BARBARA
HERRING
& ASSOCIATES INC.


# The University of Western Ontario
# Employment Systems Review (ESR)


# July 2009

# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## THE ESR PROCESS

### Background

The University of Western Ontario conducted the ESR reported here in order to identify employment barriers to four designated groups (women, Aboriginal persons, persons with disabilities and members of visible minorities - the designated groups). The ESR was undertaken to assist Western in its equity planning by suggesting alternative employment policies and practices that will support equality of opportunity for all employees and potential employees.

The ESR also fulfils one of Western's obligations under the Federal Contractors' Program (FCP), a condition of receiving more than $200,000 in federal government business. As required by the FCP, Western's ESR is focused on explaining "gaps" in the representation of designated groups in its workforce compared to the availability of qualified members in those same groups in the external workforce. Western's Workforce Analysis Summary Report 2008 reported significant[1] gaps in the following occupational groups.

| Table 1. Summary – Significant Gap Analysis | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Women** | | |
| EEOG[2] | | GAP |
| # Name | # | % |
| ▪ Faculty | - 131 | 19% |
| 8 Skilled Sales & Service (e.g., Chef, Cook, Senior Buyer, Sergeant/ Constable) | - 4 | 22% |
| 9 Skilled Crafts & Trades | - 4 | 80% |
| **Visible Minorities** | | |
| EEOG | | GAP |
| # Name | # | % |
| ▪ Middle & Other Managers (Staff) | - 15 | 65% |
| 3 Professionals (e.g., Programmer/Web designer, Analysts, Physician, Nurse, Co-ordinators, Research Scientist/Associate, Engineer and Librarian/Archivist) | - 81 | 49% |
| 13 Other Sales & Service (e.g., food servers and cashiers, "A" group only) | - 13 | 76% |
| **Persons with Disabilities** | | |
| EEOG | | GAP |
| # Name | # | % |
| ▪ Professionals | - 14 | 33% |
| 7 ▪ Admin & Senior Clerical | - 6 | 43% |
| **Aboriginal Persons** | | |
| EEOG | | GAP |
| # Name | # | % |
| ▪ ▪ Professionals | -5 | 63% |
| ▪ Total Western workforce | - 9 | |

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[1] Numerical gaps of three or larger **and** percentage gaps of 20% or more and numerical gaps of 50 or more are considered "significant" by FCP definition. Where there are small gaps in several EEOG's for a designated group, this must also be included in the ESR. (At Western this applies to Aboriginal persons). See Appendix A for more details regarding these determinations.

[2] EEOG or Employment Equity Occupational Group refers to a federal classification system based on the National Occupational Categories.

The workforce analysis and ESR were approved and finalized by the Director, Equity and Human Rights Services (EHRS).

## Summary of the Method

The consulting firm of Barbara Herring & Associates Inc. in association with Hitner Starr Associates carried out the ESR from January to July 2009.

To prepare for the ESR, the consultants worked with EHRS, a working group representing Faculty and Staff Relations and a union consultation group representing all parts of the organization.

Western announced the ESR to faculty and staff using a variety of University communications channels. Faculty and staff, including members of the President's Standing Committee on Employment Equity (PSCEE), were invited to participate in focus groups or interviews in order to provide the consultants with a variety of employee perspectives

The ESR included an assessment of the following employment systems for barriers: recruitment, selection and hiring; training and development; promotion; retention and termination; and reasonable accommodation.

The ESR included interviews/focus groups with a total of 107 employees, from all levels of the organization, including representation of all the designated groups. While this is a small percentage of the Western workforce, the views were highly consistent with each other and thus provided the consultants with a unified picture of Western's employment systems.

The EHRS staff, senior HR executives and the union consultation group reviewed the findings of the ESR and suggested strategies to address the barriers identified. These suggestions were taken into account in developing the consultants' ESR recommendations for the University to consider.

