

**EQUITY NOW FOR TODAY
AND TOMORROW:
TRANSFORMING
THE WRITERS' UNION OF CANADA**

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1. Introduction:

Given the recent controversy around the spring 2017 issue of **Write Magazine** it would be easy to interpret that episode as the trigger for TWUC to make the implementation of its 2015 Equity Policy a key issue at the 2017 AGM. However, TWUC's equity agenda for its 2017 AGM was firmly established months before that time as it had received funding to support the development of the action plans in this report and the process to develop such. As well, the Equity Task Force's report to TWUC 2017 annual meeting was completed well before the Spring Issue of **Write Magazine** was published¹, and the decision to move forward with an Equity Implementation Plan was rooted in the work that the Equity Task Force has been doing since 2013. Further, TWUC's Strategic Plan, adopted in 2015, also stressed the importance of this in identifying the diversification of membership as second-highest priority and asserting TWUC's leadership would:

*"...work with the Demographics Task Force (now Equity Task Force) to review and implement TWUC's Equity Policy including strategies to ensure TWUC leaders and representatives keep this policy in mind as part of all decision-making processes. (ongoing)."*²

And of course, the foundations for this were laid more than 15 years ago, as documented in the comprehensive and still highly relevant report submitted in 2001 by the Social Justice Task Force, which stated in its preamble:

*In this context, social justice work is not "special interest" work but is essential to the mandate of TWUC as a national voice of Canadian writers. As such it must inform every aspect of the organization's operation and activities.*³

While establishing policy and strategic goals are important foundations for an organization, it is essential that they be backed with concrete implementation plans so that good intentions result in transformative action, and that already adopted institutionalized commitments to equity are matched by measurable organizational change.

It is with this in mind that TWUC sought and obtained funding from Canada Council to engage an equity specialist to create an Equity Implementation Plan.⁴ As Executive Director John Degen put it:

*"He's taking all the discussion and policy work that we've done over the last three to four years on the issue, and figuring out how to make it real within our programs, within our leadership, how we make decisions."*⁵

¹ 2017 TWUC AGM Minutes (Document provided by TWUC. In draft version.)

² The Writers' TWUC of Canada. Writers Matter: 2015-2018 Strategic Plan, p.8.

³ 2001 Social Justice Task Force Final Report, submitted to the Writers' TWUC of Canada National Council. 1 September 2001. Henceforth cited as: SJFR 2001.

⁴ OnWords & AGM. 2017 Report, p. 47. Henceforth cited as: OnWords 2017.

<https://www.writersTWUC.ca/sites/all/files/attachments/2017AGMKitWeb-rev.pdf>

⁵ <http://www.quillandquire.com/omni/discussions-around-cultural-appropriation-and-equity-to-dominate-writers-TWUC-agm/>.

The process for developing the 2017 Equity Implementation Plan included:

- a review of TWUC's systems, policies, procedures and programs to identify existing barriers, challenges, and opportunities;
- focus groups and interviews with racialized and Indigenous writers who are not members of TWUC;
- development and implementation of a survey to gain TWUC member input about priorities for the action plans;
- two workshops and a presentation at TWUC's 2017 annual meeting; and
- ongoing consultation with TWUC's National Council, Equity Task Force and senior staff, including a specific meeting with the National Council to review the action plans.

The final plan:

- identifies priorities for actions in the short- and long term;
- provides a timeline of the sequence of processes and steps;
- suggests implementation strategies and tools;
- identifies available resources;
- identifies realistic and measurable outcomes; and
- provides measures to assess periodically and evaluate over time the impact of the action plans.

To ensure acceptance and support for these plans, it will be critical to clearly communicate to TWUC membership, staff, the literary community, funders and the public a set of directions to serve as a guide for managing the activities and tasks the Implementation Plan requires. These communications will cover:

- clearly defined strategic objectives;
- context of current government and arts council policy implementation;
- sequence of steps required;
- duration of each step/task;
- resources it requires;
- interconnections and interdependencies between steps/tasks; and
- instances where current roles and responsibilities may shift.

Such a communications plan will be all the more important since this has proven to be a contentious matter within TWUC's membership. Results of a recent survey have demonstrated a divergent understanding of the current terminology around the issue, as well as of the opportunities and benefits of implementing an equity policy.⁶

A sustainable undertaking of a transformative nature will not be completed in a year or two – the Implementation Plan is designed to provide a road map to guide TWUC through a multi-year initiative, with the goal to fully reflect, represent and support the diversity of Canadian writing and writers through its advocacy and professional services.

⁶ TWUC Equity Survey June – July 2017.

The actions included in these plans cover:

- hiring an Equity Coordinator
- raising public awareness about Indigenous, racialized and other historically marginalized writers
- assisting Indigenous, racialized and other historically marginalized writers access to grants, agents and publishing opportunities
- reviewing membership criteria
- ensuring diversity in TWUC leadership
- establishing an outreach component to ensure more diversity for the National Readings Program and Ontario Writers-In-The-Schools Program
- ensuring greater diversity and equity in Write Magazine
- ensuring a diversity component in TWUC's Manuscript Evaluation Service
- ensuring diversity on TWUC juries
- voluntary Self-Identification
- identifying items requiring AGM approval and/or By-law/constitutional changes
- Nurturing Support and dealing with Resistance

It has been 28 years since equity issues began to surface within TWUC and be addressed by statements and resolutions. However, relatively little has been *done* so far to ensure that the stated and member-adopted commitments to equity were translated into action. This adds a sense of urgency surrounding the implementation of these action plans.

Why? Because this is 2017. And because it has been 28 years.

2. Background – Equity Work in TWUC History

TWUC has a long history and a number of commitments to issues of social justice and equity, including a variety of policy statements and resolutions to address these issues. Despite these commitments and the organization's efforts (outlined below), TWUC's current membership does not reflect the diversity of writers in Canada and, as a result, the organization is eager to engage Indigenous, racialized and marginalized writers and to work with them to ensure TWUC is an organization that encompasses and supports *all* writers.

To signal this intention for organizational renewal and transformation, in 2015 TWUC members adopted a formal equity policy as an integral part of the organization's values and guiding principles and today this Equity Policy features prominently on TWUC's website. As part of this intent, TWUC created the Demographics Task Force (later renamed the Equity Task Force) to address issues of equity within TWUC and the Task Force developed the Equity Policy that is now part of TWUC's orientation for new board members, committees, task forces, and liaisons, and has played a pivotal role in TWUC's work over the past two years.

In addition, TWUC's Strategic Plan 2015-2018 identified increasing and diversifying TWUC's membership as its second priority. However, while policy and strategic goals are important foundations for an organization, it is essential that these are backed with

implementation strategies so that the organization's good intentions result in positive growth and change, and achieve the organization's goals. It is with this in mind that the Equity Task Force recommended TWUC seek funding to develop an Equity Implementation Plan.

Given this, and TWUC's previous Statement of Principle and By-Law #1, the intent and task is now to *implement* the policy and begin to close the gap between aspirations and achievements to date.

To pursue such an objective, TWUC has a wealth of research and materials that have been developed over its history to address issues of equity within and outside its membership. Much of this work can be credited to the work of the Racial Minority Writers' Conference and Social Justice Task Force in the 1990s. It can also be credited to the numerous members who continue to raise the issue of representation concerning Indigenous, racialized and other marginalized writers within TWUC and seek to raise the bar in terms of representation.

The reports of the Racial Minority Writers Committee as well as the Social Justice Task Force provide excellent background on TWUC's efforts and while these reports are, in some ways, dated in their recommendations (e.g. they were unable to take into account the communication technology that is now at our disposal) they provide an excellent jumping off point for conversation and dialogue today. They also show the willingness, and in some cases, the areas of resistance within the membership.

The more recent work of the Equity Task Force has been embraced by the membership in the acceptance of the Equity Policy. In addition, at TWUC's 2016 Annual General Meeting the membership passed two initiatives to encourage diversity within TWUC, voting in favour of allocating one position on the board to an Indigenous writer and another board position to a marginalized group such as racialized writers, trans writers, and writers with disabilities. In addition, members voted in favour of a reduced membership fee for self-identifying Indigenous, Metis, and Inuit writers.

TWUC also has an active and energetic Equity Task Force that has helped identify the challenges facing TWUC and are eager to assist and support the Equity Implementation Plan.

While TWUC's activism in its first decades of operation was concerned mostly with cultural nationalism and the defense against transnational corporations, as well as the economic and legal matters of copyrights and contracts, during the late 1980s TWUC members began to look at issues of gender and race and, during the 1990s, social justice work continued to be central to this, including the question of cultural appropriation which was debated in 1992 as it was 25 years later, and in strikingly similar terms.⁷

TWUC's activism around issues of social justice continues to be central to TWUC as it addressed issues of exclusion based on Indigeneity, gender, and race, including:

⁷ Lenore Keeshig-Tobias, "Stop Stealing Native Stories". Essay published in *The Globe and Mail* on January 26, 1990; Carol Tator, Frances Henry, and Winston Mattis. *Challenging Racism in the Arts: Case Studies of Controversy and Conflict*. University of Toronto Press, 1998; p. 87. Henceforth cited as Tator 1998.

- questionnaires to Indigenous and racialized writers in 1989;
- survey of women’s book reviews followed by a campaign to address gender inequity;
- “The Appropriate Voice” conference for Indigenous and racialized writers in 1992;
- “Writing Thru Race” conference” in 1994;
- adoption of a Statement of Principle in 1998;
- establishment of a Social Justice Task Force that issued a report in 2001 which contained recommendations to address issues of equity within TWUC.

Key milestones during those years included:

- 1986: The Status of Women Writers’ Committee (SWWC) was established to further the interests of women writers; and subsequently developed a survey of women’s book reviews in periodicals, followed by a letter campaign that urged editors to consider gender equality in books reviewed (deployed 1989)⁸
- 1989: Activists Lenore Keeshig-Tobias and Daniel David Moses raised concerns about access for Indigenous and racialized writers to grants, publication and training.
 - A formal motion that a task force be established to examine the issue and gather data was rejected at that year’s AGM.⁹
 - However, an Ad Hoc Committee on racism in writing and publishing was formed and it developed and distributed a national questionnaire to writers of colour and Indigenous writers, both inside and outside of TWUC.¹⁰
- 1990: The Racial Minority Writers’ Committee (RMWC) (later renamed the Race Issues Committee) was formed and chaired by Lenore Keeshig-Tobias.¹¹
- 1992: Chair Susan Crean based her campaign on the need for TWUC to address issues of race.¹²
- 1992-1994: TWUC convened a number of working groups, leading to two national meetings exclusively for writers of colour and Indigenous writers:
 - 1992: Planning session/retreat *The Appropriate Voice* (focused on the experience of racism as writers, assessment of current problems, identification of key issues requiring further research, and recommendations for future action.
 - 1992 AGM passed the resolution on cultural appropriation that was drafted and endorsed at the above planning session.¹³
 - 1993 AGM approved funding for a larger, national conference for writers of colour and Indigenous writers¹⁴

⁸ SJTF 2001, p. 4.

⁹ Tator 1998, p. 87.

¹⁰ SJTF 2001, p. 4.

¹¹ SJTF 2001, p. 4.

¹² Tator 1998, p 8.

¹³ SJTF 2001, p. 5.

¹⁴ Tator 1998, p. 89.

- 1994 National conference *Writing Thru Race* was held, chaired by Roy Miki, leading to the well-known controversy not only within TWUC, but played out for months in the national media and deemed important enough to be debated in the House of Commons.¹⁵
- 1996 AGM passed two important resolutions:
 - Resolution to recognize the right of all TWUC members, without discrimination, to be involved in issues of collective concern.
 - Resolution that TWUC “in consultation with RMWC and SWWC develop social justice policies which address issues of racism, sexism, homophobia and other forms of discrimination as they affect TWUC members.”¹⁶
- 1996-1998: TWUC established and promoted a mentoring program for Indigenous writers and writers of colour, which lead to new members being recruited.¹⁷
 - The program ended in 1998.
 - The 2001 Social Justice Task Force Report observed that a number of racialized writers who had joined TWUC as a result of the outreach and initiatives during the mid 90s were no longer members at the time of the report.¹⁸
- 1997: RMWC & SWWC collaborated on the organization of the program for the AGM, prior to which they put together “*Affirming Diversity: A TWUC for the New Millennium Anecdote Package*” for AGM distribution.¹⁹
- 1997: AGM passed resolutions on the development of policies addressing racism, sexism, homophobia and other forms of discrimination; and on exploring the feasibility of getting First Nations and “ethno-cultural” organizations to sponsor writers’ memberships.²⁰
- 1998: AGM adopted the Statement of Principle as TWUC’s vision statement:

The Writers’ TWUC of Canada (TWUC) is a national organization which brings writers together for the advancement of their collective interests. It is an organization which aims not only at embracing but also fostering diversity & inclusiveness in all their forms.

As such, TWUC’s organizational structure has been devised to facilitate democratic processes of decision-making. These processes enable its members to formulate policies and develop programs which incorporate diverse points of view. TWUC recognizes that power relations in Canadian society are unequal and that this reality is reflected in the lives of writers.

While advancing the interests of all its members, TWUC pays particular attention to the inequities that writers face due to racism and other forms of discrimination

¹⁵ For summary and analysis, see Carol Tator, Frances Henry, and Winston Mattis. *Challenging Racism in the Arts: Case Studies of Controversy and Conflict*. University of Toronto Press, 1998; p. 86-110.

¹⁶ SJTF 2001, p. 5.

¹⁷ SJTF 2001, p. 5.

¹⁸ SJTF 2001, Appendix C, p.11.

¹⁹ TWUC internal document.

²⁰ SJTF 2001, p. 5.

based on cultural or linguistic background, class, age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and/or ableness.

- 1998: The Social Justice Task Force obtained a grant to further explore *“Fostering Diversity and Inclusion: A TWUC for the New Millennium—A Project of the Writer’s TWUC of Canada.”*²¹
- 2001: The Social Justice Task Force released its final report (1 September).

As the Social Justice Task Force grant proposal’s title suggests, the report was designed to usher TWUC into the new millennium with a set of concrete recommendations and actions, and upon the report’s release, an Implementation Committee was struck and tasked with bringing a final set of recommendations to the National Council by mid-January 2002. That final set of recommendations was to be based on the Task Force’s findings as well as on consultation with TWUC membership.²²

Nevertheless, in the new millennium TWUC’s efforts became focused once more on “bread and butter” issues facing writers in Canada’s political landscape at the time. Correspondingly, very few equity-related items are included on TWUC website’s list of TWUC’s accomplishments over time.²³

In 2003, the issue of equity resurfaced:

- 2003: AGM recommended to National Council that language of membership criteria in the constitution be amended “...to mention indigenous persons. To effect this, TWUC’s By-Laws were amended to include “...or identifies as an Aboriginal or Indigenous person born or resident within Canada””²⁴.
- 2003: AGM resolved that the National Council in conjunction with the Race Issues and Membership Committees to
 - “identify strategies that will enhance not only new memberships but also our ability to effectively address the priorities of First Nations and social minority writers”
 - “pursue one such strategy”
 - report back (through National Council to the membership) on
 - “what they have learned regarding the needs and priorities of these writers, and
 - what they have accomplished”²⁵.

