The Organizational Improvement Plan at
Western University

Education Faculty

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Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in New Student Enrolment: Transforming Undergraduate University Admissions

Kathryn M. Verkerk
kverkerk@uwo.ca

Abstract

This Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) explores the process of aligning a university's internal admission policies, practices, and processes with its public commitments to equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI). Current admission practices reinforce the myth of meritocracy and existing alternative admission pathways are framed in discourses of deficiency. Using an EDI lens will align the university with provincial and federal strategic priorities that see an increase of new Canadians and students educated in social justice focused curricula. Critical whiteness theory and the cultural perspective underpin the change plan in order to understand the systemic barriers and legacies that contribute to the exclusion of equity-deserving students in the admission process. To initiate the change process employing an antioppression lens, the inclusion of the voices, truths, and counternarratives of systemically marginalized and historically underserved students is centered with a focus on the ethic of care. Internal and external stakeholders are key to the success of this plan, and to engage them in the process, authentic and distributed leadership approaches are used. After determining that the university is ready to engage in a policy review process, assessing resources and fiscal impacts, and conducting ethical stakeholder engagement, the preferred approach to leading the consultation process is to work with an internal EDI champion. The implementation and communication of the plan focuses on key messages that centre students in the policy review process and reinforce the urgency of making transformative change that benefits not just equity-deserving students, but all students applying for admission to a university.

Keywords: EDI, systemically marginalized, historically underserved, university admission, critical whiteness theory

Executive Summary

Universities across Canada espouse commitments to equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI), but their internal policies, practices, and processes are steeped in colonial systems and structures that marginalize and oppress equity-deserving students (Fedoruk & Lindstrom, 2022; Tamtik & Guentner, 2019). University admission is a significant experience as it communicates the values of an institution in every interaction with a prospective student and helps students understand how the university serves its students (Michalski et al., 2017). The Registrar's Office (RO) is the first point of contact a prospective student has with the university through the recruitment and admission process. As such, the RO has an opportunity to align new student enrolment policies with public commitments to EDI. The problem of practice (PoP) addressed in this operational improvement plan (OIP) is to review and update current admission policies at Mountain University (MU, a pseudonym) in alignment with the president's EDI vision by focusing on a consultation process centered on the lived experiences and counternarratives (Iverson, 2007; Miller at al., 2020; Smith, 2010) of systemically marginalized and historically underserved students.

Chapter 1 situates the PoP within international, national, and local contexts, with a review of the factors framing it. Specifically, MU admission policies are being outpaced by the changing demographic landscape of Canada due to the forecasted increase of newcomers, as outlined in various government documents (Government of Canada, 2022a; Statistics Canada, 2022), and by the changing BC high school curriculum, which focuses on social justice outcomes (British Columbia Ministry of Education, n.d.). Unfortunately, universities like MU that attempt to change their admission policies are faced with historical traditions of exclusionary admission practices and cultures stemming from the first universities in Europe (Karabel, 2005; Lüth, 2000;

McGuigan, 1970; Newman, 2008). Chapter 1 shifts to describe MU's bicameral university governance and Senate's role in approving admission policies. Finally, my positionality and personal leadership approach are outlined with a focus on my own authentic leadership style. In addition, distributed leadership is chosen as a means to address the guiding questions emerging from the PoP. These questions focus on engaging internal and external stakeholders, including senators, administrative staff, high school students, and counsellors, in the consultation process in order to gain buy in and simplify the approval process.

Chapter 2 identifies three solutions to address the PoP, guided by a discussion of frameworks to drive the policy change, including MU's readiness to tackle this change process. The process is grounded in the critical and cultural perspectives with a focus on emancipatory change by evaluating systems of oppression rooted in historical legacies and traditions (Blackmore, 2013; Manning, 2013; Schein, 2017; Willmott, 2005). Critical whiteness theory (CWT), an approach of the critical paradigm, further guides the interrogation into the systems of white supremacy that oppress systemically marginalized and historically underserved university students (Leonardo, 2002). Three stages to review and make policy change are described: stakeholder engagement, policy review and development, and policy implementation. Authentic leadership supports followers with a framework grounded in their needs, and distributed leadership disseminates the work amongst multiple leaders to anchor the success of this change process. From here, the chapter assesses MU's organizational change readiness, and it becomes clear that the RO and New Student Enrolment Office are in a good position to engage in a policy change process. Each solution follows the same process for policy consultation and approval due to rigid Senate timelines; however, the solutions explore who is involved in the process. The key consideration in the selected solution is guided by the ethic of care (Wood & Hilton, 2012).

Therefore, the selected solution is working with an internal EDI champion, the Director EDI within Student Services at MU, to lead stakeholder engagement.

Chapter 3 delves into the implementation, communication, and evaluation plans for the admission policy change process. Throughout this chapter, Kotter's (2012) eight-stage change model guides the change process with a comprehensive focus on the whole organization. There are four stages to the implementation plan, consisting of short-, mid-, and long-term goals: stakeholder engagement; consultation debriefs; an inquiry cycle informed by the plan, do, change, and adjust cycle; and drafting, approving, and implementing the policy. To communicate the change plan, the OIP follows Lavis et al.'s (2003) knowledge mobilization plan with a focus on the following stakeholders: executive leadership, members of Senate, administrative staff in the RO, current MU students, and the high school community (i.e., counsellors and prospective students). The chapter then shifts to monitoring the progress and evaluating the outcome of the change plan following Markiewicz and Patrick's (2016) framework. The monitoring and evaluation plans determine if steps in Kotter's (2012) change model need to be revisited and appraise the quality and value of the stakeholder consultations.

This OIP seeks to develop a framework for reviewing admission policies through the lens of EDI by centering the voices, truths, and counternarratives of equity-deserving students in the consultation process. In addition, the ethic of care is a key consideration in the process; specifically, who leads the process and how stakeholders are safely engaged in a consultation process. Though the plan does not state what the new admission policy will be, it is the process, rather than the outcome, that aligns this new approach to policy review with EDI principles.

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Acronyms

CRT	Critical Race Theory
CWT	Critical Whiteness Theory
EDI	Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
KMP	Knowledge Mobilization Plan
MOE	Ministry of Education
MU	Mountain University
NSEO	New Student Enrolment Office
NSSE	National Survey of Student Engagement
OCR	Organizational Change Readiness
OIP	Organizational Improvement Plan
PDCA	Plan, Do, Check, and Adjust (cycle)
PoP	Problem of Practice
RA	Recruitment and Admissions
RO	Registrar's Office
SCOA	Senate Committee on Admissions
UAP	University Access Pathway
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Definitions

Equity-deserving students: Groups of students who have been historically disadvantaged and underrepresented (Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion, 2023). Because of systemic discrimination, equity-deserving students face barriers that prevent access to the resources and opportunities necessary to attain just outcomes. These students include, but are not limited to, women, Indigenous people, people with disabilities, people part of LGBTQ2+ communities, religious groups, and racialized people (Government of Canada, 2022b). For this OIP, equity-deserving highlights that the burden of seeking equity should come from systemic, cultural, and societal change, not from those deserving equity.

Meritocracy: Claims that university admission is based exclusively on merit or academic performance, and that race, gender, or other means of discrimination do not impact decisions (Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion, 2023).

Systemically marginalized and historically underserved students: Students who have historically faced exclusion due to societal and systemic barriers, typically through discrimination or other means of oppression (Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion, 2023; Government of Canada, 2022b). This process is created and maintained by the conscious and unconscious practices, policies, procedures, and cultures of universities, which continue to uphold colonial structures (Fedoruk & Lindstrom, 2022; Government of Canada, 2022b).

Chapter 1: Introduction and Problem

Higher education institutions that publicly express a commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) do so to indicate their priority on creating campus communities that are safe, welcoming, accepting, and just (Ahmed, 2012; Smith, 2010; Williams, 2013). As institutions, including Mountain University (MU, a pseudonym), begin shifting their EDI rhetoric to actionable policy, they will encounter and navigate obstacles throughout the change process. This Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) develops a framework to guide senior leaders in MU's Registrar's Office (RO) to review and develop new student enrolment policies and practices that align with the principles of EDI. More specifically, RO leaders will understand the tools required to lead the process of developing policies and practices that better support systemically marginalized and historically underserved prospective students. For the sake of this OIP, please note that EDI does not include specific commitments to truth, reconciliation, and Indigenization. In addition, MU has not identified specific student groups that it would like to increase representation of; therefore, the focus of this OIP is the broad category of systemically marginalized and historically underserved students.

In this first chapter, I begin by acknowledging my positionality in my problem of practice (PoP), discuss the organizational context of MU, detail and conduct a factor analysis of my PoP, review questions that guide my OIP, and conclude with my vision for change with a consideration of leadership levels at MU. Through this exploration, my PoP is situated and understood within the context of MU and my leadership positionality.

Positionality and Lens Statement

Acknowledging my positionality in relation to my PoP is important given that knowledge is political, created through a researcher's lens and built on the researcher's positionality (Potts

& Brown, 2015). As a cisgender, heterosexual, white settler woman, I occupy a highly privileged space in society. I have a moral and ethical responsibility to leverage my privilege to disrupt and dismantle the systems of oppression from which I benefit and am complicit. I have committed to deepening my critical consciousness by acknowledging my complicity, unlearning my biases, and, most important, taking action, such as through this OIP. I also recognize, by virtue of my social location, that my understanding of my PoP is based on my professional experience as a senior administrator in the RO. I further acknowledge that I cannot fully appreciate the challenges of navigating university admissions due to my own unearned privilege. I grew up in a highly educated, middle-class family in predominantly white suburban neighborhoods. My whiteness has positively impacted my access to higher education and significantly increased my chances of qualifying for admission (Corces-Zimmerman & Guida, 2019; Michalski et al., 2017). My engagement with my PoP is in response to the growing ethical and moral tensions between my personal values and commitments to social justice, and my role in the RO that upholds systems of oppression.

By virtue of my location in the institutional hierarchy as a senior leader in the RO, I have direct access to executive university administrators. I am well positioned to play a role in challenging and disrupting systemic barriers, including the policies, procedures, and practices that advance and reinforce oppression within the university context. As depicted in Figure 1, my position at MU is associate registrar, new student enrolment, reporting directly to the registrar. My role oversees all undergraduate student recruitment and admissions (RA) to MU, including responsibility for a staff of 45. Key parts of my role are ensuring the university meets its new student enrolment targets, set by Senate, and recommending policy and practice changes to

ensure this goal is achieved annually. To do so, I work closely with the registrar and provost on establishing and revising Senate-mandated policies.

Figure 1

Reporting Structure of RO With Senate Focus
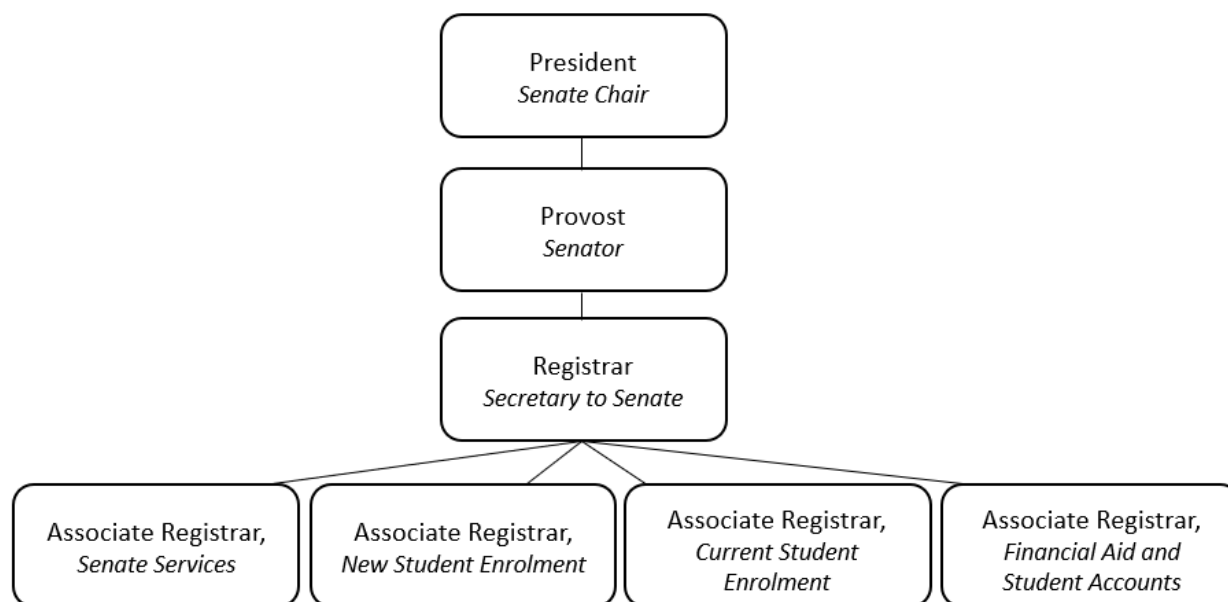
Note. To maintain organizational anonymity, this reporting structure has been simplified and the position titles have been altered.

A significant aspect of the registrar's position is as secretary to Senate. Senate is responsible for the academic governance of MU and concerned with all matters relating to teaching and research, including the development of new initiatives, the formation of priorities, and the consideration and approval of policies. The registrar works closely with the university president, Senate chair, to enact presidential priorities as governed by the provincial University Act (1996/2023), including undergraduate admission policies. Figure 1 depicts the structural levels between myself and the president. However, as a change leader, I work closely with the registrar and provost to initiate and recommend changes to undergraduate admission policies

approved by Senate and its various subcommittees. As a result, I am a resource person at Senate meetings when admission policy changes are discussed because I am considered the subject matter expert for new student enrolment at my institution. In the Organizational Context section of this chapter, the role of Senate is further discussed.

In my position at MU, as noted, my close ties to Senate will drive my intended PoP change forward, and I will play many roles, including change initiator, implementer, and facilitator (Cawsey, 2016). Many institutional stakeholders will be working alongside me, and Kotter's (2012) change model, discussed later, allows for a distributed leadership approach by encouraging many individuals to take the lead over specific sections of the plan. Millennial leaders, like myself, "lean more heavily toward inclusion, curiosity, and flexibility than [toward] confidence, infallibility, and imposing charisma" (Kotter et al., 2021a, p. 206), aligning well with the distributed and authentic leadership theoretical frameworks I will employ. Distributed leadership offers an excellent framework to embed the EDI vision into the daily work of a complex institution that comprises many stakeholders, as does authentic leadership.

My personal leadership lens focuses on fostering collaboration and trust amongst team members, leaning heavily to authentic leadership. An authentic leader holds strong personal values and convictions and acts in service of others; they have a strong sense of how to act responsibly, morally, and in the best interest of others (Avolio et al., 2004). Authentic leaders lead by example, with honesty and integrity, and have strong reputations that nurture trust amongst their followers by exhibiting high emotional intelligence, including self-awareness (Avolio et al., 2004; Avolio et al., 2009; Leroy et al., 2012; Walumba et al., 2008). In my professional practice, I challenge myself to exemplify the characteristics of authentic leadership

daily and believe that being an authentic leader lends itself well to a distributed leadership approach when addressing significant problems, such as my PoP.

In order to fundamentally change an institution steeped in settler colonial traditions, policies, and practices, the culture needs to be altered by changing institutional assumptions, behaviours, processes, and outcomes (Williams, 2012). This emancipatory change should impact the entire institution over time but will be neither easy nor straightforward. Although critical theory informs my discussion, I align with critical whiteness theory (CWT) ideologies. CWT evaluates the historical and social context of higher education in order to develop a deeper understanding of the mechanisms and environmental structures that perpetuate whiteness; "it is a term used to explain a system of policies and practices codified in law and maintained by society that conceptualize white ways of being and thinking to be superior and more deserving" (Corces-Zimmerman & Guida, 2019, p. 94). Critical whiteness studies have increased in the past 30 years, yet this research is not new. Scholars of Colour have long written about whiteness, stressing the need not to overlook the principles developed by critical race theory (CRT) that ground research on race and racism in the research process (Corces-Zimmerman & Guida, 2019; Hartmann, 2009). Both CRT and CWT centre the lived experiences of systemically marginalized and historically underserved people.

Although there are other critical theories that support my PoP, such as feminism and CRT, Thompson (2003) argued that white scholars using CRT centre white people in the work which allows white scholars to enhance the legitimacy of their analyses:

> When white antiracist researchers borrow the lives and writings of People of Color to authenticate what we have been saying all along about class relations or progressive pedagogy or moral development, we treat People of Color like trophy friends who

validate our pronouncements and help us appear informed, open minded, and cutting

edge. (p. 13)

CWT, therefore, offers a necessary alternative for white researchers and scholars as it

interrogates how white attitudes and understandings perpetuate and legitimize racial inequality

while masking deep inequalities and exclusionary practices (Corces-Zimmerman & Guida, 2019;

Giroux, 1997; Hartmann et al., 2009). CWT focuses on how whiteness masquerades its power

and privilege through different mechanisms including rhetorical, political, cultural, and social

(Giroux, 1997). Only when the systems of white supremacy that perpetuate inequality and

exclusion are critically evaluated can the work of breaking them down through new policy

development begin, such as reviewing MU's organizational context.

