic excellence” by embracing innovative and interdisciplinary approaches, moving beyond outdated models, and adopting anti-ableist practices.
- **Support and representation for Disabled scholars.** Participants stressed the importance of empowering Disabled scholars as integral to the Faculty of Arts’ commitment to JEI. This included highlighting the critical need to address the entrenched ableism that significantly impacts the experiences of Disabled faculty, staff, and students. Recommendations included reforming hiring practices, offering career support, enhancing representation in permanent positions, and providing financial aid and flexible work arrangements. Mentoring programs were identified as necessary to address significant gaps in existing support systems for Disabled members of the Faculty of Arts and as essential to fostering inclusive academic environments where Disabled individuals feel a sense of

belonging. These initiatives aim to create pathways for Disabled faculty, staff, and students to achieve secure employment and academic success.

“UBC should be and be known for a place where everyone, including disabled folks, are supported and thriving.”

Theme 9: Participants envisioned a future where the Faculty of Arts thrives through the development of equitable structures, systems, policies, and processes that facilitate creativity, adaptability, and innovation. Many emphasized the critical evaluation of current policies and structures, the establishment of equitable practices, and the cultivation of a vibrant organizational culture.

- **Facilitating equitable and inclusive decision-making.** Participants highlighted the importance of inclusive decision-making and governance within the Faculty of Arts. They recommended exploring alternative governance models to ensure diverse voices are integral to decision-making processes and integrating JEI values throughout all levels of leadership. Additionally, they underscored the necessity for clear guidance and support from leadership to effectively achieve JEI goals. Participants advocated for increasing the representation of diverse individuals in leadership positions and emphasized the importance of maintaining leadership continuity to foster stability and support collaborative teamwork.

“Making space for rethinking how to be equitable and inclusive requires streamlined decision-making processes at the institutional level.”

“We need a structure that supports dynamic decision making.”

- **Streamlining processes to facilitate creativity, adaptability, and innovation.** Participants advocated for streamlining processes and simplifying systems to support the academic mission, foster creativity and innovation, and reduce administrative barriers. Additionally, they emphasized the importance of responsively addressing feedback to foster a thriving environment. Maintaining a consistent focus on improvement was highlighted as a crucial element for success, advocating for strategies that support long-term development and innovation.

“Less bureaucracy, with less steps to reach a goal makes for a thriving present and hope for the future.”

- **Making policies, processes, and structures more equitable.** Participants highlighted the importance of creating equitable policies and procedures within the Faculty of Arts. They stressed the need to review existing policies, practices, procedures, and forms through a JEI lens to align with social justice goals and values. Addressing oppressive and racist behavior with clear guidelines and processes for handling incidents of discrimination or misconduct was emphasized to promote a just and inclusive environment for everyone.

“UBC, the ISP and other JEI statements and goals are based on the lived experiences of thousands of people. The stories, the voices are full of instruction. It means we can do it. We just need a brave leader or leaders to take us there.”

- **Accountability as a core value and practice.** Participants expressed a strong commitment to accountability and integrity within the Faculty of Arts. They underscored the importance of transparency in decision-making and urged the Faculty of Arts to establish clear systems of accountability that demonstrate their active commitment to JEI and decolonization efforts. Specific ideas included:
 - Conducting regular surveys for alumni and students, and hiring data analysts to evaluate policies and performance, focusing on diversity and intersectionality.
 - Actively listening to marginalized voices through anonymous feedback, exit interviews, and open conversations to address community concerns.
 - Requiring departments to set and report on decolonization and JEI goals, with clear deadlines for progress.
 - Thoroughly investigating and resolving complaints about hostile environments or misconduct, ensuring clear consequences and support for victims.
 - Using progress markers and regular updates to report on decolonization and JEI initiatives, with annual reports on the JEI statement's impact and accountability.

“If we are going to be accountable, how will we be accountable? How many staff hours and how much money will you put behind it? The budget is a moral document. It tells you how much you value different things line by line.”

“Would like to see integrity as a core value, e.g. ISP commitments, but hard to define what concretely is being done. How do we turn meaningful discussion into meaningful change?”

5.4.2 WHAT WE HEARD FROM MEMBERS OF HPSM COMMUNITIES

Musqueam

- **Decolonizing “expertise”.** Participants in the engagement session made note of a need to develop and institute means of formally recognizing (1) the experience and knowledge Musqueam community members hold and (2) the academics and researchers who work outside the university's typical model to meet the needs of the community. Both needs speak to the broader need and means to decolonize UBC, a post-secondary institution operating within a colonial framework and using colonial criteria to define success and expertise.
- **Moving beyond land acknowledgements.** A discussion on the use of land acknowledgements identified the possible harm these statements cause when they are not used in an appropriate, well-intentioned, and informed way. Several session participants noted that when not given the appropriate care, space, and weight, land acknowledgements are harmful rather than helpful. In particular, classes where land acknowledgements are presented without context or when further discussions make students feel uncomfortable. In these cases, participants noted the land acknowledgments were simply a matter of process and not presented to truly acknowledge the unceded lands UBC resides on and what that means historically and in the context of UBC's ongoing work and for UBC students and faculty.
- **Building on already established relationships and programs.** There are several UBC Faculty of Arts programs, departments, and faculty who have a history of collaborative work with Musqueam. These existing relationships should be attended to and highlighted for other Arts units and programs to

benefit from their successes and lessons learned. In short, UBC Faculty of Arts has a strong history of working collaboratively with Musqueam and should take full advantage of that history in making sure it informs future endeavours.