Caveats:
1. In order to maintain confidentiality and respect the privacy of the ESR participants, some of the barriers/issues/concerns expressed in this Report cannot be detailed in any more expansive way than is herein presented.
2. This ESR is focussed exclusively on explaining the gaps identified in the workforce analysis[3]. The consultants acknowledge that there may be barriers to other groups or barriers within other employment systems that are not discussed in this review.

## SUMMARY OF BARRIERS

This section contains a high level overview of barriers identified in the ESR as having contributed to the under-representation of designated group members identified in the workforce analysis. The Detailed Report provides a comprehensive explanation and discussion of each barrier.

### *Primary Barriers to Women Faculty*

The University's Employment Equity Guide provides a good explanation for the current under-representation of women among faculty. In particular, in some Faculties, an emphasis on traditional content and traditional teaching/research approaches favours the academic areas and approaches where male job seekers are concentrated. This may discourage women job seekers from applying to Western and may be a barrier to the selection of those who do apply.

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▪ [3] Due to the nature of the contractual relationship between the consultants and the University.

In addition, it appears that some Faculties may have difficulty attracting women candidates because these Faculties have a poor reputation in the academic community outside Western with respect to hiring and supporting women faculty members.

Women faculty members are not as well supported as their male colleagues in their upward mobility (i.e., in obtaining tenure and for promotion to full professor)[4]. While women faculty members receive substantial support during pregnancy and in the first year after giving birth, this is still less than optimal support in balancing work and family responsibilities, particularly after the first year. For example, during maternity leave, women are not supported for the work required to maintain an active research laboratory. As well, women are not consistently given course schedules and services assignments that take into account the responsibilities they have for care of young children.

### *Key Barriers to Staff – Aboriginal Persons, Persons with Disabilities and Members of Visible Minorities*

These groups are under-represented in professional and/or managerial positions, jobs covered by the Professional and Managerial Association (PMA). One barrier is the lack of external hiring for these jobs since PMA policies favour internal candidates in that they allow for promotion through appointment without competition or the reclassification of existing roles.

When Western is recruiting externally, the jobs are typically advertised only on Western's website. People outside the "web of connections" of current Western staff and students are less likely to be aware of job advertised only through this narrow recruitment channel.

Western has done a limited amount of outreach recruitment to encourage job applicants in the designated groups. However, it appears that this is not sufficient to reach and encourage job seekers.

Western's job application system is atypical (i.e., the on-line application process does not allow for covering letter and resume to be submitted as one document but requires the applicant to cut and paste their resume into sections on the system.) Thus, even when job seekers are aware of the on-line system of recruitment, the application process makes it more difficult for people outside the University community to apply for positions.

For current employees in the designated groups, the University's complaints-based and mediation-based system for responding to harassment and discrimination complaints may be difficult for members of the designated groups to use because of perceived and actual power imbalances among employees based on job level and also designated group status. This may be a barrier to retaining designated group employees.

### *Additional Key Barriers Aboriginal Persons - Staff*

In addition to the general barriers described in the previous section, there are several barriers specific to Western's goals to close the gaps related to Aboriginal persons.

Past negative experiences of Aboriginal persons with the University directly as employer and indirectly as a central institution of the City of London, may be a barrier to the University's current attempts to attract Aboriginal job seekers. Without further[5] outreach to the Aboriginal community, these perceptions may remain unchallenged.

Western has a practice of favouring levels of education beyond the minimum required to do the job (termed "credentialism"). Aboriginal persons in Canada, statistically, have a lower level of formal

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[4] Internal University data indicate that women are particularly under-represented among Associate and Full Professors.
[5] As described in the Detailed Report, Staff Relations has initiated some outreach initiatives with the local Indigenous community.

education than do other Canadians[6]. Thus, credentialism is a barrier to hiring Aboriginal persons who may be very capable of doing the job.

Aboriginal persons, a small minority of employees, lack an identified source of support for issues arising from balancing work and Aboriginal-specific issues (e.g., misunderstandings at the intersection of Aboriginal culture and the University norms, or in balancing work and community obligations).