Organizational Context

In this section, I discuss the national, international, and local organizational contexts that

inform my PoP. I also focus on how MU's public commitments to EDI are misaligned with the

student experience. This discussion illuminates why MU must align its new student enrolment

policies and practices with EDI principles.

National and International Contexts

EDI emerges from the context of specific governing philosophies and political contexts

and, due to recent social movements and the COVID-19 worldwide pandemic, it is not only

trending nationally, but across the globe. In 2009, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and

Cultural Organization (UNESCO) published policy guidelines for inclusive access to education,

stating that "it is equally important that [young people] are able to take full part in school life and

achieve desired outcomes from their education experiences" (p. 6). Countries across the globe

have used UNESCO's guidelines to shape their own inclusion and equity policies and practices

(Blessinger et al., 2018). There is also momentum across Canada to support EDI agendas (Tamtik & Guentner, 2019), including the *Universities Canada Inclusive Excellence Principles* (Universities Canada, 2017), which highlight seven principles to advance change across the country. These documents highlight areas that require attention but also serve to support and strengthen higher education EDI policy development. In addition, many of the recommendations focus on discourses of access to higher education, foundational to EDI principles.

At a provincial level, the government has made public commitments to equitable and inclusive education at both the kindergarten to grade 12 (K–12) and postsecondary levels. The Ministry of Education (MOE) redesigned the K–12 curriculum to transform students into educated citizens who will "develop a sense of social responsibility, acceptance and respect for the ideas and beliefs of others" (British Columbia MOE, n.d., Our Mandate section, para. 4). Similarly, The British Columbia Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Technology, which MU falls under, articulated its EDI commitments to postsecondary students with the introduction of a new cabinet minister in December 2020. The minister's mandate letter stated that the ministry will address systemic discrimination by informing policy and budget decisions through an EDI-focused lens (Horgan, 2020). With the current provincial government mandating an EDI focus on the K–12 curriculum and its public platform, the time is right to review the systemic marginalization of historically underserved students via policy decisions, including new student enrolment, at MU.

Mountain University

MU is a mid-sized research university located in western Canada, governed by the provincial University Act (1996/2023). A new president recently began their term at MU and proclaimed, as one of their three priorities, a commitment to EDI. This pledge includes a focus

on a diverse, equitable, and inclusive community where all feel welcome, safe, accepted, and appreciated in learning, teaching, research, and work. As a result, a new position at MU was created—the vice president, people, equity and inclusion—to support the president in meeting their EDI priority. Although this vice president portfolio focuses on EDI initiatives across the university, the focus is limited to faculty and staff; the student experience has been directed to Student Services, which the RO portfolio falls under. The exclusion of students from this portfolio is problematic for many reasons, including resource and operational issues, and further emphasizes that even though MU is publicly espousing commitments to EDI, its internal operations and the student experience are misaligned.

MU does not currently collect student demographic data. However, many first and senior year students participate in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). NSSE (2021) provides educators with an assessment of undergraduate student performance and collects limited demographic information. The demographic categories neither account for the intersectionality of identities nor the full diversity of MU's student body. For instance, the gender categories are binary (i.e., male/female only), no information is collected on socioeconomic status, and the "ethno-cultural" categories conflate race, ethnicity, and citizenship (Ahmed, 2012; Cabrera et al., 2016; Oswick & Noon, 2014; Smith, 2010). More specifically, the categories include, for example, Chinese, South Asian, West Asian, Southeast Asian, Arab, Japanese, Korean, and Black.

Despite these challenges, NSSE data reveal how the MU student body is changing. For instance, students who identify as female appear to be on the decline (from 65% in 2011 to 61% of 2020 first year student respondents), and a significant population of students identify as a visible minority (69% of first year students in 2020; MU, 2022). According to MU (2022),

"Visible minority status includes anyone who self-identified as a race or ethnicity besides white or Indigenous. This follows the NSSE National Project's convention." (p. 13). These statistics illuminate the need for admission policies to not only continue supporting the enrolment of equity-deserving students, but also widen the scope of who is admitted. MU must also consider the current student experience if its public commitment to EDI is to be fulfilled.

Publicly the provincial government and MU appear aligned in their commitments to advancing EDI; however, the prospective student experience at MU is quite the opposite. The majority of MU students are admitted based on academic performance, reinforcing the myth of meritocracy. Universities continue to disadvantage marginalized students through admission policies because they use the same methods and sources to diversify the student population year after year; for example, focusing student recruitment efforts only on "old source" high schools that consistently send high performing students to universities (Jack, 2019). MU is guilty of using old source schools and regions that are familiar with the competitive admission process and limiting resources on exploring new sources of prospective students. Although MU currently has a highly diverse student population, based on the NSSE results (MU, 2022), current policies are exclusionary and focus on students who meet the standard academic admission pathway, rather than considering the potential of students who do not meet those minimum requirements.

For students who do not meet the minimum academic requirements for admission, MU has a University Access Pathway (UAP) policy. UAP considers students for admission based on a combination of grades and additional criteria, such as extracurricular activities and unique circumstances. The goal is to provide access to education for diverse students, not just those who meet the competitive admission standards. UAP was introduced in the mid-1990s with the caveat that only 10% of the incoming class could be admitted via this pathway, placing a limit of 500

students annually. Unfortunately, in practice, UAP admits approximately 20–25 students per year, with 80% of that number being student athletes. This means that approximately five nonstudent athletes are admitted via UAP each academic year. UAP, unfortunately, takes a "tick-box" approach to diversity (Ahmed, 2012); its existence signals that MU was interested in exploring inclusive pathways for admission but have not continued their progressive journey. MU, therefore, is paying lip service to diversity without continuing to do the necessary work.

Although the intention of the UAP pathway is access, its website reinforces dominant discourses that perpetuate inequalities, such as the insider–outsider binary (Iverson 2007). This discourse places prospective students into two subject positions: capable or aspiring. Those who are admissible via the standard admission path are capable, whereas those who are not are aspiring (Bacci & Goodwin, 2016); this discourse continues to marginalize students. Students who do not see themselves within these deficient subjectifications, or who do but do not wish to be considered this way, will likely opt not to apply to MU via UAP. This policy "reinforce[s] the institutional rhetoric of diversity without making actual change" (Hoffman & Mitchell, 2016, p. 288). MU has work to do to align its public commitments with its internal policies.

Dominant Paradigms

The work of approaching policy change in the RO begins with a deep understanding of the dominant paradigms, including organizational culture, that exist at MU. ROs, including the one at MU, are functionalist. Functionalism is concerned with generating practical, quantifiable knowledge (Burrell & Morgan, 2005); MU relies heavily on data to inform decisions and is bound by institutional and government policy. For instance, relying on quantitative measures to inform decisions, like admission policies, is common. Williams (2013) has argued that in order to make systemic change, "leaders must dig deep into the data; organizational learning offers a

lens for understanding what the environmental and structural challenges are and how best to address them." (p. 215). The functionalist approach, however, is often conservative in its viewpoint and pragmatic in its solutions because the problems are considered practical (Burrell & Morgan, 2005). Analyzing data, therefore, may tell only one side of the organizational story. To enact change and review policies governed by Senate, the role of the structuralist perspective at MU is also important to consider.

The structural perspective creates an organizational hierarchy, and its "structure provides the architecture for pursuing an organization's strategic goals" (Bolman & Deal, 2017, p. 51). MU is a research university with a bicameral approach to university governance, with academic decisions, including admission policies, governed by Senate. The Board of Governors, on the other hand, is responsible for the business of the university, including property, revenue, and nonacademic policies. Referring to Figure 2, there are 73 members of Senate at MU, with the majority being faculty.

Figure 2

MU Senate Membership
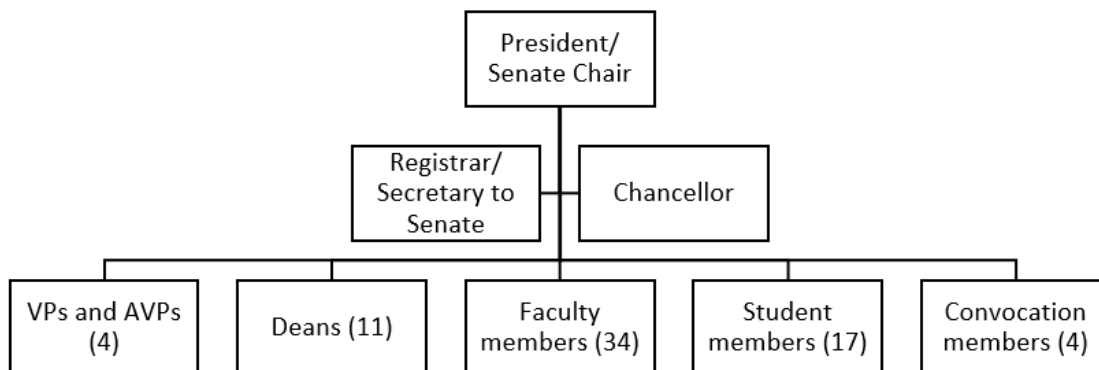
Note. VP = vice president; AVP = associate vice president.

As demonstrated in the NSSE data (MU, 2022), university populations are composed of high populations of historically marginalized students, leading to challenges in university governance (Sultana, 2012). More specifically, university senates do not reflect the diversity of the student body, even when student senators have a minority membership, which leads to problematic decision-making. At MU, Senate decisions focused on equity-deserving students are often met with opposition because oppressive policies and practices are deeply embedded in the culture. Considering the cultural perspective, therefore, is important when approaching policy change that could be viewed by some Senators as advantaging historically marginalized and underserved students. Senate is the gatekeeper to approving admission policies and has a unique opportunity to align with MU's presidential commitments to EDI through this OIP.

Leadership Problem of Practice

An emerging challenge in the Canadian postsecondary education sector is the misalignment of public commitments to EDI with current institutional policies and practices. More specifically, well-intentioned new student enrolment policies may continue to reinforce the exclusion and inequity of systemically marginalized students (Fedoruk & Lindstrom, 2022; Iverson, 2007; Tamtik & Guenter, 2019). For instance, many universities, including MU, provide a standard competitive admission pathway for students and, for those who do not fit squarely into it, an alternative. These alternatives, however, are often framed through discourses of deficiency (e.g., underachieving, at-risk, disadvantaged) and place prospective students into politically and socially damaging categories which encourage social fragmentation (Blackmore, 2006). Students either do not see themselves in these homogenous categories or are unwilling to be considered that way. Furthermore, numerous universities, again including MU, do not have the

infrastructure in place to prioritize their public EDI commitments, which results in harmful consequences both internally and externally (Williams, 2013).

There continues to be a wide cultural values gap between today's current and prospective students and senior university administrators at MU that creates tensions in creating transformative change (Williams, 2013). The university recruitment and admission process is a significant experience and communicates the values of an institution in every interaction with a prospective student (Michalski et al., 2017). The majority of prospective undergraduate students considering MU are currently attending high schools in British Columbia that have inclusive education mandates (British Columbia MOE, n.d.), and they will bring these perspectives and values, grounded in EDI, to MU. Inclusive and equitable admission policies, therefore, are an imperative first step in advancing the perception of EDI at MU. Furthermore, admission policies that centre students in the change process align with the principles of EDI and will help to uncover the systemic barriers inherent in MU's admission policies and processes.

Senior staff within the RO are uniquely positioned to review new student enrolment policies, bring forward recommendations, and implement change. EDI rhetoric espoused by Canadian postsecondary institutions is often misaligned with existing admission policies and practices. The PoP guiding this OIP, therefore, is how senior staff in the RO can review and update admission policies, through the lens of EDI, by centering the consultation process on the voices, truths, and counternarratives of systemically marginalized and historically underserved students.

Framing the Problem of Practice

The critical paradigm has guided me through a factor analysis of why university policies need to shift in order to align with a changing world. It "offers new and refreshing perspectives

to explore issues and make a difference not only to the world of knowledge but literally to the world itself" (Asghar, 2013, p. 3126). Two hundred years ago, universities educated upper class men to become the leaders of society (Karabel, 2005), but in the 21st century, universities are required to "preserve or enhance their legitimacy by conforming to environmental pressure and are driven to adopt governance structures that fit with societal demands and expectations" (Austin & Jones, 2016, p. 29). Implementing EDI at a university is a transformational change; the critical paradigm seeks to transform oppressive social factors, striving for a balanced and democratic society (Asghar, 2013). A modified PESTLE analysis (Casañ et al., 2021) of the cultural, historical, political, economic, social, and environmental factors that shape the importance of EDI, such as accessibility to higher education, is fundamental to understanding the need for change at MU.

Cultural and Historical Factors

To impact higher education with a shift in vision to EDI and create a safe and welcoming campus for all students, institutions must understand how their institutional culture shapes student behaviour and, subsequently, legitimizes the experience of systemically marginalized and historically underserved students (Chun & Evans, 2018; Hoffman & Mitchell, 2016; Michalski et al., 2017; Williams, 2013). This understanding involves going beyond token approaches to EDI and evaluating the symbols, norms, and historical context that shape an institution. In almost all cases, this evaluation will include acknowledging settler colonial discourses evident in existing policies and practices, and doing the difficult antioppressive work of dismantling these systems.

As the systems that advance whiteness are situated in every aspect of higher education, including the people, policies, and history, an interrogation into white identity and culture is essential to seeing whiteness as a social construct used to create and advance systems of power

and privilege (Cabrera et al., 2016). Shahjahan (2011) discussed how the colonizer approach to education and research was to "fashion the world into sameness" (p. 189). This sameness, arguably equality rather than equity, contradicts the principles of EDI. Dismantling the colonial settler, Eurocentric approach to university policies, practices, and procedures is the greatest challenge in implementing EDI, and a review of the history of university admission is crucial.

The history of exclusionary admission practices has a deep history rooted in the first established European universities. In the Middle Ages, universities were established as institutions to educate men for the church (McGuigan, 1970). In later years, universities like Oxford and the University of Berlin were founded to educate white men to be the leaders of society (Lüth, 2000; Newman, 2008). This history of exclusion continued in America and Canada throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. For instance, universities did not want women to surpass the number of white men on campus; therefore, practices were put in place making it more competitive for women to be admitted (Karabel, 2005; Stewart, 1990). The "Big Three"— Yale, Oxford, and Harvard—were steeped in years of tradition and not open to embracing admission policies that would change their traditional student body (i.e., elite, male Protestants) until the mid-1960s (Karabel, 2005). When they did open their doors to others, they did so with the principle that women, Jewish people, and People of Colour would not outnumber the white, Protestant men (Karabel, 2005).

In Canada, the University of British Columbia enrolled more women than men during the First World War, due to shortages in available male students, but intentionally reduced this number when the veterans returned so as to not be viewed as a women's college, which would limit their funding opportunities (Stewart, 1990). The consequences of significant events of the 20th century, however, including two world wars, an economic depression, and civil rights

movements, provided opportunities for a diversity of students to gain access to education. But change has been slow, and university admission continues to predominantly privilege white people. Though MU was established in the mid-20th century, admission was and still is focused on academic performance. Inclusive admission policies, like UAP, were introduced in the mid-1990s, but they are fraught with exclusionary practices and discourses of deficiency.

Political and Economic Factors

Political factors impacting this PoP correspond with the economic factors as they focus on the changing demographic landscape of Canadians, emphasized in federal documents. The federal government's 2022–2024 Immigration Levels Plan "embraces immigration as a strategy . . . to manage the social and economic challenges Canada will face in the decades ahead" (Government of Canada, 2022a, para. 2). Increasing permanent residents to Canada with a primary goal to support Canada's economy through immigration is emphasized throughout, with Statistics Canada (2022) projecting that immigration of racialized people will increase over the next 20 years. In addition, Canada's International Education Strategy 2019–2024 focuses on higher education student enrolment through diversification by leaning heavily on the Post-Graduation Work Permit Program immigration pathway (Government of Canada, 2020). Though these plans focus on the immigration of new Canadians, there will be long-term impacts to the demographics of prospective university students in Canada for years to come.

With demographics continuing to change in Canada, admission policies need to understand and appreciate the unique backgrounds of students, who are either newcomers or children of newcomers. In British Columbia, the population increased 7.6% between 2016 and 2021 (Statistics Canada, 2023, British Columbia section) and "international migration accounted for 93.5% of Canada's growth in 2021/2022, up from 74.9% in 2020/2021. . . . This is a result of

higher immigration targets in 2021/2022" (Statistics Canada, 2022, Highlights section, para. 7).

As Blessinger et al. (2018) noted:

> The focus on diversity, equality, equity, and inclusion has been driven by changing
> demographics (which has been fueled by such factors as internal and external migration
> and the rapid growth of urban areas) as well as wide-scale social movements driven by
> calls for greater equality and equity (which has been fueled by political, social, and
> economic disparities). (p. 2)

Although Canadian immigration policies are shifting, MU admission policies are being outpaced
by a changing Canada. As noted earlier, the demographic makeup of students at MU is changing,
and those students who identified as "visible minorities" in the NSSE survey have indicated the
most dissatisfaction with the university (MU, 2022). MU positions itself as welcoming of
students from diverse backgrounds, yet its admission policies and practices continue to
advantage already privileged students.