- **Accessibility and attractiveness of programs to Musqueam students and faculty.** The session participants noted a pressing need to integrate Musqueam ways of learning and knowledge sharing into programs and course offerings. Participants noted several land-based learning programs at other institutions and highlighted the need for something similar at UBC.
- **Compensation and funding.** It was stated that all recommendations provided by session participants must be explored in collaboration with Musqueam. Engagement session participants noted that Musqueam's time and efforts must be fairly compensated to ensure Musqueam's sustained engagement and to respect Musqueam's needs. This funding should not be an afterthought and should be a dedicated line item in the Faculty of Arts budget.
- **No checked boxes.** Participants in the engagement session spoke several times on the importance of ensuring Musqueam's participation in any research projects or initiatives is not simply a "checked box". Session participants noted current and historical struggles with faculty and students who engage Musqueam too little and too late, who approach Musqueam with designed research projects or goals in mind and who cannot or do not respect Musqueam's timelines and capacity constraints. Several participants noted that some of these projects may interest Musqueam, but because of how Musqueam is engaged, they are unable to participate. As well, participants made clear that Musqueam's needs change over time and so meaningful engagement must occur over the lifespan of a project, this includes the proposed Strategic Plan. Participants stated clear concerns regarding the ability for the Strategic Plan's findings to be actioned in a meaningful way. They noted there is a history of engaging on UBC initiatives without seeing actual change enacted.

Members of the Indigenous community

- **Conflation of ISP and equity, diversity, and inclusion.** Participants cautioned about the conflation of the ISP and EDI, emphasizing that "sometimes Indigenous peoples are lumped in with BIPOC, and we shouldn't be lumped in, in that way. We are a separate Peoples with our own laws and territories" (Sheryl Sewepagaham, Student). There was skepticism about whether the strategic planning process is more than a symbolic or rhetorical gesture. Participants noted that "rhetoric is not enough," and that strategic plans are often seen as symbols of broken promises. A central question raised was, "How do we move to a new vision before we have realized the last vision? Is this just new rhetoric?" The discussion highlighted that the next strategic plan must focus on a transformative process rather than an additive one, especially as "tough times are coming, and transformation is needed now"
- **Ensure Indigenous voices are represented in relation to Arts.** Participants highlighted the ongoing need to visibly demonstrate Indigenous presence and leadership within the Faculty of Arts, emphasizing the importance of representing First Nations voices alongside the distinct identities and contributions of other Indigenous communities on campus. As one Kwakwaka'wakw student, Leah, shared "specificity of whose land this is and the difference between different Peoples is important. It would be wonderful to see the inclusion/interaction of Musqueam language, traditions and histories on buildings and across campus. Inclusion of Musqueam language in courses, in land acknowledgements, and in signage." Suggestions for better representation included integrating Indigenous practices like beadwork, ensuring representation of leadership in every department or faculty, and enhancing department websites to include Indigenous artists. Another student, Sheryl Sewepagaham, emphasized the importance of the 4 R's, respect, relevance, reciprocity, and

responsibility, stating that “the trailblazing voices need to be recognized and have their work weaved into all areas of the campus and make sure it's represented.” These insights underscored the need for multiple Indigenous voices to be heard and for avoiding tokenistic representation. As Sheryl stated: “Make sure Indigenous voices are represented in relation to Arts. From the Board level to students, it needs to be heard/communicated. Sometimes when Indigenous voices are gathered it is a check box.”