### Additional Key Barriers to Members of Visible Minorities - Staff

As a general observation, difference does not appear to be encouraged or respected at Western. Employees expressed the belief that conformity is valued and rewarded at all levels of the organization, both among faculty and staff. Members of the designated groups are not confident that organizational actions take into account differences relating to designated groups. They pointed out that Aboriginal persons, members of visible minorities and persons with disabilities are not represented in leadership or human resources-related positions and are not consistently represented in visual representations of the University.

Few supervisors and managers have had training in cross-cultural skills and anti-racism sensitivity, and those who have had this training received it outside Western. Interviewees reported a lack of sensitive, inclusive attitudes with respect to English as a second language or to employees with accents other than mainstream ones.

Members of visible minorities are under-represented in Other Sales & Services jobs (at Western, food servers and cashiers). One barrier to closing this gap is the lack of external hiring, in part due to the clause in the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) 2692 collective agreement favouring internal candidates in the hiring process.

### Additional Key Barriers to Persons with Disabilities - Staff

Persons with disabilities are under-represented in Admin & Senior Clerical jobs. One barrier to closing this gap is the lack of external hiring, in part due to the clause in the University of Western Ontario Staff Association (UWOSA) collective agreement favouring internal candidates in the hiring process.

Persons with Disabilities, statistically, have a lower level of education than do other Canadians. Thus Western's practice of credentialism (described in the section above on barriers to hiring Aboriginal persons) is a barrier to hiring job seekers with disabilities who may be very capable of doing the job.

While there are several committees of volunteers tasked with making recommendations with respect to various aspects of access and accommodation [i.e., Western Ontarians with Disabilities Act Committee (WODAC), Barrier-free Committee and CARE (a committee focused on student needs)], there is no clear staff or executive responsibility or follow-up to ensure that the recommendations of these committees are implemented.

Attitudes of Western employees toward employees with disabilities have been formed primarily through experiences with ill or injured workers. This often results in a situation where the disability impacts negatively on the workload or some other aspect of the jobs of co-workers and managers. Colleagues are less likely to be negatively impacted by a colleague who has a disability *before* hiring and is judged to be the best person for the job.

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[6] A legacy from experiences with oppressive federal policies such as the system of residential schools.

*__Key Barriers to Women – Staff__*

Women are under-represented among staff in jobs that have traditionally been male dominated (i.e., Skilled Crafts & Trades, and in Skilled Sales & Service jobs such as chef, cook, buyer, sergeant/constable). As with the other three designated groups, the lack of outreach recruitment may be a barrier to Western reaching these women job seekers.

For women who work in these jobs at Western, negative male attitudes appear to be a barrier to the selection or retention of women into these jobs.

*__General Barriers__*

Western does not yet have accountability processes in place to support the FCP requirements. While Western publishes a yearly workforce analysis report, staff leaders and most Staff Relations Officers are unaware of the gaps for which they are responsible.

Managers receive limited training for managing a diverse workforce. Faculty and Staff Relations personnel and HR staff within Faculties are not optimally prepared to provide expertise to Appointments Committees/hiring managers/leaders in hiring, retaining and leading a diverse workforce.

There are no managerial consequences for a lack of action or lack of results in closing the gaps identified in the workforce analysis. The fact that academic managers (e.g., Chair, Dean, Provost) at Canadian universities are non-permanent positions means that conventional ways of holding academic leaders responsible for FCP requirements and outcomes are unlikely to be effective.

## SUMMARY OF CONSULTANTS' RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

The Summary includes all consultant recommendations. The recommendations are repeated in the body of the Detailed Report within the related sections.

## Faculty

*__Barriers in Outreach, Recruitment, Selection and Hiring__*

1. Examine the gender balance of professors in subject areas of focus identified at Western compared to the field as a whole to determine if the choice of area creates a systemic barrier to women. In fields where this analysis suggests a gender bias, require the Faculty to propose strategies to balance off this bias.

