



# **QCLS 2020 EDII Report**

*Working Document & Proposal*

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## **Table of Contents**

1. Introduction
2. Executive statement
  - 2.1. Statement copy
  - 2.2. Communication Channels
3. Short-term plan
  - 3.1. Objective 1: Increase executive awareness, education & engagement on EDII topics
  - 3.2. Objective 2: Conduct internal audit
  - 3.3. Objective 3: Implement EDII in our conference
4. Medium-term plan
  - 4.1. Objective 1: Reform hiring practices
  - 4.2. Objective 2: Implement mandatory EDII training
5. Long-term plan
  - 5.1. Objective: Continuously work to improve ourselves and our impact on the Smith Commerce Community



# INTRODUCTION

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This proposal will outline the objectives and actions that the Queen's Commerce Leadership Summit intends to execute in the short, medium and long term.

This process is not one that we took lightly, and is a result of the discrimination and lack of equity of the program that was brought to light in the summer of 2020. Like many others, we are in shock about the perpetual abuse that so many individuals at Smith experience throughout their time in the Commerce program. We would like to thank those individuals that had the courage to come forward and share their experiences with the world.

To prepare this document, we deliberately took the time to educate ourselves and learn more about our role in perpetuating these issues but also the opportunity we have to ignite change. This includes engaging in difficult and thoughtful conversations to critically analyze our current state and propose more inclusive alternatives.

In accordance with the Smith Commerce Society EDII review plan, we are determined to be disruptive in this space, embodying our core values of being relentlessly curious, community driven, encouraging authenticity and intentionally balanced.

Please see below a call out of the Smith Commerce Society goals that we wish to deliver on:

1. Executive Mandate & Vision
  - ❖ Strong I&D strategy with measurable metrics, I&D is integrated into executive mandate and vision
  - ❖ Governance structures indicate I&D is actively reviewed for progress and opportunities for growth
2. Leadership & Culture
  - ❖ Leaders visibly and enthusiastically support I&D
  - ❖ Leaders create I&D initiatives to contribute positively to an inclusive society and drive engagement by doing so
  - ❖ Executive consistently support and drive I&D strategy
3. Talent Management
  - ❖ Talent processes are anchored by inclusive leadership principles and behaviours
  - ❖ Inclusive leadership is embedded in the organization
  - ❖ Continuous I&D-centric training opportunities, programs are funded and drive strategy
  - ❖ I&D metrics embedded into all roles



- ❖ Bias is consistently mitigated in talent decisions, abiding by ComSoc mandated equitable hiring processes
4. Brand & Reputation
    - ❖ I&D communication is frequent and contributes to reputation
    - ❖ I&D is fully embedded in brand strategy, and aligns with I&D ComSoc strategy
    - ❖ Media coverage is positive
  5. Initiatives (Mandate Delivery)
    - ❖ Integration of EDII projects and initiatives
    - ❖ Executive actively seeks opportunities to incorporate new and innovative projects and initiatives
    - ❖ Every executive action is reviewed from an equity perspective

Our intention is to be a part of the change that will turn this program around for the better. We would like to emphasize that we are still learning but are absolutely willing to develop and grow. Please consider this proposal as a working document with room for recommendations. We welcome all and any feedback as we seek to not only support, but champion this cause and strive for a better future for all.



## EXECUTIVE STATEMENT

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### Statement Copy

The Queen's Commerce Leadership Summit stands in solidarity with the QTBIPOC community. Please consider this statement as formal confirmation of our zero-tolerance policy for discrimination, sexual harassment, and violence of any kind.

We recognize that we were delayed in our public stance of this issue. We take full responsibility and apologize for the ignorance that this lack of action suggests. However, we would like to inform you that this decision was with the intent of being deliberate and confident with our response. From the beginning of this transformation, we have implemented a series of actions that are outlined in our 2020 EDII report. To that end, it was important to us and our team to openly discuss and challenge our current practices together before coming forward. The reason for this being that we did not want to virtue signal and dismiss without any tangible action plan for long-term impact. We are proud of our executive team's full participation in this conversation and ability to take responsibility, recognize privilege, and willingness to learn and grow.

We look to our peers and would like to recognize the Queen's Women in Leadership team for their constant amplification of @stolenbysmith and public support for change. It is organizations like this that have put pressure on the community to reflect and inspire others to learn and do better. We would also like to formally thank Kelly Weiling Zou for her labour, as well as the students, alumni, faculty and staff for coming forward with their lived experiences. Our goal is to be a force of positive disruption, just like them and alongside the rest of the Smith Commerce Society.