Social and Environmental Factors

In order for students to become democratic citizens contributing to a knowledge-based
economy and society, access to higher education opportunities is essential (Busch, 2017; Giroux
& Giroux, 2015). Historically, access to universities has been limited to specific groups of
students (i.e., white men), but with the massification of higher education in the 1970s, the doors
are now, supposedly, wide open (Sultana, 2012). In practice, however, access to higher education
continues to privilege those with the financial means and social capital to support meritocratic
admission processes, such as hiring personal tutors and attending private school (Jack, 2020). As
universities focus more on neoliberal funding models, systemically marginalized and historically
underserved students are continually denied access to the benefits of higher education (Giroux &

Giroux, 2015). Furthermore, social movements have grown over the past 50 years and recently surged throughout the pandemic; these movements allow "formerly silenced communities to offer their own perspectives on issues of diversity and identity" (Williams, 2013, p. 86). Universities like MU will continue to feel the external environmental pressure from social movements due to the changing demographic of Canadian prospective students.

Guiding Questions Emerging From the Problem of Practice

MU does not have a new student enrolment issue; for the last decade, a strong pool of academically qualified international and domestic students have applied and successfully matriculated based on current admission policies. Admission to MU is a numbers game; lower the entrance average, admit more students. This managerial, neoliberal approach to new student enrolment creates competition amongst prospective students in order to keep the perception of MU as an elite research university (Busch, 2017). With this enrolment success in mind, why should MU shift from a neoliberal admission model to a more liberal, EDI-focused approach of admitting new students? Furthermore, how would MU then determine who is and is not offered admission?

EDI is a relatively new term to staff and faculty at MU; the university community is still learning what these principles mean, how to apply them, and who they include. In fact, when new policies have been created in the past, such as alternative admission pathways like UAP, they have been approached from a deficit perspective that excludes and problematizes systemically marginalized and historically underserved prospective students (Green, 2006). Table 1 identifies the issues and challenges currently present at MU, the questions that arise, the theoretical frameworks used to address these questions, and my vision for change.

Table 1

PoP Issues, Guiding Questions, Framework, and Vision for Change

PoP issues	Guiding questions	Theoretical framework	Vision for change
Undergraduate admission tied to the fiscal requirement of MU.	How to centre EDI in new student enrolment work?	Critical paradigm	Centre considerations of social justice/EDI rather than neoliberalism in admission policy development.
Alternative pathways approached from a deficit perspective problematize and exclude equity-deserving students.	How to create inclusive new student enrolment policies?	Cultural perspective	Current practices are better understood in the context of the origins of higher education.
Lack of meaningful consultation with students when developing policies.	Who is included and excluded in the process?	Critical whiteness theory	Consult with diverse university community members.
Limited knowledge of applying principles of EDI and apprehension of systemic change.	How to educate faculty and staff and embed EDI into the culture?	Distributed and authentic leadership frameworks	Connect EDI goals of institution, using inclusive language, with new student enrolment policies, through revision and development.

When considering new policies, defining EDI is essential; most specifically, the discourse of diversity. Diversity is generally defined as a positive term, used as a tool for action (Ahmed, 2012); for example, diversifying the university population through student recruitment initiatives. As Smith (2010) has argued, however, diversity "lends itself to existing organizational ideals and, unlike equity, it is detached from the histories of civil rights and social justice struggles" (p. 47). Diversity, therefore, is possible without disrupting institutional culture;

it can add to the institution but not impact meaningful change. Diversity is often seen as meeting the minimum standard without addressing the broader, systemic issues (Ahmed, 2012).

In order to meaningfully implement EDI policies, diversity should not exist without equity and inclusion. Instead, as Blackmore (2006) argued, diversity as a discourse should be viewed as transformative, with the capacity to make meaningful change, going beyond equality and representational change. Although this shift in discourse seems obvious, institutions are steeped in problematic histories that challenge the implementation of equity and inclusion. The guiding question here is how can staff in the RO, who may have a limited understanding of EDI principles, create inclusive new student enrolment policies and shepherd them through governance approval processes that are neither performative nor framed through a deficit lens? These guiding questions inform the direction of my change vision.

Leadership-Focused Vision for Change

Inclusive and equitable education is critical to advancing EDI and has been addressed throughout the literature through discourses of access (Blessinger et al., 2018; Michalski et al., 2017). One of the core principles of "equity and inclusion programs in higher education is to mitigate practices that tend to exclude people from higher education" (Blessinger et al., 2018, p. 2), which can be achieved in a number of ways. For instance, one of the first connections a student has with a university is in the recruitment and admission process. The majority of Canadian institutions rely upon grades or entrance exams for undergraduate admission, yet a more inclusive alternative could explore many pathways of admission, rather than a single, standard approach. Michalski et al. (2017) noted that the admissions policies of each institution provide a "framework for understanding the university's normative position with respect to serving their students" (p. 67). By reframing policies and practices through an EDI lens, MU has

an opportunity to signal its inclusivity by adopting various measures of success rather than focusing so heavily on academic performance, which reinforces the myth of meritocracy and the functionalist paradigm. Inclusive and equitable university admission policies are an imperative first step in advancing the perception of EDI at an institution.

Gap Between Present and Future State

MU currently offers an alternative admission pathway for students who do not meet the academic standards for admission via UAP. This pathway, as discussed earlier, is framed through discourses of deficiency and the process is mostly used for student athletes. Created in the mid-1990s with faculty and staff in the RO, the policy process did not actively engage students in the consultation process. The current UAP adjudication committee comprises six faculty senators and two student senators, with the current majority being white men. Senate committees, such as these, do not have the lived experience required to make inclusive decisions on behalf of historically underserved and marginalized students (Iverson, 2007). As Chan (2005) argued, "While policies may have the intent of change, the institutional norms that are embedded in practice carry a powerful countervailing weight" (p. 153). Although educating committee members is one approach, the gap that needs to be addressed is determining who sits on committees making admission decisions about equity-deserving students.

In order to review, rewrite, and implement new admission policies, consideration needs to be given to whom to include in the development process. Currently MU does not meaningfully engage with students in the policy development process. With authentic leadership, followers identify with the leader (personal identification) and the organization (social organization); however, equity-deserving students (as follower subjects) may not identify with either of these in higher education (Avolio et al., 2004; Fedoruk & Lindstrom, 2022). Those with lived

experiences, therefore, must be safely included in each step of the EDI implementation process so their voices are elevated. Counternarratives that disrupt hegemonic narratives must be considered because without these imperative perspectives, policies will continue to standardize whiteness and take an exclusionary approach to policy development (Iverson, 2007; Miller at al., 2020; Smith, 2010). To access these narratives, current students must be included in the process of policy review and approval.

The current process for developing and approving Senate policies at MU is to rely on the current student experience through the lens of staff and faculty, thus privileging the voice of staff and faculty over students (Lizzio & Wilson, 2009). Students at MU have expressed that when they are engaged in policy consultations, it is performative, and although there are 17 assigned student senator seats (see Figure 2), some seats remain vacant, and student senators are often outvoted by the 56 other Senate members. Many factors influence why students are excluded from governance processes; students are viewed as transient, immature, frequently absent from committee meetings, limited in their knowledge of the student experience, unable to maintain confidentiality, not committed to the university's mission, less experienced than faculty, and self-interested (Austin & Jones, 2016; Cini, 2020; Lizzio & Wilson, 2009; Zuo & Ratsoy, 1999). This approach, however, puts students on the margins of decision-making, defined as structural marginalization (Powell, 2013). These hierarchical structures, in addition, create a culture of silence amongst students and continue to marginalize their viewpoints (Lizzio & Wilson, 2009). An EDI approach to policy development centres the lived experience of equity-deserving students and acknowledges that changes in support of one student benefit the entire student body.

Stakeholder theory suggests providing external stakeholders, such as individuals from a civil society, with a stronger role in the governance of universities and decision-making

processes (Austin & Jones, 2016), aligning with the principles of EDI. For my PoP specifically, embracing this theory means meaningfully engaging not just current students, administrative staff, and faculty in the consultation process, but also high school students and counsellors. Access admission pathways are meant to support the success of students who do not meet traditional admission criteria, making it vital to learn more about these significant stakeholders and their context directly from them. By including diverse perspectives and counternarratives (Iverson, 2007; Miller at al., 2020; Smith, 2010), antioppression is centred in the policy change process, led by internal leadership.

Leadership Considerations

Three key levels of internal leadership must be considered in this plan: first, the micro-leadership level that represents managerial staff in the RO and New Student Enrolment Office (NSEO); second, the meso-leadership level of Senate; and third, the macro-level leadership of the university president and their executive team. Through a distributed leadership approach, each of these levels is responsible for their individual work; however, they must consider the impacts of the differing levels.

Each level of this organizational change has an impact on the role of policy development at Senate, as shown in Figure 3. Managerial-level staff in the RO and NSEO are considered at the intraorganizational level as the relationship focus is between a leader and a follower (Wukich & Robinson, 2013). This change implementer/recipient role of RO and NSEO staff, however, should not be underestimated; administrative staff not only will be impacted by the change in their daily work, but also will drive the change-management process forward at the student level. Once a policy is approved at Senate, the operational lifting begins for staff in the RO and NSEO. NSEO staff speak with prospective students on a daily basis, advising on admission requirements

and pathways; they must fully understand any new policy and be included in all stages of the

process, through participation on committees to regular communication focused on why EDI

principles must be normalized within their operations.

Figure 3

MU Leadership Considerations
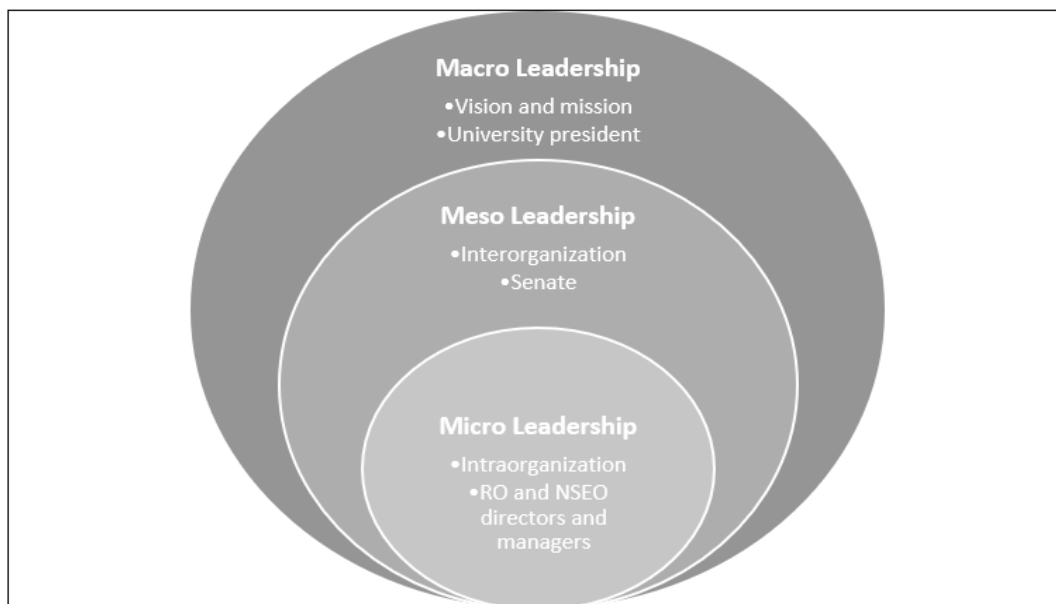
Interorganizational levels call for "leadership that mobilizes and frames support for a

broad network, facilitated by effective strategies for and a compelling vision of what is to be

done" (Wukich & Robinson, 2013, p. 44). At this level, a key consideration is that MU's Senate

is composed of faculty, administrative staff, executive leadership, alumni, and current students.

Meso leaders must be able to navigate the differing priorities of senators, recruit supporters of

new ideas, manage relationships successfully, and develop policies in a collaborative manner.

Admission policy discussions must be socialized at various Senate committees early and often to

ensure buy-in. An EDI approach to admission requires many conversations about why this

change is necessary for MU, and why now.

Finally, at the macro-leadership level is the university president. Macro leadership focuses on the influence a leader has in social and political spheres, instead of focusing on the interorganizational relationship between leaders and individuals (Wukich & Robinson, 2013). The current MU president has repeatedly declared their commitment to EDI in public forums across the globe and is advocating for significant systemic change at MU. A lack of this kind of executive level support is identified in the literature as a major obstacle to initiating EDI change (Chun & Evans, 2018; Wentworth et al., 2020; Williams, 2013). Without it, policy changes lack the necessary support to pass at Senate. The work of engaging MU in this transformational change will be challenging; however, one small but significant step is reviewing and changing policies that continue to marginalize prospective MU students.

Conclusion

MU enrols a high number of students every year and has observed increases in the diversity of the student body; however, diversification is slow and not in keeping with the MU president and society's directives. It continues to rely on the myth of meritocracy and underutilizes the current admission access pathway, resulting in a limited number of students applying via that route. As the Canadian population demographics continue to change, it is incumbent upon MU to align its admission policies with the president's public commitments to EDI. Furthermore, EDI is not simply performative acts of diversity framed in discourses of deficiency. Rather, MU must recognize that inclusivity and equity are as important, if not more so, in the admission process. Equity-deserving students must have the opportunity to access higher education through pathways that look beyond meritocracy and centre those students' lived experiences in the process. Removing the systemic barriers in admission policy and practice will involve multiple leadership levels at MU working together harmoniously in service to students.

Chapter 2: Planning and Development

Chapter 2 shifts from the discussion of the problem itself, the focus of Chapter 1, to understanding my leadership approach to change, reviewing a framework for leading the change process, and assessing MU's organizational change readiness (OCR). It concludes with three solutions to address my PoP. Through this discussion, it becomes clear that a combination of authentic and distributed leadership is necessary to support both followers and stakeholders. The chapter is grounded in the critical paradigm by applying CWT and the cultural perspective. In order to develop solutions, an analysis of MU's readiness for change is important to determine the viability of the three solutions presented. Finally, the proposed solutions bring my leadership approaches and framework together for leading change.

Leadership Approach to Change

As discussed in Chapter 1, my personal leadership style leans heavily to authentic leadership and the characteristics that define this approach, such as acting with honesty and integrity, and fostering trust (Avolio et al., 2004). In this section, however, I use authentic leadership to discuss followers and introduce a framework for follower engagement. Followers are defined as external stakeholders participating in the policy development process (e.g., students, high school counsellors) and the micro (e.g., RO and NSEO director and managers) and meso (e.g., Senate) internal leadership levels discussed in Chapter 1 (see Figure 3). As there are many internal and external stakeholders in this policy process, distributed leadership also supports my approach by activating multiple team and project leaders.

Authentic Leadership

Authentic leadership challenges the notion of traditional leadership; it is co-constructed and linked to followers' attitudes and behaviours (Avolio et al., 2004; Avolio et al., 2009; Leroy

et al., 2012). It focuses on the development of followers, not just the leader, and shifts away from traditional, transactional styles (Walumbwa et al., 2008). Leaders who practice authentic leadership influence followers through their openness, honesty, and integrity rather than leaning towards more persuasive or forceful styles (Avolio et al., 2004). In authentic leadership, considering the impact of decisions on followers and not just the success of the leader is critical (Avolio et al., 2004; Avolio et al., 2009); the leader's values, positions, and beliefs influence followers' attitudes, behaviours, and performance.

In considering how authentic leadership impacts followers, Avolio et al. (2004) developed a framework that connects to followers' attitudes and behaviours. Their model enhances follower motivations to develop personal identification with the leader and social identification with the organization. Ideas are presented from a positive perspective—positive psychology and organizational behaviour—and their outcomes. In addition, the framework evaluates emotions, social identification, and trust, plus it considers the lifelong development of a leader. This perspective assumes that when leaders provide a positive, trust-based environment, employees connect themselves with the organization, accept organizational values, and identify with those organizational values. In Figure 4, the Avolio et al. (2004) model is adapted through an antioppression lens.

To engage followers in addressing my PoP, the principles of EDI need to align with antioppressive theory. Antioppressive research focuses on the power dynamics of researcher and subject and shifts the power to the subjects (Potts & Brown, 2015). It hinges on relationships, such that the indispensable groundwork of successfully involving followers in EDI initiatives is building meaningful connections. An antioppressive approach, through authentic leadership, reverses the gaze from focusing on the impact of systemic inequities to considering who benefits,

scrutinizing power and dominance (Potts & Brown, 2015). To achieve this outcome, my

approach focuses on explaining why the change is necessary, identifying who is leading these

conversations, and amplifying dissident campus community voices (Ahmed, 2012; Kotter, 2012;

Potts & Brown, 2015; Williams, 2013).

