

April 3, 2025

Dear Yabome:

We, members of the SFU Academic Freedom Group and other concerned faculty members, are writing to provide feedback, as requested, on the revised version of the Employment Equity Policy (GP 19).

As indicated in the policy, employment equity at SFU is governed by the BC Human Rights Code. The Code states that

13 (1) A person must not

(a) refuse to employ or refuse to continue to employ a person, or

(b) discriminate against a person regarding employment or any term or condition of employment

because of the Indigenous identity, race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, political belief, religion, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or age of that person or because that person has been convicted of a criminal or summary conviction offence that is unrelated to the employment or to the intended employment of that person.

(2) An employment agency must not refuse to refer a person for employment for any reason mentioned in subsection (1).

However, GP 19 lists only women, Indigenous/Aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities, members of visible minorities (i.e., “designated groups” under the federal Employment Equity Act) as protected. The policy should list all groups that are protected under BC’s (more expansive) legislation.

SFU is an academic institution, where diverse viewpoints are critically important. Therefore, we are especially concerned that “political belief” is not listed as a prohibited basis for discrimination. Moreover, given that “political belief” is not an explicitly protected characteristic in other jurisdictions, members of hiring committees and tenure and promotion committees may not be aware that discrimination on that basis is unlawful.

In light of these concerns, we respectfully request that GP 19 be modified to list **all** protected groups under the BC Human Rights Code. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,