This pivotal point in time will require relentless commitment on behalf of us and our peers to be better. We want this statement to go beyond a simple acknowledgement of the racism, sexual harassment, and discrimination that Smith School of Business and Queen's Commerce Leadership Summit has perpetuated in past. Likewise, this statement is not only about complying with the guidelines given by the Smith Commerce Society. This statement is to hold the Queen's Commerce Leadership Summit, as a collective and as individual team members, accountable for our actions of the past, the present and the future. It is about taking tangible action to ensure that we are better in the future and are a force for positive change in our program.

### Communication Channels

- ❖ Statement to be posted on the Queen's Business Review
- ❖ QCLS EDII Action Plan to be uploaded to our website
- ❖ Statement to be reiterated at our conference and made clear to our corporate partners



## SHORT-TERM PLAN

*Note: timeframe defined as present-September 31, 2020 in conjunction with our conference schedule, being September 25/26.*

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### **OBJECTIVE 1:** *Increase executive awareness, education, and engagement on EDII topics*

**Purpose:** To promote discussion and reflection with our executive team regarding QCLS's role in perpetuating a negative Commerce culture, how we can do better, and personal feelings toward the matter. Upon discussion, focusing on learning and improving our knowledge of social issues for the entire executive team. Want to encourage team growth and learning, and facilitate and promote ongoing conversations.

#### **Actions:**

##### *1. Executive Team Town Hall Discussion*

Our executive team held a roundtable discussion where we discussed making a statement about the Stolen by Smith platform and decided as a team that we wanted to take action rather than simply post a performative action statement. In addition, we talked about our executive in general, to see if there are any problems that currently lie within the executive team and our community. We also discussed the broader Commerce culture and how we (as a ComSoc committee) could be a force of positive change by acknowledging our complacency and taking action.

*Leadership & Culture  
Marked: Completed, July 16th*

##### *2. Individual One-on-One Conversations*

The two Co-chairs met up with every single executive member on a one-on-one basis. In doing so, we provided a space where the Co-chairs could hear opinions, thoughts, and feelings in a safe and confidential environment. The conversations started with a debrief of the town hall conversation, followed by welcoming any ideas on how to improve as an executive. As a result, the Co-chairs took the feedback to further improve our Diversity and Inclusion mandate and inform how we conduct ourselves moving forward.

*Talent Management  
Marked: Completed, week of July 20th*

##### *3. Portfolio Meetings*

Co-chairs provided directors with questions to ask their coordinators in meetings (each portfolio ranges from 2-4 people). Questions regarding our town hall discussion, feelings about QCLS complacency, and how we could move forward by taking action. The hope being that small group conversations with peers would create an opportunity for executive team members to share without fear of judgement or repercussions. In a large group, we recognize that people might feel apprehensive and eliminate any barriers to speaking up in front of superiors.

*Executive Mandate & Vision*



*Marked: Completed, week of July 20th*

4. *Update Executive of Common Themes, New Ideas*

Consistent updates during our weekly virtual meetings. Summarize key points and themes during our one-on-one conversations and new initiatives moving forward. This includes circling back to our conversations, asking if anything has changed, and staying informed on current events and best practices.

*Executive Mandate & Vision  
Marked: In-Progress, weekly*

5. *Learning Conversation Led by Kate Rowbotham*

Invited Professor Kate Rowbotham to come and discuss Diversity and Inclusion to the executive team via a Zoom call. Our expectation is that expert opinion and academic support will enforce the urgency and need for such education. We would like to level-set our executive on these issues, and learn how to be a better ally and role-model.

*Leadership & Culture  
Marked: Week of August 17th*

6. *Optional: book club activity for individual learning*

The implementation of an optional book club. Assigned novel was “The Skin We’re In: a Year of Black Resistance and Power” by Desmond Cole. Book was given as a resource to help executive members become more knowledgeable of the experiences as a black person and Canada and to learn about the history of racism in Canada. Desmond Cole is from Toronto and a Queen’s Alumni allowing his stories to be applicable to the environment we find ourselves in. After a month’s time, the executive team will have a round table discussion of the book and what they learned.