Figure 4

Authentic Leadership and Follower Outcomes
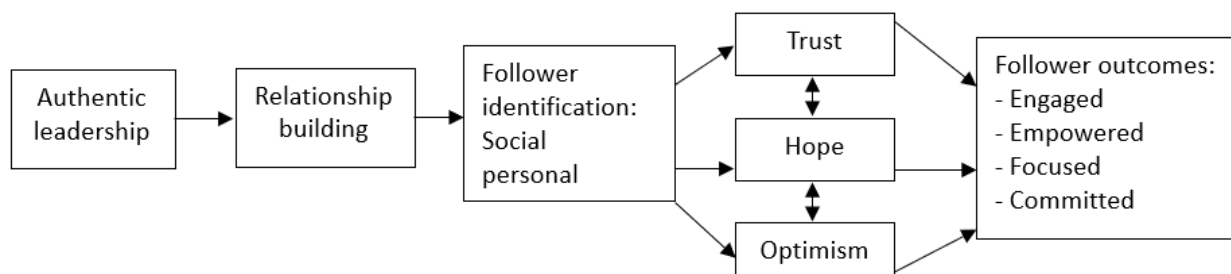
Note. Adapted from "Unlocking the Mask: A Look at the Process by Which Authentic Leaders

Impact Follower Attitudes and Behaviors", by B. J. Avolio, W. L. Gardner, F. O. Walumbwa, F.

Luthans, and D. R. May, 2004, *The Leadership Quarterly*, *15*(6), p. 803

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In my role as change leader, it is my responsibility to ensure followers identify both with

MU (e.g., social identification) and those collectively undertaking this work (e.g., personal

identification) (Avolio et al. 2004; Potts & Brown, 2015; Williams, 2013). Once this personal

and social identification occurs, as noted in Figure 4, followers develop positive emotions, like

trust, hope, and optimism, towards the change process (Avolio et al., 2004). By using the

framework in Figure 4, my goal is that MU followers are engaged in the process, empowered to

act, focused on the issue being addressed, and committed to working on the problem collectively.

Distributed Leadership

Authentic leadership and distributed leadership both centre individuals in the change process and encourage followers to take ownership of the process. Fundamental change to an institution steeped in oppressive traditions, policies, and practices necessitates the distributed leadership approach of both top-down and bottom-up leadership (Kotter et al., 2021b; Williams, 2013). The authentic leadership framework in Figure 4 depicts how to engage followers in the process, whereas distributed leadership connects to my values of working collectively with stakeholders, rather than leading independently. Employing a distributed leadership framework empowers multiple levels of the organization to own the work and embed it into practice, providing a strong framework for campus-wide community engagement (Blackmore, 2013). Furthermore, distributed leadership aligns with the principles of EDI because of its focus on multiple change agents in the process.

Incorporating the campus-wide community through empowerment, ownership, and collaboration is an important tenet of distributed leadership. It is most successful when senior-level leaders support the change and provide resources, infrastructure, and professional development opportunities (Blessinger, 2017; Jones et al., 2012; Williams, 2013). With formal leadership, like me, setting the vision and empowering staff to lead their work, this approach embeds a new vision into the daily work of a large organization such as MU. Its holistic approach encourages individual staff to work with one another, leading to more trusting and productive partnerships. As Gronn (2010) stated, distributed leadership "highlights people's interdependence or mutual dependence and the ways in which their reliance on one another in performing their work provides a basis for building and sustaining ongoing trust" (p. 418). With

a radical new approach to MU's admission policies and practices, staff must trust one another while navigating their new professional context.

A challenge of EDI work is being aware of the voices in the room and not standardizing whiteness. Distributed leadership centres multiple voices rather than one dominant voice. In addition, being aware of the burden placed on staff, faculty, and students leading and participating in EDI centric work is essential (Iverson, 2007; Smith, 2010). As Ahmed (2017) discussed, however, often those who do not embody the norms of the institution are tasked with the work of transforming those norms; these folks sit on committees, facilitate workshops, and encounter ongoing resistance. When the consultation period begins to address my PoP, careful consideration needs to be given to members of the university community who are exhausted by this work from their own lived experience. Dismantling systems of white supremacy requires all members of the university community to work together. As the change leader, I must acknowledge the impact of this work on systemically marginalized and historically underserved administrative staff, faculty, and students throughout the process. Distributed leadership provides the opportunity for different stakeholders to lead this work, shifting the reliance both from those exhausted by the work and from me, a white woman leading EDI policy change. As discussed later in Chapter 2, distributed leadership, in conjunction with Kotter's (2012) eight-stage change model and antioppressive theory, creates the opportunity for me to develop guiding coalitions that will distribute the policy development and implementation work amongst different leaders.

Framework for Leading the Change Process

The theoretical change frameworks discussed below, CWT and the cultural perspective, align with second-order change as my PoP aims to create schematic change. Second-order change makes an irreversible, fundamental shift from how operations have been conducted to a

new way of working (Bartunek & Moch, 1987), and a schemata supports people's understandings of their work, guides interpretations, and helps staff make sense of unit structures, work outcomes, and institutional hierarchies (Lau & Woodman, 1995). With a second-order, schematic change, the work of admissions is no longer to keep students out (i.e., admitting only those with high admission averages). Rather, admission practices shift to being more accessible to a diverse range of students through inclusive and equitable admission policies. The theories below inform two key stages of my change initiative: stakeholder engagement, and policy review and development.

Critical Whiteness Theory

Postsecondary institutions are steeped in a history of exclusionary admission policies that solidify the power of a dominant white male society and require emancipatory organizational change (Karabel, 2006; Williams 2013). The critical paradigm evaluates the oppressive patterns that are shaped "within specific historical and societal contexts, and that the methods of representing these patterns are themselves inextricably embedded within and coloured by these contexts" (Willmott, 2005, p. 94). With public commitments to EDI proclaimed by the MU president, the critical paradigm provides a dialogue to uncover issues with the objective of making emancipatory change. CWT, an approach of the critical paradigm, offers a deeper look into the systems of white supremacy that continue to oppress systemically marginalized and historically underserved university students by disrupting white discourses (Leonardo, 2002).

CWT evaluates the historical and social context of higher education in order to develop a deeper understanding of the mechanisms and environmental structures that perpetuate whiteness (Corces-Zimmerman & Guida, 2019). CWT interrogates how white attitudes and understandings legitimize racial inequality while masking deep inequalities and exclusionary practices (Giroux,

1997; Hartmann et al., 2009). In the higher education context, Cabrera et al. (2016) stated that "whiteness is situated in every aspect of higher education from the people, the policies, and even the early vestiges of the institution up to today" (p. 8). As the systems that advance whiteness are invisible, an interrogation into white identity and culture is essential to seeing whiteness as a social construct used to create and advance systems of power and privilege (Ahmed, 2007). Ahmed (2007) further discussed a phenomenology of whiteness; this approach does not dictate how to change, but rather to learn where individuals are stuck in institutional habits and routines while being open to critique. A phenomenological approach shifts focus to the systems that perpetuate whiteness, rather than the individual people perpetuating harm.

In discussing and using CWT, as a cisgender, white woman who is "disrupting white discourses and unsettling their codes" (Leonard, 2002, p. 31), I have observed defensive reactions from my white peers and colleagues, known as white fragility (DiAngelo, 2018). As discussed in Chapter 1, I selected CWT because of its focus on the inequalities and exclusion created by the systems of white supremacy, rather than focusing the gaze on those being oppressed and marginalized by these systems. The discomfort that comes with questioning white systems and discourses cannot be ignored and will continue to be an obstacle for me. My intention, therefore, with using CWT in my PoP is to take a phenomenological approach that focuses on engaging counternarratives and using authentic leadership principles, with the goal of better understanding the barriers facing systemically marginalized and historically underserved students in the admission process (Capper, 2018; Iverson, 2007). The leadership approaches discussed earlier, authentic and distributed, support a phenomenological approach because of their focus on individual rather than collective experiences, key to CWT work. Figure 5 illuminates how CWT will inform stakeholder engagement; this approach, as Giroux (1997)

explained, "focuses largely on the critical project of unveiling the rhetorical, political, cultural, and social mechanisms through which whiteness is both invented and used to mask its power and privilege" (p. 292).

Figure 5

CWT and Stakeholder Engagement
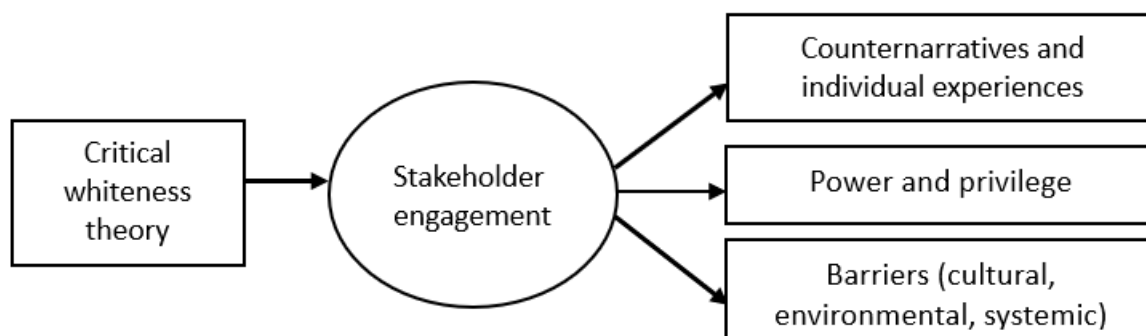
Cultural Perspective

When beginning the work of introducing EDI in policy development, leaders must research their institution's legacy and ascertain where persistent tensions reside; Manning (2013) argued that "organizations as cultures are not isolated entities but institutions situated in a context that includes history, past players, and traditions that serve as fodder for and backdrop to any culture building experience" (p. 93). Universities have existed since the Middle Ages, and changing their culture is a daunting task due to their longstanding history of cultural practices (Cabrera et al., 2016; Karabel, 2006). In order to begin researching the culture at MU, there are many artifacts that can be analyzed to understand the organization and its legacy.

Policy artifacts, included on institutional websites for example, offer a window into the values and beliefs (i.e., culture) of an institution (Schein, 2017). As noted earlier, one of the first connections a prospective undergraduate student has with a university is in the recruitment and

admission process, often by interacting with the website. Unfortunately, the admission webpages at MU reinforce insider–outsider binaries (Iverson, 2007), which do limit who submits an application. For this reason, it is imperative to analyze policy artifacts through the lens of those who have been marginalized and excluded from the admission process. In Figure 6, the cultural perspective informs the policy review and development phase of the change plan with the ideal outcome being a review of institutional legacies, language, and subcultures that will inform the final phase of the change plan (i.e., policy implementation; Manning, 2013). Used together, CWT and the cultural perspective will clarify the barriers equity-deserving students face in the admission process by addressing the historical factors that shape oppressive policies and practices. In addition, authentic and distributed leadership align with EDI principles by focusing on follower engagement and empowerment throughout the change process.

Figure 6

Cultural Perspective and Policy Review
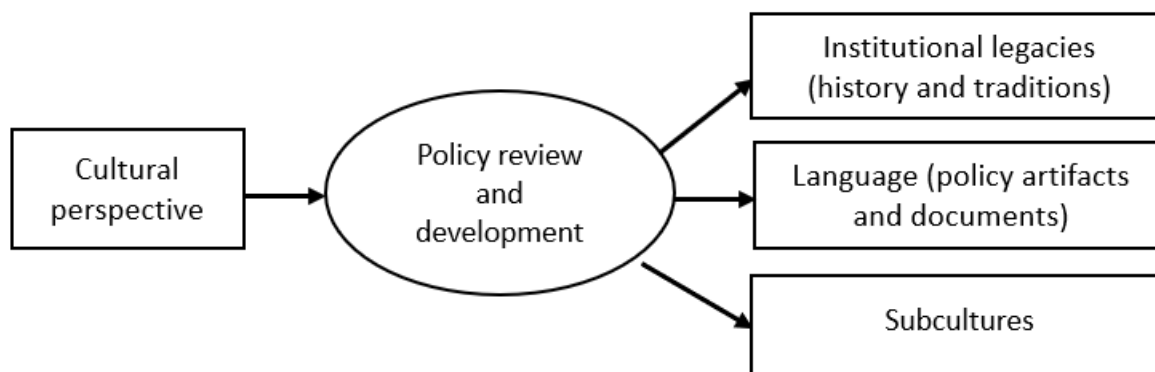
Change Framework

My PoP requires significant buy-in from multiple stakeholders across MU in order to make emancipatory change. Kotter's (2012) eight-stage model focuses on creating a climate for change by engaging the entire university. The stages are (a) create a sense of urgency, (b) build a

guiding coalition, (c) form a vision for change, (d) communicate the vision, (e) enable employees and remove obstacles, (f) generate short term wins, (g) consolidate improvements, (h) anchor the change. From a critical perspective, the process should take time because, as Buller (2015) noted:

> If you don't pause long enough to learn the reasons that a certain policy, procedure, or organizational structure was put in place to begin with, you may well make the false assumption that it was put in place for no reason at all. (p. 60).

The entire organization can be considered through this model, and taking a follower-centric, relationship-building, antioppressive approach aligns with the principles of EDI tied to CWT, authentic leadership, and distributed leadership. In my adaptation of Kotter's model, distributed leadership supports the creation of a sense of ownership of the change and the engagement of followers through the authentic leadership framework depicted in Figure 4.

In Figure 7, the model is adapted for my PoP to illustrate three key phases: stakeholder engagement, policy review and development, and policy implementation. Whereas Kotter's (2012) model considers one stage at a time in a linear fashion, there may be times when stages need revisiting, causing a break to the sequential order (Pollack & Pollack, 2015). For instance, when developing the change vision through stakeholder engagement (Stage 3), the guiding coalitions (Stage 2) may need to be revisited and adjusted. The model presented in Figure 7 also accounts for the length of time that must be dedicated to the first two phases of the process; as stakeholder engagement is fundamental to the policy review process and executed through the lens of CWT, it must not be rushed.

Figure 7

Change Model and Theoretical Framework
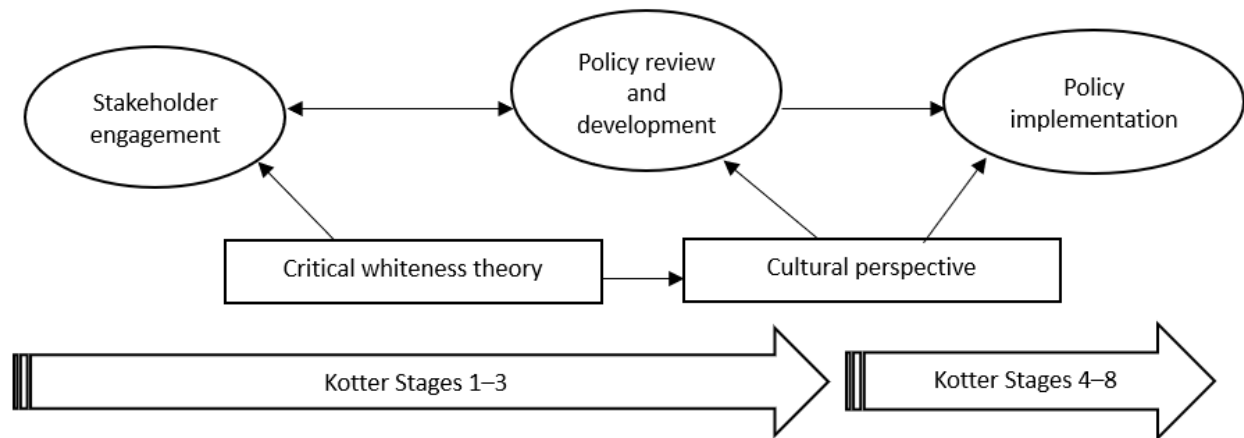
The model presented in Figure 7 highlights the importance of Kotter's (2012) Stages 1 to 3 in my change plan. As discussed, these will take the longest to complete as they involve meaningful stakeholder engagement, detailed further in Chapter 3. To approach this change through distributed leadership, the guiding coalition (Stage 2) is essential; these individuals constitute the change team who will champion and lead throughout the various stages. Following Pollack and Pollack's (2015) framework, I will create multiple guiding coalitions (e.g., strategy, governance, and project management teams) based on the complex governance structure of MU and its various stakeholders. The multiple guiding coalitions align with the authentic leadership framework (see Figure 4) by engaging followers early in the process. In so doing, they develop personal and social trust, thus identifying with the change. To develop the change strategy and vision (Stage 3), stakeholder engagement will occur, led by members of the guiding coalitions, with a focus on the key components of EDI that must be included in new admission policies (Stages 4–8). Stages 1 to 3 are the most critical to my PoP and will take the longest.

Kotter's (2012) Stages 4 through 8 are focused on policy implementation. For this OIP, implementation of these stages will follow a clear plan dictated by Senate meetings and timelines. Throughout these stages, RO staff at all levels will be engaged in the change process. For instance, at Stage 6, short-term wins are generated by making simple changes to admission practices, as not all changes need to be mandated through Senate. Also of importance is Stage 7, consolidate the change; once policies have changed, the momentum must continue in order to anchor the change in culture, Stage 8. These are important stages when considering the importance of stakeholders in the change planning process. However, it is also important to determine MU's readiness for this change process.

