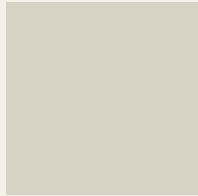
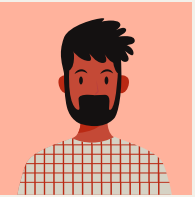


Checkboxes and moral conundrums: Professors with mental illness reflect on campus DEI initiatives

2022 Symposium
Scholarship of Teaching and Learning
Mokakiis Centre for SOTL
November 12, 2022



- Jan Gelech (USask)
- Simonne Horwitz (USask)
- Terri Croteau (USask)
- Jake Bergen (U Winnipeg)
- Carolina de Barros (Queen's)



01

Academics and Mental Illness

Basic background

02

Disability Identities

What? Who?

03

The Current Project

The Academic Mental Illness
Project; Research Approach

04

Yes or No?

What factors underlie decisions to
identify as 'disabled'?

05

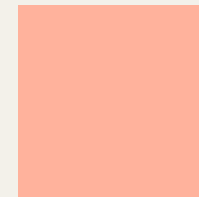
Implications

So what?

06

Next Steps

Now what?



Academics and Mental Illness



Distinct, Large Equity- Seeking Group

- Bourgeault et al. (2022)
- Catano et al. (2010)
- Winefield et al. (2003)

Benefits of Instructor Diversity

- Maruyama & Moreno (2000)
- Milem (2003)

DEI Initiatives: 'Disability Umbrella'

- Smith (2019)
- Turpin (2015)

Example:



Self Declaration ✕

Self declaration helps us understand the richness and diversity of the community to which we all belong and we invite all members to review and update their self declaration information. We believe that having employees who reflect the diversity of our student body and our province makes us a better university. Each employee and student has something meaningful to contribute to the USask community.

We want to ensure a representative workforce and your voice needs to be heard. Your self declaration is confidential and is collected to measure and inform our **Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Indigenization** initiatives.

Please review and update your self-declaration information:

Employee

Next

Self Declaration ✕

Providing this information is voluntary

Person with a disability/ disabilities: Persons with physical, intellectual, cognitive, psychological, sensory, and learning disabilities. For more information see The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code - Section 2 (2.1)

Knowing how many employees with a disability/ disabilities are at the university:

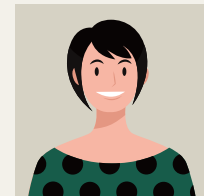
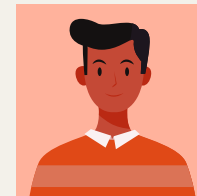
- Helps measure and inform our Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Indigenization initiatives.

Do you self-declare as a person with a disability/disabilities?:

- Yes
 No
 Prefer not to provide the information

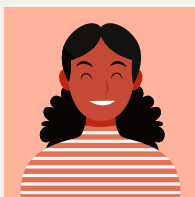
Previous

Submit

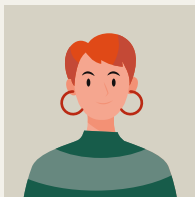
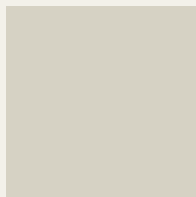
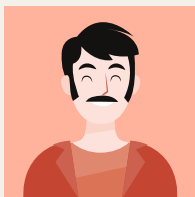




01

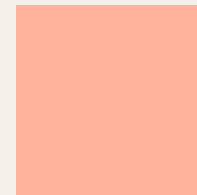


Disability Identities



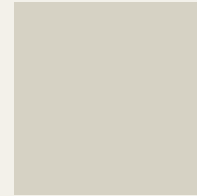
Disability Identities + Mental Illness

- No singular definition of 'disability'
 - a) functional limitations (medical model),
 - b) administrative definitions (eligibility for benefits/services - social model)
 - c) subjective definitions - identity and self-categorization (Gronvik, 2009).
- Not all persons living with 'difference', 'impairment', 'illness', etc identify as disabled personally or publically
 - "... disability as an identity is often a personal construction, a purposive attempt to make meaning of self in the world."
(Johnstone, 2004, para. 10)