*Talent Management & Leadership & Culture  
Marked: In-Progress, assigned July 20th*

**Key performance indicators:**

1. *% of executive buy-in regarding learning conversations and sharing insights to inform our plan moving forward*
  - ❖ Needs improvement defined as < 75% engagement (buy-in from less than 15 members)
  - ❖ Satisfactory defined as 75% (buy-in from 15/20 executive team members)
  - ❖ Success defined as 100% (buy-in from all 20 executive team members)
2. *Action-oriented outcomes from these learning initiatives*
  - ❖ Valuable insights given to inform executive next-steps
  - ❖ Receive honest feedback that is critical of our current and/or past actions

**Evaluation date:** September 31, 2020



## **OBJECTIVE 2:** *Internal audit conducted by Co-Chairs*

**Purpose:** To investigate current and past QCLS landscape. Looking at how we as an executive team have perpetuated a toxic culture within the Commerce community, and assess how our internal culture could have isolated or excluded certain team members. Gather feedback on how we as a team and conference can improve and take tangible actions for the medium and long term.

### **Actions:**

#### *1. Hiring, Organizational and Conference Assessment*

Kathryn and Jacqueline to review our hiring practices, organizational priorities, choices of our business partners (both sponsorship and speaking engagements), and events of the past 3-5 years. Taking a holistic view of our internal executive team culture, what we portray to the commerce community, and the role of our conference.

- ❖ **Hiring Practices:** looking at what our hiring practices were like in the past. What type of person do we attract to our team and why that occurs? What type of questions do we ask prospective candidates? Do our questions isolate a particular demographic of a person? Do we place any barriers or have unconscious biases that can be eliminated or mitigated during our hiring cycle?
- ❖ **Organizational Priorities:** What is our executive team mandate? What do we look to accomplish over the year? How can we as a team create a diversity and inclusion lens in our mandate?
- ❖ **Conference Partners:** What type of firms do we look to participate in our conference? Who are the reps that they send, are they inclusive to all of our delegates or do they pay more attention to one specific type of person? Who are the speakers we bring to the conference? Do they represent exclusivity or had a past that would be harmful to our delegates? Do they represent a company of good ethical standards?
- ❖ **Delegates:** Do we impose any significant barriers of entry for our delegates and how can we mitigate that in the future? Where and how do we promote our conference, does it promote equal opportunity?

*Talent Management & Brand & Reputation  
Marked: In-Progress*

#### *2. Anonymous Feedback Form*

An anonymous feedback form was created and distributed to our entire executive team to respond to. Only the co-chairs have access to the anonymous feedback that has been given by the executive team in order to ensure our team members feel as secure as possible answering questions in a transparent way. The survey was made to gain insights into our current executive's experience(s). A summary and conclusion will be drawn from the insights discovered. The survey can be found [here](#).

*Talent Management  
Marked: In-Progress, distributed July 20th*





3. *Summary of Findings and Educated Recommendations*

Create a series of recommendations for incoming Co-Chairs based on our research and findings. Focused on hiring practices, conference recommendations, and internal culture.

*Initiatives (Mandate Delivery)*

*Marked: In-Progress*

4. *Anonymous Feedback and Concern Form*

A Google Form run by our Relationship and Culture Coordinator that will act as a “hotline” for executive members to voice any concerns they may have throughout the year. If there is anything alarming or exclusive going on internally, they can share it in an anonymous fashion. It will be handled by a portfolio separate from the co-chairs to prohibit any ramifications. This form will be open during the whole year and will be checked periodically.

*Initiatives (Mandate Delivery)*

*Marked: In-Progress*

**Key performance indicators:**

1. *Comprehensive audit in every aspect of our conference and executive operations*

- ❖ Evident improvement and change to each component, not just one element (ex. hiring).

2. *Content of continuous anonymous feedback and concern form*

- ❖ Are we receiving the same type of anonymous concerns or are they being solved when they were brought to attention the first time?
- ❖ The repetition of concerns will indicate that we are not handling them in a correct fashion and risk isolating executive members.

**Evaluation date:** September 31, 2020

**OBJECTIVE 3:** *Implement diversity and inclusion in our conference*

**Purpose:** To incorporate diversity and inclusion into our clubs mandate through implementing actions not only internally but externally during our conference. To be completed in all facets of our conference from delegates, to speakers and sponsorship. By incorporating EDII in our conference, we can create a more inclusive environment where all Commerce students can thrive and learn.

**Actions:**

1. *Diversity in Representation*

Diverse Partners and Speakers: For our online conference this September, we have sought to bring both gender and ethnic diversity to emulate a diverse range of voices and perspectives. As of right now, four of our eight speakers are from the QTBIPOC community. In addition, three of our four keynotes are women while two of the three panelists are men. We strive to have diversity in our speakers as it allows for a range of perspectives. Likewise, we have attempted to have sponsors



from a range of industries including banking, insurance, restaurant/food, consulting, entertainment, entrepreneurship, telecom, and healthcare.