However, it was more than a decade later that the debate over equity issues took center stage again:

- By 2013, TWUC had recognized the urgent need to address the unresolved issues of (the lack of) diversity within, and the Demographics Task Force (later renamed the Equity Task Force) was created in order to help TWUC expand its membership

²¹ SJTF 2001, p.5; and SJTF 2001, Appendix B.

²² SJTF 2001, p.1 (Chair’s note on title page). The 2001-2002 records of the Implementation Committee can be found in Box 215 in TWUC files archived at McMaster University Archives²² - but they did not result in any action taken at the time (Minutes from TWUC AGM, 24-26 May 2002, p.1-2, p. 5-6).

²³ <https://www.writersTWUC.ca/content/achievements>

²⁴ TWUC Minutes of Meeting, Saturday 24 May 2003, p.10. The motion had been put forward by the BC First Nations Caucus and Membership Committee and reflected a constitutional change. See Clause 8.3 TWUC By-Laws.

²⁵ Ibid p. 12-13. No report/documentation of change on file.

- and to promote and enact principles of diversity and equity.
- 2015: Equity Policy was adopted and was included in the Union’s orientation presentation to new members, committees, task forces, and liaisons; with the stated intent to *“integrate equity principles into its decision-making regarding policies, practices, programs, partnerships and services”*.²⁶
 - 2015: Conference *Twenty Years of “Writing Thru Race”: Then & Now* was held with sponsorship by the University of Toronto Faculty of Arts and Sciences.
 - 2015: Strategic Plan 2015-2018 identified increasing and diversifying TWUC’s membership as a key TWUC priority.
 - On June 17, 2016, at the Canadian Writers’ Summit, TWUC’s Equity Task Force facilitated an “Equity Now Lively Lunch & Learn”. This session’s summary of recommended concrete actions included among others that TWUC designate a staff person to deal with equity issues, a recommendation which had previously been proposed to National Council.²⁷
 - 2016: The Equity Task Force delivered a report to the AGM²⁸ and specifically recommended that two National Council positions be designated for underrepresented equity groups; that motion was passed.²⁹
 - Following the AGM, the Task Force identified the need for an increased focus on the issue of disabilities as a critical area, and added a new Task Force member with lived experience.³⁰
 - 2016: TWUC obtained funding from Canada Council to *“develop an Equity Implementation Plan to ensure that TWUC welcomes, encourages, supports, and embraces all voices in the writing community.”*
 - TWUC engaged equity specialist and consultant to work with them on that plan, and in preparation on the action steps below.
 - 2017: In preparation for the development of an Equity Implementation Plan, the following steps were taken:
 - Two focus groups and six one-on-one interviews were held with racialized and Indigenous writers who are not members of TWUC
 - Three meetings were held with the National Council, and three meetings were held with the Equity Task Force
 - Two equity workshops were held at the AGM,

²⁶ <https://www.writersTWUC.ca/equity-policy>.

²⁷ National Council Online Meeting, 23 February 2015, Report from the Demographics and Membership Task Force: Summary includes as first outreach and recruitment recommendation that funding for a 12-month part-time equity staff position be prioritized; followed by recommendations collected during Equity Lunch & Learn at 2016 Writers’ Summit: Post-event summary provided by moderator Farzana Doctor.

²⁸ 2017 AGM p.18 (2016 AGM Minutes).

²⁹ TWUC Policies and Procedures. Title: Elections- Advocate Positions. Draft dated 12 December, 2016. See also communication from Heather Wood on behalf of the Equity Task Force to TWUC National Council, 8 Nov 2016. Documentation on file.

³⁰ 2017 AGM, p. 47.

- A comprehensive survey (its wording based on the results from the work of the groups above) was deployed after the AGM.³¹

During these years, especially the work in the 1990s, the diversity of TWUC’s membership expanded somewhat, and TWUC began to take steps to better reflect the diverse voices of Canadian writers. However, by 2014 it was apparent that despite TWUC’s efforts in the 1990s and early 2000s, its membership did not adequately represent the wide diversity of voices in Canadian writing. As a result, while the framework of equity was accepted and the language of equity embraced in membership surveys, fundamental tensions remain when it comes to concrete measures to bring about organizational change to achieve institutional diversification.³²

And while the work of the Equity Task Force has in recent years been embraced by the membership as evident in its acceptance of the Equity Policy and the 2017 AGM resolution to hire an Equity Coordinator, TWUC members’ reactions and public comments to the *Write Magazine* controversy have thrown the still-existing polarization on equity within TWUC into sharp relief.³³ Further, in response to the June 2017 equity survey, TWUC’s membership have expressed divergent positions with regards to equity issues, in particular racial equity, and their understanding of the terminology around equity.

These current challenges exist despite the efforts TWUC has made to address equity and social justice. For example, the 2001 Social Justice Task Force report states in its Preamble:

*“Unprecedented global changes are affecting the cultural industries and the work of creators in profound and sometimes disturbing ways. These changes may be provoking fears of uncertainty and loss of control and order, but they also provide an opportunity for a radical rethinking of our organization.”*³⁴

This would appear to aptly describe where TWUC is 16 years later and while TWUC is clearly positioned and resourced to close the gap between aspiration and achievement, and is supported by a dynamic and experienced Equity Task Force, the challenge of making such changes are still very evident.

As such, the Equity Implementation Action Plans in this report identify goals and objectives, provide specific actions with clear strategies and timelines, and identify resources to achieve each. The Plans comprise multi-year initiatives as a necessary road map to ensure TWUC develops the tools and capacities to reflect, represent and sustain the engagement of Indigenous, racialized and other marginalized writers along with its current membership.

3. Current Context

³¹ 2017 AGM, p. 47.

³² SJTF 2001, p. 7; TWUC Equity Survey June – July 2017.

³³ See p. 51-52 of this report

³⁴ SJTF 2001, p. 3.

The demographic, social, cultural and artistic landscape of Canada has changed quite dramatically since TWUC was established in 1973. These changes are critical to note as they have significant implications for arts creation, particularly modes of story-telling, story or scholarly content, interests of artists and audiences, a wide range of aesthetic practices as well as modes of publication and dissemination, e.g., online zines, blogs and options for self-publishing.

This section will review these changes that are provided as the context for the proposed action plans.

3.1 Demographic Changes:

'Super-diversity'. This is the headline in the Saturday March 12, 2011 article in the *Globe and Mail*, an article whose subhead reads "Canadian cities are rapidly evolving into a fusion of cultures, religions, sexual orientations, experiences and values. While this mix is vibrant, some question whether social inequalities are putting this asset at risk."³⁵

At the time of the 2006 Census (the most recent full data set available)³⁶, Canada had a population of 31,612,897. A key part of Canada's population growth has been the increased levels of immigration and the rapid growth of Indigenous communities and other key factors within Canada's population.

As part of these demographic changes, it is evident that in 2006:

- persons identifying as disabled comprised in 2006 14.3% of the Canadian population for all ages and 16.6% of those 15 years of age and older;³⁷
- 47% of Canadian citizens have an ethnic origin that is other than Anglo or French;
- immigration accounts for more than 50% of Canada's population growth and that immigrants represent 100% of the growth of the net labour force in Canada;
- 16.2% of Canadians self-identified as racialized (i.e., visible minority),³⁸
- Individuals identifying as Indigenous comprise 1,172,790 of the Canadian population for an increase of 45% between 1996 and 2006, almost 6 times more than other

³⁵ *Globe and Mail*, Saturday, March 12, 2011, Section F.

³⁶ Similar data based on the 2016 Census is not as yet available. TWUC should update this data once the 2016 information is available since further changes are expected, based on changes in underreporting among Indigenous peoples, as well as attitudinal changes. For details please see Statistics Canada. Population Projections by Aboriginal Identity. 2006-2031; <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/91-552-x/91-552-x2011001-eng.htm>; as well as **Statistics Canada. Aboriginal Peoples in Canada: First Nations People, Métis and Inuit: 2011 National Household Survey (NHS)** at <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/as-sa/99-011-x/99-011-x2011001-eng.pdf>.

³⁷ See *Participation and Activity Limitation Survey 2006: Analytical Report*, Statistics Canada 2006 p. 9.

³⁸ Visible minority population, by age group (2006 Census) Statistics Canada <http://www40.statcan.gc.ca/l01/cst01/demo50a-eng.htm>. Note: While Statistics Canada census data refers to racialized groups as visible minorities, there has been strong distaste amongst critical race scholars about the imprecision of this term.

communities;

- the population identifying as Indigenous has experienced significant growth in Ontario (68%); and 54% of people identifying as Indigenous live in urban areas, an increase of 50% from 1996;
- the Métis are the most rapidly growing Indigenous group in Canada increasing by 91% since 1996, in 2006 they totalled 389,785.³⁹

Resulting from changes to selection criteria, recent immigrants to Canada are highly educated, skilled and have significant economic capacities. For example, the Conference Board of Canada suggests immigrants account for 33% of Canada's economic growth in the past ten years and by 2011 will account for all labour force growth. This report further suggests that racialized peoples currently account for 16% of those in the labour force and that this will increase to close to 18% by 2016.⁴⁰

In the cultural sector, the Canadian Conference for the Arts has noted several issues related to the changing demographics of Canada, particularly its urban centres, and has stated that:

- the workforce in the cultural sector must become more representative of the 'culturally diverse population of Canada'; and
- the population identifying as Indigenous is growing faster than the rest of Canadian communities and is much younger than its counterparts; Indigenous youth will form a major part of Canada's future workforce.⁴¹

Most population estimates suggest these changes will only accelerate over time and the proportion of Indigenous and racialized communities will continue to increase at rates faster than their European counterparts.⁴²

For example:

- in 2017, racialized peoples will likely be between 19% and 23% of the Canadian population and that racialized communities in the country's largest urban centres (e.g., the Greater Toronto Area, Vancouver and Richmond B.C.) will be more than 50% of the population. Further, Indigenous peoples are likely to comprise 4.1% of the Canadian population;⁴³

³⁹ See *Indigenous Peoples in Canada in 2006: Inuit, Metis and First Nations, 2006 Census* p. 6-7.

Note: See legislative changes, for example Bill C-31 in 1985 and Bill C-3 in 2011.

⁴⁰ See ***Making a Visible Difference: The Contribution of Visible Minorities to Canadian Economic Growth***, 2004 p. 3-5.

⁴¹ See ***Creative Management in the Arts and Heritage: Sustaining and Renewing Professional Management for the 21st Century – A Proposed Action Plan for Creating Winning Conditions***, Jocelyn Harvey, 2003 p.21

⁴² See Alain Belanger and Eric Caron Malenfant ***Ethnocultural Diversity in Canada: Prospects for 2017***, and, Krishna Pendakur ***Visible Minorities in Canada's Workplaces: A Perspective on the 2017 Projection***.

⁴³ See ***Arts Fact Sheet Series: Cultural Diversity – Our Regenerative Strength in the 21st Century***, Sharon Fernandez, May 2006, unpaginated, from "Study: Canada's visible minority population in 2017" from 2005.

- racialized peoples will likely comprise between 29-32% of the Canadian population by 2021 or between 11.4 to 14.4 million people. This population will also have more youth under the age of 15 (36%) and South Asians and East Asians will be the largest of all racialized groups;
- Arabs and West Asians are projected to grow the fastest between 2006 and 2031, increasing from 806,000 to 1.1 million Arabs and 457,000 to 592,000 for West Asians between 2006 and 2031;
- Muslims are anticipated to increase to being 50% of those who self-identify as non-Christian;
- those whose Mother Tongue is neither English or French will increase to between 29% and 32% by 2031, up from 10% in 1981;
- 96% of racialized peoples would live in urban areas in 2031; with 72% of these residing in Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal;
- 55% of those living in urban centres are anticipated to be immigrants in 2031; with Toronto and Vancouver expected to reach 78% and 70%, respectively.⁴⁴

3.2 Changes in Canada's Arts Landscape:

The impact of Indigenous influence in the public domain combined with the changes in demographics is evident in the growth of the number of artists from Indigenous, racialized and other marginalized communities. Trends in these areas will increase almost exponentially given the growth of Indigenous and racialized communities. There is little statistical data on persons identifying as differently-abled in the arts; however, there is anecdotal information that is useful to understanding the challenges these artists face.

The socio-economic achievement for Indigenous and racialized artists is somewhat similar to the performance of these communities in other sectors of society. For example, it has been consistently documented that Indigenous and racialized persons as well as persons with disabilities do not fare as well as their counterparts in economic achievement. A recent report by the Wellesley Institute and the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives⁴⁵ suggests that individuals from racialized peoples

- Earn on average 81.4 cents for every dollar paid to non-racialized persons;
- have higher levels of labour market participation (67.3% v. 66.7%) but also experience higher levels of unemployment and that the work they get is temporary and low-paying and, further, racialized men are 24% more likely to be unemployed than their counterparts and racialized women are 48% more likely to be unemployed

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/050322/dq050322b-eng.htm>

⁴⁴ *Projections of the Diversity of the Canadian Population, 2006 to 2031*, Statistics Canada 2010 p. 1-2

⁴⁵ See *Canada's Colour Coded Labour Market: The gap for racialized workers*, Sheila Block and Grace-Edward Galabuzzi, 201.

than racialized men;

- saw their incomes decline between 2000 and 2005 by 0.2% while the earnings for their counterparts grew by 2.7% and while the economy grew by 13.1%;
- particularly immigrant women, earn on average 48.7 cents for every dollar of a non-racialized male⁴⁶;
- occupy only 14.7% of all occupations compared to 85.3% for non-racialized groups. Within the arts and cultural sector, racialized people occupy 10.4% of all occupations compared to 89.6% for non-racialized groups;
- in terms of industry, are composed of 8.5% of the 'arts, entertainment and recreation' sector compared with 91.5% of their counterparts;⁴⁷
- in terms of gender, racialized men make on average \$48,631 compared to \$60,044 for non-racialized men while racialized women make \$37,932 compared to \$52,345 for non-racialized women. Combined the difference is on average \$43,979 earnings for racialized peoples compared to \$52,345 for non-racialized peoples;⁴⁸
- while these gaps may narrow, they do not evaporate for second and third generation wage earners. There is still a significant gap that widens where racialized men in the second generation make on average \$57,237 compared to \$75,729 for non-racialized men and racialized women earn on average \$42,804 compared to \$46,391 for non-racialized women. The differential in the third generation indicates that racialized men earn \$66,137 compared to \$70,962 for their counterparts while racialized women earn \$44,460 compared to \$44,810 for their counterparts;⁴⁹
- in terms of poverty, 19.6% live in poverty compared to 6.4% of their counterparts.⁵⁰

Based on analysis of the 2001 census, Hill Strategies *Diversity in Canada's Arts Labour Force*⁵¹ suggests many revealing pieces of information, including:

- of the 131,000 artists in Canada, 11,700 (8.9%) are racialized, and 3,100 (2.5%) are Indigenous. Racialized artists earnings were 11% less than other artists while earnings for Indigenous artists were 28% less than other artists;⁵²
- 90% of racialized artists live in urban areas (Census Metropolitan Areas/CMAs) with Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal combining for 39% of all racialized artists. Of these racialized artists, Toronto's CMA has the highest concentration (39%), followed by Vancouver CMA (24%) and Montreal CMA (11%).⁵³

⁴⁶Ibid p.3-4

⁴⁷Ibid p 9-10

⁴⁸Ibid p. 12

⁴⁹ Ibid p. 13

⁵⁰ Ibid p. 15

⁵¹ *Statistical Insights on the arts, Vol. 3 No.3*, February 2005.