2. In Faculties where women are under-represented compared to subject-level availability, require Appointments Committees to submit a plan to the Provost's office for outreach to potential women candidates. Further, require these Committees to show that they have been successful in recruiting viable women applicants before the selection process can proceed. As is currently the procedure, continue to require Appointments Committees to present the rationale for their final selection to the Provost's office before the unit head undertakes negotiations with the successful candidate.

3. Expand the current initiatives to provide additional support for job search in the London area for spouses of successful probationary or tenured faculty members for jobs

### Barriers to Faculty Retention (Working Conditions, Reasonable Accommodation, Attitudes, Development and Promotion)

4. Provide more support to faculty in balancing work and family responsibilities:
   - For women and men who identify themselves as care-givers of young children[7] (i.e., those who do not have a spouse/partner at home caring for the children) or other dependents, require Chairs and Deans to discuss with these care-givers how the Department/Faculty can support their dual role by, for example, reviewing the type of service contribution they are asked to make or the teaching times assigned. Provide an appeal process up to and including the Provost's office for care-givers who do not believe their reasonable requests have been accommodated.

   - In Faculties where women are under-represented compared to availability in their subject area, provide funding for up to one-year appointments of researchers who can manage the lab of a care-giver who is on maternity or parental leave.

5. Strengthen the Non-Discrimination/Harassment Policy to make clearer the responsibility of academic leaders for a respectful workplace, and the actions academic leaders are expected to take when they observe a breach of this article. Discuss with the University of Western Ontario Faculty Association (UWOFA) ways to similarly strengthen the non-discrimination and harassment articles of the collective agreement.[8]

6. Develop a formal mentoring system to ensure that each non-tenured faculty member and those working toward full professorship are provided with the advice, support and encouragement they need to succeed. Where possible, provide women and other designated group candidates with access to mentors of their own group, without imposing the requirement for such a match.

7. Provide more leadership development related to the designated groups:
   - Develop an equity training process for Promotions and Tenure Committees and require Deans to ensure their committees undertake this training.

   - Mandate new Chairs to access leadership training related to equity, human rights and designated group issues.

8. Consider ways in which Western can send a definitive message to the academic community that Western is now welcoming of women faculty.

## Staff

### Barriers in Outreach, Recruitment, Selection and Hiring

9. Provide more outreach to designated group job-seekers:
   - Place ads regularly or on a continuing basis in locations that reach a wide audience of job seekers to inform job seekers to check the Western website for job ads. These should include Monster, Workopolis and the London Free Press.

   - Contact employment counsellors in the local area to inform them of the need to check the Western website for jobs and about the Western application process.

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[7] Young children are usually considered to be those up to the age of 11 since at this age children may remain at home unsupervised.
[8] See parallel recommendation for administrative managers (Recommendation 19)

- Develop a network of organizations through which designated groups find jobs (e.g., Indigenous community organizations, organizations related to ethnic and racial groups, settlement services for new immigrants, organizations that assist persons with disabilities to find employment, organizations for women in non-traditional job areas). This network would provide Western contacts (e.g., Staff Relations personnel) with an opportunity to explain the types of jobs available at the University and the typical job requirements, and to inform members of the network about the Western website and the application procedures. The network could provide the Western representative with insights about any barriers that the University systems pose for the designated groups and assist the University with ideas to remove these barriers.

- In planning for and contacting potential networking organizations, consult with the Coordinator of Indigenous Services, the Coordinator of International Students Services and the Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities for assistance in identifying appropriate organizations and any other advice in approaching these groups.

10. Discuss with the PMA, UWOSA and CUPE 2692 ways to minimize the impact of the respective policies and/or collective agreement clauses encouraging internal promotion and promotion by seniority in job area(s) where the designated group(s) are under-represented, recognizing that the FCP requires unions to co-operate in efforts to remove barriers.

