

Report from the Ad Hoc Work Group to Review Equity Mentorship Program [MAC 202-20]

The MAC 202-20 Ad Hoc Work Group was tasked by AMPA 2020 to review the Equity Mentorship initiative and provide a report to AMPA 2021. The Members of the Ad Hoc Work Group were:

Jen Hare, TBU D17
Richardo Harvey, PSSP D12
Nicole McLister, PSSP D11
Shannon Smith, TBU D22
Irene Taylor, ESS D9
Michelle Teixeira, TBU D12
Jennifer Speiran, TBU D16
Karen Littlewood, Provincial Executive Liaison
Rosemary Judd-Archer, Secretariat
Jenny Chen, Secretariat

The following is a report that provides a description of the pilot program, review, and recommendations.

Introduction

In 2015, OSSTF/FEESO conducted a Member Participation Survey regarding to barriers to participation. Survey results identified that the further an OSSTF/FEESO leadership role is from the worksite, the less likely members from an equity-seeking group would fill those roles. The survey also found that 70% of our members self-identified as women, racialized persons, First Nations, Metis, Inuit persons (FNMI), LGBTQ2SI persons or persons with a disability. Of those, 13% also identified as belonging to more than one group. In light of these findings, a formal mentorship program for members of equity-seeking groups was recommended as a positive development to making our Federation more inclusive. Addressing barriers to leadership opportunities was determined to be a necessary initiative for OSSTF/FEESO as we worked to create a union that represents the make-up of our membership. It was determined that barriers to leadership can be systemic or attitudinal. Making this long-term investment in our equity-seeking members through leadership development has been an important and essential step for our union. We have always dedicated a great deal of resources to increase member engagement in OSSTF/FEESO. It is important to ensure that the insights and lived experiences of members of equity-seeking groups are included.

In 2016, delegates at the Annual Meeting of the Provincial Assembly (AMPA) approved the development of a formal, intensive mentorship program for members from equity-seeking groups and to identify resources that were needed to promote engagement and the presentation of a [report](#) with recommendations to AMPA 2017. A budget of \$125,000 was allocated to support the entire 3-year pilot project. This three-year pilot program supported members of equity seeking groups (i.e. women members, racialized members, members with a disability, LGBTQ2SI members, First Nations, Métis, Inuit (FNMI) members, as well as francophone members) who were interested in further developing their leadership involvement in the Federation. Due to the many challenges associated with a lengthy central agreement negotiation with the provincial government and then followed by the COVID-19 pandemic, AMPA 2020 approved an extension for the Equity Mentorship pilot program by an additional year. The budget allocation for the four years is as outlined in the chart below.

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|------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 2017-2018 | 8 Mentors | \$ 16,000.00 |
| | Resources & promotion | \$ 5,000.00 |
| | Total Year 1 | \$ 21,000.00 |

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|---------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| 2018-2019 | 8 Mentors | \$ 16,000.00 |
| | 15 Mentees | \$ 28,000.00 |
| | Resources | \$ 8,000.00 |
| | Total Year 2 | \$ 52,000.00 |
| 2019-2020 | 8 Mentors | \$ 16,000.00 |
| | 15 Mentees | \$ 28,000.00 |
| | Resources | \$ 8,000.00 |
| | Total Year 3 | \$ 52,000.00 |
| 2020-2021 | 8 Mentors | \$ 16,000.00 |
| | 15 Mentees | \$ 28,000.00 |
| | Resources | \$ 8,000.00 |
| | Total Year 4 | \$ 52,000.00 |
| Total Budget for pilot program | | \$177,000 |

Pilot program

2017-2018

Mentor application*, selection* and mentor training

- Application process and approval for Level 1 mentee candidates
- Content/curriculum development with Mentors

The major focus in the year's work was the launch of the inaugural OSSTF/FEESO Equity Mentorship Program. Fifteen members, representative of self-identified equity seeking groups, were selected based on an application process. Over the course of the pilot program, four participants left the program due to a variety of reasons.