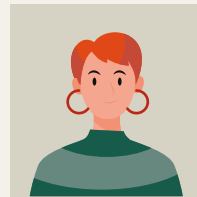
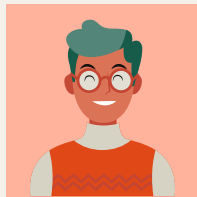
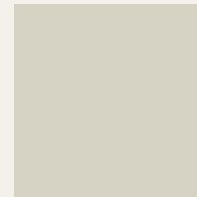
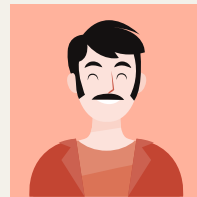
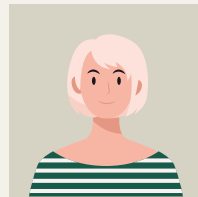




02



The Current Project



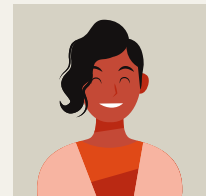
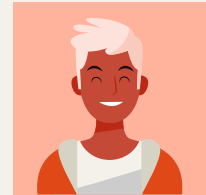
Research Questions



Do professors with mental illnesses identify as ‘disabled’ personally and/or publicly?

Why or why not?

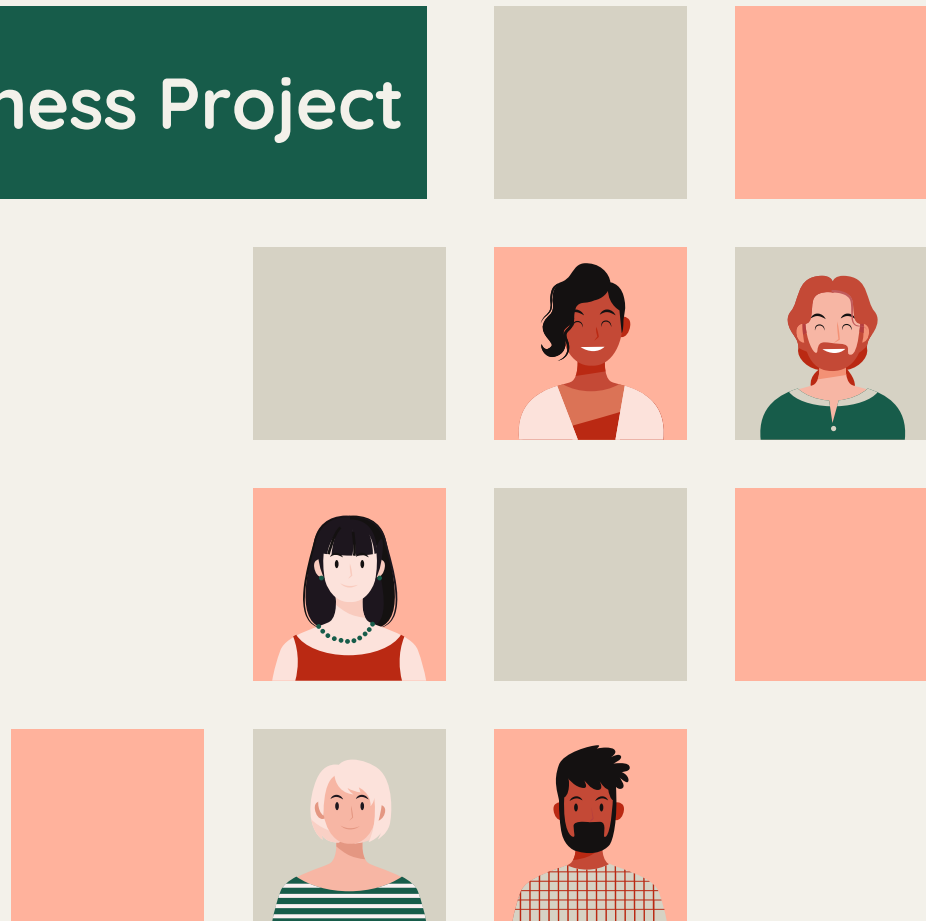
What are the potential implications for universities, DEI initiatives, instructors, and students?



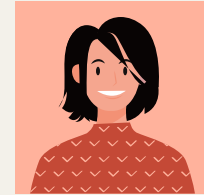
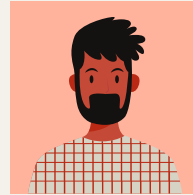
The Academic Mental Illness Project

AMIP

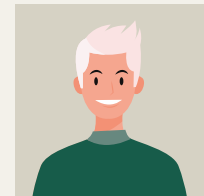
- Interdisciplinary research team (psychology, engineering, education, history, organizational behaviour, kinesiology)
- Emancipatory research ethic - majority of team members live with mental illness
- Explores how instructor experiences of mental illness shape teaching and learning in higher-learning environments



Research Approach



Collaborative Autoethnography



Reflective Narratives

Individual written responses to reflexive prompts.