⁵² Ibid p.1

⁵³ Ibidp. 1-3

In a report based on the 2006 Census, Hill Strategies note that⁵⁴:

- there were 140,040 artists in Canada with 105,345 whose first language is English or 75% of all artists; 24,585 whose first language is French or 18% of all artists; 8,630 whose first language is a non-official language or 6% of all artists. Of these artists, 5,555 are English-language minorities residing in Quebec (4%) and 1,755 Official Language Minorities (Francophones) (1.3%),⁵⁵
- Anglophone artists made on average \$22,776 per year compared with Francophone artists who made \$24,520, non-official language artists who made \$17,373, English-language minorities who made \$26,069, and French-language minorities who made \$22,738;⁵⁶
- there were 3,295 Indigenous artists (2.4% of all artists) and 14,910 racialized artists (11%). Respectively, these artists earnings were on average \$15,883, and \$18,796,⁵⁷ and
- there were 6,300 artists identifying as disabled (5% of all artists) who indicated that they are often limited in their activities and 13,500 artists identifying as disabled (10% of all artists) who indicate that they are sometimes limited in their activities. Average earnings for the former are \$15,300.00 or 42% less than other similarly situated workers and for the latter earnings are \$17,700.00 or 43% less than other similarly situated workers.⁵⁸

In terms of changes in artists' income from the 2001 to the 2006 Census, Hill notes that while all artists' income fell 14%, Indigenous artists' income fell by 16% and income for racialized artists each fell by 20%.⁵⁹

What is very notable in this data is the dramatic increase in the number of Indigenous and racialized artists since 1991. While this has contributed to the diversity of Canadian artists, and has provided a broader span of cultural forms, histories and artistic standards and values to the public, it is also likely that the significant disparities in earnings for Indigenous and racialized artists are attributable to them being less employed than other artists.

This may be due to a number of factors, including the relative newness of some of these artists as well as the diverse cultural forms and values they bring to the arts that are different than the Eurocentric values and practices of the dominant Canadian arts ecology. In fact, the latter may be directly related to the lesser rate of earnings of Indigenous and racialized artists since their forms of cultural expressions and stories (including myths, iconography, references, techniques, etc.) may draw on the rich histories and traditions of their own cultures and not solely on Eurocentric norms and many in the arts' field, including publishers, may see this as not being appropriate for 'their audiences.'

⁵⁴ See *A Statistical Profile of Artists in Canada – Based on the 2006 Census*, Hill Strategies, 2009.

⁵⁵ Ibid p. 18

⁵⁶ Ibid p.19

⁵⁷ Ibidp. 20-21

⁵⁸ Ibid p. 22

⁵⁹ Ibid p. 36. Further, TWUC's recent survey on writers' incomes states women writers make 55% of their male counterparts – see: *Devaluing Creators, Endangering Creativity*, 2015, p.2.

Another issue is that what is considered 'contemporary' by Indigenous, racialized and other marginalized artists, is often not considered to be 'contemporary' by the current arts system.⁶⁰ The contemporary arts milieu is very much based upon the standards of the West and has not reached a substantive level in addressing the important histories and artistic practices that had been suppressed during centuries of European domination and its prevailing of so-called universal values that were implicit in European systems of thought, governance, economics and civil society.

The change in demographics and Indigenous presence in the public domain are supplanting traditional notions of Canadian culture as Eurocentric, and are addressing issues concerning groups marginalized within that framework. The obvious challenge here is for the arts community generally to begin to understand that it is not possible to use traditional Western modes to assess the merits of diverse artistic forms and expressions of Indigenous and racialized communities.⁶¹

As such, long-standing and all-too-often unexamined 'standards of excellence only' need to be re-assessed against the measure of a critical capacity, one that considers the 'standpoint' of publishers and arts services organizations, i.e., their relationship to the production of knowledge and their adherence to a selective tradition that honours the notion that universal values in the arts derive from European systems against which others are then measured. Such an approach cuts short dialogue about the values and selective traditions of Indigenous and racialized groups and their importance in influencing the creative expressions of artists from these communities.

⁶⁰ See Natasha Bakht, *Mere Song and Dance: Multicultural Imperative in the Arts*. This paper was first presented in 2009 at the Canada Dance Festival and then has been published by Between the Lines Press in: *Unsettling Multiculturalism: Lands, Labours, Bodies*, May Chazan, Lisa Helps, Anna Stanley, And Sonali Thakkar, (Eds.), , (2011) and is forthcoming in *Pluralism in the Arts In Canada: A Change is Gonna Come*, compiled, written and edited by Charles C. Smith for the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. See also Kevin A. Ormsby's *Between Generations: Towards Understanding the Difference in Realities and Aspirations of the First and Second Generation of Culturally Diverse Artists*, as well as George Elliot Clarke *The Stage Is Not White* and *Neither Is Canada*; forthcoming in *Pluralism in the Arts In Canada: A Change is Gonna Come*, compiled, written and edited by Charles C. Smith for the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

⁶¹ For a more in-depth discussion on this issue, see Cornell West *The New Cultural Politics of Difference* (1990); Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (1994); Frances Henry and Carol Tator, *Challenging Racism in the Arts* (1998); Althea Prince, *Being Black* (2005); Michael M. Ames, *Cannibal Tours and Glass Boxes: the Anthropology of Museums* (1992), Natasha Bakht, *Mere Song and Dance* (2009), Michael Greyeyes, *Notions of Indian-ness* (2009); Kevin A. Ormsby, *Between Generations: Towards Understanding the Difference in Realities and Aspirations of the First and Second Generation of Culturally Diverse Artists* (2009); Little Pear Garden Theatre Collective, *Demystifying Chinese Aesthetics* (2009); Menaka Thakkar Dance Company and Kalanidhi Fine Arts of Canada, *Contemporary Choreography in Indian Dance* (2009).

3.3 A Word About Terminology⁶²:

One of the challenges in addressing these issues is around the terminology used to define them and the significance of this to public policy and community mobilization. The equity and diversity field is full of terms and concepts that seem to change constantly. Several contemporary texts provide glossaries with definitions for what appear to be a never-ending, exponentially growing minefield of words and phrases, and the ideas associated with them.⁶³ In perusing some of these resources, commonalities and differences and changes over time become clear. However, it may still be perplexing to some what these terms mean, how such meanings were constructed, which terms are most appropriate at this time, the implications of selected terms for the construction of social identities and, in the case of the arts, the responsiveness of the arts ecology to these factors, including and particularly funders and arts services organizations.

This issue is disturbing even to writers and thinkers deeply engaged in this discourse. For example, the poet, novelist, playwright and essayist Marlene Nourbese Phillip once wrote:

I always thought I was Negro
till I was Coloured,
West Indian, till I was told
that Columbus was wrong
in thinking he was west of India –
that made me Caribbean.
And throughout the '60s, '70s and '80s,
I was sure I was Black.
Now Black is passé,
African de rigueur,
and me a chameleon of labels.⁶⁴

One can also see similar scenarios when looking at identifying terms for Indigenous peoples or persons with disabilities. For the former, do we refer to them as nations, people or peoples, Indigenous or Indian or Native; for the latter, do those who are hearing impaired fit here? What about those with mobility challenges, visual impairments or blindness? What commonalities do they share? What is different about each and how might this be considered?

⁶² This section is based on a document I had prepared for the Media Arts Network 2016 (<https://mano-ramo.ca/resources/studies/>) and based on research I had previously done for OCAD U as well as for the Big Dream Conference in North Bay (2015).

⁶³ For example, see: Frances Henry, C. Tator, W. Mattis; ***The Colour of Democracy: Racism in Canadian Society. Nelson Education, 2009***; Tina Lopes and Barb Thomas, ***Dancing on Live Embers***, , Between the Lines, 2007; *Cultural Diversity in the Media Arts*, Independent Media Arts Alliance and National Indigenous Media Arts Coalition in ***Pluralism in the Arts in Canada: A Change is Gonna Come*** ed. Charles C. Smith, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2012; and *Arts and Equity: A Toolkit for Community Engagement*, Skye Louis and Leah Burns, Neighbourhood Arts Network in ***Pluralism in the Arts in Canada: A Change is Gonna Come*** ed. Charles C. Smith, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2012; Mina Para Matlon et al, ***Figuring the Plural***, , Art Institute of Chicago, 2014.

⁶⁴ *What's In A Name?* in ***Sad Dances in Field of White***, ed. Charles C. Smith for Is Five Press, p. 36

In their glossary of terms, Lopes and Thomas provide an historical context for the terms they employ. They explore the contingent nature of such definitions and why they may change over time. They note several reasons for this, but the most significant likely stem from the binary positions of: (a) state determined categorization; and (b) community processes of self-determination, self-naming and agency.

In both scenarios, naming and definitions have changed and, for the latter, will likely continue to do so. Regarding the government's influence in this area, it can be seen as a process of categorization that contains and limits whereas community processes are much more exploratory and, thereby, expansive. The former often comes without or, at best, with little direct dialogue for those it names and defines; the latter often has little influence in obliging government to accept the process and outcomes of self-definition. Both clearly have social, political, cultural and educational implications.

In her play **Fires in the Mirror: Crown Heights, Brooklyn and Other Identities**, Anna Deveare Smith creates the role of a human rights officer in the New York City administration who shares her perspectives on the conflict between African Americans and Hasidic Jews in Crown Heights Brooklyn. This character declares:

“I think you know the Eskimos have 70 words for snow. We probably have 70 different kinds of bias, prejudice, racism and discrimination, but it's not in our mind-set to be clear about it. So I think that we have sort of a lousy language on the subject, and that is a reflection of our unwillingness to deal with it honestly and to sort it out.”⁶⁵

As a counter point, Audre Lorde quite clearly and irrevocably defines herself as a Black lesbian feminist socialist mother of two and often challenged feminism for its ‘Whiteness’ and reliance on patriarchy. In this context, Lorde critiques the Eurocentric philosophical tradition of binaries, explaining that notions of identity and being are much more complex and contingent rather than fixed between oppositions that determine positionality in terms of values, including ideas about dominance and subordination.⁶⁶

Perhaps this is the starting point for this conversation – the link between power and naming and what this means in society, culture and the arts, and in institutions that are engaged in the arts, with commitments to equity and diversity and must, as part of this, engage these notions within parameters of freedom of expression, scholarship, artistic practice and standards of excellence.

To reflect on this, it may be useful to review in the next section developments in the following areas:

- The Canadian Multiculturalism Policy and Law
- Self-Definition and Identity Movements
- Problematic Terms

⁶⁵ Anna Deveare Smith, **Fires in the Mirror: Crown Heights, Brooklyn and Other Identities** Anchor Books, 1993, p. 63.

⁶⁶ See “Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Redefining Difference”: Also, see Ian Ang “Identity Blues” from **Without Guarantees: In Honour of Stuart Hall**, eds. Gilroy, P. et. al., , Verso 2000, p. 1-13.

3.3.1 Multiculturalism - Challenges and Changes:

A state project formed in the late 1960s and adopted by Parliament in the early 1970s, multiculturalism in Canada was intended to recognize a pluralistic society within a bilingual/bicultural framework.⁶⁷ While this ideology provided a clear demarcation from the past history of assimilation to Western values and norms, it has been roundly critiqued for its focus on cultural celebrations and avoidance of substantive issues of equality in law and practice, including the arts.⁶⁸ Despite such critiques from mostly Indigenous and racialized peoples, multiculturalism was not only Canadian government policy in the 1970s and 1980s, it was enshrined as a Canadian value in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and adopted into legislation in 1988.

However, the codification into law of the multicultural policy did little to curtail the many challenges from community advocates and scholars regarding the limitations of the Canadian government approach to substantive issues of Indigenous and racialized peoples. Further, the advent of the term 'employment equity', while proposing some advances in terminology, presented other challenges in its homogenization of 'designated' groups as 'Aboriginal', 'visible minorities', 'persons with disabilities', 'Francophones and 'women'.⁶⁹

Parallel developments in feminist, Indigenous, racialized, deaf, disability and mad communities were evident during this time - Indigenous peoples seeking recognition for their inherent right to self-determination, including recognition of their diverse cultures; diverse racialized communities advocating for an understanding of the impact of racism and its historical and systemic traits while feminism was broadening its understanding based on intersections with other identities.

As part of this, Indigenous and racialized peoples called respectively for reconciliation and reparations for past injustices⁷⁰ and these along with other challenges to government determination of terms brought about some changes in public discourse. For example, in terms of race, the first break from multiculturalism was the term 'race relations' that quickly changed to 'anti-racism', a term that has in recent years, however, seemingly disappeared in public policy discussions. Regarding Indigenous peoples, there continues to be demands to recognize the plurality of nations, languages and cultures as well as relationships to land and associated rights.

While one would think that these things might find home in a truly multicultural society, past and present discrimination and its impact on life opportunities for certain groups, has

⁶⁷ See Pierre Elliot Trudeau *A Just Society*, Viking, 1990; and Cecil Foster, *Blackness and Modernity: the colour of Humanity and the Quest for Freedom*, McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007.

⁶⁸ See Natasha Bakht, *Mere "Song and Dance": Complicating the Multicultural Imperative in the Arts*, and, George Elliot Clarke, *The Stage is Not White – And Neither is Canada*, in: *Pluralism in the Arts in Canada: A Change is Gonna Come* ed. Charles C. Smith, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2012.

⁶⁹ See Justice R. Abella, *Report of the Commission on Equality In Employment*, Government of Canada, 1984. This document proposed these terms that then became codified in Federal employment equity legislation and the Federal Contractors Program.

