



Communication to Staff and Public on Internal and External Consultations

Milton Public Library (MPL) continue the development of our Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Anti-Racism Strategy. Between the summer and fall months, MPL employed DiversiPro, to undertake consultations with the MPL workforce who identify as racialised/persons of colour and/or 2SLGBTQ+, and MPL's external partners who may represent the above communities.

Internal Consultations

During July and August 2021, DiversiPro conducted internal consultations with approximately 20% of the MPL workforce with the majority of participants self-identifying as racialised/persons of colour and/or 2SLGBTQ+. The consultations were conducted through voluntary confidential interviews. Highlights, split into two categories include:

1. Workplace Experience



While a few participants seemed to describe attempts to “fit in”, by belonging to or being accepted by normalising or minimising any negative encounters with non-racialised/heteronormative staff or patrons, participants as a whole, described the workplace environment as comfortable, open, friendly and much different and improved than in previous years. Overall, they reported positive experiences while working at MPL.

2. MPL's Inclusion, Equity, Diversity and Anti-Racism Journey



The participants felt that the organisation was embracing diversity and on the right path towards achieving equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) in its transformative efforts but there was consensus that more could be done. For example;

- It was observed that while there has been more diversity in recent and new hiring, there remains a lack of representation at the Senior Leadership Level and among the Board of Directors;
- It was acknowledged that there are systemic barriers in place with regards to accreditation and classifications for positions requiring an MLIS, which has contributed to a legacy of non-diverse and non-representative hiring industry-wide, but MPL has made attempts to address this barrier within its own recruitment efforts.

External Consultations

During the months of September and October 2021, DiversiPro interviewed a total of nine external organisations, which consisted of and represent people in Milton who identify as racialised/persons of colour and/or 2SLGBTQ+. Each participating organisation did so through voluntary confidential interviews. Highlights from the SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) provided to MPL include:

I. Strengths

All participants had positive things to say about their working relationships with MPL. Specifically they felt that their partnership with MPL has been very beneficial for both sides in their efforts to collaborate and to serve the public well. They reported that MPL is always available, open and supportive to helping and working together.

2. Weaknesses



All participants agreed more can always be done to better serve the various communities that is changing Milton's landscape, including within their own organisations. For example, it was suggested that MPL can deliver more programmes to Arabic and South Asian communities and the collection can also benefit from additional Braille options and Chinese materials.

3. Opportunities

All participants stated that MPL has competent and motivated human and other resources needed to make the systemic and organisational changes based on EDI principles. In addition, MPL can be the model for change for other organisations within the community. Participants also noted that MPL has a powerful voice within the community so it needs to continue to be that voice to push for changes that will better serve the various diverse communities that make up Milton.

4. Threats

A few participants indicated that MPL's shortcomings or weaknesses could become a challenge and possibly threaten the viability of the Library, though they did not provide details of what these shortcomings might be. Alternatively, these threats may contribute to the Library's loss as a central or key figure and role model within the community in relation to EDI.

Recommendations for Change

All participants provided excellent and well-thought out recommendations for improvement and change, which included:

- Ongoing learning for employees to increase awareness and address unconscious biases;
- A strong and demonstrated commitment from leadership on achieving Organisational change (e.g. better representation at all levels, mentorship and promotional opportunities for staff, strengthening of policies and process, etc.);
- Ongoing community outreach to learn from and promote relationships with various communities to effectively tackle barriers impacting these groups;
- Engaging in community consultations such as focus groups with community agencies to learn and stay current on the needs of the communities or hold public forums to discuss and exchange ideas;
- Promoting programmes and services in different languages in order to be more accessible to the diverse communities in the region;
- Having a mobile library at local parks using youth or other volunteers would be also a great way to remove or address barriers for some communities

Along with all the information collected throughout the past nine months, the feedback received through these consultations will form part of DiversiPro's final report and recommendations. The report is due to be received in late February 2022, with MPL planning to initiate the development of a strategic plan related to Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Anti-Racism plan in the Spring of 2022.