11. Discuss with UWOFA and Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) Local 610 ways to establish guidelines for non-biased hiring practices for faculty to use when they hire Research Scientists/Associates.

12. Review job postings from an equity perspective:
    - Focus selection criteria on skills, knowledge and personal characteristics that are required to perform the job.

    - Review all job postings from a diversity perspective, to ensure that when the job requires the incumbent to serve, supervise or lead a diversity of students/clients/subordinates, that this is explicitly included in the job requirements and selection criteria.

    - Focus selection criteria on skills, knowledge and personal characteristics that are required to perform the job rather than on credentials or a set number of years of experience.

    - If a set number of years' experience is stated, ensure that this is the minimum number of years to do the job in the first weeks of work.

    - Unless the law requires a credential, ensure that the education requirement represents the minimum required to do the job (e.g., no higher credential than current incumbents) and that the phrase "or equivalent experience" is added to all requests for credentials. Ensure that hiring managers know how to assess equivalent experience.

13. On the Position Description Form, add the caution that the credentials listed should be the minimum required for the job except where required by law.

14. Revise the selection tests for entry level Hospitality Services staff to reduce the reliance on written English and to ensure that the level of verbal English is that which is required for the main job duties.

15. Develop a procedure for informing all interview candidates about how to request accommodation for participating in the selection process.

**Barriers to Staff Retention (Working Conditions)**

16. Provide more support for women in balancing work and family responsibilities:
    - Discuss with the unions and faculty/staff associations the option of providing some paid time for care-givers for the care of sick children.
    - Provide parents of young children with assistance in finding suitable child care, when there are no available spaces in the on-campus child care facility.

17. Continue efforts to create a more pro-active recruitment process and a more welcoming work environment for women in skilled crafts and trades jobs.

18. Provide support services for the specific needs of women in non-traditional work, and for employees who are Aboriginal persons, members of visible minorities or persons with disabilities.[9]

19. Review and clarify the complaint procedures in the Non-Discrimination/Harassment Policies and in the non-discrimination and harassment articles in the collective agreements to include a more effective procedure for vulnerable complainants who are reluctant to file a complaint.
    - Continue to train all faculty and staff leaders in identifying harassing behaviours and impose an obligation on them to deal with the matter in consultation with the applicable Faculty/Staff Relations staff and/or EHRS staff. This could be included as part of the Respect in the Workplace program[10].

    - Include an explicit procedure for staff and academic leaders to deal with a potentially poisoned work environment or to bring complaints to EHRS in the absence of a specific complainant. Ensure that academic leaders both within and outside the bargaining unit clearly understand and are held accountable for this responsibility.

    - Develop a data analysis of staff transfers and terminations by designated group. Where EHRS observes a pattern of transfers and terminations of designated group members from one work area, this should trigger an investigation in the absence of a specific complainant.

20. Develop a process for Faculty and Staff Relations personnel to document and report on the prevalence of harassment and discrimination cases resolved by their office, in the same format as is used by EHRS, and to send a yearly summary to EHRS to add into their yearly report.

**Barriers to Staff Retention (Reasonable Accommodation)**

21. Develop an Accommodation Policy and related procedures. These should include:
    - A central registry for technical aids owned by the University.

    - A central budget which Departments can draw on to pay for technical aids and other accommodations for employees with disabilities when the cost exceeds a specified amount.

    - In support of new employees with disabilities, develop and implement a process for ensuring that, when a job offer is accepted, the new hire is invited to discuss accommodation needs, and that any equipment or technical aids required be acquired as expeditiously as possible, preferably before the new employee's start date.

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[9] Providing support comparable to that provided to students by the offices of Indigenous Services, Services for Students with Disabilities and International Student Services.
[10] See also Recommendation 5.

- In planning for access and accommodation of an employee, include the accommodations needed to get safely to and around the work location as well as doing the work itself.

22. Include on the membership of WODAC and the Barrier-free Committee, a representative from the senior leadership whose responsibility includes the overall planning for accessibility. Ensure that the responsibility for overall planning for accessibility is included in the performance evaluation of that leader. Establish regular communications between the Committee and the leader.