⁷⁰ For example, there are the following issues: Japanese Canadian Redress, Black Reparations for Slavery, Chinese Canadian Head Tax, South Asian Komagatu Maru, Hogan's Alley, Africville.

not been addressed adequately. As a result, it was and is not possible to realize the vision of such a society, one full of historically entrenched inequities resulting from subordinating particular groups.

It is for this reason, and others, that Canadian multiculturalism has had little success.⁷¹

3.3.2 Self-Definition and Identity Movements:

As noted above, there have been considerable efforts expended by marginalized groups upon articulating their identities and to have this recognized in the broader society; that is, in law, institutional policies and practices, and artistic disciplines, including standards of excellence, practice, scholarship and adjudication. These groups included Indigenous and racialized persons, women, persons with disabilities, the Deaf, the LGBTQ2 communities and those who self-identify as 'Mad'. West describes this as flowing out of the movements for national liberation globally, and civil and human rights within Western states, which emerged out of the 1950s and 60s but which he and others acknowledge as having precedent in earlier times.⁷²

Further, we are witnessing in the contemporary a broad range of hybrid ties that address intersectionality and active 'becoming' through awareness/discovery of one's past and 'Blood Memory', the connections to disjointed ancestry and the value of orality as a source of authority and education. One of the major arguments in these and other writings has been about Western values of homogenization and hegemony versus the plurality of self-identification and creative expression.

As with any paradigm shift, there is the challenge of naming and the construction of meaning. As Said and Fanon suggest, terminology sits within the context of the times in which it is used and is often contested.⁷³ For example, in discussing the transition in social value of museums, Bennett details how a similarly constructed institution, the museum, can shift over time to reflect the values of those in power. This contestation owes itself to several sources, e.g., generational, educational, privilege and emerging constructs of political-economic interests, creating what is seen as 'the norm'.

Said and Fanon suggest that the times of European hegemony created 'norms' in which sexism, racism and other currently disparaged categories were common like breathing air. Therefore, unless these elements of the past have been totally identified, eliminated and remedied, they will find their way into the contemporary, a matter that has been seen in the arts in such contestations around the Royal Ontario Museum's *Into the Heart of Africa*, The Art Gallery of Ontario's *Barnes Exhibit*, TWUC's *The Writing Through Race Conference* and in OCAD U's Black arts conference and its follow-up report.

⁷¹ See Cecil Foster *Blackness and Modernity*, McGill University Press, 2007.

⁷² See Cornell West, The New Cultural Politics of Difference, in: *Out There: Marginalization and Contemporary Cultures*, eds., Ferguson, R. et al, West Publ. 1990. p. 11-23. As well, see Constance Backhouse, *Petticoats and Prejudice: Women and Law in Nineteenth Century Canada*, Women's Press with Osgoode Society for Canadian Legal History, 1991; "Race", *Rights and the Law in the Supreme Court of Canada*, J. Walker, Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2006; *The Racial Polity*, in Charles W. Mills, *Blackness Visible: Essays on Philosophy and Race*, Cornell University Press, 1998.

⁷³ Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism of Civilization*, Vintage Books, 1994. Frantz Fanon, *Racism and Culture*, in *Toward the African Revolution*, Monthly Review Press, 1964,

A sign of this difference can be seen in the following writings of William Butler Yeats and Chinua Achebe. Yeats wrote in *'The Second Coming'* the iconic lines:

Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world.
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of a passionate intensity.

Written as a reflection on the devastation of Europe as a result of World War I, this poem was a cry about the Western world losing hold of itself and falling in to chaos. Taking one of these lines as the title for his first novel, *Things Fall Apart*, it would seem Achebe might agree with this but from an entirely different perspective. What the former sees as the end of what seemed both a desired and homogenous/ordered world, the latter sees as the chaos derived through the force of an homogenizing colonialism, a project that cut off access to things past in the colonized group and clearly evident in residential schools for Indigenous peoples or compelling slaves to speak the languages and adopt the religions and customs of their masters. In both scenarios, any practice of traditional languages and/or customs was punishable.

Regarding Indigenous peoples, in particular, this has a legacy in Canadian society that is still unresolved.

For different reasons, the same could be said for the Chinese, South Asians and Blacks, (persons of African descent), persons with disabilities, and the deaf; and this difference is pronounced in various sectors and disciplines in the arts and academic education in the arts. Therefore, where equity and diversity is a challenge to a system built on Eurocentric values and standards, it becomes the cry of the 'other'. It is this 'other', acknowledged in fullness, that underlines what it might mean to live in a truly inclusive society, one that educational, particularly post-secondary, institutions should be preparing aspirants to engage in. As part of this, acknowledgement must be given to the emergent field these expansive and expanding entities can and will occupy. As Hall might suggest, this would be the moment of a 'festival of revolution' or what Foster presents as the infinitude and variableness of Blackness in contrast to the idealized and static nature of Whiteness.⁷⁴

3.3.3 Funding Bodies and Priority Groups:

As the discourse continues regarding terminology and the importance of arts engagement with Indigenous, racialized and other marginalized artists, the Canada Council for the Arts, the Ontario Arts Council and other arts funders have incorporated criteria and processes into their granting that recognize the importance of engaging 'priority groups', e.g., Indigenous, racialized, deaf, disabled and mad, Official Language Minorities, youth and others.

⁷⁴ This section is 'borrowed' from my speaking engagement at the 'Big Dream Conference' in North Bay, May 2015 and also for research I conducted for OCAD U in the spring 2015. This entire section appears in my work for the Media Arts Network (January 2016). See also *For Allon White: metaphors of transformation from Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*" ed. D. Morley and Chen, K., Routledge, 1996, p. 287-308; and Cecil Foster *Blacks and Modernity*. McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007.

These recent determinations are prompting funded arts organizations to address these issues and to provide evidence to assure funding is reaching these artists and their communities in meaningful ways. Clearly, TWUC has recognized the importance of these changes and more recently has implemented several equity initiatives, including:

- allocating two positions on National Council for Indigenous and other diverse TWUC members;
- reducing member fees for and conducting specific outreach to Indigenous writers;
- establishing an Equity Task Force;
- adopting an Equity Policy; and
- including equity principles in all TWUC jury and task force selection.

However, these initiatives were severely undermined with the spring 2017 issue of **Write Magazine**, a matter made clear in the focus groups convened for this process and in TWUC's June 2017 annual meeting. A common concern in the focus groups and at the annual meeting is that incidents like this will deter Indigenous, racialized and other marginalized writers from joining TWUC.

The Hill Strategies analysis of the 2001 census provides further context when comparing diversity among writers with the general arts labour force. They found that Whites comprised 72% of all writers while racialized peoples comprised 7%, even though at that time they made up 10.6% of the arts labour force, 15.4% of the overall labour force and 16.2% of the national population while Indigenous peoples are at 1% even though they comprise 2.4% of arts labour force, 3% of the overall labour force and 3.8% of the national population⁷⁵.

This is a major challenge given the very low representation of these writers among TWUC members. For example, in a voluntary survey question in 2014, 5% of respondents identified themselves as being racialized and 1.5% as Indigenous.⁷⁶ These numbers compare to national population figures based on census data of 4.3% Indigenous and 19% racialized peoples. It must also be noted that youth writers (20-29) are estimated to comprise 0.5% of TWUC members.

A direct comparison with 2017 is difficult: While the responses to the June 2017 equity survey did provide opportunities for members to self-identify, these results cannot be considered in the same way as those from 2014 as the purpose of the 2017 survey was not designed specifically to gather data on self-identification and, given its focus, may have encouraged or dissuaded members from replying to this query⁷⁷.

4 Equity Action Plans:

As noted above, over the past 22 years TWUC has adopted a Statement of Principle, its By-Law #1 and several resolutions, established a Social Justice Task Force and an Equity

⁷⁵ See Hill Strategies report *Diversity in Canada's Arts Labour Force: An Analysis of the 2001 Census Data* which provides comparative detail based on census data. Note on the data set: 2001 data is not the best of situations given changes from one Census to another. However, there appears to be no more recent comparable data to assess these comparisons.

⁷⁶ See TWUC 2014 STRATEGIC PLANNING SURVEY SUMMER 2014.

⁷⁷ The survey reached 599 TWUC members, little more than 25%. The survey responses indicate that individuals self-identified as follows: Indigenous 3.2%, racialized 12.95%, youth 0.23%.

Task Force, convened special meetings to discuss equity and diversity issues, adopted an Equity Policy and included initiatives on equity and diversity in its 2015-18 Strategic Plan as a its second priority.

In this context, it is clear that TWUC has made very strong commitments approved by its membership to ensuring equity and diversity are embedded as core principles with appropriate, strategic actions in all of its governance and operations. However, as noted earlier in this report, TWUC has not adopted the actions needed to implement a significant number of these initiatives and, as a result, many of its resolutions on this matter suffer from under- or delayed-implementation. It has not addressed many of the recommendations from its Social Justice Task Force and Equity Task Force, particularly the results of its 2016 Lunch meeting; nor has TWUC fully applied its Statement of Principle, its By-law #1 and its Equity Policy, all of which are binding on the entire organization, to its core programs, services, and governance.

In this context, it is important to note that:

- TWUC’s Statement of principle states it will: “...advocate for social justice and equity for all writers and, in so doing, to embrace and foster diversity and inclusiveness and to oppose discrimination...”
- TWUC By-law #1 states that *“TWUC recognizes that power relations in Canadian society are unequal and that this reality is reflected in the lives of writers. While advancing the interests of all its members, TWUC pays particular attention to the inequities that writers face due to racism and other forms of discrimination based on cultural or linguistic background, class, economic status, age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and/or ableness.*
- The issues addressed in the various forums to develop these action plans are based on resolutions previously adopted by TWUC and/or recommendations or suggestions brought forward by its members. As such, these action plans provide detail on how these initiatives can be put into motion;
- The various focus groups, TWUC AGM workshops and survey responses have contributed significantly to the priority setting detailed in these action plans. In fact, the survey data was analyzed both in terms of overall responses and those from Indigenous, racialized and other marginalized members. In doing so, it was astounding to note the commonalities between these two cohorts of TWUC membership, such commonalities built into these action plans; and
- Along with the aforementioned Statement of Principle and By-Law #1, TWUC’s Equity Policy (See Appendix A) is a primary statement of values and, therefore, must be applied to all of TWUC’s governance and operations, including its By-laws. Further, since many of the resolutions noted in this report stem from items adopted by TWUC at various AGMs or member referendums, they will not need further discussion and approval by members but action by National Council to ensure implementation.

These are the foundations upon which the action plans are put forward. It is based on these that the presentations and workshops at TWUC's 2017 annual meeting were framed and the member survey was developed.⁷⁸

As for the presentation at the annual meeting, it covered the chronology of TWUC's involvement on issues of equity and cultural appropriation and also provided definitions of key terms that were put forward to be used as the critical lens to review member responses to the survey and to put forward appropriate action plans. These key terms and their definitions are:

- **Equality:** means that every person enjoys the same status, and thus everyone should be treated the same way so that everyone can realize their full human rights and potential in contributing to social development, and then benefit from the results⁷⁹.
- **Equity:** refers to the rights of individuals and groups to an equitable share of the resources and influence in society. Equity means equitable access and outcomes. Equity work challenges unfair systems and practices and works towards the creation of equitable outcomes⁸⁰.
- **Systemic Racism:** is implicit and mostly invisible; it is embedded in the policies and practices of institutions and organizations. Systemic racism operates directly or indirectly to sustain the power structure and advantages enjoyed by the dominant groups. It results in the unequal distribution of economic, social and political resources and reward among different "racial" groups. It also denies (Indigenous – my addition) racialized people access to fully participate in society and creates barriers to education, employment, housing, and other services available to the dominant group⁸¹.
- **Cultural Racism:** is a system of values and ideologies that are based on racial differences, cultural superiority and inferiority. These values are produced, maintained and reproduced through powerful institutions like the media and popular culture such that the dominant ideologies become the "taken-for-granted" and norm for society. This form of racism is entrenched in society and it supports, allows and perpetuates individual and systemic racism⁸².

In addressing these terms, the presentation noted the significant differences between equity and equality while underscoring TWUC's stated commitments to address systemic and cultural racism. In particular, the focus on the term 'equity' was to indicate that equality of outcomes is its over-riding purpose and that processes were required to

⁷⁸ The survey was developed in the spring 2017. Note: While I drafted the survey, it received significant input from TWUC staff, the National Council and Equity Task Force before it was released late June 2017

⁷⁹ Jasmin Zine, Glossary of Terminology. Sociology of Race and Ethnicity/ Principles of Anti-Racism Education (OISE 2004-2005).

⁸⁰ See Dancing on Live Embers, Tina Lopes and Barb Thomas, 2006, p.267.

⁸¹ Ibid, p. 270.

⁸² <http://www.diversitydufferin.com/glossary.html>!

achieve this. It was also to affirm that evidence of past inequality, particularly as it relates to historical treatment of individuals and communities, is the basis to determine the types of outcomes, the communities that would be enabled and how this can be done.

The definition of equity dovetails well with TWUC's Equity Policy as the latter acknowledges past discrimination, its impact on current inequities and the communities that should benefit directly from the implementation of this policy.

As for the member survey⁸³, it was based on the understanding of the above and tested through focus groups in Toronto and interviews as well as email exchanges with a number of writers across Canada, including TWUC's National Council, Equity Task Force and staff. It was also the focus for the workshops at TWUC's annual meeting that involved close to 70% of those at this annual gathering. In this context, the survey focused on TWUC's core programs/operations and its governance.

The survey also included suggestions and recommendations made by the Equity Task Force to National Council.

Significantly based on survey response, the action plans represent a sequential process to implementation, beginning with outreach and taking actions to amend and/or offer TWUC programs to Indigenous, racialized and other marginalized writers. The plans also address TWUC's governance, citing its By-Laws that allow for such changes and citing those By-Laws which need to be revised to ensure consistency with TWUC's Equity Policy, Statement of Principle and By-Law #1.

For each action plan, there is the identification of: (i) goals, (ii) objectives, (iii) actions/timelines, (iv) resources, and (v) assessment/evaluation. This framework provides benchmarks that will enable TWUC to take actions over time and to have in place regular opportunities to assess and then evaluate the implementation. Because of the nature of TWUC's past in equity implementation, the action plans call for quarterly assessments each year of the plans' roll out. Following the third year, it is recommended that an overall evaluation should take place to review all of the actions plans, their status on implementation and results of the assessments done to date, including a critical approach to actions required going forward to ensure TWUC achieves the goals and objectives of these action plans and builds on them to bring about organizational transformation.