- **Recruitment of Indigenous faculty, staff and students and criteria for admissions.** Participants called for better recruitment of Indigenous students, emphasizing the need to revise admission criteria to account for the life experiences and cultural knowledge. They suggested that the Faculty of Arts revise admissions policies for competitive major programs and apply UBC's Indigenous Admissions Policy at the department level. Participants noted that “sometimes we have Musqueam students, but not that many, and that's a problem.” Participants spoke to a theme of “broken promises,” noting a disjunction between the commitments made during the recruitment process and the support experienced once Indigenous faculty and students arrived at UBC. They shared examples of promises that influenced their decision to join UBC which were not fulfilled due to systemic barriers, such as a faculty member's child not qualifying for a tuition waiver that was promised. In turn, participants shared that recruitment and hiring processes should be transformative, not additive. Faculty and staff recruitment should also be accompanied by resources, including a retention plan to ensure their satisfaction and success. There was also an expressed need to increase Indigenous representation and acknowledge knowledge systems beyond academia, valuing lived experience in hiring. Building community through informal gatherings and interpersonal relationships was highlighted as crucial for recruitment, retention, and supporting Indigenization efforts. As one Indigenous faculty member stated: “What has supported me to thrive is informal gatherings with supportive colleagues and peers. It is important to feel that I belong here. In these gatherings, we exchange notes, teaching ideas and practices, develop interpersonal relationships, share information.”
- **Support for Indigenous faculty, staff and students.** There was a call to support Indigenous faculty, staff, and students in ways that go beyond increasing recruitment and representation to ensure they are thriving. Participants aspired for the Faculty of Arts to lead in promoting Indigenous rights and priorities, translating institutional commitments into actionable steps that nurture a thriving Indigenous community. As one participant stated: “UBC does a lot of represent Indigenous identity as part of its institutional identity, but this does not always translate to having nurtured a thriving Indigenous community at UBC. We may put a lot of effort to meeting goals for recruitment, but what about support for retention and thriving?” Ensuring robust support systems, including expanding Indigenous-focused resources and mentorship programs, providing scholarships, tuition waivers and more funding for Indigenous students, and building an Indigenous cohort, were seen as crucial for retention and success. Building trusting relationships with Indigenous students through initiatives like Arts Indigenous Student Advising (AISA) were noted as essential. There was also a recognition that while UBC wants to be seen as a global institution, it often fails to recognize or support global Indigenous students. This raised the question, “What about implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)?” Participants noted that systemic support requires more than individual efforts; it necessitates changing systems, politics, and institutional practices. Currently, change is often practiced at an individual level, which can be challenging for those navigating complex systems. For instance, while academic advising might help students navigate problematic situations, it does not address the underlying systemic challenges that contribute to those issues.

- **Proactive leadership in Indigenous support and education.** In envisioning the future of the Faculty of Arts, participants suggested that the Faculty of Arts should “take leadership at UBC for institutional changes that support Indigenous community at UBC to thrive,” with a focus on building a critical mass of Indigenous students in classes to foster a more supportive and inclusive climate. They called for the Faculty of Arts to be proactive in addressing these issues, urging it to “look ahead and not relax into ‘What we are doing is working.’” The need for “strategic recruitment and hiring processes that are transformative, not just additive,” was also highlighted, along with the necessity for Arts to play a central role in “educating newcomers to Canada, including international students, faculty, and staff” about Indigenous histories and responsibilities on this unceded Musqueam land.
- **Decolonizing research and teaching.** There was strong consensus on the need to strengthen engagement with Musqueam by supporting hən̓q̓əmiñəm language classes, understanding Musqueam protocols and practices and emphasizing Musqueam history across UBC’s campus. Sheryl Sewepagaham emphasized that “there are still so many students who don’t know even after they leave UBC” about the significance of whose territory this is and who the people are. Participants emphasized respectful and accurate teaching of Indigenous topics, challenging colonial perspectives, and integrating Indigenous knowledge systems into academic curricula. Participants called for “more oversight to ensure Indigenous topics are being taken up in safer and respectful ways,” raising concerns about how these topics are taught and questioning whether the Faculty of Arts ensures they are being taught effectively and appropriately. They stressed that “academic knowledge is not the only kind of knowledge,” advocating for the recognition and valuation of lived experiences, particularly in hiring practices. Sheryl Sewepagaham noted that “more opportunities for Indigenous-led research, calls for proposals, calls for conferences [and] decolonizing literature reviews” are essential for advancing decolonization efforts.
- **Interdisciplinary collaboration:** Participants emphasized collaborative approaches that transcend departmental boundaries, fostering community-building and diverse educational paths. This includes facilitating interdisciplinary studies and opportunities for students to engage across departments, enhancing educational flexibility, and enriching the learning experience. Leah stressed the importance of “expansion beyond individual faculties. Collaborative approaches that challenge borders and silos—and instead, combine strengths” as fundamental to fostering a more connected educational experience.
- **Accountability:** Participants expressed a critical need for modes of accountability to ensure that the burden of transformation does not continue to fall on Indigenous faculty, particularly lecturers and early career faculty who are over-burdened with change and implementing the ISP. They noted that the institution must establish modes of accountability for mid- to late-career senior faculty to take responsibility for transformation, address the cycles of burnout from inequitable labour distribution, and ensure oversight, accountability, and advocacy in workplaces, particularly for student employees.