Focus Group Interviews

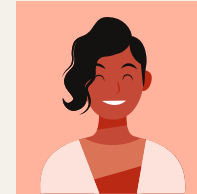
Participants respond to a series of targeted, topical questions; dynamic interaction, new insights.

Reflexive Thematic Analysis

Develops organized interpretations of people's experiences, perceptions, and representations

Braun & Clarke, 2006; 2019; Ellis et al., 2011; Hernandez et al., 2017; Roy & Uukusa, 2020

Participants

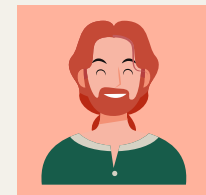
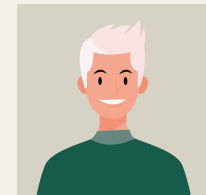
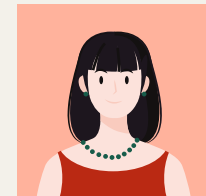


6 USask Instructors

- ❖ White
- ❖ 36-45 years old (mean 41.7)
- ❖ 5 female, 1 agender-nonbinary
- ❖ 5-15 years PS teaching (mean 10.7)
- ❖ Graduate and undergraduate teachers

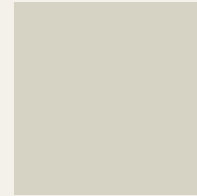
Diagnoses (2-6, mean 3.3)

- ❖ Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (n=3)
- ❖ Autism spectrum disorder (n=1)
- ❖ Bipolar disorder (n=1)
- ❖ Borderline personality disorder (n=1)
- ❖ Disordered eating (n=1)
- ❖ Dyslexia (n=1)
- ❖ Generalized anxiety disorder (n=4)
- ❖ Major depressive disorder (n=4)
- ❖ Post-traumatic stress disorder (n=1)
- ❖ Postpartum anxiety/depression (n=1)

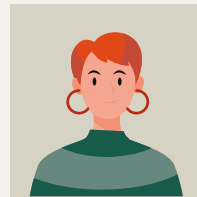
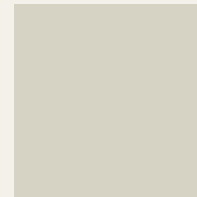
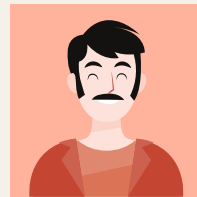
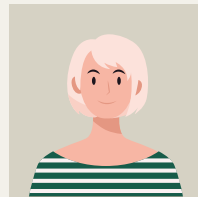




03



Yes or No?



Personal Identification: Yes



Personal identification: considering oneself to be 'disabled' or living with a 'disability'

"... an individual's knowledge that they belong to certain social groups."
(Curtis et al., 2018, p. 9).

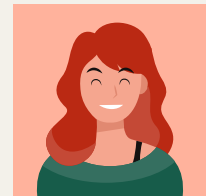
→ Half = yes

→ Why?

- ◆ MI involves suffering
- ◆ Disruptive to daily life, work, goals
- ◆ Requires ongoing management and resource / energy expenditure
- ◆ Chronicity



"Every day I have to think consciously about what am I going to do to be okay, that other people don't have to ... every day I'm thinking, 'how can I be okay?' It's something that I've had to overcome - and constantly, I can never say 'I'm done.'"

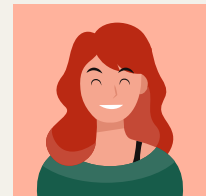


Personal Identification: Uncertain



"I was socialized with such a very narrow conception of what, like, what counted as 'disability.'"

"...there's been sort of various points in my life where I've questioned whether or not I fit into this category. And then there's always something in the back of my mind, that's like, but you don't have it as hard as some of these other people. And so, do you really belong in that category?"



→ Half

→ Why?