The action plans begin with focused outreach and each plan involves the Equity Coordinator, National Council, the Equity Task Force, the Executive and Associate Directors and other TWUC staff. This approach will require leadership by the Equity Coordinator both in terms of making connections with external writers and groups but, as well, in regard to working with TWUC staff to ensure they enhance and/or develop the knowledge and skills to take on tasks associated with their role within TWUC. For example, for communications needed to support this action plans, the Equity Coordinator will work with TWUC staff responsible for this function. The same will take place for membership.

⁸³ The June-July 2107 Equity Survey is a key part of the research for this report. It is available from TWUC at (WEBSITE: <url once survey is posted>).

Further, TWUC's leadership in its National Council, Regional representatives and Equity Task Force will also be required to take specific actions with the support of the Equity Coordinator.

This approach will ensure that all TWUC leadership and staff are actively engaged in the implementation and are able to carry on this work for the long-term, making it a systemic approach and not solely reliant on one position but a shared responsibility. The action plans address:

- a) Hiring an Equity Coordinator;
- b) Raising public awareness about Indigenous, racialized and other historically marginalized writers;
- c) Assisting Indigenous, racialized and other historically marginalized writers access to grants, agents and publishing opportunities;
- d) Reviewing membership criteria;
- e) Ensuring diversity in TWUC leadership;
- f) Establishing an outreach component to ensure more diversity for the National Readings Program and Ontario Writers'-In-The-Schools Program;
- g) Ensuring greater diversity and equity in *Write Magazine*;
- h) Ensuring a diversity component in TWUC's Manuscript Evaluation Service;
- i) Ensuring diversity on TWUC juries;
- j) Initiating a Voluntary Self-Identification process;
- k) Addressing items requiring AGM Approval and/or By-law/Constitutional Changes;
- l) Nurturing Support and Dealing with Resistance.

4.1 Hiring an Equity Coordinator:

*"That reflecting the will of TWUC's Annual General Meeting, the issue of hiring an equity coordinator (who should be an Indigenous person) be referred to the National Council to move forward as soon as possible."*⁸⁴

One matter that is urgent for TWUC to act on immediately is the hiring of an Equity Coordinator. While this position was not seen as a priority in the survey by any of the members, the above-noted motion was adopted at the June 2017 AGM to establish such a position.

Further, TWUC staff recognize the value of such a position as one that will guide the implementation of these action plans and ensure bona fide equity criteria and specific responsibilities are embedded in all work/tasks, and staff job descriptions to support the Equity Implementation Plans. TWUC management had been considering such a position before because of the Equity Policy and other statements of organizational commitment.

The particular role of this position is noted in the action plans below. However, to recruit and staff this position will require a number of steps.

Goal: To develop TWUC as an organization, its governance and operations, so that the it has the knowledge and skills to address and implement equity and diversity issues in the

⁸⁴ Minutes of TWUC AGM June 2017 (Draft document), p. 5.

short-, intermediate- and long-term as a means to enact its Statement of Principles, By-Law #1, its Equity Policy, its 2016-18 Strategic Plan and other related resolutions adopted by its membership.

Objective: To ensure TWUC builds the capacities to implement the actions plans and to assess, evaluate and act on future needs

Actions:

To achieve this is an immediate priority requiring the following:

- i) Convene a hiring committee to draft job description, promote, recruit and orient the selected candidate. This may include meeting with TWUC's current Equity Consultant to assist in the transition from completing this report to the actual hiring process. **Timeline: October 2017 – January 2018.**
- ii) The Equity Coordinator is in place by January 2018 accompanied with public announcement, including the action plans to be implemented.

In addition to participating as noted in the action plans, as the implementation process develops momentum, the Equity Coordinator may need to:

- Draft more extensive evaluation criteria based on the experience of implementation and any relevant research;
- Assist in revisions to staff job descriptions to ensure appropriate relationship with working on the action plans and long-term implementation of them as core responsibilities;
- Lead assessment of action items;
- Work directly with National Council and the Equity Task Force; and
- Identify other issues/initiatives TWUC needs to address, providing the evidence and actions to support such.

Resources:

This will be led by the Executive Director, Associate Director and representatives of the National Council and Equity Task Force. TWUC's current Equity Consultant will provide advice on this process.

This process will require promotional materials, including ads, that can be distributed through social media and selected media, e.g., Quill and Quire.

Once on board, the Executive Director and National Council will develop a workplan with monthly timeframes for the achievement of the action plans. This can then be used for both annual organizational and professional review, assessment and development.

Outcomes:

1. Cohesion around the criteria and process for the recruitment and retention of the Equity Coordinator;
2. Public announcement of the hiring and the Equity Action Plans.

Assessment:

The selected candidate can be assessed at six months and the end of the first year of employment. The agreed upon workplan will provide the framework for such assessment and, in turn, form the basis of follow-up for further implementation of the work plan.

4.2 Raising public awareness about Indigenous, racialized and other historically marginalized writers

The actions noted below are for specifically focused and consistent outreach and require leadership from the Equity Coordinator and Equity Task Force with support from the National Council and TWUC staff. It is also open to contributions from TWUC members who are interested in building sustainable relationships between TWUC and these authors as these actions are critical to establishing TWUC in the communities noted and amongst their artists.

Goal: To increase awareness of TWUC with writers from Indigenous, racialized and other historically marginalized communities and build relationships with them.

Objective: To expand TWUC's profile with writers and to increase the diversity of TWUC's membership.

Actions:

- i) The Equity Coordinator will work with the National Council, Equity Task Force, TWUC staff, and interested TWUC members to reach out to Indigenous, racialized and other historically marginalized communities. To do this, it will be essential to put together a list of organizations, events/activities to guide this outreach and to develop communications/promotion materials to support it. **Timeline: Immediate and ongoing.**
- ii) Partner with organizations affiliated with Indigenous, racialized and other historically marginalized groups to both do outreach and mutually build capacity. (For example, Toronto Public Library and University of Toronto recently organized the "Emerging Voices" conference in Toronto, which attracted many young people of colour.) This will be led by the Equity Coordinator in consultation with other TWUC staff. To do this, it will be essential to put together a list of organizations, events and activities to guide this outreach. **Timeline: Immediate and ongoing**
- iii) Develop proactive, positive opportunities to celebrate Canadian writers and TWUC and that engage Indigenous, racialized and other marginalized writers (e.g. International Festival of Authors event, National Writers' Day). This will be led by the Equity Coordinator working with the National Council, Equity Task Force, and staff. **Timeline: Fall 2018 with report in Winter 2019.**

Resources:

All TWUC staff will work with the Equity Coordinator to support this outreach and to provide communications on this initiative. This may require specialized communications – emails, newsletters, social media.

Funding will be available for the Equity Coordinator to travel to TWUC regions to convene meetings for these actions. It would be advisable for the Equity Coordinator to visit each region at least once per year and that any outreach visit is supported by the National Council's Regional representative.

TWUC staff responsible for membership and communications will work with the Equity Coordinator to support outreach to interested members and to provide communications informing on this initiative. These should be done in coordination with the Equity Coordinator's travel and promotion of activities.

For Item # (i), it will be important for those involved to set specific outreach targets on an annual basis to guide implementation and to assess regularly.

Any special events as noted in (iii) will require funding to coordinate, promote and convene. Such event(s) might be associated with TWUC's annual meeting, regional meetings and/or with the National Readings Program in partnership with organizations that are involved in this.

Outcomes:

1. Public awareness regarding TWUC's equity action plans will start and this will set a benchmark regarding outreach targets, reception of outreach and increase in membership.
2. Receptiveness of potential partners as noted in Items # (ii) and (iii) and this becomes a benchmark to measure participation, growth and impact in terms of engaging diverse authors.

Assessment:

This will be based on:

1. The number of communications materials prepared and disseminated and reactions to them;
2. Support provided to the Equity Coordinator by National Council and its Regional representatives;
3. The degree of receptivity to the recommended partnerships, including number of meetings, correspondence, etc.;
4. Notes from the Equity Coordinator regarding the impact of these outreach initiatives and recommendations for further effort.

4.3 Assisting Indigenous, racialized and other historically marginalized writers access to grants, agents and publishing opportunities

This will be a very challenging component of TWUC's action plans as it positions TWUC as both contributing to creating public awareness about these writers but, as well, increasing their relationships with and access to literary agents and publishers.

Goal: To centre writings by Indigenous, racialized and other historically marginalized writers in contemporary Canadian writing

Objectives: To reduce barriers to accessing literary markets for Indigenous, racialized and other historically marginalized writers.

Actions:

- i) Consider providing lower conference fees and membership rates for lower income writers. The Financial Accessibility Task Force has begun this work and will report to National Council on its findings by Spring 2018. The Task Force will consult the Equity Coordinator and Equity Task Force on its findings and recommendations. **Timeline: Spring – Summer 2018.**
- ii) Create and/or partner on an annual public education event/workshop that is specifically geared to Indigenous, racialized, and other historically marginalized writers. This event will involve other writers' associations, e.g., Magazines Canada, the League of Canadian Poets, the Literary Press Guild, the Playwrights Guild of Canada, the Festival Of Literary Diversity. This will be led by the Equity Coordinator working with TWUC staff, National Council, and the Equity Task Force. **Timeline: 2018 and ongoing.**
- iii) Develop events like TWUC/IFOA annual event (panel discussion on varying topics open to TWUC members and the public) in other cities. This will be led by the Equity Coordinator working with the Executive Director and Associate Director. **Timeline: 2018 and ongoing.**
- iv) In tandem with #2, organize a youth forum with a focus on less canonical forms of writing - e.g., spoken word, digital poetry, dub poetry – and focusing on equity and diversity. Equally, this action will provide information on TWUC's Membership Criteria and Reading Programs and how they are being changed and can be accessed. This will be led by the Equity Coordinator working with TWUC staff responsible for event coordination, the Equity Task Force, National Council and Regional Councils. **Timeline:** Start Fall 2018 and with the first possibly to coincide with TWUC's annual meeting.

Resources:

All of the actions noted for this item require financial support and will require TWUC to review its budget to determine capacity and, if necessary, seek new funding for undertaking these initiatives. Given the priority of implementing TWUC's Equity Policy and this workplan, TWUC should hold these annual events for at least the next five (5) years in order to demonstrate interest, sincerity and to build relationships.

Specific items that require financial consideration include:

- the impact of fee reduction for lower income writers;
- convening the actions noted in (ii) and (iv). These could be accommodated as part of TWUC's annual meetings and supported by regional outreach;
- The partnerships noted in (ii) and (iv) will be important to collaborating with other organizations both in terms of achieving mutual goals but, equally, to creating and contributing to public awareness regarding Indigenous, racialized and other marginalized writers. This, in turn, may have an impact on public and institutional bodies (e.g., publishers, schools and universities) who might then turn their attention more directly to these writers, their works and their importance to understanding Canadian identities through literature.

Outcomes:

1. The impact of lower fees will be assessed and, if adopted, action forward will establish a benchmark for member and non-member uptake and impact on TWUC's membership and financial capacities.
2. Items (ii), (iii) and (iv) are similar in outcomes to those noted in 4.2 Outcomes #2.

Assessment:

This will be based on:

1. The number of communications materials prepared and disseminated and reactions to them;
2. Support provided to the Equity Coordinator by National Council and its Regional representatives;
3. The degree of receptivity to the recommended partnerships;
4. Notes from the Equity Coordinator regarding the impact of these outreach initiatives and recommendations for further effort;
5. The status of the proposed event.

4.4 Reviewing membership criteria:

A key aspect of TWUC is its membership and how the organization attracts, supports and retains writers of all genres. For this purpose, TWUC has established membership criteria that acts in a gate-keeping function to ensure the organization represents its mandate and the communities it serves. While this is standard in most organizations, membership criteria may act to limit access to potential membership and, as a result, membership may not be as representative of the full cohort of individuals and communities who might be interested and, potentially eligible, if membership criteria were more broadly based and within a contemporary context that addresses Indigenous and equity issues.

In this context, TWUC's membership criteria relies predominantly on credentials established through publications in 'reputable' presses. Such reliance may reflect the

limitations and biases of these presses that may not be accessible to writers from Indigenous, racialized and other marginalized communities. However, TWUC's By-Law recognizes new formats of publication such as zines, blogs and other social media outlets being used by diverse writers to promote their work. Further, its Membership Criteria states:

8.3... Application for membership shall be made to the Membership Committee. Admission or re-admission may be applied for once a year. The individual who is the applicant for membership must satisfy the following requirements: (a) he or she is a writer who (i) has had a book published by a commercial or academic press **or the equivalent in another format**, (my emphasis) or (ii) has self-published a book that demonstrates commercial intent if three (3) members of TWUC selected by the Membership Committee (whose identity will remain unknown to the applicant) have reviewed the self-published book and attest to its professionalism...

In this context, it would seem TWUC has the ability to provide alternative forms of assessment, particularly to address what is meant by 'the equivalent in another format' which could include zines, blogs, etc.

The opportunities for TWUC to increase its membership through review of membership criteria may enable the organization to remain contemporary in regards to what constitutes 'published writing' and how to represent writers given the impacts of social media and digital technology. This can build TWUC's relationships with these writers, adding its voice and actions to support their concerns as a way of speaking out for Canadian writers and writing. It can also provide an opportunity for TWUC to discuss with these writers the merits of traditional publication of a 'book' and how that form can be transformed to incorporate new modes of expression.

It is with these concerns that the actions below are put forward.

Goal: To increase TWUC's membership in general and particularly with Indigenous, racialized and other historically marginalized writers.

Objective: To identify and eliminate barriers to entry to TWUC membership

Actions:

- i) Provide self-published authors whose applications membership are rejected with the specific reasons for such decisions in order to encourage greater professionalism. This will be implemented by the Membership Coordinator and the Membership Committee in consultation with Equity Coordinator. **Timeline: Immediate and ongoing.**
- ii) Review the application process to ensure it does not include barriers for Indigenous, racialized and other historically marginalized writers. This will be led by the Membership Coordinator and the Membership Committee in consultation with the Equity Coordinator. **Timeline: Immediate with completion by end 2018.**

- iii) Review TWUC's membership criteria including commercial intent and book equivalency in consideration of other criteria that recognizes more diverse professional literary practices, publication and production outside traditional book publishing, e.g., spoken word, CD, DVD, YouTube, zines, popular blogs, online serialization as criteria for membership. National Council should establish a Task Force for such review. Any recommendations for change would then be brought to TWUC's Annual General Meeting for approval. The Task Force should consult with the Equity Coordinator and Equity Task Force.
Timeline: Immediate with completion by end 2018 and recommendations brought forward to TWUC's 2019 annual meeting.

Resources:

These actions are to be led by the Associate Director with the involvement of the National Council and in consultation with the Membership Coordinator, Membership Committee, Equity Task Force, Equity Coordinator, and staff.