Organizational Change Readiness

To begin the process of aligning admission policies and practices with EDI principles, an important step is to determine MU's readiness for change. OCR "involves proactive attempts by a change agent to influence the beliefs, attitudes, intentions, and ultimately the behavior of a change target" (Armenakis et al., 1993, p. 683). OCR considers the complexity of organizational change using a holistic approach that assesses individual and collective readiness and is consciously developed aligned with existing organizational systems and structures (Armenakis et al., 1993; Cawsey et al., 2016; Errida & Lotfi, 2021). If OCR is not applied in a change process, efforts may collapse because specific factors that are either indicators of success or failure have not been reflected upon (Cawsey et al., 2016). The focus of OCR in this section is on those who will approve (i.e., meso level) and implement the changes (i.e., micro level) to admission policy.

Evaluating the social exchange context between individuals who are making sense of the change, and not relying solely on the change agent, is an important component of OCR. Individual staff will make sense of the change based on the information disseminated to them by

their leaders, but also in conversations amongst themselves (Kotter, 2012). Errida and Lofti

(2021) have described how OCR considers both individual and organizational readiness:

> Individual readiness focuses on employees' skills and abilities, in addition to their
>
> motivation, perceptions, and behaviors toward change projects. Organizational readiness
>
> focuses on the readiness of the organizational environment, in which change is to be
>
> implemented and can be seen in three aspects: cultural, commitment, and capacity
>
> readiness. (p. 5)

Referring back to the authentic leadership and follower outcomes framework depicted in Figure

4, change readiness is developed at the individual, follower level. Distributed leadership, on the

other hand, focuses on organizational readiness by including many levels of faculty and

administrative staff in the change process; this emphasis supports the dynamics of social

information being disseminated at multiple levels of the organization (Armenakis et al., 1993;

Gronn, 2010). The cultural perspective takes into account the subcultures of MU and addresses

their unique responses to change; for example, differentiating the type of communication that

goes to Senate compared to the RO.

In order to assess OCR at MU, I have adapted Cawsey et al.'s (2016) readiness-for-

change questionnaire. Table 2 analyzes seven factors that consider previous staff experiences

with change, leadership support and credibility, the existing organizational culture, and how

change is measured. The questionnaire illuminates the importance of micro- and meso-level staff

stakeholders in the change process. The success of this change relies significantly on the

commitment of NSEO staff, the change implementers, and considerations of why staff may resist

change (Errida & Lotfi, 2021).

Table 2

The NSEO's Organizational Readiness for Change

Readiness dimension	MU context	Section score
Previous change experience	The NSEO has experienced significant policy, organizational, and technology change in the last 5 years. Execution was poor due to inadequate change planning. The mood of the NSEO is neither upbeat nor negative, but rather cautiously optimistic. Senate has recently approved a number of new admission policies.	-2
Executive support	There is wide support for EDI-related change at the MU executive level and at Senate.	+4
Credible leadership and change champions	I have built trust amongst my NSEO team as a credible leader and change champion. Change champions, like me, find change at MU slow and bureaucratic, but I am supported. Senior leaders and Senate view this proposed change as positive and needed.	+7
Openness to change	Prior to the recent changes, long-serving NSEO staff had not experienced significant policy or organizational change. Turnover resulted, but those who remain are open. It is widely acknowledged that EDI related change is needed. Senate is amenable to new admission policies, but there are senators rooted in historical practices that require careful consideration.	+10
Readiness dimensions	Staff in the RO are tired due to the ongoing impacts of the pandemic. They are also skeptical about change that does not consider implications to their work. MU still has work to do to educate staff and faculty, but this policy could set a standard for reviewing outdated policies through an EDI lens.	0
Rewards for change	I work tirelessly to shift the NSEO culture in support of innovation and change, and I encourage trying and failing, but there are pockets of mistrust amongst long-serving staff about the personal impact of failure.	+1
Measures for change and accountability	The RO is responsible for all student data, and the NSEO measures student satisfaction of admission services. Due to the governance of Senate over RO policies, deadlines and timelines are clear and followed.	+4
Total		24

Note. Scores can range from –10 to +35; organizations that score under 10 are likely not ready for change and will find it very difficult.

As illustrated in the readiness-for-change questionnaire results shown in Table 2, MU is in a positive position to make change, but there are specific areas that require attention. As the change champion, I have significant support for this change from executive-level leadership (i.e., the president, provost, and registrar) but anticipate challenges with the strong focus on student consultation. MU is resistant to engaging students in policy consultations and, often, has taken a checkbox approach (Ahmed, 2007). For instance, MU held community town halls on Zoom to discuss a recent policy change and student feedback was moderated by disabling the chat function and limiting verbal comments. As discussed in Chapter 1, government policies have been shifting to align with social justice movements and immigration; the population of Canada is quickly diversifying. If MU does not effectively engage systemically marginalized and historically underserved students, whiteness will continue to be centred in policy development. With messaging focused on the importance of diversifying the student population by developing inclusive admission policies, those who resist student involvement will, ideally, see the alignment to internal and external pressures.

Employees resist change for many reasons, including unclear messaging and the uncertainty of developing the skills required for the change (Kotter & Schlesinger, 1979). With EDI change specifically, resistance stems not from lack of motivation, but uncertainty on how to implement the change and of making mistakes (Michalski et al., 2017). Communicating the change to NSEO staff and stakeholders, therefore, "should be aligned with the organizational strategy and describe the characteristics of the future state, the reasons the change is needed, and the expected outcomes of the change" (Errida & Lotfi, 2021, p. 5). NSEO staff will require ongoing professional development to understand their role in implementing EDI-focused admission policies.

Supporting RO and NSEO staff through this change journey will be enabled through the authentic leadership and follower outcomes framework depicted in Figure 4. Time will be allocated to EDI professional development, such as antiracism- and/or antioppressive-focused workshops led by internal and external EDI professionals. Currently the management level of the RO (i.e., directors, associate directors, managers) are engaged in these workshops, facilitated by an external agency, but this training needs to be extended to all staff levels. Finally, for stakeholders at Senate, I will lead conversations at Senate meetings, including two subcommittees, and potentially initiate individual conversations with Senators who could be resistant to EDI-focused change. I was the registrar *pro tem* in 2020–2021 and developed strong relationships with many members of Senate during that time. In addition, I have presented at Senate and its subcommittees multiple times due to an overhaul of MU's undergraduate admission requirements in 2018. For this reason, Senate is quite familiar with admission policy change and further changes to these policies will be a familiar endeavour. By having conversations early and often with RO staff, faculty, and Senate, when the policy is brought before Senate for approval and implemented in the NSEO, it should not be met with significant resistance.

Strategies and Solutions to Address the Problem of Practice

In Chapter 1, two specific guiding questions were introduced: (a) why should MU shift from a neoliberal admission model to a more liberal, EDI-focused approach of admitting new students; and (b) how can staff in the RO, who may have a limited understanding of EDI, create inclusive new student enrolment policies that are neither performative nor framed through a deficit lens. In this section, I discuss three strategies to address the guiding questions within my PoP. These solutions focus on the process of engaging internal and external stakeholders in

better understanding the barriers students face in the MU admission process. From there, current

MU admission policies and practices will be revised, or changed altogether, depending on the

outcome of the stakeholder engagement process. The three solutions I propose are (a) using

NSEO directors, (b) working with an internal EDI champion, and (c) hiring external consultants.

Notably, each solution relies on the same governance process given that the outcome is changing

or revising Senate-mandated admission policies. For the purpose of this OIP, Figure 8 illustrates

the simplified process of reviewing admission policies at MU.

Figure 8

MU Policy Implementation Procedure
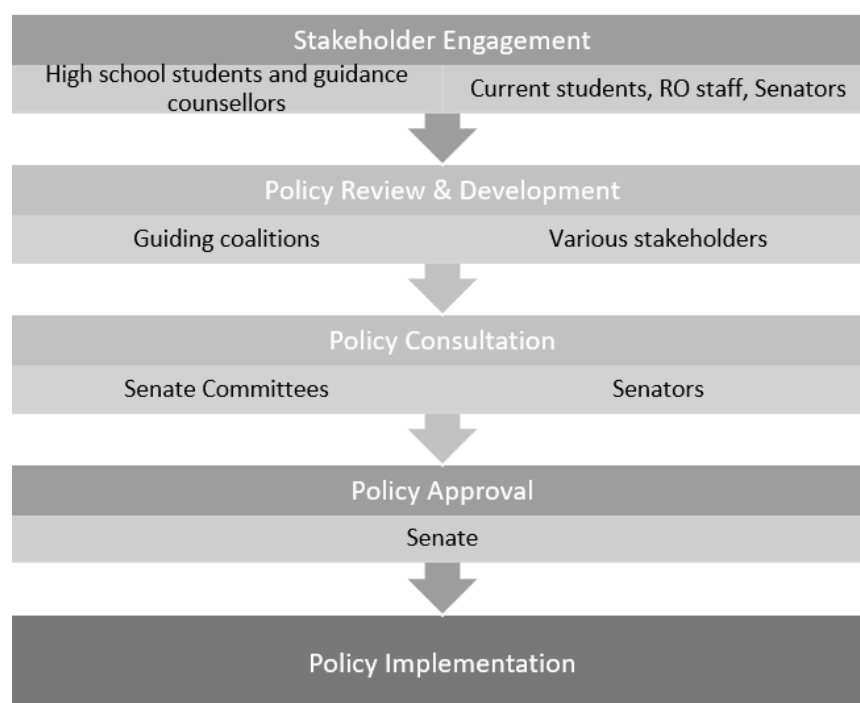
The ideal timeline works backwards from the annual December meeting of the Senate

Committee on Admissions (SCOA); SCOA puts forward admission policy motions to be

discussed and approved at Senate. The December meeting with SCOA will not be the only

meeting to discuss this policy, as consultation must include SCOA well before the draft policy is presented. The December meeting, however, is meaningful because this is when the policy motion will be sent to the January Senate meeting and, ideally, approved. Approval of the policy in January provides the NSEO with ample time for communication and implementation of the new policy in time for the subsequent recruitment and admission activity for the upcoming term. As an aside, this timeline worked well for the 2018 admission requirements change mentioned earlier.

My role in this change process is important to clarify. As the change champion, I will be present at every stage of the process navigating between providing high-level leadership, delegating, overseeing delegation, and working with the change implementation. As discussed in Chapter 1, I acknowledge my privileged position in this work and will not lead the consultation process; rather, I will provide critical oversight and support. As depicted in Figure 7, the ensuing solutions explore who will lead Kotter's (2012) Stages 1 to 3, with my oversight and support. In addition, focus is given to how I will lead Stages 4 through 8 with support from the group or individual detailed in the solutions. Once Stages 1 to 3 are concluded and the policy is ready to be written, enacting Stages 4 to 8 will be my role. As an associate registrar, I have two directors who oversee the operations of the NSEO, allowing me to focus on high-level strategy development and implementation, including responsibility for leading changes to admission policy and practice. My role, therefore, will remain consistent throughout the three proposed solutions.

Over the following pages, the three solutions discussed consider Wood and Hilton's (2012) five ethical paradigms (i.e., ethic of justice, critique, care, the profession, and local community), with an emphasis on the ethic of critique and care. A key element of authentic

leadership is embodying high ethical standards through both behaviour and decision-making (Walumbwa et al., 2008), aligning well with the ethical leadership framework Wood and Hilton have outlined. Guiding my decision-making in this section is the ethic of critique, which concentrates on shifting social order and focusing on individual experiences within multiple groups (Wood & Hilton, 2012). Furthermore, this emphasis aligns with my chosen theoretical paradigm, CWT: "The ethic of critique as a critical consequentialist perspective . . . identifies laws, policies, and structures that disadvantage certain groups and the promotion of action to address identified inequities" (Wood & Hilton, 2012, p. 202). For my PoP specifically, the ethic of critique allows a focus on how current MU admission policies provide an advantage to privileged students and uphold hegemonic practices.

The most important ethical consideration to address within the proposed solutions is the ethic of care in the stakeholder engagement process. As a white woman leading EDI work, I am acutely aware of my own privileged identity and the ease with which I navigated university admission. As I have mentioned earlier, I do not share the lived experience of the prospective and current students I seek to support and am acutely aware of white saviour complex: that white people hold the mistaken belief they have the "unique power to uplift, edify and strengthen" (Straubhaar, 2015, p. 384) those being oppressed. The ethic of care consideration, therefore, is to engage leaders in this process who are deeply aware of their own identity and its impact when engaging systemically marginalized and historically underserved students.

Solution 1: Using NSEO Directors

Four years ago, the NSEO was reorganized to combine both student recruitment and undergraduate admissions into one department overseeing enrolment of all new undergraduate students to MU. As part of this integration, I focused on developing a distributed leadership team

comprising myself, two directors, and three associate directors, illustrated in Figure 9. Each

leadership team member has authority over their portfolio, but we work collectively to support

and guide one another. One of the strategies to approaching my PoP, therefore, is to engage the

NSEO directors, and specifically the director of Recruitment and Admissions (RA), in leading

this project. Currently, the director of the Indigenous portfolio is conducting a review of

Indigenous admission policies and pathways at MU. This person will not be tapped to also lead

this policy review project, but they will provide support and guidance to the RA director.

Figure 9

NSEO Leadership Team Structure
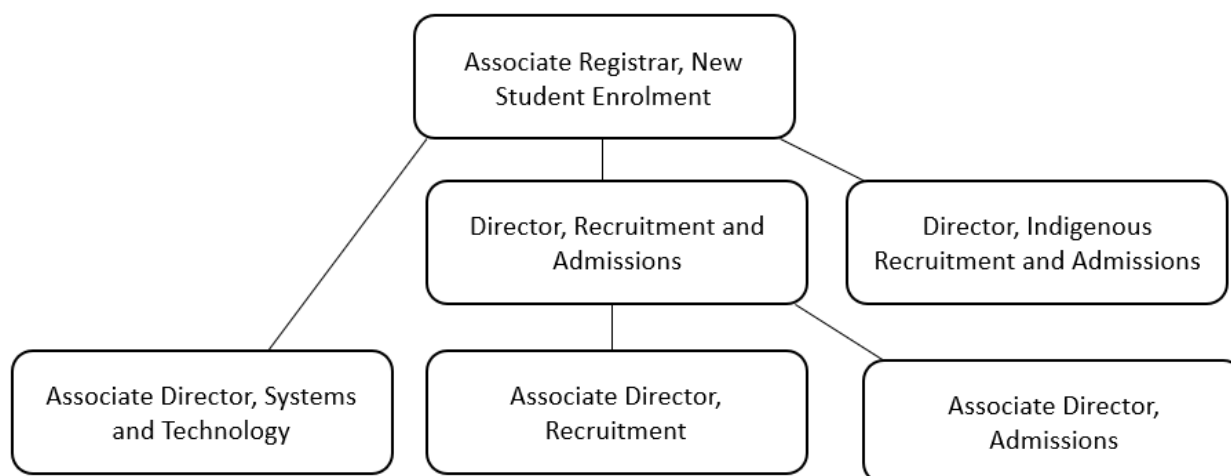
Using the NSEO directors confers many benefits. First, the directors report to me, and we

have weekly one-on-one meetings, including weekly leadership team meetings. With these

regular meetings, I am informed on the progress of projects and provide my support and

guidance. Second, the RA director has close connections and a foundation of trust with the entire

NSEO team through direct line authority and responsibility, meaning that they will be able to

engage staff more easily in this process (Bartunek et al., 2000; Cawsey et al., 2016). Third, both

NSEO directors are well connected with university stakeholders across campus and with the external high school community through various committees. As noted, the director of the Indigenous portfolio is currently working through a similar process and has experience engaging diverse stakeholders both within MU and externally, an important aspect of this work. Finally, by engaging the NSEO directors and entire leadership team, buy-in to new admission policies and practices will be easier and supporting the implementation will be more consistent.

The limitations of this approach, however, must be considered. The RA director is an integral leader managing two associate directors and overseeing the operations of 40 staff. To shift focus from operations to a policy project will have an impact on staff resources. Although the associate directors could take on aspects of the director's role, this option would increase their already significant workload. Unfortunately, the NSEO is understaffed due to funding issues, and some operational work that typically resides with staff falls amongst the leadership team. In addition, funds are unavailable to hire additional NSEO staff, so the leadership team will continue to contribute to the work and, therefore, accumulate time off in lieu. Time accrual is a significant challenge in our overburdened department. It is also challenging for a director focused on operations to hold the goal of large-scale, institutional culture change; Bartunek et al. (2000) argued that "managers' interventions are likely to be within the context of the work of their particular unit, rather than the more general context of organizational change" (p. 59). Finally, a key ethical consideration of my PoP is the identity of who leads stakeholder engagement. Although the director of the Indigenous portfolio is an Indigenous person, the RA director is a cisgender white person, who, like me, does not share the lived experiences of the students we seek to support. To address this limitation, I will provide professional development opportunities. Even so, this need for training highlights the assumptions of this approach.