Disabled Persons/Persons with Disabilities

- **Current experiences of ableism.** Every participant in the focus group sessions for Disabled Persons/Persons with Disabilities spoke about their experiences with ableism being embedded in institutional structures and practices. While issues like physical barriers were noted, many highlighted systemic ableism—such as microaggressions, insufficient understanding of disability as an identity, and outdated views on merit and value—as deeply problematic. One participant underscored the need for institutional change by stating, “The Faculty of Arts needs to unlearn ableism.” Another participant described their first day at university as “the worst experience of my life because I was

disabled and literally left behind.” Disabled faculty, staff, and students reported feeling that they need to work harder than their colleagues to simply get to the same place as others, or that they must demonstrate that their work is exceptional to compensate for the negative stigma of disability and ableism that they experience. A key area of concern was the experience of Disabled contract faculty. One faculty member expressed, “There is a fear of sharing your needs; you won’t get your contract renewal or advancement,” highlighting anxiety surrounding job insecurity. Another participant noted, “The contract renewal process causes a huge amount of anxiety, making individuals wary of asking for accommodations,” indicating that fear of repercussions can hinder requests for necessary support. In turn, participants called for meaningful improvements in employment practices for Disabled individuals, suggesting that the institution should “Put your money where your mouth is [and] hire Disabled people into permanent positions with equitable pay. Currently we are over-represented in contract/precarious work conditions.” Participants urged the Faculty of Arts to adopt equitable hiring, retention, and promotion practices, increase the number of Disabled individuals in permanent positions, create research opportunities and tenure track pathways specifically for Disabled contract faculty, and foster a culture committed to unlearning ableist assumptions and practices.

- **Reframe merit, productivity and excellence.** Across all focus groups, participants stressed that the Faculty of Arts must redefine excellence in non-ableist terms and reconsider current practices related to productivity, promotion, and merit. One participant stated, “the narrative of excellence justifies exclusion,” while another criticized the UBC culture, saying, “The culture at UBC isn’t one of collectivity; it’s one of leaving people behind so you can achieve excellence.” Disabled faculty and staff were noted to face greater challenges in achieving recognition compared to their non-disabled peers. Multiple attendees highlighted that “reward and merit considerations are prejudicial for Disabled faculty—we need more qualitative measures, not quantitative.” Concerns were raised about implicit disability bias negatively affecting inclusion and opportunities, including awards, contracts, grants, scholarships, tenure, and promotion. In turn, participants called for the Faculty of Arts to redefine “inclusive academic excellence” by embracing innovative and interdisciplinary work, moving beyond outdated academic models, and adopting anti-ableist approaches.
- **Remote and hybrid work as cornerstones of inclusive practice.** Participants across focus groups highlighted the value of flexible learning and work options, such as remote and hybrid models, which proved effective during the COVID-19 pandemic. There is a strong desire to continue these accommodations, with one participant noting, “COVID taught us that we could teach and work remotely—the return to campus showed us that UBC doesn’t want Disabled people to continue working and learning in the way that best supports them.” Many expressed that remote work is an essential need, with one participant stating, “I can’t keep choosing between my career and my health. I need online work.” Students also advocated for remote learning as a necessary accommodation, emphasizing the importance of institutional support. In turn, participants encouraged the Faculty of Arts to advocate for more inclusive policies, emphasizing that remote learning should be a standard course option and an accommodation, rather than left to individual discretion.
- **Mentorship.** Participants emphasized the need for improved support structures and stressed the importance of creating an inclusive environment where Disabled individuals are valued, supported, and provided with equitable opportunities to thrive. They identified a gap in mentorship programs for Disabled and neurodiverse individuals at UBC, calling for the development of tailored mentoring opportunities, including mentorship clusters on disability and intersectional topics. Mentoring for neurodiverse faculty, staff, and students was emphasized. Participants also highlighted the urgent need for mentoring supports, noting that while Disabled community groups such as the Disabilities

United Collective and the Disability Affinity Group are addressing this need, they are currently under-resourced. They noted that this situation presents an opportunity for the Faculty of Arts to collaborate with these groups to enhance mentoring and support for Disabled individuals.

- **Promoting allyship.** Participants expressed a strong desire for the Faculty of Arts to be an ally to Disabled individuals by supporting and advocating for the recommendations made by the Disabled community at UBC. A priority is the establishment of a disability taskforce. As one participant noted, “Arts should support the call for a disability taskforce. They should fund disability initiatives like it’s a priority.” Additionally, they encouraged backing the Access for All Campaign, collaborating with experts from the Disabled community to create an accommodations policy for employees, and support calls for the meaningful implementation of the Accessible British Columbia Act. Participants also highlighted the importance of ongoing, meaningful involvement of Disabled individuals throughout the strategic planning process. They expressed a need for Arts to move beyond traditional consultation practices and foster a true partnership with the Disabled community to advance Disability Justice and accessibility.
- **Disability as an area of academic and research excellence.** Focus group participants recommended that the Faculty of Arts establish a Centre for Disability Studies to lead in research and scholarly excellence in this field. Participants noted that establishing such a centre would support calls for greater disability inclusion in the Strategic Plan and help destigmatize disability within academia. As one participant stated, “Immediately establish a Centre for Disability Studies—UBC doesn’t currently recognize disability studies as an area of scholarly expertise or importance. UBC is lagging behind other post-secondary institutions by not supporting research and teaching in Disability Studies.
- **Visibility and financial support for Disability Justice initiatives.** Participants across focus groups highlighted a pressing need to enhance disability awareness within the Faculty of Arts. They called for integrating disability as both an academic discipline and a relevant perspective in all fields, alongside improving education for managers and colleagues on accessibility. There was support for mandatory educational programs on disability, accommodations, and inclusion, like the Positive Space program. Participants also emphasized the importance of funding for Disability Justice work and resources to support access needs, highlighting the impact of volunteer efforts such as the Disability Affinity Group which receives no funding and the Disabilities United Collective which receives some support from the AMS, and called for increased university funding. Participants noted that significant work on Disability Justice and inclusion was being done by community members without support or engagement from the university.
- **Remove barriers to access.** Participants emphasized the need for justice-oriented approaches that recognize disability as a core aspect of human diversity rather than a deficit. They advocated for systemic changes that challenge the medical model of disability and that remove barriers to access, including physical barriers, obstacles to academic participation, barriers to hiring and advancement, harmful human resources practices and, most commonly, ableism and discrimination. This involves challenging ableist assumptions and practices within educational settings, shedding discriminatory and outdated practices, and fostering a culture of access and inclusivity.