### *Attitudes and Organizational Culture*

23. Continue ongoing training in Respect in the Workplace:
    - Continue to train supervisors and leaders in how to encourage a respectful, harassment free workplace emphasizing the adverse impact of a poisoned work environment on members of designated groups.

    - Include training as part of employee orientation and periodically conduct 'refresher' training for all employees.

24. Develop a process for monitoring University-sponsored visual communications to ensure that a diversity of students and staff is consistently portrayed.

### *Barriers in Staff Training, Development and Promotion Processes*

25. Provide support for sessional and permanent staff members for ESL training. Consider ways to provide support to contract employees for ESL training, possibly through a system of "bursaries."

26. Provide additional leadership development opportunities:
    - Develop a formal mentoring system for staff and a process to ensure that designated groups get their fair share of mentors. Where possible, offer candidates mentors within their own designated group as well as other mentors.

    - Establish and communicate the opportunity for employees who aspire to a leadership position to participate in the Foundations of Leadership Program as preparation for advancement.

    - Encourage supervisors and managers to ask all staff members about their interest in special assignments, and to make efforts to share these assignments among all staff members.

    - In performance dialogue discussions with PMA staff, encourage leaders to discuss the employee's developmental needs related to their career aspirations, rather than only for current work improvement. Develop opportunities for similar discussions with other staff members.

27. Provide more training for managers and supervisors on managing a diverse workplace:
    - Include in Foundational Leadership Skills modules on managers' responsibilities under the Ontario Human Rights Code, the University's Non-Discrimination/Harassment Policy, and related articles of the relevant collective agreements.

    - Include in Foundational Leadership Skills modules on managing diversity effectively, recruiting and selecting a diverse team, strategies to encourage team members to value difference, and issues related to each of the designated groups.

- Provide managers and supervisors with ongoing training in human rights, employment equity and managing diversity.

- Provide all leaders with training in non-biased recruitment and selection techniques.

28. Require that human resources staff within Faculties and Staff/Faculty Relations personnel engage in ongoing learning to develop a higher level of competency in all areas related to hiring and retaining a diverse workforce. Include diversity competencies in selection criteria for HR positions.

### *Barriers in Staff Termination Processes*

29. Establish a process to obtain exit information on a confidential basis from employees voluntarily leaving their position, whether or not they are leaving the University. Invite interviewees to describe their designated group status, again on a confidential basis.

## Accountability

30. Expand the workforce analysis to include more detailed information on a yearly basis:
   - Track and report data on new hires, promotions and terminations.

   - Research sources for designated group comparison data for faculty members by Department and/or Faculty and provide Faculties with a gap analysis using comparison data at the level of Department or Faculty as available.

   - Continue with plans to work with other universities to develop Canada-wide statistics by Department and Faculty.

31. Provide leaders with a gap analysis and other current equity data as a way of highlighting their personal responsibility for the FCP requirements.
   - Determine the appropriate data to provide Faculties in the yearly planning process as a basis for evaluating the outcomes of their efforts to hire and retain more women faculty and to promote women to tenured and senior Faculty positions (e.g., yearly hire, promotion and termination data). Produce and provide Deans with this Faculty-specific information and ask for an accounting of initiatives taken and results attained.

   - Provide leaders and HR staff with specific information on the extent of under-representation of designated groups by job categories within their area of responsibility. In the yearly performance evaluation process, hold Deans and managers accountable for initiatives and outcomes related to specific areas of under-representation.

   - Within the Faculty Planning Process, establish an accountability process for FCP outcomes (i.e., closing the gap for women.)

32. Organize the PSCEE report around the gaps identified in the workforce analysis. Provide a yearly assessment of initiatives and outcomes (i.e., change) related to each gap.

33. Assess the resources needed to implement Western's EE Plan based in part on these recommendations and provide additional resources where required.