Outcomes:

1. Membership criteria will be relevant to contemporary Canadian writing and its formats. This will provide benchmarks in terms of the formats used by TWUC members and an incentive to potential new members;
2. TWUC's current membership may increase with writers who meet the new criteria and apply. This information should be captured in the membership form and aggregated to provide a benchmark to measure growth.

Assessment:

This will be based on:

1. The number of communications materials prepared and disseminated and reactions to them;
2. Support provided to the Equity Coordinator by National Council and its Regional representatives;
3. The impact of this initiative in terms of increasing membership;
4. Notes from the Equity Coordinator regarding the impact of these initiatives and recommendations for further effort.

4.5 Diversity in TWUC leadership:

Similar to TWUC's membership, the organization's leadership is important in regard to the issues it addresses and how it sets priorities. Over the years, TWUC has advanced some actions to ensure its leadership is diverse, including establishing an Equity Task Force and to mandating advocacy positions on its National Council for Indigenous and racialized members.

However, while these initiatives are a start, TWUC needs to ensure consistency in its representation on its decision-making bodies. This is a challenge since positions on its National Council are determined by votes of its members. It is logical, therefore, that

TWUC's leadership will reflect its members and this may limit TWUC in establishing leadership reflective of diverse writers.

Goal: To have TWUC's leadership reflect the demographics of the Canadian population and its writers.

Objective: To eliminate barriers to TWUC's leadership by establishing mechanisms to identify and build structural support to ensuring access to such leadership by Indigenous, racialized and other marginalized writers

Actions:

- i) Provide education and training on Indigenous and equity issues to those involved in TWUC programming and leadership so they are better equipped to address equity issues within TWUC. Such a program will be coordinated by the Equity Coordinator and involve an external facilitator to develop and deliver this program for all TWUC staff. An online component should also be developed for members of National Council and the Equity Task Force. **Timeline: 2018 with refreshers provided each year by the Equity Coordinator based on her/his work supporting implementation of these action plans and other issues that may arise in the implementation process.**
- ii) Work to ensure Indigenous, racialized, and other historically marginalized communities are reflected in TWUC's leadership. The Nominating Committee and National Council will review this in consultation with the Executive and Associate Directors, the Equity Coordinator, Equity Task Force, and members. This will include reviewing the protocols and structure of the Nominating Committee and looking at ways to diversify the Nominating Committee. **Timeline: 2018 with recommendations for change to be presented to the 2019 annual meeting.**
- iii) Ensure equity criteria is a priority in the hiring of TWUC staff. The Equity Coordinator will work with the Executive and Associate Directors and the National Executive to develop this. **Timeline: January – December 2018.**
- iv) Establish a standing position on National Council for TWUC's Equity Task Force. If membership approval is required, TWUC National Council can take an interim measure of inviting a representative of the Equity Task Force to attend/participate in its meetings. Currently two members of the Equity Task Force sit on the National Council, however without an intentional position there could be times when no member of the Equity Task Force sits on National Council. While the Equity Task Force may be sought out by National Council on matters concerning equity, it may not be for other deliberations where equity issues may apply. **Timeline: Immediate.**

Resources:

For Item iv), it is important to note TWUC's By-Law that states:

6.1 Appointment. The members of the National Executive and the Executive Director shall be the officers of TWUC. **The National Council may from time to**

time appoint and supervise such additional officers as the National Council may determine (my emphasis). The National Council may specify the duties of and, in accordance with This By-law and subject to the Act, delegate to any officers powers to manage the activities and affairs of TWUC, except those which pertain to items which, under This By-law or the Act, must be done by the National Council or the membership. Unless a member of the National Executive, an officer may but need not be a director. Subject to Section 4.1 of This By-law, any person may hold more than one office.

This clearly indicates that such an action can be taken immediately.

There is a cost for the education/training. A full day of training will require one day prep and one day delivery at an estimate of \$500 per day for a total of \$1,000.00. This assumes that all support materials, space, copying etc. are covered by TWUC.

Outcomes:

1. All TWUC staff and leadership will receive appropriate education and training. This will establish information to determine additional learning needs and delivery mechanisms.
2. TWUC's leadership will be consistently diverse in representation. Benchmark data can be compiled on this in 2018 and measured each year or whenever there is turnover.
3. The Equity Task Force will have permanent standing with National Council.

Assessment:

This will be based on:

1. The preparation, delivery and evaluation of the education/training;
2. The changes for leadership criteria and selection as adopted/recommended by National Council and the Nominating Committee;
3. The number of communications materials prepared and disseminated and reactions to them;
4. In the event any changes require member approval, the quality of the discussion (if any) on this and the outcomes;
5. Support provided to the Equity Coordinator by National Council and its Regional representatives;
6. Notes from the Equity Coordinator regarding the impact of these initiatives and recommendations for further effort.

4.6 Equity in the National Readings Program:

At the outset of this initiative, it must be noted that TWUC does not select authors to support in this program but, rather, responds to requests from institutions and others hosting reading series. Further, these requests were responded to on a first-come, first-served basis. As such, TWUC's role can serve as advisory to these reading programs and, if necessary, TWUC can refuse to provide funding to reading programs that do not adhere to TWUC's Equity Policy.

Goal: To promote Indigenous, racialized and other marginalized writers in reading programs supported by TWUC

Objective: To eliminate barriers to readings supported by TWUC that limit the involvement of diverse writers.

Actions:

Establish specific application deadlines as appropriate and develop criteria with an equity lens for submissions that address this issue;

Develop a jury to review applications and make selections. This jury should have representation from the Equity Task Force and be coordinated by the Equity Coordinator;

Partner with other organizations that provide ongoing reading series to promote this program, e.g., Festival of Literary Diversity, Shab-She'r Readings. **Timeline: Initiate in 2018 and ongoing;**

Reach out to venues serving diverse populations. This can include libraries, universities, colleges and school boards. **Timeline: Initiate in 2018 and ongoing;**

Encourage the inclusion of spoken word and other formats of literary practice in this program. **Timeline: Initiate in 2018 and ongoing;**

Resources:

The actions noted here will be led by the Equity Coordinator and the Office Administrator with the involvement of the National Council and Equity Task Force. This will require:

- a) communications to past and potential reading series organizations to promote this initiative;
- b) informing Indigenous, racialized and other marginalized writers about how they might engage reading series organizers;
- c) developing promotional materials highlighting Indigenous, racialized and historically marginalized members to encourage hosts to offer diverse programming;
- d) gathering data on the engagement of reading series organizers that support this initiative; and
- e) establishing protocols on actions to be taken in the event reading series organizers do not support this approach, including the withholding of funding for a reading series.

There is the likelihood of a small financial contribution to develop promotional materials.

|

Outcomes:

1. Applicant organizations will provide diverse reading rosters and TWUC juries will select based on equity criteria. Benchmark data can be compiled here to assess growth over time and to guide TWUC in future actions on this item.
2. The number of partner organizations is captured and provide a benchmark for future development.
3. TWUC outreach efforts will be gathered and the success of such tabulated to form a benchmark for growth. As part of this, TWUC will need to establish the number of reading programs it has supported in the past to determine if there is any growth.

Assessment:

This will be based on:

1. The consistency of the developed criteria with TWUC's Equity Policy and other commitments to equity
2. The diversity of the composition of the jury that selects venues that meet the selection criteria.
3. The number of communications materials prepared and disseminated and reactions to them
4. Support provided to the Equity Coordinator by National Council and its Regional representatives
5. The degree of receptivity to the recommended partnerships.
6. Notes from the Equity Coordinator regarding the impact of these outreach initiatives and recommendations for further effort.

Further, in the event the reading series' organizers do not support TWUC's intent to diversify selected readers, TWUC may need to consider implementing a 50% diversity component, subject to regular review by National Council. TWUC may also seek out alternative hosts for this program.

4.7 Equity in the Ontario Writers'-In-The-Schools Program

As with the above, TWUC does not select authors to support in this program but, rather, responds to requests from schools. Further, these requests were responded to on a first-come, first-served basis. As such, TWUC's role can serve as advisory to these reading programs and, if necessary, TWUC can refuse to provide funding to reading programs that do not adhere to TWUC's Equity Policy.

Goal: To promote Indigenous, racialized and other marginalized writers in reading programs supported by TWUC

Objective: To eliminate barriers to readings supported by TWUC that limit the involvement of diverse writers.

Actions:

- i) Establish specific application deadlines as appropriate and develop criteria with an equity lens for submissions that address this issue.
- ii) Develop a jury to review applications and make selections. This jury should have representation from the Equity Task Force and be coordinated by the Equity Coordinator.
- iii) Reach out to schools serving Indigenous and diverse populations. This can be done through communications with school boards and with the Ontario Arts Council's 'Artists in Schools and Communities' program. **Timeline: Fall 2018 and ongoing.**
- iv) Partner with other organizations that provide ongoing reading series to promote this program, e.g., Festival of Literary Diversity, Shab-She'r Readings, Toronto District School Board Dare to Create. **Timeline: Fall 2018 and ongoing.**
- v) Encourage the inclusion of spoken word and other formats of literary practice in this program. **Timeline: Fall 2018 and ongoing.**

Resources:

The actions noted here will be led by the Equity Coordinator and Office Administrator with the involvement of the National Council and Equity Task Force. This will require:

- a) communications to past and potential schools to promote this initiative;
- b) informing Indigenous, racialized and other marginalized writers about how they might engage reading series;
- c) developing promotional materials highlighting Indigenous, racialized and historically marginalized members to encourage schools to offer diverse programming;
- d) gathering data on the engagement of reading series organizers that support this initiative; and
- e) establishing protocols on actions to be taken in the event reading series organizers do not support this approach, including the withholding of funding for reading series.

There is the likelihood of a small financial contribution to develop promotional materials.

Outcomes:

1. Applicant schools will provide diverse reading rosters and TWUC juries will select based on equity criteria. Benchmark data can be compiled here to assess growth over time and to guide TWUC in future actions on this item.

2. The number of partner organizations is captured and provide a benchmark for future development.
3. TWUC outreach efforts will be gathered and the success of such tabulated to form a benchmark for growth. As part of this, TWUC will need to establish the number of reading programs it has supported in the past to determine if there is any growth.

Assessment:

This will be based on:

1. The consistency of the developed criteria with TWUC's Equity Policy and other commitments to equity
2. The diversity of the composition of the jury that selects venues that meet the selection criteria.
3. The number of communications materials prepared and disseminated and reactions to them
4. Support provided to the Equity Coordinator by National Council and its Regional representatives
5. The degree of receptivity to the recommended partnerships.
6. Notes from the Equity Coordinator regarding the impact of these initiatives and recommendations for further effort.

Further, in the event the reading series' organizers do not support TWUC's intent to diversify selected readers, TWUC may need to consider implementing a 50% diversity component, subject to regular review by National Council.

4.8 Equity in *Write Magazine*:

While this is a TWUC core program long-established and with some attention paid previously to Indigenous and racialized writers, the 'fiasco' that hit the magazine's (and TWUC's) credibility was clearly on public display after its spring 2017 issue. Interestingly, the challenges of cultural appropriation have been discussed in various genres (see MY CARFAC presentation) and seem to show no signs of abating (editors 'cult appropriation prize').

Specific to TWUC, issues of cultural appropriation were first raised in 1989 and were a key item for discussion in TWUC's *Writing Through Race* conference of 1994 (check social justice report). That this issue would emerge again as it did in the spring of 2017 demonstrates TWUC's lack of movement on this issue and how damaging such an ignoring can be to its mandate to reflect Canadian writers and writing.

While TWUC has published issues of **Write Magazine** (sources) that include and/or focus on writers/writing of Indigenous and racialized writers, it has not done so consistently and, further, this clearly requires an equity lens that will both ensure it promotes the writing of diverse writers, their stories and formats in which these are told; but, as well, ensure that this magazine does not publish materials that are contrary to its interests in this area.

While **Write Magazine** has published articles by Indigenous and racialized writers, TWUC needs to ensure consistency here and this will require adherence to its representation on

the magazine's editorial board and to developing trusting relationships with Indigenous, racialized and other marginalized writers so that they contribute to its pages.

Goal: To have **Write Magazine** reflect the demographics of the Canadian population and its writers.

Objective: To eliminate barriers to **Write Magazine** by establishing mechanisms to identify and build structural support to ensuring access to its editorial board and to its engaging Indigenous, racialized and other marginalized writers

Actions:

- i) Ensure adequate representation in **Write** by involving Indigenous, racialized, and other historically marginalized writers on the *Write* Editorial Board. This will be led by the National Council in consultation with the Equity Coordinator and Equity Task Force. **To date:** TWUC's Write Editorial Board policy has been amended to include one representative of the Equity Task Force, and equity considerations were applied when assembling the full editorial board. **Timeline: Immediate and ongoing.**
- ii) Ensure protocols for editing all issues of *Write* build in accountability to issues of Indigeneity, race, colonialism, and other forms of marginalization. This will be led by the National Council in consultation with the Equity Coordinator and Equity Task Force. **To date:** The Write Editorial Guidelines have been updated and the process for each issue includes a sensitivity reading. **Timeline: January – June 2019.**
- iii) Equity-sensitive hiring, including specific equity criteria in job call and description, for next editor of *Write* to encourage applicants who are Indigenous, racialized or otherwise historically marginalized. This will be led by the Executive Director in consultation with the National Council and the Equity Coordinator. Several items may need to be considered such as the criteria in job descriptions including job-related equity components. **Timeline: Fall 2018 and for every selected editor afterwards.**
- iv) Dedicate a future issue of *Write* to bringing historical context to cultural appropriation, Indigenous writers, and racialized writers. This will be led by the Write Editor. It will also require outreach and communications to interested writers, particularly Indigenous, racialized and other marginalized writers. **To date:** TWUC has already appointed Indigenous author Cherie Dimaline, who will be the guest editor for the next issue of Write magazine, which will address the issues noted above. For future issues, consultation will take place with the Equity Task Force and Equity Coordinator. **Timeline: Fall 2018 and for every selected issue thereafter.**

Resources:

This issue will require the involvement of the National Council and Equity Task Force in consultation with the Equity Coordinator.

For Item (iv), writers will need to be invited to contribute to ongoing issues of **Write Magazine** to keep a profile on this issue and its importance to transforming Canadian writing.

Outcomes:

1. The representation on **Write Magazine** will be compiled and used as a benchmark to ensure appropriate representation at all times;
2. The content of **Write Magazine** will be reviewed to determine the focus of its content and how it includes diverse writings.

Benchmarks can be set in 2018 based on TWUC's representation of writers and content. These can be used to set annual benchmarks aimed at ensuring continuity and, if necessary, growth.

Assessment:

This will be based on:

1. The number of communications materials prepared and disseminated and reactions to them;
2. The coherence of any protocols and the Editor job criteria in promotion, recruitment and accountability to TWUC's commitments to equity;
3. Support provided to the Equity Coordinator by National Council and its Regional representatives;
4. Notes from the Equity Coordinator regarding the impact of these initiatives and recommendations for further effort.