Members of the Black community

- **Anti-Black racism and accountability.** Participants underscored the critical need for a strong commitment to anti-Black racism within the Faculty of Arts. They expressed frustration over the absence of explicit anti-racist pedagogy and policies, highlighting the specific challenges faced by

Black faculty, staff, and students. As one participant asked, “Where is the commitment? How do I see it or live it as an experience?” Participants voiced a strong desire for the Faculty of Arts to demonstrate accountability towards its community, which includes students, faculty, staff, and members of HPSM groups. There was a significant emphasis on the importance of genuine care in addressing issues like anti-Black racism and creating transparent procedures for addressing racial discrimination. As one participant stated, “Care is important. Act with care and be careful. Honour people's unique experience and dignity,” stressing that the institution must go beyond mere dialogue and show real commitment to care and accountability.

- **Lack of institutional support and need for transformative change.** Participants expressed critical views about the institution, emphasizing the need to address specific issues of anti-Black racism, rather than subsuming these concerns under broad JEI or general racism initiatives. They shared a desire for these concerns to be meaningfully engaged with and integrated into the Faculty of Arts transformative work. As one participant noted, “It’s not enough to talk about DEI in general terms. We need a focused commitment to addressing anti-Black racism specifically.” Another participant added, “Black and People of Colour seem like an add on at the end of [the Faculty of Arts’ Justice, Equity and Inclusion] Statement. Black seems like the afterthought.” This feedback underscores the importance of acknowledging and acting on the unique challenges faced by Black community members, ensuring their voices are central to the Faculty’s initiatives and strategies.
- **Challenges and support.** Participants highlighted challenges such as financial constraints, rigid academic policies, and the urgent need for mental health support. They stressed the importance of institutional support and community networks and advocated the need for proactive policies that address pay parity, retention rates, and support HPSM students, faculty and staff. The need for flexible academic policies and support mechanisms, including specialized counseling for arts students and equitable access to university-wide resources, were also emphasized. As one participant stated, “The more we explore the details of people's lives, we see small things impacting folks. Disclosure of problems in family or personal issues and financial concerns need to be acknowledged.”
- **Community engagement.** The role of the Faculty of Arts in promoting critical thinking and ethical engagement was underscored, with participants calling for teaching that is relevant to everyday life and global social justice issues, such as environmental ethics and the implementation of AI. They stressed the importance of arts education in shaping societal values, fostering relationality, promoting community wellbeing, and contributing meaningfully to society. As one participant stated, “Learning consciousness and creativity is core work for the Faculty of Arts. How do we become better people in the world?”
- **Decolonization and institutional action.** While acknowledging UBC's efforts in decolonization, participants noted ongoing challenges in addressing the complexities of settler colonialism, particularly in relation to Black and Indigenous communities. “Although UBC is working hard in this decolonial moment, there’s often conflation of settler with anyone not Indigenous without nuance—especially when thinking of Black people,” one participant observed, highlighting the need for a more nuanced understanding. In turn, participants urged the Faculty of Arts to go beyond symbolic gestures and adopt concrete actions, such as providing free transit for students, stipends for Black employees' professional development, and redistributive policies to address gaps in access and support.
- **Leadership in JEI.** Participants envision the Faculty of Arts as a leader in JEI initiatives, advocating for innovative approaches that move beyond tokenism towards genuine equity and representation. As one participant stated, “Culture and structure at UBC inhibit JEI. Be leaders rather than play catch up

on EDI. Be experimental and try innovative things,” expressing a desire for the Faculty of Arts to be at the forefront of equity efforts. They emphasized the importance of fostering an environment where failure is embraced as part of transformative change, particularly in addressing systemic racism and promoting cultural diversity. “Let go of the fear of failure. Staff, students are afraid to fail or be accountable on racism and more. Let’s try and fail spectacularly,” they urged, highlighting the need for courage and innovation in equity practices.