Candidates of this program worked with a pool of resource mentors to gain:

- networking opportunities
- the ability to develop an action plan for leadership
- tips for goal setting
- tips for skills building
- access to OSSTF/FEESO leaders and staff
- the ability to adapt to leadership challenges

In the 2020-2021 Federation year, the following members remained in the program as mentees:

- Sherry-Ann Bowen-Gordon PSSP D16
- Deborah Buchanan-Walford TBU D12
- Angelique Cimankinda Kanku Unit 66 D33
- Christine Goudreau Unit 61 D31
- Jen Hare TBU D17
- Richardo Harvey PSSP D12
- Cheryl Lampkin ESSP/ECE D18
- Nicole McLister PSSP D11
- Carol Pinnock TBU D24
- Matthew Schroeder TBU D24
- Jennifer Speiran T/OT D16
- Solange Scott PSSP D12

The mentors who have remained in the program are:

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- Blair Vowles TBU D16
 - Danica Izzard TBU D12
 - Irene Taylor ESS D9
 - Michelle Teixeira TBU D12
 - Shannon Smith T/OT D22
 - Susan Rab OTBU D25

2018-2019

First meeting at Provincial Office

At the inaugural meeting of the Equity Mentorship Program, staff and mentors conducted orientation for mentees by providing:

- an overview of the mentorship program
- tour of provincial office
- Introduction to organizational structure and leadership pathway options

Mentors took the lead with program curriculum in small group guided discussions based on the following curriculum documents: i) Roles and Responsibilities of Mentors and Mentees, ii) The Initial Mentoring Meeting, iii) Planning the Mentoring Relationship Worksheet, as well as iv) Mentee Leadership Plan for Success. As well, mentors and mentees had an opportunity to spend an hour with the four Directors. In addition to learning about the services provided by each department, there was also an opportunity to hear about their individual journeys and pathways to provincial office.

Second meeting with Provincial Committees/Councils

The second meeting offered mentees the opportunity to visit one of our Provincial Standing Committees. The Communications and Political Action Committee, the Educational Services Committee, and the Protective Services Committee all welcomed mentors and mentees and offered a glimpse of the leadership opportunities involvement in these groups can offer.

In between meetings, mentors and mentees continued to connect with each other via telephone/video conference calls so that mentors can offer enrichment support and tutorials that are based on the mentees' individual skills and interests. In addition, local leadership connections were discussed to support the mentees to increase their involvement in their District and Bargaining Unit. As well, staff from provincial office facilitated training with two workshops – Managing Conflict, Meeting Expectations: All in Favour? – that were tailored for the mentorship program.

Third meeting at April Provincial Council

- Thursday evening orientation - Sector Councils and PC
- Review procedure
- Review agenda, reports etc.
- Attend PC on Friday morning
- Lunch with mentees and provincial councillors

2019-2020

First meeting at Summer Leadership in August

- Orientation of Level 2 program conducted by mentors and staff
- Mentees developed personal leadership profile and plan with assistance from their mentor
- Attended selected leadership workshops

Second meeting at AMPA in March

- Mentees reviewed personal leadership profile and plan
- Guest status at AMPA
- Pre-AMPA conference call
- AMPA Orientation – volumes, procedures, cards, motions
- Attended equity caucuses
- Continued mentee training from last meeting

Third meeting at Provincial Office in May

- Mentees reviewed personal leadership profile and plan

Review of the Equity Mentorship Pilot Program 2017-2021

As a first of its kind, the OSSTF/FEESO Equity Mentorship Program provided opportunities for members belonging to marginalized groups to increase their participation within Federation. There are a number of compelling examples in the various ways this group of mentees progressed in their individual journey to increase their leadership roles, both at the local and provincial level within the union. Examples of these successes include running for bargaining unit executive positions, appointments to provincial committees/councils/work groups, AMPA news team, and writing for the OSSTF/FEESO Education Forum magazine.

Members of this mentorship program believe that this type of program is necessary. By increasing access and breaking down some of the systemic barriers to participation for those groups that have been historically marginalized, OSSTF/FEESO can aspire to having Members from marginalized groups take on leadership roles at all levels of Federation.

Yet, in retrospect, the Equity Mentorship Program was found to be far from perfect. Overall, the scope of the program was ambitious. First, the program needed to have a narrower focus to allow applicants the ability to connect their own personal goals and aspirations to the program. Second, this program is not meant to be an introduction to OSSTF/FEESO. Third, the union, through this program did not have an identifiable strategy to increase representation of marginalized groups in leadership roles.