If the above actions are not implemented well, TWUC may need to turn over *Write* to Indigenous and other racialized editors and writers for a number of issues in consultation with the Equity Task Force. This may be led by the Equity Coordinator with the involvement of the Equity Task Force and National Council. It will also require outreach and communications to interested writers, particularly Indigenous, racialized and other marginalized writers.

4.9 Diversity in TWUC's Manuscript Evaluation Service:

TWUC's Manuscript Evaluation Service engages its members in reviewing and commenting on manuscripts received from writers who are seeking critical feedback on their work. This is a fee-for-service program where the expectant writer pays for the assessment and, as such, provides a stipend for TWUC reviewer.

To implement changes to this service, TWUC will either need to secure members who are willing to work on a sliding scale and/or secure external funding so that costs are not a barrier to this program

Goal: To enable writers of diverse backgrounds to receive critical feedback on their work.

Objective: To reduce and/or eliminate financial barriers to having writers' works reviewed by TWUC members.

Actions:

- i) Offer the manuscript evaluation service on sliding scale to attract Indigenous, racialized, and other historically marginalized writers. This will require agreement by TWUC reviewers to accept this or TWUC will need to raise funds to provide support to such writers who request this service. This will be led by the Equity Coordinator with support from TWUC staff. **Timeline: Winter-spring 2019.**
- ii) Partner with other organizations to promote this program, e.g., Festival of Literary Diversity, Shab-She'r Readings. This will be led by the Equity Coordinator with support from TWUC staff. **Timeline: Winter-spring 2019.**

Resources:

The challenging issue here is the funding required to offset costs associated with this service. This can be done by:

- a) inviting TWUC member reviewers to work on a sliding scale; and/or
- b) raising funds through grant requests and/or a fundraising campaign.

Promoting this action will have minimal costs in terms of promotional (communications) materials and keeping track of those who accept the offer to work on a sliding scale. However, it will likely be important for TWUC to seek funding and this can be done on an online campaign and as a pitch to foundations, corporate sponsors and arts funding bodies.

Outcomes:

1. Applicants may receive reduce rates for this services. Benchmarks can be made to determine/assess who applies and their social identity.
2. TWUC outreach efforts will be gathered and the success of such tabulated to form a benchmark for growth.

Assessment:

This will be based on:

1. The number of communications materials prepared and disseminated and reactions to them;
2. The number of members who respond positively to this item;
3. The strategy and completion of fundraising activities and grant applications, their targets and number of proposals and their success;
4. Notes from the Equity Coordinator regarding the impact of these initiatives and recommendations for further effort.

4.10 Advocacy

As an organization representing and acting on the interests of writers, TWUC addresses issues in law, legislation and in letters of all kinds (e.g., magazines, newspapers, social media) to advocate for its members. One recent example is the copyright issue with Canadian universities that was successfully concluded.

In supporting Indigenous, racialized and other marginalized writers, TWUC will need to establish an agenda that addresses funders, publishers, legislators with the aim of inviting them to support these writers.

Goal: To raise the profile of Indigenous, racialized and other marginalized writers in the public as well as amongst publishers and funders

Objective: To identify specific issues and concerns of Indigenous, racialized and other marginalized writers and to advocate with these writers and on their behalf on their particular concerns and as part of TWUC's ongoing advocacy on all matters.

Actions:

- i) Work with under-represented writers to open doors in publishing and agent worlds. Use TWUC website to raise awareness of writers from diverse backgrounds and **coordinate this activity with those noted in [4.2](#) Actions.**
- ii) Initiate a campaign to raise awareness of writers from diverse backgrounds, particularly from Indigenous, racialized and other historically marginalized writers. **This action can be combined with activities noted in Action #1.**
- iii) Identify any income disparities involving Indigenous, racialized, other historically marginalized writers and women and advocate to publishers and granting bodies to take up specific initiatives to eliminate these disparities. This advocacy work will also include addressing the gender gap identified in TWUC's 2015 Income Survey which found that female book authors made 55% that of their male counterparts. The Executive Director and Chair, in consultation with the Equity Coordinator and Equity Task Force, will address this with Hill Strategies and both the Ontario Arts Council and Canada Council for the Arts that fund the latter's research. **Timeline: Fall 2018 – Spring 2019**
- iv) Bridge the divide between "on the page" and "on the stage" (e.g. spoken word) writers by advocating for common programs and services for these writers, particularly those who are Indigenous, racialized, and other historically marginalized writers. This will be led by the Equity Coordinator and Equity Task Force who will report to National Council and TWUC members on a definition of related terms and actions to guide this initiative. **Timeline: Winter – Spring 2020**
- v) Create spoken word or literary performance events across the country to promote this form of writing as a valued contemporary expression. **This action can be combined with activities noted in [4.2](#) and [4.3](#) Actions.**

Resources:

Items (i), (ii) and (v) can be combined with those of [4.2](#). Items (iii) and (iv) will require requisite staff time and involvement of the National Council and Equity Task Force.

Outcomes:

1. The number and diversity of writers who agree to work with TWUC on these actions.
2. Items (i), (ii) and (v) are similar to Outcomes in [4.2](#) and 5.3
3. Item (iv) will need definition in order to establish a benchmark to assess impact.

Assessment:

This will be based on:

1. Items (i), (ii) and (v) are similar to [4.2](#)
2. Notes from the Executive Director and Equity Coordinator regarding the impact of these initiatives and recommendations for further effort.

4.11 Diversity in Juries:

TWUC has several juries that assist in the selection of writers for various opportunities and programs, e.g., awards. The make-up of these juries is currently done on a voluntary basis involving members and there is no specific reference to the representation of Indigenous, racialized and other marginalized writers to be part of these bodies; nor is there any orientation/education on issues concerning these writers to the selected juries.

Goal: To have TWUC juries reflect the demographics of the Canadian population and its writers.

Objective: To eliminate barriers to jury selection in order to engage Indigenous, racialized and other marginalized writers.

Actions:

- i) Ensure a defined number of jury members are from Indigenous, racialized and other historically marginalized groups. This will be led by the Equity Coordinator and the Equity Task Force in consultation with the National Council. This may require TWUC to engage non-members from these writing communities and such selection is explicitly supported through By-law 5.7 which states: "The members in attendance at a Meeting of Members may from time to time establish committees, task forces or working groups and may make appointments or request National Council to make appointments to serve on such advisory bodies, howsoever designated, which may include persons who are not members of TWUC, or may call for volunteers from the membership." **Timeline: Initiate in Spring 2018 and ongoing.**

- ii) Provide education and training on Indigenous and equity issues to selected jurors. This will be led by the Equity Coordinator to ensure jurors are aware of TWUC's Equity Policy, these action plans and application to their work. **Timeline: Spring – Fall 2018.**
- iii) Open each jury to one non-member who is Indigenous, racialized or from another marginalized group as a way to invite non-members to participate in TWUC activities and to gain more insight into how it operates. This can be helpful to TWUC's efforts to build relationships with these writers that may lead to positively increasing TWUC's profile and its membership. **Timeline: See Action (i) above**
- iv) Monitor the nominations and selection of jurors to assess involvement of Indigenous, racialized and other marginalized writers and their writing practices. This will be led by the Equity Coordinator and the Equity Task Force in consultation with the National Council. **Timeline: annually.**

Resources:

These initiatives will be coordinated by the Equity Coordinator, TWUC staff responsible for this program. The National Council and Equity Task Force should also be involved in promoting this initiative.

Funding will be needed to prepare materials for education/orientation of selected jury members.

Outcomes:

1. All TWUC juries will include representation from Indigenous and racialized writers in proportion to their percentage as writers.
2. Criteria will be established to promote jury diversity
3. All jurors will receive appropriate education/training.
4. Jury decisions will be benchmarked to assess impact of these actions on diversifying awards and other opportunities TWUC provides.

Assessment:

This will be based on:

1. The number of communications materials prepared and disseminated, and reactions to them;
2. The number of members and non-members who respond to this item and the quality of their responses;
3. Notes from the Equity Coordinator regarding the impact of these initiatives and recommendations for further effort.

4.12 Awards and Competitions:

TWUC annually selects writers for its various awards. The current criteria for such awards do not address issues related to the representation of Indigenous, racialized and other marginalized writers.

Goal: To have TWUC awards reflect the demographics of the Canadian population and its writers.

Objective: To eliminate barriers to TWUC awards to engage Indigenous, racialized and other marginalized writers.

Actions:

- i) Promote these awards programs to Indigenous, racialized and historically marginalized writers. This will be led by TWUC staff responsible for this activity and in consultation with the Equity Coordinator. **Timeline: Winter 2018 and ongoing.**
- ii) Provide award information to Indigenous, racialized and other marginalized publishers, e.g., Mawenzi House, Theytus, and Kegedonce Press. This will be led by TWUC staff responsible for this activity and in consultation with the Equity Coordinator. **Timeline: Winter 2018 and ongoing.**
- iii) Ensure the criteria for these awards include elements that reflect the diversity of Indigenous, racialized and other marginalized writers and their writing practices. This will be led by TWUC staff responsible for this activity and in consultation with the Equity Coordinator. **Timeline: Winter 2018 and ongoing.**
- iv) Monitor the nominations and selection of awardees to assess involvement of Indigenous, racialized and other marginalized writers and their writing practices. This will be led by TWUC staff responsible for this activity and in consultation with the Equity Coordinator. **Timeline: annually.**

Resources:

These initiatives will be coordinated by the Equity Coordinator with the involvement of TWUC staff responsible for this program and for communications, re, promotion of these awards as noted in items (iv) and (v). The Equity Task Force, National and Regional Councils should also be involved in promoting this initiative.

Outcomes:

1. The number of promotional materials circulated to groups noted in Item # (i) and (ii) and their responsiveness to this, e.g., their sharing these promotional materials.
2. The change in criteria may increase the number of Indigenous, racialized and other marginalized writers nominated and successful.
3. Benchmark data will be captured to assess success and further steps.

Assessment:

This will be based on:

1. The number of communications materials prepared and disseminated and reactions to them
2. The number of members who respond positively to this item;
3. Notes from the Equity Coordinator regarding the impact of these initiatives and recommendations for further effort.

In addition to these, it may be advisable to establish specific awards for Indigenous, racialized and other marginalized writers. If such is done, funding will need to be sought or set-aside to offer such a prize(s).

4.13 Voluntary Self-Identification

The discrepancies noted in the two survey cohorts are critical. The general survey response to this indicates that 43.10% support voluntary self-identification while 38.3% oppose it and 18.57% are uncertain. Meanwhile, the cohort of those who self-identified in the survey as Indigenous, racialized and otherwise marginalized members indicates that 65.41% favour voluntary self-identification with only 20.3% opposed and 14.29% uncertain.

This presents a rather significant gap between the two cohorts of TWUC's membership and raises critical issues to the action plans noted above for the following reasons:

- Voluntary self-identification will enable TWUC to implement more effectively many of the actions pertaining to outreach, promotion of Indigenous, racialized and other marginalized writers for readings, advocacy, publishing etc. Without this, it will be quite challenging for TWUC to take needed action to support these writers; and
- Promotion of diverse writers and their stories has the potential to influence the public's reading behaviours and generate opportunities for enhanced understanding of stories from these writers and their communities/subjects

Voluntary self-identification is an essential component to any organization seeking to be equitable as it provides quantitative data based on social characteristics to establish a base-line of an organization's cohorts – members, employees, board, volunteers, suppliers of goods and services – and, through this, can assess and act on any inequities that the data presents to ensure it is truly representative of the communities served.

In this context, it is critical to reference the definition of equity noted earlier. A uniquely Canadian concept employed by now Supreme Court Justice Rosalie Abella⁸⁵, equity takes into consideration the status of social groups and their representation. A key element of this is identifying both dominant and marginalized communities and noting the disparities

⁸⁵ See **Equality In Employment, 1985**

between them. **This then leads to clearly defined actions to remedy such disparities in order to achieve equality of results.**

Goal: To ensure TWUC membership reflects the diversity of Canadian writers and its population.

Objective: To eliminate barriers to participation in TWUC by Indigenous, racialized and other historically marginalized writers

Actions:

- i) The Equity Coordinator will work with TWUC staff to prepare the voluntary self-identification form. Such a form also will invite TWUC members to indicate if they wish to have their identities included on TWUC's website of members. **Timeline: Spring – Fall 2018**
- ii) TWUC's membership staff will devise a mechanism to ensure privacy and that this data is stored with access limited to TWUC staff. **Timeline: Spring – Fall 2018.**
- iii) The Equity Coordinator will draft communications to TWUC members to indicate how the data will be accessed and used. **Timeline: Fall 2018 – Winter 2019 and ongoing promotion/updates and education as to the importance of this data, how it will be gathered, stored and used.**
- iv) The National Council and Equity Task Force will support the actions noted above and receive annual reports from the Equity Coordinator on its status. **Timeline: As noted above.**

Resources:

The resources required for this are specific to having an ongoing campaign to engage members in this initiative. Funds will also be needed to set up the appropriate data base to store and aggregate the responses and to adjust TWUC members pages to add social identities for those who have given approval to do so.

Outcomes:

1. TWUC will have a sense of the diversity of its members and this will assist in developing its programs and its equity action plans.
2. TWUC's website will provide information on the social identities of its writers who voluntarily agree to such.
3. Communications to members and non-members will be gathered and responses to such compiled and assessed to determine next steps in promoting these actions.

Assessment:

This will be based on:

1. The number of communications materials prepared and disseminated and reactions to them;
2. The clarity of the purposes for this data collection to affect systemic change and TWUC's relationships with its partners and external bodies it deals with;
3. The number of members who respond positively to this item;
4. The security of the data system developed to house the responses;
5. Changes to the member information on TWUC website;
6. Notes from the Equity Coordinator and Membership staff regarding the impact of these initiatives and recommendations for further effort.

5 Next Steps:

There can be no doubt that there is a significant amount of work for TWUC to do in order to implement its stated commitments on equity and diversity. No more than 16 years after its establishment, Indigenous writers raised concerns about cultural appropriation to TWUC, which was followed by 28 years of initiatives that, for the most part, did not lead to [action/change](#), particularly systemic and long-term change. In this context, it is quite ironic that the issue of cultural appropriation would rise up again as it did in the matter of the spring 2017 **Write Magazine** and that this happened in the midst of this project to develop equity implementation action plans for TWUC. Even though the process that has now led to the creation of this report had been [already initiated](#) in the fall of 2016, the **Write Magazine** issue [half a year later](#) became a lightning rod [for controversy](#) across the Canadian literary landscape as well as across other arts disciplines.