- **Support for Black communities.** Participants noted that a thriving future for the Faculty of Arts includes normalized presence and support for Black individuals. They called for increased investment in repairing historical inequalities through policies that value and compensate the additional labour required for equity work. As one participant stated, “More representation of Black people as cultural assets with more equitable commitment and presence. More investment to repair inequality—more time, money, capacity, and compensation. No more tokenism,” calling for a systemic change in how Blackness is supported and celebrated. Another participant added, “Retention, support, care, and promotion practice. Be known for retention and satisfaction. [Support] people to thrive,” emphasizing the need for a comprehensive approach to supporting Black communities within the Faculty.
- **Commitment to data collection and accountability.** Participants envisioned a future where the Faculty of Arts will be known for its rigorous collection and utilization of race-based data to drive equitable outcomes in areas such as student and employee retention, pay equity, promotion, and hiring. As one participant stated, “Be known to collect race-based data on Black folk and other race categories. Students. Employees. Pay equity. Retention. Promotion. Hiring,” emphasizing the importance of data-driven decision-making. They stressed the importance of accountability in achieving these goals, advocating for transparent reporting on progress and impacts to foster a culture of continuous improvement. “Words only matter if there is action,” a participant concluded, underlining the necessity for ongoing action and accountability to truly reflect the values and commitments of the Faculty.

Members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community

- **Core values and purpose.** Participants emphasized the importance of core values that guide the Faculty's work, especially on unceded Musqueam land. They underscored the need to bring marginalized voices to the center, inspiring and driving change for a brighter humanity. Arts education should continue to be a catalyst for personal growth and social change, enabling students to express their voice, and develop as critical and creative thinkers who understand the past, present, and future. The Faculty's purpose was seen as amplifying marginalized voices, developing critical and creative thinkers, and promoting social justice through interdisciplinary engagement. There was a strong call to celebrate the breadth and depth of the arts, embracing diverse approaches and the complexity inherent in field such as theatre, film, and music, which were noted as offering unique perspectives distinct from disciplines like economics and political sciences. As one participant noted, “Arts have the ability to shape perspectives and open minds in ways that other disciplines cannot,” emphasizing the unique role the Faculty of Arts plays in shaping societal understanding.
- **Interdisciplinary collaboration.** Participants emphasized the importance of integrity and reciprocal relationships between students, staff, and faculty to create an inclusive environment that values diverse identities. They also advocated for cross-disciplinary collaboration within the Faculty of Arts, recognizing its potential to enrich educational experiences by integrating diverse perspectives from sciences, business, and humanities. There was a recognition that interdisciplinary approaches could lead to innovative solutions that address societal challenges more effectively. As one participant

remarked, “Collaboration across disciplines allows us to see the full picture, connecting the dots in ways we wouldn’t if we worked in silos.” Participants envision a future for the Faculty of Arts as a center of innovation and collaboration, fostering cross-disciplinary understanding, co-research initiatives, and the preservation of languages and cultural knowledge. As one participant said, “Connecting and communicating in both a challenge and an opportunity for us.” Building collaboration skills was seen as crucial not only within the Faculty of Arts, but also as a key component of students’ professional development, preparing them for diverse and interconnected work environments.

- **Actionable steps towards equity.** There was a strong call to bridge the gap between aspirational equity statements and practical implementation. Participants urged the Faculty of Arts to take tangible steps to decolonize research and teaching, improve accessibility, and centralize resources for efficiency and transparency. They stressed that intersectionality and diversity must be explicitly integrated into institutional commitments, moving beyond statements to meaningful action with clear, measurable goals. This includes enhancing pedagogical development focused on equity and inclusion, supported by initiatives such as Indigenous programming and guest speakers on anti-racism and decolonization. As one participant said, “Statements are all well and good, but what do they do?” Participants expressed a desire for more structured support for faculty members to integrate these themes into their curriculum, noting that “without practical tools and support, these initiatives risk becoming tokenistic.” They also emphasized the importance of better funding, strategic policy implementation, and fostering a culture of kindness and respect within Arts, stating that “kindness as a practice is crucial.”
- **Adaptive learning and accessible education.** Participants called for more adaptive and accessible learning environments, advocating for longer course times, smaller class sizes, and blended teaching formats. They stressed the need to integrate accessibility features, such as captioning and sign language, across all educational experiences to accommodate students. Emphasizing the importance of flexibility, they noted that the lessons learned during the pandemic about online and hybrid learning environments should be leveraged to make education more accessible. One participant mentioned, “We need to think about accessibility from the start, not as an afterthought.” Participants also highlighted the importance of universal design in learning spaces, ensuring that physical and digital environments are inclusive for all. They emphasized that the focus should be on celebrating differences as strengths rather than viewing them as problems to accommodate. They also advocated for openness, a willingness to learn, and care in educational interactions.
- **Addressing inequities in employment.** Participants identified the urgent need to address systemic inequities in employment, such as the undervaluation of adjunct and part-time faculty, inadequate support for pre-tenure faculty, and pay and benefit disparities. Participants called for organizational justice to dismantle hierarchies and ensure equitable treatment and fair compensation across all faculty categories. There was concern about the lack of job security for contract faculty and the impact of this on their ability to contribute fully to the Faculty’s mission. As one participant stated, “We need to dismantle hierarchies and ensure equitable treatment for everyone, from adjuncts to tenured professors.” Addressing these issues was seen as critical for fostering a sense of belonging and value among all faculty members. Participants also called for mentorship and career development opportunities for all faculty members to support their professional growth and advancement.
- **Creating inclusive environments.** The need for environments where all faculty, staff, and students can express themselves without fear, particularly regarding gender and sexual diversity, was stressed. As one participant highlighted, “It’s not safe to be out. We need environments where people can be