- ❖ **Attract a Diverse Delegate Pool:** Ensure that we are attracting delegates from all different backgrounds (race, socioeconomic, gender) in the Commerce programs from all four years. Surpassing the barrier of Smith Commerce by being open to all faculties at Queen's. Having brand ambassadors that recruit delegates from business schools across Canada. Ie. McMaster, Ivey, McGill.
- ❖ **Speakers & Partners that Prioritize EDII:** Seeking speakers and sponsorship partnerships from firms/leaders who prioritize EDII in their day-to-day personal and professional life. We have done this through one of our keynotes, Kristine Remedios, who is the Chief Inclusion and Social Impact Officer and former Director of Diversity and Inclusion at KPMG Canada. Another keynote being Sandy McIntosh, Executive VP, People & Culture and CHRO at TELUS Communications Inc..

*Initiatives (Mandate Delivery)*

*Marked: On-going*

## 2. *Operate Respectfully and Curate an Inclusive Environment*

- ❖ **Use of Pronouns:** All executive members will use their pronouns in public-facing name cards on the platform (ie. Zoom, All-in-the-Loop, etc.) and highly encourage delegates and partners to do the same. We look to make this a standardized practice at all times for the QCLS executive and normalize the use of pronouns.
- ❖ **Acknowledgment of EDII Action Plan During the Conference:** During the opening ceremonies of our September 2020 conference, the Co-Chairs will issue a formal acknowledgment of our diversity and inclusion action plan. State how we look to foster an open and inclusive environment.
- ❖ **Conduct a Land Acknowledgment:** Every morning of our September 2020 conference, we will conduct a Land Acknowledgement of our use and benign situated on the Anishinaabe (Ah-nish-in-ah-bay) and Haudenosaunee (Ho-den-o-show-nee) territory.

*Leadership and Culture*

*Marked: pending*

## 3. *Improve Student Social Mobility (increase accessibility)*

- ❖ **Remove Financial Barrier:** For this year's conference, our team has removed the traditionally \$150.00 fee, to a \$0.00 fee. We are going to be requiring a minimum \$10.00 donation to a charity that supports social initiatives for the BIPOC community. This fee is not to isolate individuals, but rather to hold them accountable to attending the conference.
- ❖ **Eliminated Geographical Barrier:** Through our online conference, delegates can attend from any location across Canada regardless of being in Kingston.

*Initiatives (Mandate delivery)*

*Marked: pending*



## **Key performance indicators:**

1. *Every delegate, executive member and corporate partner felt included at all times in our conference*
  - ❖ Create a feedback form to learn about success of conference from external perspectives
  - ❖ Proportion of comments that we have attempted to mitigate but failed to address properly
  - ❖ Success is defined as all elements of our conference (ie. each activity and each interaction between delegate-executive member-sponsor/speaker) is respectful and inclusive
  - ❖ Satisfactory would be defined as having it present and a priority through some elements, but not all (ex. If keynote, panel and delegates highlight need for EDII but sponsors do not)
  
2. *Demographics of our delegates changed (to become more diverse) as a result of improved social mobility*
  - ❖ Is it apparent that we are not only inviting diverse individuals to our conference, but that they are showing up and feel included throughout the events?
  
3. *Number of reach outs to external executive teams to attend conferences.*
  - ❖ We recognize that often our marketing does not reach all people in the Commerce Society or people may feel hesitant to attend the conference.
  - ❖ By reaching out to various multicultural associations we can ensure everyone feels welcome at our conference. For example, reaching out to Queen's Global China Connection and Smith Black Business.
  
4. *Target to have a 50% representation between BIPOC and female speakers.*
  - ❖ We acknowledge that diversity quotas can have negative effects, however, by setting guidelines for ourselves we can ensure that we are intentional with our diversity and inclusion at all levels.
  - ❖ This allows our delegate pool to hear from a variety of perspectives in the business world and identify with a leader who aligns with their experiences.

**Evaluation date:** September 31, 2020



## **MEDIUM-TERM PLAN**

*Note: time frame defined as October-November, 2020 in conjunction with the hiring of the incoming Co-Chairs and 2021 Executive Team*

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### **OBJECTIVE 1: Reform Hiring Practices**

**Purpose:** To reform our current hiring practices through our recruitment, interview, and executive relationship standpoint. To ensure that all executive members feel included and valued throughout the entire hiring process. Providing equitable practices that recognize implicit biases and different leadership experiences.