As captured in documents addressing challenges in implementing TWUC's many [equity-related](#) statements and resolutions, even though adopted by TWUC members, TWUC [had not developed](#) the appropriate mechanisms to implement these and, as a result, very little has been done to [date in order to action](#) its commitments to equity. This may have had the effect of indirectly communicating to its members and the larger literary community that these statements and positions are not important. Therefore, the June 2017 equity implementation survey that captured members' thoughts on priorities for action has received many comments – both positive and negative.

While not surprising, the negative responses seem to suggest that implementing adopted policy and resolutions should not now be done, even though voted on by the members. For example, as noted earlier the survey was designed to establish implementation priorities for TWUC and no other reason. Despite this, several responses suggested that this was not appropriate and contrary to developing and promoting the quality of writing in Canada. In some cases, member responses forcefully challenge this approach, calling into question previous TWUC commitments.⁸⁶

⁸⁶ [See section 5.3](#)

At the same time, a number of TWUC documents cite an inability to move on certain matters as a result of its By-Laws.⁸⁷ This has led to delaying implementation and/or requiring member approval for what has already been decided.

These issues are addressed here. On one hand, the By-Laws are critical to providing a framework for the organization's decision-making. However, these have not been reviewed through the lens of its Statement of Principle, By-Law #1 and Equity Policy, policy statements which over-ride all other TWUC policies and procedures and require that they be aligned to conform with these primary value statements.

As for member responses to the June 2017 survey, they provide clear indicators of the support TWUC will receive and the resistance it will face in the implementation of these action plans.

5.1 TWUC By-laws:

TWUC's Statement of Principle, By-Law #1 and Equity Policy have been discussed earlier on. However, it is worth referencing once again their central importance to all that TWUC does. These statements are bold assertions of TWUC's intent and, given their nature, are binding on the entire organization, its operations, governance, staffing and relationship to members, the broader literary community and external institutions and organizations that rely on TWUC for their reading series. As such, any By-Law that may conflict with these matters must be reviewed and revised to ensure consistency.

Earlier on in this report, the specifics of some of these statements are provided to underscore the implementation of action plans. These include reference to By-Laws 3.7 (Action by the National Council), 5.7 (Other Committees, Task Forces or Working Groups established by Membership), and 6.1 Appointment (of additional National Council Members).

In this section, the focus is on what the National Council can do in-between member referendum and annual general members' meetings. TWUC's By-Laws are rather clear about this process as noted below.

11.3 Amendments. Amendments to This By-law shall be submitted to the National Council and presented to the membership to be approved in accordance with the Act and the following procedures:

(a) Subject to Sections 11.3(b) and 11.3(c) of This By-law, and as permitted by the Act, *the National Council may, by resolution, enact amendments to This By-Law (each, an "Amendment"). Any Amendment so enacted by National Council shall be effective immediately upon approval by the National Council, but shall be submitted to the members at the next Meeting of Members for ratification, (my emphasis) further amendment or repeal by an ordinary resolution of members at the Meeting of Members. If further amended at the Meeting of Members, any such further amendment to an Amendment shall be effective from the date of the Meeting of Members. If the Amendment is repealed, such Amendment will cease to have effect from the date of the Meeting of Members.*

⁸⁷ [Documents on file.](#)

Subsections (b) and (c) to this section of the By-Laws are not in conflict with this.

5.2 Items Requiring Proposals to Members

There are several issues that may need approval of TWUC membership. For example, providing services to non-members from Indigenous, racialized and other marginalized writers, TWUC will need to develop relationships with these writers which will likely take time and test TWUC's sincerity in representing them. One way to build trust and relationships with such writers can be to offer them the same services that are now offered to TWUC membership. However, current TWUC members may not be supportive of such a development and/or may not see the benefit of offering TWUC services to non-members as a way to build relationships, and possibly membership over time.

Here are the services Indigenous, racialized and other marginalized non-members would likely find valuable:

- National Writing Program and Writers in Schools: Open up this program to non-members who are from Indigenous, racialized and historically marginalized communities.
- Expand TWUC programs to non-members from Indigenous, racialized and other historically marginalized writers. This is a decision National Council needs to make in consultation with the Equity Task Force. Once done, the Equity Coordinator can include this in the outreach, communications and promotions of TWUC initiatives to support Indigenous, racialized and other marginalized writers.
- For Manuscript Evaluation Service: Open up the program to allow non-members who are from Indigenous, racialized and historically marginalized communities to be evaluators in the program. This will be led by the Equity Coordinator with support from TWUC staff.
- Juries: Open each jury to one non-member who is Indigenous, racialized, or otherwise historically marginalized.

Actions for these items can easily be included in the appropriate action plans noted above. They can be key elements to outreach and engagement that can assist TWUC in representing a more diverse range of Canadian writers and may lead to increases in TWUC membership.

5.3 Support and Resistance:

During the process of this project, I've come across and encountered both encouragement and resistance. In some cases the encouragement has been shared with exclamations of the importance of this work and of hopefulness for an immediate and sustained relationship with this longstanding arts services organization, TWUC. On the other hand, the resistance has ranged from thoughtful to [clichéd](#) to outright rejection of the concept of equity, and of equity becoming embedded as a core value in TWUC's governance and operations.

The sources for comments range from those invoked by the **Write** magazine issue to the focus groups held and comments received in the survey, as well as to online blogs [by TWUC members](#), and commentary on social media.

It will be essential to both garner support and address resistance as TWUC [is taking on the implementation of](#) action plans.

5.3.1 Supportive Survey Responses:

Positive survey responses were emphatic, but often tinged with skepticism when it came to belief in actual implementation. The skepticism is offered from those who seem to recall earlier and most recent TWUC declarations, resolutions and policy on equity. While supportive, these voices feel that, as in the past, nothing will happen but, at the same time, are hopeful that this moment will be different.

Here a sample of some of these voices:

- TWUC has an opportunity to implement the equity measures that should have happened more than two decades ago. I was thinking about leaving TWUC because of its lack of progress in equity but the resolutions passed at the recent AGM made me decide to stay for another year to support the equity work. (Q 16, A5)
- To be frank, in each of the categories of questions I just answered, I felt that more than one, if not all steps should be taken. [...] Secondly, much of the language in these steps uses words like "consider". These words do not signal commitment to change, they signal the consideration of change, which is very different. I hope that my friends at the Writer's TWUC will do much more than consider changing. Based on what I have just read, hoping seems to be all I can do. (Q16, A82)
- I understood that the hiring of an equity coordinator was a done deal. I wonder why it is still being placed up for grabs in the survey. Still, glad to see this work getting done. Hope we'll move beyond the survey stage and into action soon. (Q16, A 97)
- Excellent work. Writers have a responsibility to be in the forefront of crucial societal change. It takes critical mass to shift the status quo, and any paradigm shift starts with language. (Q16, 111)
- Finally! (Q16, 136)
- I believe that it is possible to avoid endless, unproductive debate on these issues by focusing on practical measures that would increase diversity and improve opportunities for writers from groups that have previously been under-represented. I'm an older, white guy, by the way--but I think this is important. (Q16, A 178)
- This is much needed and shockingly late to become a priority. (Q16, 274)

5.3.2 Signs of Resistance:

While these positive, albeit somewhat guarded comments were offered, there were a range of negative responses as well and these fell largely into three categories:

- A. **Emphasizing the support for equity in general (not defined) terms, but asserting that TWUC's priority should remain the "nuts and bolts" (Q16, A 9)**

of rights and contracts, which is presumed to be incompatible with implementing equity:

- Perhaps the biggest and most loudly unspoken issue is economic diversity. Look around. Which members are neglected right now? Then figure out how to reach out to new members. (Q12, Other A1)
- I would like TWUC to be fair and inclusive, but I don't want it to lose sight of the fact that it represents ALL members regardless of how they self-identify. (Q12, Other A 21)
- Yes, take steps to bring equity into TWUC, but not at the expense of work that affects us all, in particular the fight for fair copyright legislation. (Q12, Other A 25)
- I'd prefer that TWUC devote its efforts to making the works of its authors known to all Canadians. [...] The diversity component will follow. (Q12, Other A 50)
- While I applaud the efforts of TWUC to encourage diversity in writing, ultimately, for all writers to flourish, including indigenous and racialized, we need to be fairly compensated. (Q 12, Other A 67)

Although I agree that equity is an important issue for writers to address, and the sooner the better, we must not forget the other issues and concerns that all writers share, among them copyright and the right of writers to earn a living from their work, [...]. (Q16, A 255)

B. Emphasizing the importance of priority of merit above all else, which is presumed to be incompatible with the implementation of an Equity Plan.

- Don't allow cultural diversity to outweigh literary quality in decision-making or determining awards. (Q12, Other A7)
- My main concern is with maintaining professionalism and ensuring that professionalization is upheld and promoted, as opposed to allowing the promotion of equity and diversity to overshadow the professional standards that have previously characterized TWUC membership requirements, policies, and practices. (Q12, Other A18)
- Nothing should be done for the sake of diversity. It should be done for the sake of qualifications and merit regarding literary matters. (Q12, Other A 21)
- Looking ahead, I am fearful that in our efforts to right [...] past wrongs we are creating a maze of problems for ourselves. We are further stratifying when we should be concentrating on finding the means to ensure an even playing field to support excellence. (Q16, A80)
- I completely support moves towards greater diversity and support for marginalized writers. Please don't confuse this worthy approach with changing or diluting the fundamental purpose of TWUC: protection of and support for Canadian writers committed to the creation of high quality books. (Q16, A170)

C. Outright resentment, frequently based on economic concerns:

- I'm not prepared to turn any organization inside out and take all kinds of time, energy and money to appease anyone. Equity is a wonderful thing but not at the expense of everything else. Sorry. (Q16, A5)
- Since when is TWUC as an entity qualified to determine what is the right number of black, gay, or indigenous authors that any [lit]fest should have? Is TWUC prepared to financially compensate lit fests if TWUC forces those fests to include unworthy authors who hail from a minority-of-the-week and who fail to sell tickets? (Q16, A 47)
- Concerns about over-reaction. Writers should be acknowledged for the quality of their work. Period. Whether a writer is from a minority group should not be a criteria [sic] for awards, etc. It already appears to be the case, though, when one looks at who is short listed and winning awards. (Q16, A 49)
- Support for indigenous people should be axiomatic, but lumping in other people of colour with them is ahistorical and ignores that fact that most non-indigenous people of colour live in cities and are nearly always better placed than white people in provincial cities or rural areas to access agents, publishers, etc. (Q16, A51)
- All I see with this diversity message is that I will be even more marginalized by the publishing establishment because I [am] white, while people from 'minority' backgrounds will have their stories brought forward, access money easily, and get nominated for all the big prizes. (Q16, A75)

8. Conclusion:

I have elected to bring this report to a close citing responses from the June 2017 Equity Survey as I consider these comments somewhat critical for how TWUC moves ahead on equity. At the start of this report, I noted that TWUC has been discussing equity issues for 28 years and, despite policy statements and resolutions – all of which adopted by its membership – TWUC has little evidence to show action and results/outcomes in this area. In this context, while the supportive comments are offered as noted above, there is considerable concern that this current approach to equity be implemented. And now. And now be left like previous declarations adopted by TWUC members.

At the same time, the negative responses, if allowed to influence the National Council's decision-making, will make it impossible for TWUC to live up to its stated commitments to meaningfully engage Indigenous, racialized and other marginalized writers. While it may be tempting to critique these negative responses, it is far more important for TWUC to spend the time to do what it has committed to doing, and that is to implement its equity policies and resolutions. The negative concerns expressed in the survey clearly miss the point about the income inequality amongst writers and, in many cases, tend to hold to unfounded notions that equity reduces quality.

As for the voices of support, they recognize an urgency to have an organization that speaks for all Canadian writers/writing and is specifically focused to engage those writers who have been largely excluded from TWUC. They see this as being contemporary and as preparing for the future.

The background information in this report and the action plans provide TWUC with the rationale for a clear and concise road map to put into place what it has committed itself to and, in this regard, offers TWUC a timely opportunity to do so. Failure to do this likely will result in these writers finding other forums to address their concerns as they may continue to perceive TWUC as an organization that is not interested in them and that TWUC's policies and resolutions are not well meaning. What is challenging here for TWUC is that there are other forums developing, e.g., The Festival of Literary Diversity, that is drawing significant attention from Indigenous, racialized and other marginalized writers.

TWUC's background information in this report gives a candid history of TWUC's discussions on this issue and the socio-demographic sections, particularly regarding the status of marginalized artists paint a picture of the inequities within the community of Canadian writing and how that reflects broader societal inequities. Further, the equity policies of TWUC's major public funders provide a supportive framework for TWUC to move ahead on this implementation process.

The contending sides on this issue certainly present a divide within TWUC's members and are a prompt to TWUC to:

- a) either go ahead with equity implementation and, in doing this, speak directly and convincingly to all Canadian writers about the sincerity of its intentions on equity, particularly to engaging meaningfully Indigenous, racialized and other historically marginalized artists; or
- b) give in to those members articulating disagreement with TWUC's intent to implement its equity commitments and risk the withdrawal and/or opposition of many Canadian writers, particularly Indigenous, racialized and other historically marginalized artists who may publicly raise their concerns that TWUC is denying access to these writers and is in violation of its own commitments.

The former certainly paves the way toward a new future while the latter can cement the image of TWUC within Indigenous, racialized and other historically marginalized communities, as well as the public, as an organization that pays lip service to equity. The former presents TWUC with an opportunity to grow; the latter represents stagnation and may have adverse consequences that can be harmful to TWUC now and in the future.

APPENDIX A

The Writers' Union of Canada

Equity Policy

The Writers' Union of Canada is committed to creating a community that is reflective of the diversity of Canadian writers. We acknowledge and respect the diversity of our members, leadership, volunteers and staff. TWUC recognizes that various historic and structural inequities, due to discrimination based on race, cultural or linguistic background, class, economic status, age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion and/or disability, have created barriers to access and consequently, equity measures are required to promote full participation of our membership in TWUC activities. In doing so, we have the opportunity to create more space for Canadian writers and writing.

Leadership: TWUC will integrate equity principles into its decision-making regarding policies, practices, programs, partnerships and services and will continue to address systemic barriers and historic challenges. Equity and diversity should inform strategic planning discussions, AGM and conference planning and all other TWUC planning and activities.

Inclusiveness: TWUC will foster a welcoming, barrier-free environment, and build and nurture relationships with communities not traditionally involved with TWUC through targeted outreach activities.

Responsiveness: TWUC programs, activities and services will meet and respond to the varied needs of the diversity of Canadian writers.

Diversity: TWUC will strive to ensure that it reflects the diversity of Canadian writers and writing. This includes: National Council, staff, members and volunteers, including task forces, committees, awards juries, events speakers and other representatives. From time to time, TWUC will survey its membership and leadership on equity and diversity issues to evaluate its progress in this regard.