their authentic selves.” Participants noted that leadership should model inclusive behaviors and integrate diverse ways of knowing into institutional practices. There were also calls to reevaluate grading and assessment practices that perpetuate inequities to foster inclusivity and support all student populations. Some participants suggested alternative forms of assessment that recognize diverse ways of learning and expressing knowledge.

- **Improving mental health and wellbeing.** Mental health and wellbeing emerged as a pressing concern, with participants calling for a supportive work environment that prioritizes mental health, enhances support systems, and promotes proactive management for long-term wellbeing. Participants emphasized the importance of creating a culture that recognizes the pressures faced by faculty, staff, and students, and provides adequate resources to support mental health. There was a strong emphasis on addressing burnout through effective workload management and promoting a healthy work-life balance. One participant underscored the importance of this by saying, “We are people, and it has to be okay to not be okay here.” Participants called for more mental health resources and support to be made available and accessible to all members of the Faculty of Arts.
- **Celebrating diversity and inclusion.** Participants advocated for moving from merely accepting to actively celebrating diversity. This included creating safe spaces for all individuals, improving gender-accessible facilities, and supporting staff and students with disabilities. Integrating and acknowledging the experiences of members of HPSM groups, including transgender individuals, within the institutional framework was deemed essential for fostering a truly inclusive environment. As one participant stated, “We must move beyond acceptance to truly celebrating diversity in all its forms.”
- **Strategic planning and proactivity.** There was a call for a shift from reactive approaches to more strategic, proactive measures. Setting clear priorities, revisiting goals quarterly, and ensuring that actions drive meaningful organizational change were emphasized. Equitable distribution of teaching loads and class sizes to support better access to resources like TA support was also prioritized. Participants stressed the need for the Faculty of Arts to lead by example, driving change in organizational and systemic structures to support these goals. As one participant mentioned, “We need to be proactive, not reactive, to truly embody the values we claim to uphold.”

Racialized community members

- **Building trust and accountability in strategic planning.** A recurring theme from the focus group was questioning of the value of this strategic planning process, and the need to ensure that the process aligns closely with the Faculty of Arts’ stated values, especially in the areas of equity and anti-racism. Participants appreciated the opportunity to gather and discuss these important topics, some said this was the first time they had received an invitation like this. At the same time, they emphasized that the process must go beyond symbolic gestures. They expressed that having a singular, overarching set of values might unintentionally overlook the diverse needs of members from HPSM groups, which are crucial to addressing systemic inequities. Participants called for stronger follow-through on commitments, urging the Faculty of Arts to prioritize transparency, accountability, and resource allocation to support meaningful change. They also emphasized the need for more opportunities for HPSM voices to be heard and for the Faculty’s actions to consistently reflect its aspirations. This included fostering a culture of care, humility, and sustained progress.
- **Purpose and value of an Arts degree.** Participants explored the core purpose and value of a Faculty of Arts education, highlighting its role in fostering critical thinking and societal impact through humanistic perspectives. As one participant stated: “It is [Arts’ students] ability to weave together practical hard data with humanistic points of view that sets them apart.” They acknowledged the

challenge of articulating this uniqueness compared to other disciplines, and underscored the importance of extending students' knowledge of society, humanity, and care outside the university, to emphasize the broader social impact of Arts education.