- ◆ Not considered
- ◆ Associate 'disability' with physical impairments
- ◆ Not as impaired as others they think of as 'disabled' (comparative)
- ◆ Strong coping skills
- ◆ In past: lack of insight into how much MI impacted their daily life and work

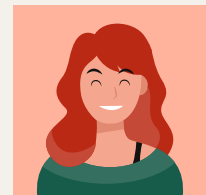
Personal Identification: It's Complex...



All participants pointed to factors that make personal identification with disability complex:

- Concerns
 - ◆ Ambiguous criteria - who fits in the category?
 - ◆ Stable versus episodic symptoms
 - ◆ Defined by need / coping ability?

"I've applied three times for disability credit, tax credit, but apparently you can't get professor and also receive a disability because apparently, you're successful in society."



Public Identification: Yes



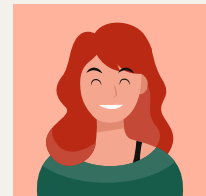
Public identification: Affirming a disabled identity to others, in a public arena (employee profiles, grant applicant information, etc.)

→ Half of respondents

- ◆ *Same who held firm personal identities, despite complexities
- ◆ *Same 3 that reported living with chronic physical illness / learning impairments (not MI specific, recognizing similarities)

→ Why?

- ◆ In line with personal disability identity (affirmative)
- ◆ Need accommodations or supports
- ◆ Want admin to recognize scale of this issue



Public Identification: No



→ Half of respondents

→ Why?

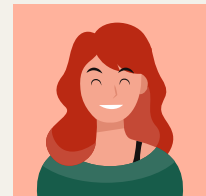
- ◆ In line with personal disability identity (absent or uncertain)
- ◆ No present need for accommodations or supports
- ◆ Legitimacy Concerns:
 - Are my struggles ‘bad enough’? Can I be ‘disabled’ as a successful academic?
 - Will I have to prove my mental illness / provide documentation of diagnoses?*
 - Will others question my status?*
- ◆ Social Perceptions:
 - Will others think I am unfairly taking advantage of EDI programs and opportunities?
 - Will my achievements be delegitimized?
- ◆ DEI as a ‘zero-sum’ game:
 - Sense of taking something from (more deserving) others



“Do I have the right to use that term? When ... you know, someone who’s missing the limb, for example, or you know, something else where I feel like they have more challenges? So I feel a little bit of this privileged mental illness guilt.”

“if someone were to call me on it, I can show them my notes and records. I don’t know like, like what counts, what doesn’t?”

“I wondered a lot as to whether since I click that box, did I have an advantage and so then the guilt.”



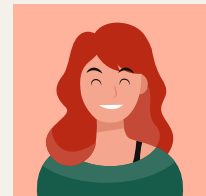
Public Identification: It's Complex...



All participants pointed to factors that make public identification with disability complex:

- Ambiguous Questions...
 - ◆ Ambiguous criteria - who fits in the category?
 - ◆ Stable versus episodic symptoms
 - ◆ Defined by need / coping ability?

"a lot of mental illnesses can be episodic and especially can be triggered by – like in Canada, the radical changes in sunlight, which can create radical changes in sleep patterns, which can create all sorts of things... and so – for me, I don't know it's like would it make sense to say, 'I am disabled at these times of the year?' ... and I'm lucky in the sense that – if I can get the medications right, I can function pretty well. So ... do I check the box or not? Because it's like, well, I'm functioning quite well, but if you were to take away these supports, I wouldn't be... So it's like, where do you do do I check the box?"



Notes on a Unique Sociopolitical Context...

The University of Saskatchewan in the news...

SASKATOON | News

University of Sask. professor resigns after claims of Indigenous ancestry disputed

University World News  THE GLOBAL WINDOW ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Global Edition Africa Edition Asia Hub SDGs Hub Transformative Leadership Special Reports Partnerships Search About Us

Join us on **Facebook**
Follow us on **Twitter**

Featured Employers

CANADA
New university report tackles Indigenous identity fraud
CBC News 05 November 2022


[Share](#) [Tweet](#) [Share 0](#)

One year after Canada's University of Saskatchewan found itself in the



'WHAT A HOAX': Pretendian professor slithers away


Carrie Bourassa couldn't even spell one of her claimed Native nations

 Indianz.Com
Jun 1

4

Dr. Carrie Bourassa
Ts'iotat Kutx Ayanaha s'EEK
(Morning Star Bear)