EDI is a priority espoused by MU's president. Nevertheless, there is significant work ahead for staff and faculty to understand the impacts of EDI to their work. By engaging the RA director in this work, my assumption is that they are ready to lead EDI-focused work. Even though the Indigenous director and I will provide support, the RA director may not yet be comfortable enough to lead stakeholder engagement focused on equity-deserving students.

Solution 2: Working With an Internal EDI Champion

Within Student Services, which at MU includes the RO and NSEO, an EDI director provides leadership and direction for activities supporting the development of coordinated, equity-related projects for students. The EDI director is expected to lead the development of equitable student-facing policies and guide unit-level operational planning. Though the EDI director reports into the vice provost, students portfolio and not the RO, reviewing admission policies through the lens of EDI is a priority for the RO, and student policies fall under the role's responsibilities.

There are many strengths to working with the EDI director as an internal change champion. First, the director is internal to Student Services, and working with them would not come with costs to my department, unlike seconding an external project director. In addition, through conversations with me, the EDI director is familiar with this policy review and the vice provost, students has already approved the project. Second, the EDI director may carry more influence over the process, as internal managers leading change initiatives can experience challenges mediating conflict amongst staff compared with those external to the department (Bartunek et al., 2000; Cawsey et al., 2016). Third, the EDI director is familiar with both the internal and external higher education landscape within the context of EDI, and is closely connected to MU's central vice president, people, and equity and inclusion office, with access to

their resources. Finally, as mentioned throughout this chapter, who is leading this work is the utmost ethical consideration. The EDI director has multiple years of experience in leading social transformation within challenging and political environments, and in working with systemically marginalized and historically underserved students. Given all of these strengths, it is important also to weigh the challenges.

The challenges of working with the EDI director are rooted in the complexity of their portfolio within Student Services. The EDI director serves all of Student Services and has multiple priorities within their portfolio, which would have to be realized while working simultaneously on this project. This heavy workload may impact their availability to start the project, which could impact the ideal policy approval timelines. Furthermore, I will need to establish this initiative as a priority with the vice provost, students that benefits directly from the EDI director's participation.

Additionally, the EDI director would meet with me regularly to provide updates on the project; however, they do not have a direct reporting line to me. Recently I worked with a project director who, like the EDI director, reported into the vice provost students, and I encountered a number of performance challenges with the director. To address these issues, I had to involve both the project director and their supervisor. It was, to be frank, an awkward arrangement and best not repeated if Solution 2 is preferred. Finally, the EDI director is working on this project for a short period of time and is not expected to be part of the ongoing implementation within the NSEO.

Solution 3: Hiring External Consultants

Consultants are frequently engaged in both the public and private sector to provide support in implementing new initiatives, developing efficiencies, focusing attention on new

insights, and transferring skills and knowledge within organizations (Cawsey et al., 2016; Phillips et al., 2015; Wright & Kitay, 2002). As sector specialists, consultants develop vast experience and immense knowledge for each client and their system through repeated assignments within their specific field of practice (Fincham et al., 2008; Vogt, 2000). Consultants could either be sector specialists in a subject area, like EDI, or a field of work, like undergraduate admissions.

The NSEO works regularly with higher education consultants who provide expertise on undergraduate admissions and higher education. While successful, for this policy project, it is more important the consultants have EDI expertise rather than general higher education knowledge. Oswick and Noon (2014) argued that management approaches to consultation follow trends, whereas EDI specialists address systemic issues that are deeply entrenched in the culture of organizations, affecting those organizations in fundamental and enduring ways. I recently worked with Scout Consulting (a pseudonym), a full-service equity, inclusion, and antiracism company based in British Columbia. Scout Consulting supported MU with a faculty-specific scholarship program for equity-deserving students by facilitating multiple antiracism training workshops online and in person. The company provided feedback on the language used on the program website but did not work on the scholarship policy itself. Scout Consulting does, however, offer services that support creating and analyzing policies through the lens of equity and inclusion and would be an ideal consultant to engage in this policy review process.

There are many strengths working with an external consulting agency like Scout Consulting. Most noteworthy is their lack of institutional bias or memory. External EDI consultants "introduce new language and thinking into the organisational change process because they circulate among multiple organisations providing expertise, working on and learning from

different projects, and networking with their professional group" (Kirton & Greene, 2019, p. 679). In addition, external consultants focus on a project for a set period of time and deliver a finished product. For instance, Scout Consulting offers two packages: (a) policy analysis and recommendations over 4 to 6 weeks, and (b) policy development over 6 to 8 weeks. Consultants can lead the entire policy review and development process over a period of 4 months, requiring support only with logistics. Finally, the staff at Scout Consulting share a diversity of lived experiences, skills, and expertise working with and for systemically marginalized and historically underserved populations. There are, however, drawbacks with this approach, including significant cost and time.

Working with Scout Consulting comes with a number of challenges and assumptions. Although a consultant will deliver a final product within an agreed-upon timeline, delivery depends on their availability, and again, this project must adhere to strict timelines. Scout Consulting would come in for a short period, leaving MU to develop "cultural change initiatives that would ensure the translation of policies into lived employee experiences" (Kirton & Greene, 2019, p. 686). This gap would be addressed by me and would have an impact on staffing resources. In addition, EDI-focused consultants may encounter obstacles because they are not higher education insiders. The power structures, including Senate and its many committees, may challenge the content and direction of their work (Kirton & Greene, 2019). Finally, the major barrier of this proposed solution is the cost of hiring a full-service consulting company, which could cost upwards of $100,000 for a project of this scale. The biggest assumption of Solution 3 is that funds would be available during a fiscally challenging time for MU.

Solution Analysis

To analyze the three solutions, I have considered four factors: NSEO staff resources, availability, fiscal impact, and leading stakeholder engagement. Table 3 illustrates each factor with dark gray as high impact or risk and light gray as low impact or risk.

Table 3

PoP Solution Analysis

Solution	NSEO staff resources	Availability	Fiscal impact	Stakeholder engagement
Solution 1				
Solution 2				
Solution 3				

Regardless of the solution chosen, NSEO staff resources will be needed because NSEO staff will be involved throughout this change process. That said, the solution with the most impact to resources is Solution 1, as work would be shifted internally, causing leadership staff to accumulate more time off in lieu. Solution 3 has the least impact to NSEO resources, as the consultants would lead the process mostly independently, with Solution 2 requiring limited use of NSEO staff by the EDI director. Factor two, availability, is straightforward: the NSEO director could start almost immediately, contrasted with the unknown availability of the EDI director and Scout Consulting. The fiscal impact, factor three, is also clear: neither internal option (i.e., Solutions 1 and 2) requires significant funding, whereas using Scout Consulting for up to 6 months would come at a significant cost, upwards of $100,000. Finally, the fourth factor is the ethic of care consideration: who is leading the stakeholder engagement? Solutions 2 and 3 include a director and consultants with immense experience working with systemically

marginalized and historically underserved students, whereas Solution 1 would appoint a director who is not quite ready to embark on this work.

Based on my analysis, the most viable option is Solution 2, working with an internal EDI champion. Solution 3, hiring external consultants, is also very appealing but, postpandemic and with the recent hiring of the EDI director, funds to hire external consultants would likely not be approved. In addition, Solution 1 carries too much risk for the NSEO at the staff and director levels. Though there are significant challenges with Solution 2, such as the EDI director reporting to a different leader and the short period they are dedicated to the project, the strengths outweigh the negatives.

Conclusion

In Chapter 2, I clarified how critical stakeholder engagement is to my PoP and to the identity of those engaging in EDI work. CWT offers the perspective that in order to disrupt white discourses in policy development, systemically marginalized and historically underserved students must be centred in the process. The cultural perspective acts as an additional lens to review institutional legacies, policy artifacts, and subcultures that contribute to the development of oppressive admission policies and practices. MU is ready to embark on this change process, but administrative staff and faculty require ongoing education and communication about the reasons for such a change. Authentic leadership supports followers with a framework grounded in their needs, and distributed leadership disseminates the work amongst multiple leaders to anchor the success of this change process. The implementation of this project, using Solution 2 and working with the EDI director, will need to carefully consider communication and monitoring, which I cover in the next chapter.

Chapter 3: Implementation, Communication, and Evaluation

The current MU president has publicly declared their commitment to EDI, and MU is readying itself to bring about systemic change. In addition, the RO and NSEO, as outlined in Chapter 2, are in a strong position to embrace change. Even though MU is signaling its commitment to deep change through structural changes, EDI must be a shared responsibility across the institution and not rest solely with the individuals leading this work (Ahmed, 2012; Williams, 2013). Engaging the MU community in transformational change will be challenging; nevertheless, one significant step is implementing a change plan that addresses the inequities and systemic barriers inherent in admission policies. Chapter 3 delves into those specifics with a focus on implementing, communicating, monitoring, and evaluating the organizational change process.

Change Implementation Plan

The short-, mid-, and long-term goals of this implementation use the cultural perspective, CWT, and antioppression frameworks, including stakeholder consultation (short-term); policy review, development, and approval (mid-term); and the final policy implementation (long-term). To implement this plan, "a strategy, infrastructure, and communication plan that is proactive and well-articulated" (William, 2013, p. 170) is necessary to guide the significant change management process forward. As confirmed in Chapter 2, the EDI director will be actively involved in the planning, analyzing, design, development, implementation, and evaluation of this change (Kang, 2015). To this end, the implementation plan follows Kotter's (2012) eight-stage change model with a focus on the first three stages.

Managing the Transition and Change

Kotter's (2012) change theory, as discussed in Chapter 2, serves to guide the transition and manage this implementation plan; see Appendix A for an overview of how the model is applied to the PoP. Kotter considered the whole organization and built in the time it takes to make significant cultural change by providing a template to approach the desired change—in this case, admission policy changes at MU enacted through a distributed leadership framework. There will continue to be resistance to the implementation of inclusive admission pathways that are perceived as less focused on systems of meritocracy, but the critical paradigm, cultural frame, and CWT offer the opportunity to work within these fraught perspectives to support the change plan. The EDI director will lead the early stages of this policy project and begin with Kotter's first stage of establishing the sense of urgency.

Kotter (2012) noted that some managers are complacent when it comes to change and do not create a high enough sense of urgency for why the change needs to occur. To establish this sense of urgency, MU could rely on functionalist approaches; for example, drafting a memorandum that highlights current enrolment data with a narrative framed in critical discourses. The EDI director's participation is imperative in not only establishing this sense of urgency, but in also communicating the change vision, detailed later in Chapter 3. Once the sense of urgency has been established and communicated at various leadership levels (see Figure 3), guiding coalitions will be created.

Selecting Change Agents

Guiding coalitions, Kotter's (2012) Stage 2, lead and oversee the change, given that one person cannot be expected to lead significant organizational change on their own. Coalitions include multiple staffing levels, such as project leaders and operational managers, ensuring the

entire organization is represented (Kotter, 2012; Wentworth et al., 2020). Because universities

are complex institutions including administrative staff, faculty, and students, this change plan

requires multiple guiding coalitions working on different stages at the same time (Pollack &

Pollack, 2015). In addition, having multiple guiding coalitions is congruent with a distributed

leadership approach of using both top-down and bottom-up approaches to leadership (Bolden et

al., 2009). Pollack and Pollack (2015) discussed the need for multiple guiding coalitions leading

different aspects of change work and working at different times throughout the process; this is

the case for the coalitions in this change plan, which include governance, strategy, and project

management teams. Table 4 illustrates the three guiding coalitions, their members, the

anticipated time commitment, and the stages each coalition will oversee.

Table 4

Guiding Coalitions

Variable	Governance team	Strategy team	Project management team
Members	EDI director; associate registrar; faculty and student senators	EDI director; associate registrar; faculty senator(s); current student(s); high school counsellor(s)	NSEO directors or managers; NSEO staff member(s); associate registrar
Stage of change model	1, 2, 3	3, 4	5, 6, 7, 8
Key responsibilities	Community consultation; create vision and strategies; bring policy to Senate	Review recommendations; draft new policy; communicate policy	Policy implementation
Timeline goals	6 months: short-term	Ongoing: mid-term	1 year: long-term

Selecting change agents is critical for the success of each guiding coalition as they are the

change champions, appreciate the urgency, and possess the social capital to drive the change

forward (Armenakis & Harris, 2009; Cawsey et al., 2016; Kezar, 2018; Kotter, 2012). As discussed in Chapter 2, those leading this project, including coalition members, must be aware of how their identities shape their participation in this process, including assumptions, values, and experiences (Wigginton & Lafrance, 2019). Leaders must be able to "address the deeper, systemic ways that whiteness and white supremacy are historically and contemporarily situated at the core of most institutions of higher education" (Corces-Zimmerman & Guida, 2019, p. 96). To do so, the gaze shifts from who is oppressed by current admission policies to how admission policies uphold systems of white supremacy, consistent with Ahmed's (2007) phenomenological approach discussed in Chapter 2. Kotter (2012) further discussed the challenge of selecting the right guiding coalition members; therefore, myself and the EDI director must be discerning and work closely together on this step.

Critical to the success of this plan is selecting guiding coalition members who deeply understand the truths of systemically marginalized and historically underserved students. The EDI director, therefore, will take a lead role in determining strategy and governance team membership. The faculty senator(s) must have capacity to dedicate time to this project and be proficient working with differing university community levels; this key member can leverage their unique position as both a faculty member and senator to gain policy support. There are often tensions between the administrative and academic sides of a university, and having faculty senators on two of the guiding coalitions will be critical to gaining faculty-level support (Wentworth et al., 2020). Furthermore, the EDI director will use their discretion to select governance and strategy team students, including a student senator and a student government and/or equity-deserving student group member. As discussed throughout the literature,

representation is critical when making change impacting historically underserved groups (Ahmed, 2017; Iverson, 2007; Smith, 2010; Williams, 2013).

The high school counsellor on the strategy team will be selected from the existing counsellor advisory group, which I chair. This advisory includes a diverse, representative group of high school counsellors from across the province with an established working relationship with MU. Finally, the project team will include NSEO staff who support and understand the change, and I will determine membership of this coalition. Once the guiding coalitions are established, they begin the work of developing the change vision and strategies.

Moving Towards the Change Vision

Creating a vision for change clarifies the rationale, motivates people to take action, and coordinates the actions of different people (Kotter, 2012; Wentworth et al., 2020). One reason an implementation plan fails is lack of guidance on why a change is occurring (Kang, 2015); it is, therefore, important for the vision to be clear to change recipients. For my PoP, the strategy team will develop the vision and subsequent strategies through stakeholder consultations, Stage 3 of Kotter's (2012) change plan. As noted in Chapters 1 and 2, stakeholder consultations, led by the EDI director, will inform the final policy and connect directly to the principles of authentic leadership.

The EDI director will lead the review of MU's current admission policies and the barriers systemically marginalized and historically underserved students face. CWT informs the approach to develop a deeper understanding of the mechanisms and environmental structures that perpetuate whiteness in current admission policies and practices. Additionally, an antioppressive approach engages various stakeholders in consultations, including current students, high school counsellors, and community members, and centres their truth and experiences by giving space to

counternarratives. Antioppressive approaches shift the gaze from the oppressed to scrutinize the power and dominance of the oppressors (Potts & Brown, 2015). Stakeholders must, therefore, include those who work with the policy to gauge their perspectives on admission process, such as members of Senate and administrative staff. The EDI director will develop trust with stakeholders through relationship-building, ensuring followers are engaged, empowered, focused, and committed to this process, aligning with the framework depicted in Figure 4.

During the consultations, the vison and strategy will become clear. The consultations, as depicted in Figure 7, follow a CWT, phenomenological approach. Systems of white supremacy should be not be upheld, so rather than simply collecting data as an exchange between follower and leader, there should be conversations, one-on-one meetings, and multiple points of contact (Corces-Zimmerman & Guida, 2019). Figure 10 depicts the process of consultation, inquiry, and policy writing. Because this work is not by consensus, critical to CWT, dissenting voices are centred in the process (Ahmed, 2012; Kotter, 2012; Potts & Brown, 2015; Williams, 2013); therefore, engaging in an inquiry cycle (Step 3) with participant stakeholders is important.

The EDI director will engage in a modified version of Pietrzak and Paliszkiewics's (2015) plan, do, check, and adjust (PDCA) cycle. A limitation of Kotter's (2012) model is its presentation as linear steps (Hughes, 2016; Kang et al., 2022; Pollack & Pollack, 2015; Wentworth et al., 2020), so engaging in a PDCA cycle within the change stages (see Appendix A) allows approaches to be adjusted based on stakeholder participation and feedback. To do so, the EDI director will map out the stakeholder consultations following PDCA by aligning with the vision (Plan), educating participants on EDI and CWT principles during the consultations (Do), ensuring everything stays on track (Check), and if not, adjusting as necessary (Adjust); this cycle may repeat often. Once the consultations are complete, the strategy team will go back to

stakeholders to ensure viewpoints have been accurately reflected before moving to the final

stages of Figure 10. This inquiry process is further detailed in the monitoring and evaluation

section later in this chapter. Finally, addressing and mitigating various challenges is essential for

this implementation.