#### **Actions:**

1. *Refurbish Hiring Questions*

Current co-chairs looking deeply at our hiring documents and questions. Evaluating which questions potentially isolate certain applicants. Making questions more inclusive of different experiences regardless of socioeconomic status. For example, not holding certain experiences as more valuable than others. In addition, creating a framework that forces co-chairs to look at their implicit biases towards applicants who are most similar to themselves.

*Talent  
Management  
Marked: pending*

2. *Maintain Culture Coordinator Roll*

This past year, the current co-chairs changed the “Socials Coordinator” position to “Relationship and Culture Coordinator”. We intend to keep this role moving forward. The purpose of this position is to ensure solid relationships among executive members. Their role is to ensure every person on the executive team feels included and valued on our executive team. They will be a point of contact for executive members who are feeling uncomfortable.

*Talent Management  
Marked: pending*

3. *EDII Integrated into Each Portfolio Role Description*

Each executive roll will integrate diversity and inclusion into their portfolio mandate. For example:

- ❖ Speakers Coordinator: looks for a variety of speakers from all different backgrounds.
- ❖ Sponsorship Coordinator: partnering with companies that integrate EDII initiatives into their corporate mandate, and ensure that reps attending the conference are from different backgrounds.
- ❖ Delegates Coordinator: looking for a wide range of delegates from all areas of the Commerce program, Queen’s and Canada.

*Executive Mandate and Vision*



*Marked: pending*

## **OBJECTIVE 2: Offer formal EDII Training**

**Purpose:** To continuously improve and educate ourselves. It is our firm opinion that the incoming Co-Chairs and Executive must maintain and evolve our current EDII understanding and plans.

### **Actions:**

1. *Mandatory EDII training within the first two months of hiring*

It is true that training alone is not going to eliminate the discrimination of individuals. However, it is our hope that reinforcement through formal education will reiterate the urgency and need for such action plans.

*Leadership and Culture*

*Marked: pending*

2. *Allocate x% of funds to EDII training resources*

In accordance with the training mentioned above, we would like to allocate funds to this initiative to ensure quality and accurate education occurs. In addition, we would like to extend this learning opportunity to the greater Smith community, not just internal to our executive team.

*Talent Management*

*Marked: pending*

### **Key performance indicators:**

1. *Percentage of applicants who do not previously know any team members.*

To alleviate any internal biases or perpetuation of the similar personalities and backgrounds being hired, we would look at the percentage of applicants who do not previously know any team members. This will show the reach we are getting across the Commerce Program beyond people from the same socioeconomic, demographic, or geographic background.

2. *Executive Member Retention Rate.*

We want to look at the retention rate of our executive members from year-to-year. We believe this is an indicator of whether or not our team members felt included and welcomed throughout the year. Similarly, it will demonstrate whether or not they felt supported by all levels of our team from a social and professional growth standpoint.

**Evaluation date:** November 30, 2020



## **LONG-TERM PLAN**

*Note: year over year evaluation. This is with the intention that the incoming Co-Chairs will continue with our proposal or implement their own short- and medium-term action plans. Given this, we consider this long term plan to still be a work in progress as we continue to reflect and learn.*

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**OBJECTIVE:** *Continuously work to improve ourselves and our impact on the Smith Commerce Community*

**Purpose:** To implement formal check-points to critically evaluate the success of current plans as well as evolve and develop EDII plans moving forward.

### **Actions:**

- 1. Measure and evaluate success and implementation of short- and medium-term plans to date*
- 2. Learn best practices from other committees*
- 3. Comply with the Smith Commerce Society's long-term goals*
- 4. Evolve short- and medium-term plans to be sustained in long-run*

### **Key performance indicators:**

1. Implementation of EDII requirement / criteria in Co-Chair hiring
2. Number of sharing opportunities and conversations with other executives
  - ❖ Did we meet with the Commerce Society to share our feedback and gain insights from them?
  - ❖ Did we meet with other External Committees (ie. Conferences)?
  - ❖ Did we meet with Internal Executives?
  - ❖ Did we meet with other Queen's Societies such as EngSoc and AMS for their learnings?
3. Do our actions align with the long-term goals of the Smith Commerce Society?

**Evaluation date:** March/April, 2021 and September, 2021