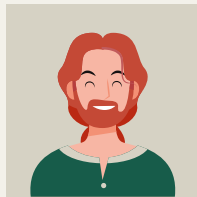
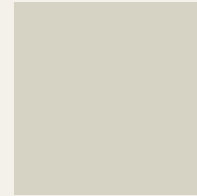
- Member of Regina Riel Metis Council #34, Anishinaabe, Treaty #4 territory, Tlinglit
- Grandfather raised me; teen parents; grounded in ceremony



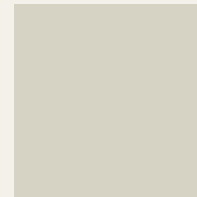
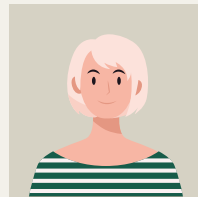
Chair, Indigenous & Northern Health, HSNRI



05



Potential Implications (So what?)



Institutions

Language Matters

What exactly do you want to KNOW and WHY?

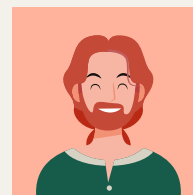
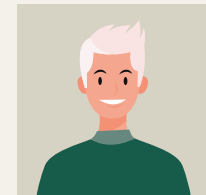
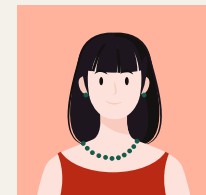
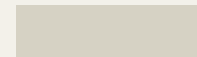
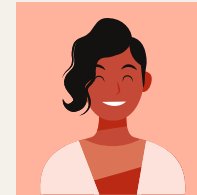
Dubious Information

Reasonable to assume many academics with mental illness are not being identified in personal disclosure documents.

Ineffective Outreach

How to better connect with this group / speak to them in terms they identify with more broadly.

Need for Thoughtful Responses to 'Identity Scandals'



Professors

Underutilization of EDI Supports

- Lack of identification with services
- EDI not a zero-sum game
- Perversion of identity politics and a culture of fear

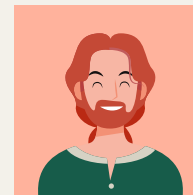
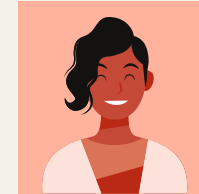
Missed Opportunities for Allyship and Community

As a 'social' identity, 'disability' can connect us to others and to broader causes.

Movement toward Universalism

Recognizing the limits of identity politics.

The promise of universal design for learning.



Ableism, Self-Stigma

- Is 'disability' a dirty word?
- Negative values and emotions attached to disability



Students

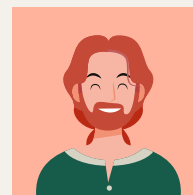
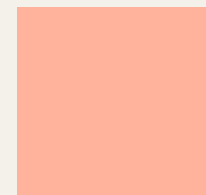
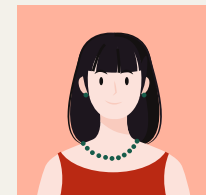
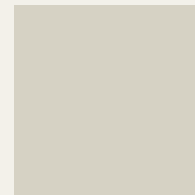
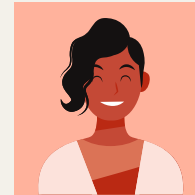
The Benefits of Instructor Diversity

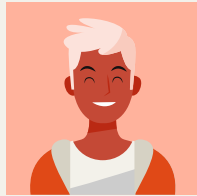
Where academics are open about personal MI / disability experiences:

- Student experiences
- Student outcomes
- Student recruitment and retention

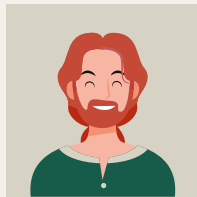
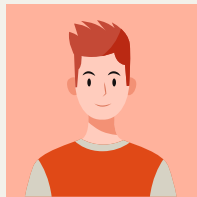
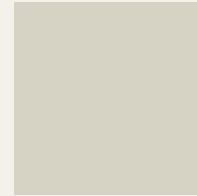
Universal Design for Learning?

Whether disclosing or not

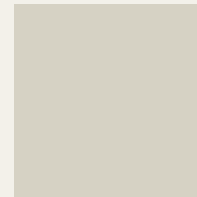
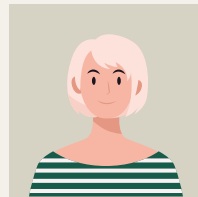
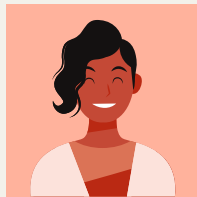




06



Next Steps (Now what?)