Figure 10

Vision, Strategy, Milestones, and Timeline
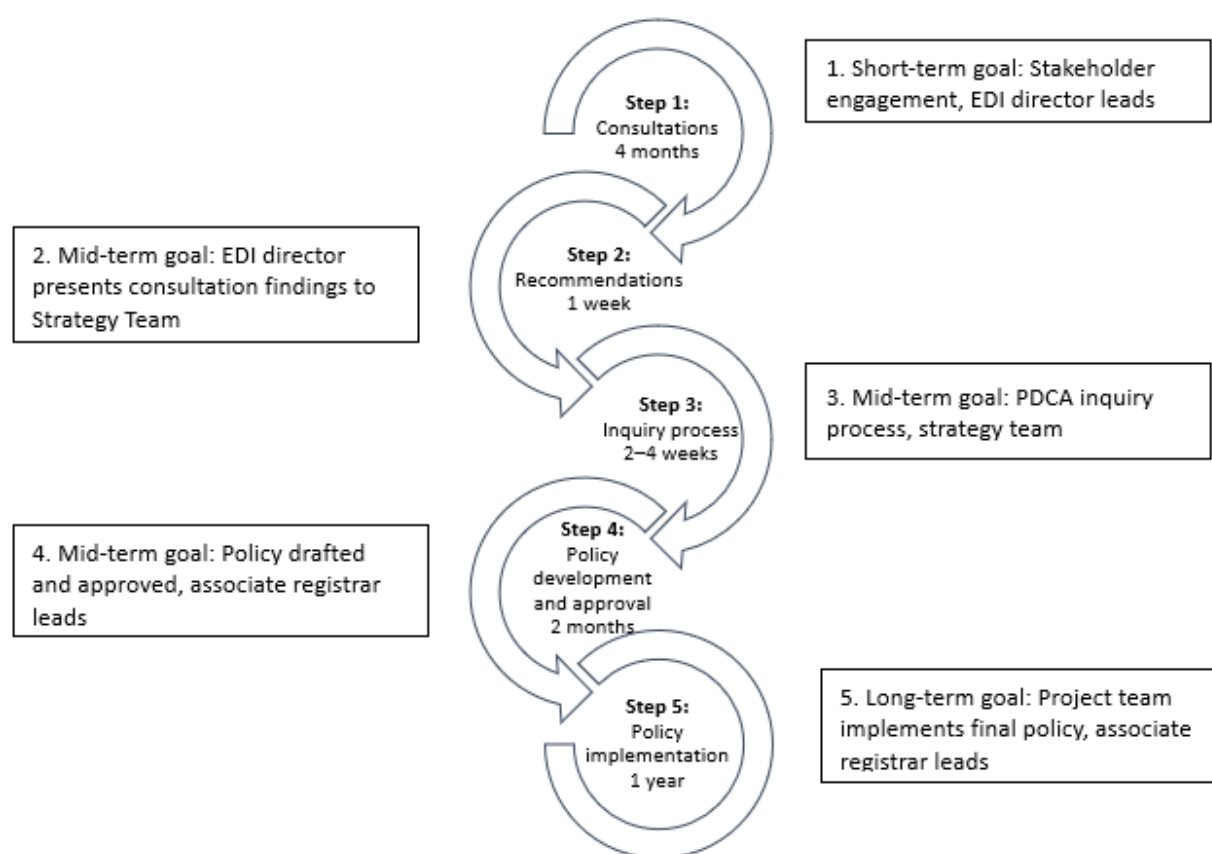
Implementation Constraints and Barriers

A change implementation plan must address barriers, and address them well (Kotter,

2012). As Williams (2013) noted, "Diversity champions need to appreciate that the most

ambitious diversity efforts, while often offering the best means of moving the diversity agenda

forward, inevitably rock the boat" (p. 29). The most significant constraints of this implementation plan include stakeholder reaction to change, participant safety, time and resources, and attempting to do EDI work within an institution steeped in a colonial culture.

Stakeholder Reaction to Change

Gathering feedback from stakeholders and viewing dissenting opinions as creative, rather than as needing to be overcome (Burnes et al., 2016; Kotter, 2012; Lewis, 2011) is critical to the success of my OIP. These viewpoints are essential to moving the change process forward and should not be perceived as resistance, as this feedback informs how the vision may need to be reworked (Kotter, 2012). In addition, meaningful stakeholder engagement energizes both the participant and the organization and is essential to the success of this plan (Belle, 2016). Dissenting opinions also include those uncomfortable with CWT as the chosen theoretical framework for this plan. Working with dissenting stakeholders is a critical component of my communications plan, addressed next, and the guiding coalitions will mitigate this challenge with different stakeholders leading key aspects of the implementation. In addition, my authentic leadership style lends well to hearing dissenting opinions and incorporating feedback, rather than seeing it as a barrier to overcome (Kotter, 2012). In centering dissenting opinions in the process, it is important to consider stakeholder safety.

Participant Safety

Safely engaging stakeholders is a key ethical consideration of this change plan, discussed in Chapter 2. EDI work is an exhausting, "banging your head against a brick wall job" (Ahmed, 2017, p. 136). Often those who do not embody institutional norms are tasked with the work of transforming those norms by siting on committees, facilitating workshops, and encountering ongoing resistance (Ahmed, 2017; Smith, 2010; Williams, 2013). Dismantling systems of white

supremacy requires all university community members to work together but consideration needs to be given to equity-deserving stakeholders who are constantly engaged in EDI work. This implementation plan acknowledges the emotional labour of administrative staff, faculty, and students and employs antioppression and CWT frameworks to guide safe stakeholder participation. In addition, the EDI director's expertise, given their professional and personal background, will be crucial here.

Time and Resources

This plan must adhere to rigid Senate timelines, discussed in Chapter 2. Adjustments must, therefore, align within the timeline and, if not, policy changes will be delayed a year. This means stages must move simultaneously, including stakeholder consultations, to ensure the change plan stays on track (Pollack & Pollack, 2015). Communication between the EDI director and the guiding coalitions will need to be clear and efficient, with continual communication provided to me as the change leader. In addition, the guiding coalitions will be expected to work within tight timelines, indicated in Figure 10, with little to no budget support. Faculty and administrative staff will not be financially compensated for their participation on guiding coalitions but need permission to be released from their duties for short time periods. This permission relies upon executive-level support to release staff from their regular duties, discussed further in the communication plan.

EDI Versus Colonialism

This change plan attempts to fit a square peg into a round hole. More specifically, an antioppressive CWT approach to policy change does not reflect "colonial discourses of scientific civilization, rationality, control, and order" (Shahjahan, 2011, p. 188). Employing distributed leadership, with a focus on bottom-up approaches to policy decision-making, gives agency to

leaders to make decisions based on stakeholder feedback. This approach is in opposition to colonial policy decision-making that relies on top-down approaches (Shahjahan, 2011). In addition, the intentional and meaningful inclusion of systemically marginalized and historically underserved students in the policy consultation process is a significant cultural shift for MU. As discussed in Chapter 1, including students in policy consultations has a history of being performative. Finally, my implementation plan does not clearly define the final admission policy and focuses instead on what colonialism would consider an inefficient policy consultation process (Shahjahan, 2011; Tuck & Yang, 2012). Colonial approaches to policy development present enormous barriers; therefore, the communication, monitoring, and evaluation plans discussed in the coming sections seek to address these challenges.

Plan to Communicate the Need for Change and the Change Process

Organizational change communication is a critical component of a change initiative in order for leaders to establish themselves within the process and to stimulate the necessary change with employees (Adiguzel, 2019; Jurisch et al., 2013; Lewis, 2011; Udin et al., 2019). My OIP requires significant buy-in from multiple stakeholders across the university in order to make emancipatory change; communication clarifies the why of the change and how key messages are disseminated (Lewis, 2011). Without strong and varied communication, this implementation plan will face many challenges. The importance of effective communication begins with understanding the different forms communication takes and consistently communicating the vision for change. This focus ensures that those involved understand the change goals and directions, consistent with Stage 4 of Kotter's (2012) change theory, communicating the change vision.

Informal and formal communication, using multiple media, and the timely dissemination of information are significant factors of a communication plan (Adiguzel, 2019; Kotter, 2012; Lewis, 2011). Formal communication channels include official channels, such as the first announcement by the change leader (Lewin, 2011). Informal communication plays a larger role than formal communication as this is often how information is disseminated between stakeholders (Adiguzel, 2019; Lewis, 2011). Informal communication comes in many media such as the bidirectional day-to-day interaction between stakeholders and change leaders (e.g., one-on-one meetings or group meetings), memos, meetings, and newspapers (Adiguzel, 2019; Kotter, 2012; Lewis, 2011). Because stakeholders are key to my change plan, the stakeholder perspective offers an approach for shaping communication.

The stakeholder perspective considers how those involved or participating in organizational change enact their understanding through interactions with the change process (Lewis, 2011). Authentic leadership, as discussed earlier, challenges the notion of traditional leadership and is co-constructed and linked to followers' attitudes and behaviours (Avolio et al., 2004) focusing on the development of followers, not just the leader. The literature on change further emphasizes that "communication and participation are the main ways to stimulate support for change among employees" (Van der Voet et al., 2016, p. 856) and aligning with distributed leadership and Stage 4 of Kotter's (2012) change theory.

Building Awareness for Change

To avoid the pitfalls of communication, Kotter (2012) offered seven principles: (a) keep the communication simple, (b) rely on examples and metaphors to frame the communications, (c) use different media, (d) repeat over and over, (e) lead by example, (f) address inconsistencies explicitly, and (g) encourage two-way communication amongst stakeholders and followers with

the change leaders. Furthermore, the information generated from interactions with followers, including dissensus, is essential for keeping the change process moving and should not be perceived as resistance: "Swallowing our pride and reworking the vision is far more productive than heading off in the wrong direction—or in a direction that others won't follow" (Kotter, 2012, p. 103). These considerations are woven throughout my communication plan.

Ensuring multiple approaches are taken successfully builds awareness of the change plan, including engaging administrative staff who must operationalize new policies and practices, socializing the change with senators before the policy is brought to the floor of Senate, and, consulting with prospective and current students on their experiences navigating admission. Changing an institution embedded in years of oppressive admission practices is daunting, but if care is taken at each stage, including strategic and intentional consideration of communication, it can be successful (Williams, 2013). In addition to following Kotter's (2012) change theory stages, I employ Lavis et al.'s (2003) knowledge mobilization plan (KMP).

Knowledge Mobilization Plan

A KMP informs initiatives such as policy changes with the goal of creating "take-home messages from the field of research" (Lavis et al., 2003, p. 221) to ensure the research project activities are easily understood and translated to those external to the project. The Lavis et al. (2003) framework includes five guiding questions to develop a knowledge-transfer strategy:

> What should be transferred to decision makers (the message)? To whom should research knowledge be transferred (the target audience)? By whom should research knowledge be transferred (the messenger)? How should research knowledge be transferred (the knowledge-transfer processes and supporting communications infrastructure)? With what effect should research knowledge be transferred (evaluation)? (p. 222)

Questions must be salient, placed in a specific order, and the answers ought to determine the review direction and knowledge transfer evaluation. In Appendix B, a visual representation of my KMP is detailed, including how it aligns with Kotter's (2012) change theory. Of note, my KMP is divided into two stages: policy review (including stakeholder engagement), development and approval; and policy implementation. Foundational to the KMP are key messages that remain consistent throughout the stages of this change plan.

The first KMP question asks about the message to be transferred to decision-makers (Lavis et al., 2003). It equates to the five key messages of my communications plan:

1. MU admission access pathways have not been reviewed in 27 years.

2. Enhancing inclusion for equity-deserving students is a presidential priority.

3. Canadian demographics are shifting and MU must anticipate more students applying from diverse backgrounds.

4. Systemically marginalized and historically underserved students are centred in the admission policy review process.

5. Change that benefits one student benefits all students.

These messages are incorporated in all formal and informal communication and differ depending on the audience.

Stakeholder Considerations

Framing the issues for various audiences and their specific needs is an important consideration of my PoP. As noted in Appendix B, the audiences differ depending on the communication plan stage, as do the messengers of the information. Being transparent and consistent by communicating the five key messages encourages buy-in from executive leadership, Senate, and administrative staff (Kang et al., 2022). In addition, stakeholders

understand the change and are empowered to engage meaningfully in the implementation, which is Kotter's (2012) Stage 5, empowering employees for broad-based action. There are, however, specific considerations for each stakeholder group, including unique issues that require attention.

Executive Leadership

The university president is the chair of Senate and carries significant influence over the policy approval process; see Figure 1. The president, therefore, must be openly supportive of this change initiative and communicate it as a priority to Senate. At the beginning of all Senate meetings, the chair shares prepared remarks that include support for upcoming policy reviews and discussions. Ideally, the president will inform Senate of this policy review at Senate in their opening remarks, serving as an act of approval and the first announcement, setting the tone for subsequent communication (Lewis, 2011). I am familiar with Senate and the channels to disseminate information and will work with the registrar to inform the president of this intended policy review.

Senators

Including faculty in the change process at institutions with shared governance models is important, and committees should be cochaired by a faculty senator and senior administrator (Wentworth et al., 2020); hence, the guiding coalition governance team. Senate has discussed and approved EDI-related initiatives in the past, including academic courses and scholarship programs, yet some topics have been met with resistance. The chair of Senate must openly support policy changes to overcome this resistance. In addition, Senate is the gatekeeper for admission policies, and some senators may challenge the decision to engage students in the consultations. These change resistors will want to know how a change for equity-deserving students benefits all students. Relying on the key messages, therefore, is especially important for

this group, as is the president's support. To communicate the change, the governance team will engage in both formal and informal communication, including one-on-one meetings with senators, presenting at Senate subcommittees like SCOA, and providing electronic updates via email and webpages.

RO Staff

Administrative staff are change implementers and must be continually engaged in the process. They are responsible for "charting the path forward, nurturing support, and alleviating resistance" (Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 39), so they must deeply understand why the change is occurring and what the impacts to their work will be. This engagement is managed through formal and informal communication, including directly from senior staff and between colleagues, reinforcing the guiding coalitions distributed leadership approach. There are two steps in socializing the change with staff: (a) during the policy review and development stage and (b) when implementing new policies and practices. Intentional EDI education is required at Step 1, led by the EDI director, to address staff behaviour, skills, and attitudes (Kotter, 2012). This training is ongoing, especially once the policy is implemented, so that staff learn how to discuss the policy with prospective students. In addition to the key messages, the project team must provide a fully fleshed out operational plan to staff indicating how their work could be impacted. For past admission changes, in-person information sessions to answer questions, address concerns, and receive feedback were well received.

Current MU Students

As change recipients, students should not be excluded from policy decision-making processes (Cini, 2020), and the change team must go beyond collecting vanity feedback. The governance team will lead this aspect of the plan by speaking with students directly and

approaching different student groups, relying on the key messages. In most cases, this communication will likely be a combination of in-person conversations, presentations, and email correspondence. MU needs to ensure that student safety is considered in the consultation process, so mapping out the consultation structure and process is an important task for the EDI director.

High School Community

Prospective students and high school counsellors are involved in both the policy development and implementation stages, as depicted in Appendix B. In the first stage, as strategy team members, high school counsellors provide access to prospective students. Similar to the other stakeholders, counsellors will want to ensure safety in the consultation process and that their feedback is meaningfully incorporated. The counsellor roundtable meets twice a year, but if the timing is not ideal, I will hold one-on-one meetings with each roundtable member to share key messages. For the second phase, a much wider group of counsellors and students is needed to promote the new policy as they shift to becoming change facilitators, supporting the policy implementation (Cawsey et al., 2016). For both audiences, the key messages continue to be important, and resources will be required to ensure they are empowered to support the change. In this case, a one-page handout could be provided and admission materials (e.g., website, viewbook) updated. In addition, at any student or counsellor event, the project management team will present the changes.

The communication plan is critical to communicating the change, empowering stakeholders to take action, and moving the change forward in a manner clear to stakeholders (Kotter, 2012). In order for the implementation to continue building upon the momentum thus far, monitoring and evaluating the change plan is an important next step.

Change Process Monitoring and Evaluation

Throughout this chapter I have discussed the implementation plan (Kotter Stages 1 to 3) and communications plan (Kotter Stages 4 and 5). Now the focus shifts to monitoring and evaluating the change plan (Kotter Stages 6 to 8). A monitoring and evaluation framework is essential to ensure a change plan is reviewed over its lifecycle and future decisions are informed by the data gathered (Markiewicz & Patrick, 2016). The monitoring and evaluation framework for this plan shifts focus from adopting functionalist approaches to examining relationships and power relations (Potts & Brown, 2015), in alignment with CWT and antioppressive approaches to research. In addition, my openness as an authentic leader corresponds well to this approach due to my ability to listen to multiple perspectives, hold realistic optimism, and see opportunities and pathways forward, rather than roadblocks (Avolio, 2004). Markiewicz and Patrick's (2016) monitoring and evaluation framework structures my approach.

Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

An effective monitoring and evaluation framework addresses a range of purposes, including results, management, accountability, learning, program improvement, and decision-making (Markiewicz & Patrick, 2016). To align with CWT, my framework focuses on learning, program improvement, and decision-making. Considering this focus, understanding the differences between monitoring and evaluation is important. Monitoring is what is currently happening in a change implementation, in real time, whereas evaluation takes time to deeply understand the long-term impacts and assess whether objectives have been met. In both cases, evaluation questions provide a foundation to build the monitoring and evaluation plans.