To improve the program, the mentees and mentors brainstormed the following suggestions:

- Increase time available for mentees and mentors
- Time available for mentors at the beginning of the program to know their role
- Training for the mentors about mentoring; provides an added value who apply to be mentors
- Clear expectations set up for mentees/mentors (e.g. what happens when someone can't attend a meeting)
- Front load mentee/mentor time to build relationship; bigger chunk of time at the beginning of the program
- Mentees should be selected before mentors are selected

- Facilitated discussions re: barriers to participation to leadership roles in the union; what actions can we take? What solutions are available?
- Be purposeful about the Equity Mentorship Program; actively identify the issues and address the systemic barriers
- Connecting mentors/mentees take time; when meeting, having 1.5 days or 2 days allows for time and space to form connections
- 3-5 phone/video individual sessions; allow for flexibility
- “share the wealth”; having small breakouts so that you have access to more mentors and their areas of expertise
- Have a menu of options available to mentees when attending leadership opportunities; not everyone needs to attend the same event
- Variety of communication formats: phone conversations, telephone town halls, virtual meetings
- Mentees want to know more about OSSTF/FEESO opportunities
- How could we have pathways from one mentor to another (e.g. primary pairing and secondary pairing)
- Build a program that is responsive to the needs of the mentees
- Have a “pool of mentors”; may not be assigned to a mentee right away
- Have regular check in with staff assigned to the program
- When attending events, provide more structure to have contact between mentors/mentees or with staff; avoid attaching a formal group meeting to an event
- Provide more time and space for conversations to occur between mentee/mentors
- Advertise the program widely; whose voices are missing? How can we increase representation?
- Provide option to build local leadership connection; could be with another district
- How do we keep the program “front of mind” within Federation and not let it be tokenism (e.g. provide structured roles to lead an equity caucus meeting)
- Provide regular updates about the program at Provincial Council, committees, PE reports to districts and bargaining units, Update, Education Forum, social media
- Cannot simply become photo opportunities for the union
- Attending leadership opportunities should not be too early in the program; could happen in the second year
- Attending events is important; push to the second year so that we are more intentional about the conversation between mentor and mentee; to include any other parties involved (e.g. the Speaker at Provincial Council)
- Allow flexibility when attending events
- “your goals are your own”; not place limits on what the goals might be

Recommendation for the Equity Mentorship Program 2021-2024

Upon review, the MAC 202-20 Ad Hoc Work Group recommends that the Equity Mentorship Program continue with a two-year structure. Ideally, funding for this program would be allocated to have twelve mentees and six mentors.

Timelines & Budget

2021

- Work group made up of current mentors/mentees to work with staff to create the course content for the next group – **early spring**
- Advertising and Promotion – **mid spring**
- Selection of mentees – **mid spring**
- Advertising and promotion (mentors) – **June**

- Selection of mentors – **early fall**

Year 1 (2021-2022)

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|---|------------------------|-----------------|
| Leadership coaching course for mentors – 2 days | 6 mentors @ \$635 x 2 | \$7,620 |
| 3 days of course work for mentees with mentors | 6 mentors @ \$635 x 3 | \$11,430 |
| | 12 mentees @ \$635 x 3 | \$22,860 |
| 3 days of mentee/mentor sessions | 6 @ \$635 x 3 | \$11,430 |
| | 12 mentees @ \$635 x 3 | \$22,860 |
| Resources | 18 @ \$500 | \$9,000 |
| Total budget for Year 1 | | \$85,200 |

Year 2 (2022-2023)

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|---|------------------------|-----------------|
| 2 days of course work for mentees/mentors | 6 mentors @ \$635 x 2 | \$7,620 |
| | 12 mentees @ \$635 x 2 | \$15,240 |
| 3 days of mentee/mentor sessions | 6 mentors @ \$635 x 3 | \$11,430 |
| | 12 mentees @ \$635 x 3 | \$22,860 |
| 2 funded leadership opportunities (e.g. conference, committee/council meeting, Provincial Council, Leadership conference, AMPA) | 6 @ \$975 x 2 | \$11,700 |
| | 12 @ \$635 x 2 | \$15,240 |
| Resources | 18 @ \$500 | \$9,000 |
| Total budget for Year 2 | | \$93,090 |