Coming Soon

Broader Samples

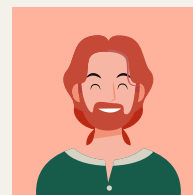
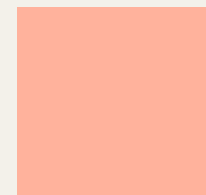
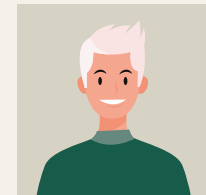
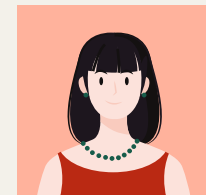
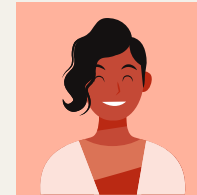
U15 to start

The Silent Majority

Those who do not disclose personal experiences of mental illness

Student Benefits of Diversity

Student and faculty perspectives.



A top-down view of a diverse group of people sitting in a circle on white chairs, holding hands in a supportive gesture. The group includes individuals of various ethnicities and ages. A dark green square is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the word 'THANKS!' in white, bold, uppercase letters.

THANKS!

References

- Bourgeault, I., Mantler, J., & Power, N. (2022, January 20). Mental health in academia: The challenges faculty face predate the pandemic and require systemic solutions. *Academic Matters*. <https://academicmatters.ca/mental-health-in-academia-the-challenges-faculty-face-predicate-the-pandemic-and-require-systemic-solutions/>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2019) Reflecting on reflexive thematic analysis.(4), 589-597. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2159676X.2019.1628806>
- Catano, V., Francis, L., Haines, T., Kirpalani, H., Shannon, H., Stringer, B., & Lozanski, L. (2010). Occupational stress in Canadian universities: A national survey. *International Journal of Stress Management*, 17(3), 232–258. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0018582>
- Ellis, C., Adams, T.E., &Bochner, A.P. (2011). Autoethnography: An overview. *Qualitative Social Research*, 12(1), 10.
- Hernandez, K.C., Chang, H., Ngunjiri, F.W. (2017). Collaborative autoethnography as multivocal, relational, and democratic research: opportunities, challenges, and aspirations. *Auto/Biography Studies*, 32(2), 251-254.
- Roy, R. & Uekusa, S. (2020). Collaborative autoethnography: “self-reflection” as a timely alternative research approach during the global pandemic. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 20(4), 383-392. <https://doi.org/10.1108/QRJ-06-2020-0054>
- Grovník, L. (2009). Defining disability: effects of disability concepts on research outcomes. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 12(1), 1-18.
- Johnstone, C. J. (2004). Disability and Identity: Personal Constructions and Formalized Supports. *Disability Studies Quarterly*, 24(4). <https://dsq-sds.org/article/view/880/1055/>
- Maruyama, G. & Moreno, J. F. (2000). University faculty views about the value of diversity on campus and in the classroom. In *Does diversity make a difference? Three research studies on diversity in college classrooms* (pp. 8-35). American Council on Education, and American Association of University Professors. https://www.aaup.org/NR/rdonlyres/F1A2B22A-EAE2-4D31-9F68-6F235129917E/0/2000_diversity_report.pdf
- Milem, J. F. (2003). The educational benefits of diversity: Evidence from multiple sectors. In M. J. Chang, D. Witt, J. Jones, & K. Hakuta (Eds.), *Compelling interest: Examining the evidence on racial dynamics in colleges and universities* (pp. 126-169). Stanford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1353/rhe.2003.0047>
- Smith, M. (2019). The diversity gap in 2019. Academic Women’s Association – University of Alberta. <https://uofaawa.wordpress.com/2019/06/20/u15-leadership-remains-largely-white-and-male-despite-33-years-of-equity-initiatives/>
- Turpin, D. (2015, November 30). *Universities: Enduring opportunity equalizers*. <https://u15.ca/what-we-are-thinking/universities-enduring-opportunity-equalizers>
- Winefield, A. H., Gillespie, N., Stough, C., Dua, J., Hapuarachchi, J., & Boyd, C. (2003). Occupational stress in Australian university staff: Results from a national survey. *International Journal of Stress Management*, 10(1), 51–63. <https://doi.org/10.1037/1072-5245.10.1.51>