In Chapter 1, guiding questions were introduced focusing on stakeholder involvement, acceptance of EDI-focused change, and creating cultural change through new policy

development. To monitor and evaluate such guiding questions, Markiewicz and Patrick (2016) discussed the importance of developing additional evaluation questions that create focus and direction organized under the following domains: appropriateness, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability. Based on the guiding questions from Chapter 1 and my PoP, my questions are presented in Table 5, including to which stage of Kotter's (2012) change theory they connect.

Table 5

Evaluation Questions

Domain	Evaluation question	Kotter stage
Appropriateness	To what extent did consultations include participants from systemically marginalized and historically underserved groups?	6
Appropriateness	To what extent did stakeholders understand the rationale for change?	6
Effectiveness	To what extent did stakeholders increase their EDI knowledge?	6
Effectiveness	To what extent does the new policy incorporate CWT perspectives and antioppression considerations?	7
Efficiency	Did the change process adhere to Senate timelines?	7, 8
Impact	Is there an increase in applications via the new policy or pathway?	7, 8
Impact	To what extent has this policy or pathway impacted other EDI policy change and/or discussions coming before Senate?	7, 8
Sustainability	Is there evidence of ongoing benefits beyond the new admission policy or pathway?	8

The evaluation questions in Table 5 guide the following discussion on monitoring and evaluation plans.

Monitoring Plan

The monitoring plan is consistent with Kotter's (2012) Stages 6 and 7: generating short-term wins, and consolidating gains and producing more change. To keep motivation for the change high, the monitoring framework provides the opportunity for guiding coalition members and stakeholders to observe successes and bring forward feedback throughout the implementation. This feedback loop enhances the credibility of the change process and is in step with distributed leadership by creating a sense of ownership (Blackmore, 2013; Kang et al., 2022). Monitoring plans are a reflective process running in real time, with the intention to refine the implementation plan as it is in progress (Markiewicz & Patrick, 2016). This plan identifies the focus, develops performance indicators, informs data collection, and determines who is responsible for what.

Identify Focus

As discussed in Chapter 2, the focus of this change plan is second-order, aiming to create schematic change (Bartunek & Moch, 1987; Lau & Woodman, 1995). More specifically, it proposes reviewing current admission policies through the lens of CWT to uncover the systemic barriers preventing systemically marginalized and historically underserved students from applying to MU. The monitoring plan focuses on stakeholder engagement, as this informs future admission policy development, by analyzing the context of the change, implementation progress, management and governance processes, and its impact (Markiewicz & Patrick, 2016).

Develop Performance Indicators and Targets

Developing a baseline is important to monitor the successful implementation of this change plan; specifically, how stakeholders are engaged in the process. Stakeholder theory states that within an organization, stakeholders hold definitive stakes in the organizational enterprise

and are an integral part of a change plan (Carroll, 2000). Therefore, monitoring who is and is not participating in the process is essential. By documenting who attends the stakeholder sessions, and the reasons they may or may not, barriers to participation can be addressed through quantitative indicators. Methods to assess will include sign-in sheets that identify the individual's background and stakeholder group.

Qualitative indicators, such as satisfaction with the process and behaviours observed during the consultations, will determine the consultation quality (Markiewicz & Patrick, 2016). Through an antioppressive lens, walking alongside participants and nurturing inherent power dynamics is key; qualitative indicators monitor this aspect through semistructured interviews, one-on-one conversations, observations, and the like (Potts & Brown, 2015). In addition to qualitative indicators, impact indicators will support the assessment of cultural shifts in stakeholders, including attitudinal, following consultations, again using qualitative indicators.

Identify Data Collection Processes and Tools

When analyzing the responses from the stakeholder consultations, consideration must be given to who gave the story, who recorded it, and who is interpreting the information (Corces-Zimmerman & Guida, 2019; Potts & Brown, 2015). The inquiry cycle in Figure 10, therefore, is imperative, as qualitative data are analyzed and included in the new policy draft. Ensuring the primary data collected in the consultations accurately reflect the discussions and are not taken out of context is essential. The EDI director will work closely with either an administrative support person or research assistant to collect, record, and store consultation data. In addition, stakeholders need the option to either self-identify or be recorded as anonymous in the consultations and be clearly informed about the data collection process by the EDI director.

Determine Responsibilities and Time Frames

The timeline and oversight of three key monitoring plan stages are detailed in Figure 10: community consultation; policy review, development, and approval; and final policy implementation. The EDI director takes a lead role in the first stages, and I will oversee subsequent processes involving Senate. The ideal time frame, including consultation and the final policy draft, is approximately 18 months. Evaluating the new policy's impact is expected to take 3 to 5 years postimplementation.

Evaluation Plan

The evaluation plan builds on the monitoring plan with a focus on long-term impacts, achieving implementation goals, and assessing intended positive and negative consequences (Markiewicz & Patrick, 2016). The evaluation plan is executed at specific points during the change process in order to conduct a deeper level analysis of the impact and sustainability domains. Corresponding with Kotter's (2012) Stage 8, anchoring new approaches into the culture, the evaluation plan specifically relies on answering the evaluation questions in Table 5 in order to guide the overall evaluation approach and its focus, methods, responsibilities, and times frames.

Formative and summative assessments provide context for the different roles of evaluation (Markiewicz and Patrick, 2016). According to Markiewicz and Patrick (2016), formative evaluation is completed during the program implementation to determine future program adjustments. Summative evaluation, on the other hand, focuses on program results once it is completed, or at other significant points. For my OIP, formative evaluation is the focus of reviewing the impact and sustainability domains, whereas summative is useful for the retrospective review of current admission policies and their impact. The evaluation plan will

encompass five stages: (a) determine overall approach, (b) identify criteria and standards for evaluation questions, (c) identify focus and methods of evaluation, (d) determine responsibilities and time frames, and (e) review the monitoring and evaluation plans.

Determine Overall Evaluation Approach

This evaluation plan relies on CWT and the cultural perspective as outlined in Figure 7. CWT supports the summative evaluation of systemic barriers that exist with current admission processes and policies, and the cultural perspective guides a formative evaluation into how culture and policy artifacts impact current policy and, subsequently, shift due to the new policy. This approach also considers how distributed leadership supports my authentic leadership style by engaging with various change agents.

Identify Evaluation Questions Requiring Criteria and Standards

The monitoring and evaluation plans focus on the specific questions in Table 6, based on my guiding PoP questions. Markiewicz and Patrick (2016), however, further discussed developing headline evaluation questions to establish the quality and value of a program. Table 6 summarizes my headline questions, criteria for the change implementation, and assessment scale to evaluate the quality of stakeholder engagement and the new admission policy's value to stakeholders (e.g., high school community, administrative staff, and Senate). The headline questions will guide the policy implementation's formative review.

Table 6

Headline Questions, Criteria, and Assessment Scale

Variable	Headline question	Criteria	Assessment scale
Quality	To what extent is stakeholder engagement considered good quality?	• Stakeholders are representative of systemically marginalized and historically underserved students. • Consultations align with antioppression and CWT frameworks. • EDI education and CWT-framed discussions are evidence based.	Excellent Good Adequate Poor
Value	To what degree is the new admission policy of value to key stakeholders?	• Policy includes stakeholder feedback and incorporates EDI principles. • Policy increases applications of systemically marginalized and historically underserved students. • Consultation process engaged meaningfully with key stakeholders.	Excellent Good Adequate Poor

Identify Focus of Evaluation and Methods for Each Question

The vision of my PoP is to make emancipatory change to new student enrolment requiring community building and empowerment, and developing nuanced understandings of the problem, rather than relying on traditional research outcomes like data validity (Potts & Brown, 2015). The methods focus, then, is to evaluate the policy development and implementation process using both individual and group qualitative methods, such as interviews and one-on-one meetings post policy implementation. Although qualitative evaluation methods require more resourcing, the evaluation process should not be rushed (Kotter, 2012). To analyze the policy's successful implementation, quantitative methods such as admission application and student retention data will be used. Reviewing admission data, current student progression, and

graduation rates (i.e., retention data) is important to understand the impact and sustainability domains noted in Table 5.

To assess if barriers of access to MU have shifted, a positivist research methods evaluation could be employed. For instance, upcoming NSSE survey results, discussed in Chapter 1, could be analyzed to determine how the incoming cohort of students has changed since the new admission policies were implemented. In addition, once MU begins collecting demographic data at the point of admission, a base level could be determined and analyzed against incoming cohorts for the next 5 to 10 years. Finally, understanding how attitudes may or may not have shifted amongst faculty and administrative staff is key. This shift could be evaluated using both quantitative and qualitative methods that align with antioppressive approaches to research; specifically, distributing surveys while also providing opportunities to hear the stories behind the survey results.

Determine Responsibilities and Time Frames

I will oversee the evaluation of policy implementation and the impacts on prospective and current students. Formative evaluation will be ongoing from the first year of implementation to a formal policy review at the 3-year mark. The summative evaluation adopted throughout stakeholder consultations will be led by the EDI director, in real time.

Review the Monitoring and Evaluation Plans

The evaluation plan seeks to understand how stakeholder engagement processes inform future policy consultations; monitoring ensures the stakeholder process is evidence based and aligns with EDI principles. Stakeholder engagement must be intentional, experiential, and motivational (Belle, 2016). It is my role to oversee the monitoring and evaluation plans, with the EDI director taking the lead, under my direction, of key sections noted in Figure 10. By working

collaboratively, the evaluation plan is informed by the monitoring plan, and stakeholders are meaningfully engaged in the process.

Refining the Change Implementation Plan

From the information gathered in the monitoring and evaluation plans, there are points at which the implementation plan will need to be revisited to address barriers and inequities. As discussed earlier, Pietrzak and Paliszkiewics's (2015) PDCA inquiry cycle can be used to monitor and evaluate whether plan objectives have been met. If not, stages can be revisited and adjusted. Distributed leadership and the authentic leadership follower's framework, discussed in Chapter 2, support the meaningful engagement of multiple levels of staff and build trust with participants. If guiding coalition members, for example, become aware that participants feel unsafe or that the views of equity-deserving students are not being represented, the consultations must shift. In addition, when retention data are analyzed post policy implementation, further evaluation is required to assess the policy's positive or negative impacts. For instance, if systemically marginalized and historically underserved students are not applying, why is that the case? Or, if students who applied via this pathway are unsuccessful in their subsequent years of study after admission, earlier stages of Kotter's (2012) change model may need to be revisited via PDCA (Pietrzak & Paliszkiewics, 2015).

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Next Steps and Future Considerations

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Making emancipatory change to admission policies that impact MU's culture is going to be difficult. As discussed throughout this OIP, there have been significant structural shifts that align MU with the president's EDI vision, from the hiring of key positions to creating new Senate programs and policies. There is also significant momentum across the Canadian postsecondary sector to review current admission policies in order to better serve systemically

marginalized and historically underserved students. The timing is optimal to begin this change process at MU, but it will not come without its challenges.

Implementing an EDI change vision is neither straightforward nor easy. First, the change vision and its foundations must be strong, with senior leadership support, dedicated infrastructure, and a clear framework. In addition, equity-deserving students, staff, and faculty must be safely included in the consultation and implementation process; their emotional labour to support this work must be acknowledged and addressed. There are many opportunities to fail; therefore, the process must be intentional and consider the entire institution. A president who proclaims a vision for EDI is simply not enough to shift an institution steeped in systems of power and privilege that have existed for hundreds of years.

Chapter 3 focused on the change implementation; however, a number of steps are needed to get to this starting point. My supervisor, the registrar, is aware of my OIP and supportive of me operationalizing it upon its completion. My first step is to draft a high-level project plan to create the sense of urgency. As mentioned earlier, this plan has been approved by the vice provost, students; therefore, with this project plan in hand, I will meet with them to discuss how the EDI director's involvement is essential to the success of this initiative. Once the director's participation is confirmed, I will work with the current secretary to Senate (the registrar) to connect with potential faculty Senator candidates for the guiding coalitions. Representation matters in the selection of guiding coalition members, therefore, the EDI director and I will work closely on determining faculty Senator participation. Once the governance team is in place, the EDI director and I will develop plans for the consultations, including draft questions, and confirm strategy and project management team members. The next important step is connecting with the chair of Senate.

As discussed earlier, a critical group to engage is Senate, and connecting with the president, chair of Senate, is an essential first step in gaining this support. To do so, I will work with the registrar, who meets regularly with the chair. Once the chair confirms their level of support, I will connect with the provost, who chairs SCOA, to bring the project plan before that Senate subcommittee. With SCOA and the president on board, conversations with staff in the NSEO and our high school community will occur, alerting them of this change plan. From there, the implementation plan can begin to be rolled out.

Many future considerations impact both MU and the Canadian postsecondary sector. In terms of MU, the most significant impact is learning how a policy consultation that centres the voices, truths, and counternarratives of systemically marginalized and historically underserved students is received. Through this process, I am sure to encounter much feedback about using CWT and antioppression frameworks and will see where resistance to EDI-focused change resides. An additional consideration for MU is the impact of admission changes to current students; many EDI initiatives intended to make institution-wide change end up being isolated tactics that lose momentum upon implementation (Williams, 2013). I can change admission policies to admit a more inclusive group of students, but how will MU then support them as current students? Is MU prepared to put supports in place to ensure equity-deserving students feel supported and safe? Admission changes should always consider impacts to student retention.

For the Canadian higher education sector, this OIP can serve as a framework for how to approach admission policy change by stepping outside of colonial approaches. My hope is that my OIP provides a starting point to conversations in ROs across Canada about engaging in admission policy reviews that centre the counternarratives of systemically marginalized and historically underserved students.

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Appendix A: Kotter's Eight-Stage Change Model Applied to the PoP

Stages	Description	Timeline
Stage 1: Create a sense of urgency	Create a broadly embraced sense of urgency around the PoP. Communicate widely using a functionalist approach. Rely on key messages in the KMP.	Year 1 January
Stage 2: Build guiding coalition(s)	Target individuals from the strategy team, governance team, and project management team.	February
Stage 3: Form a vision for change	Create draft policy through consultation, review, and inquiry with stakeholders (leading up to SCOA meeting in December). Engage in PDCA inquiry cycle throughout this stage.	March to November
Stage 4: Communicate the vision	Obtain Senate approval in January, Year 2. Begin rollout of KMP.	Year 2 January
Stage 5: Enable employees and remove obstacles	Maintain continuous communication of vision with and from coalition members to stakeholders. Provide EDI education and training (can begin in Year 1). Connect with those questioning the direction or vision.	January to June
Stage 6: Generate short-term wins	Generate wins from student enrolment changes that do not require Senate approval and can be updated quickly. For example: • Review policy artifacts (websites, publications) and update language to reflect new policy. • Have project management team determine small tweaks that have a large impact. • Publish quick wins on project website and share at committee meetings.	Ongoing

Stages	Description	Timeline
Stage 7: Consolidate improvements	Continue to focus on maintaining clarity of shared purpose and keeping urgency levels up. Project team continues to lead and manage projects. Shift to long-term policy implementation with governance team.	Ongoing
Stage 8: Anchor the change	Anchor the change using the KMP and the monitoring and evaluation plan.	3–5 years postpolicy

Note. KMP = knowledge mobilization plan. Adapted from *Leading Change*, by J. P. Kotter, 2012. Copyright 2012 by Harvard Business Review Press.

Appendix B: Knowledge Mobilization Plan

| Stage | Target audiences | Messenger | Knowledge transfer and communications infrastructure | | Evaluation |
			Formal	Informal	
1	Executive leadership (registrar, provost, president); Senate; RO/NSEO staff; current MU students; high school community	Governance team; strategy team	Internal Student Services website; email newsletter updates; attendance at Senate subcommittees; meetings with high school counsellor roundtable; information sessions	Updates and conversations held by members of coalitions	Evaluation questions (Chapter 3); Headline questions (Chapter 3)
2	RO/NSEO staff; high school counsellors; prospective MU students	Project team	Email newsletter updates; meetings with high school counsellors; student recruitment presentations and events; admission website updated; one-page handout summarizing new policy; viewbook highlighting change	Updates and conversations held by members of coalitions	Evaluation questions (Chapter 3); Headline questions (Chapter 3)

Note. Each stage has five key messages: (a) MU admission pathways have not been reviewed in 27 years; (b) Enhancing inclusion for equity-deserving students is a presidential priority; (c) Canadian demographics are shifting, and MU should anticipate more students applying from diverse backgrounds; (d) systemically marginalized and historically underserved students are centred in the admission policy review process; and (e) change that benefits one student benefits all students. The key messages, target audiences, messenger, and knowledge transfer relate to

Stages 4 and 5 of Kotter's (2012) model: Communicate the vision and enable employees and

remove obstacles, respectively. Evaluation relates to Stage 8 of Kotter's model: Anchor the

change. Adapted from Leading Change, by J. P. Kotter, 2012. Copyright 2012 by Harvard

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