- **Public engagement and consultation.** Participants noted that meaningful public engagement requires UBC to better reflect the diversity and experiences of the broader public. They highlighted the importance of valuing embodied experience and knowledge as a foundation for creating stronger connections with non-UBC community members. Specifically, they called for UBC to approach relationship-building with Indigenous communities, particularly the Musqueam people, with a focus on reciprocity and mutual respect. This involved shifting away from a top-down perspective of what UBC can do for the community and instead exploring what can be accomplished together. Participants emphasized that such an approach is vital for truly serving the public good and fostering enduring connections beyond the academic sphere.
- **Embodied experiences and connections.** Participants advocated for focusing on embodied experiences and meaningful connections within the academic community. They noted that large institutions could often feel detached and emphasized the need for a more intimate, community-oriented approach that valued the lived experiences of students and faculty. As one participant stated, "You get a sense that at smaller colleges and institutions, the connection with community and professors is heightened—we should take that experience and incorporate it into the work that we do." Several participants highlighted the isolation felt by racialized individuals within the institution and suggested that events focused solely on engaging racialized faculty, staff and students could help build community and support.
- **Institutional understanding and flexibility.** Discussions reflected a keen awareness of how institutional policies, such as those addressing academic misconduct or diversity, impacted different individuals and communities. Participants spoke about the weight of carrying the burdens and histories of these systems, even as they work toward change, which can often feel tiring and overwhelming. They called for policies that were sensitive to diverse backgrounds and experiences, recognizing the varied implications of uniform regulations and allowing for diverse approaches and conclusions. As one participant said, "Everybody comes from a different frame of reference and [we need to] understand how the same blanket policies can affect individuals differently."
- **Decolonization and Indigenous ways of knowing.** Decolonization was identified as a critical guiding principle. Participants recognized the Faculty's contributions to Indigenous rights and decolonization efforts as central to its purpose, reflecting a commitment to addressing historical and ongoing injustices. However, they also noted that some colleagues express discomfort around decolonization, acknowledging this as a point of tension. As one participant stated "There's a refusal to sit in discomfort. A lot of the times our engagement is surface level." Despite this, participants emphasized the importance of engaging with that discomfort as a necessary step toward meaningful change. They discussed the need to incorporate Indigenous ways of knowing into departmental practices and curriculum, making Indigenous education a fundamental part of everyone's career development. Reflecting on the implementation of past initiatives like the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was also suggested as a guide for this ongoing work.
- **Aspirational statements, accountability and burnout.** Participants advocated for concrete actions and measurable outcomes to advance JEl, stressing the importance of clear definitions, budget allocations, and tangible results. They proposed forming advisory boards or working groups to help translate JEl goals into actionable items, focusing annually on specific themes such as justice. Transparent leadership, active engagement, and frameworks to hold leaders accountable for

advancing equity and addressing systemic barriers were highlighted. However, participants also expressed concerns about burnout, particularly for those who are often seen as the “token” diversity hire or leader, or as passionate students or staff who take on this work due to their deep commitment to meaningful change. They described a sense of being wooed by promises only to encounter immovable barriers to change within the current structures. The frustration of hearing aspirational statements without adequate follow-through, or of seeing language shift without real action, was palpable. At the same time, participants recognized that achieving JEl goals requires embracing messiness and discomfort, advocating for learning from failures to achieve meaningful change. Setting realistic goals for JEl progress over 5-10 years was emphasized, along with fostering frequent and inclusive conversations to drive progress with diverse perspectives. In envisioning the Faculty of Arts as a systemic change innovator, participants prioritized relational goals over traditional metrics. They emphasized building meaningful relationships within and beyond the institution to inspire broader societal impact. As one participant said, “We need to reprioritize what our aims and objectives are. Away from aims/objectives/metrics. Towards relationships. Arts can model this.”

- **Equity in hiring and retention.** Participants discussed inequities in hiring and retention practices, pointing out issues with job security and the often-superficial nature of diversity efforts, which can create an illusion of inclusion. They emphasized the urgent need for clear career pipelines, mentorship programs specifically designed for racialized community members, and opportunities for racialized staff to connect and support one another. As one participant remarked, “Creating opportunities for racialized staff to come together—is there a place where we can meet each other and get support? Once you’re in, you have to figure things out on your own.” There was a strong call for enhanced staff support and career development within the institution to ensure equitable opportunities for growth. Participants also stressed that supporting diversity at all levels is crucial, warning that appointing racialized leaders without adequate backing is akin to setting them up for failure. They recognized that diversifying teams is just the beginning; ongoing support is essential to address challenges and ensure success. “You need to follow it up with policy and a structure of support to push it through,” as one participant remarked. The importance of creating an environment where cohorts not only grow but thrive and find happiness was also highlighted, underscoring the need for continuous improvement in support systems.
- **Barriers to access.** Participants discussed the profound impact of access, or lack thereof, on the perceived potential and merit of students. They highlighted that students from HPSM communities often faced systemic barriers that shaped how their abilities were perceived. Additionally, there was consensus on the significant gap between the skills taught in university programs and the skill sets required by entry-level job opportunities. This mismatch not only affected student preparedness but also perpetuated inequities in access to career advancement.
- **Cultural shift towards care.** Participants called for a cultural shift towards genuine care and empathy in the Faculty of Arts, moving beyond performative actions to nurture a culture that deeply values care. They envisioned the university as a relational ecosystem emphasizing interdependence, not just interdisciplinary connections. Specifically, participants emphasized the critical need for a supportive and well-funded community for racialized and marginalized students, advocating for reduced reliance on sessional lecturers, increased social engagement beyond academia, and initiatives that promote a strong sense of belonging and happiness among students. As one participant articulated, their vision for the Faculty of Arts, is a place “for racialized students to feel happy and that they belong here. A sense of community especially amongst underrepresented and marginalized students.”