

Member Engagement and Representation within SUN

Within our nursing community, a diverse tapestry of backgrounds and experiences shapes our context, forming a distinctive population of health professionals united in answering the call to deliver optimal healthcare for the residents of our province. Recognizing the importance of equitable representation, the establishment of diversity committees becomes a crucial step in fostering inclusivity and ensuring the diverse voices within our community are heard. These committees are typically constituted by a diverse group of individuals who collaborate to champion inclusivity and represent the unique perspectives within a community or organization. Incorporating individuals from diverse hierarchical levels cultivates essential organizational depth by making space for these perspectives within and experiences to be highlighted and recognized. Moreover, the deliberate acknowledgement of intersectionality ensures proactive action through equitable representation of individuals with multiple marginalized identities.

Creating diversity committees within the Saskatchewan of Nurses (SUN) can result in a myriad of benefits, fostering a more inclusive and equitable representative organization. In this discussion paper, we outline several compelling reasons for SUN to contemplate the establishment of diversity committees.

Representation and Inclusivity:

- Diversity committees can ensure that the voices and perspectives of all members regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, or other characteristics, are heard and considered within the union.
- Enhancing representation fosters a sense of inclusivity, making all members feel valued and engaged.

Addressing Systemic Inequities:

- These committees can work towards identifying and addressing systemic inequities within the nursing profession and the union itself.
- By understanding and tackling issues related to discrimination or bias, SUN can actively contribute to creating a more equitable environment for all its members.

Policy and Advocacy:

- Diversity committees can play a crucial role in reviewing existing policies and advocating for changes that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion.

- They can contribute to the development of policies that address specific concerns related to underrepresented groups and support initiatives that foster a more diverse workforce.

Educational Initiatives:

- Diversity committees can organize workshops, training sessions, and awareness campaigns to educate members about the importance of diversity and inclusion.
- Promoting cultural competence and understanding can enhance collaboration and communication among nurses with different backgrounds.

Enhanced Organizational Performance:

- Diverse teams often outperform homogenous ones due to a broader range of perspectives and ideas.
- A diverse union is likely to be more innovative and adaptable, which can positively impact its ability to navigate challenges and advocate for its members effectively.

Community Engagement:

- Engaging with diverse communities outside the union can strengthen SUN's relationships with the public and other organizations.
- This engagement can also foster partnerships and collaborations that benefit both the nursing profession and the communities they serve.

Legal Compliance and Social Responsibility:

- Establishing diversity committees demonstrates SUN's commitment to legal compliance with anti-discrimination laws and regulations.
- It also reflects the union's social responsibility in contributing to a fair and just healthcare system.

Member Well-being:

- A diverse and inclusive environment contributes to the overall well-being of members by creating a sense of belonging and support.
- Members who feel valued and understood are likely to be more engaged and satisfied with their union representation.

By creating diversity committees or caucuses, SUN can actively promote a culture of diversity and inclusion, ultimately benefiting its members, the nursing profession, and the broader healthcare system. Below are some examples of various forms of diversity and equality committees and/or representation in nurses unions and labour organizations:

- Canadian Federation of Nurses Union (CFNU)
 - Human Rights and Equity Council reports to the National Executive Board Human Rights and Equity Committee. Made up of five diversity caucuses including: LGBTQ2S+, Racialized Workers, Workers with Disabilities, Young Workers, Indigenous and Francophone. Meets during biennial conventions.
 - Equity and Inclusion Toolkit (2019) was developed to assist Member Organizations and the CFNU to implement procedures and governance structures that will facilitate the inclusion and participation of equity-seeking groups.
- Saskatchewan Federation of Labour (SFL)
 - Representation on committees is comprised of members of different labour unions in Saskatchewan that are a part of the SFL.
 - Equity and Diversity Committees:
 - Indigenous, Solidarity and Pride, Workers of Colour, Women's, Young Workers, Workers with Disabilities. Caucuses meet at biannual meetings. Committees meet two to three times a year.
 - Other committees:
 - Apprenticeship, Education, OH&S and Workers' Compensation, Pension and Benefits, Environment.
- BC Nurses Union (BCNU)
 - Four Human Rights and Equity Caucuses: Indigenous Leadership Circle, Mosaic of Colour, LGBTQ, Workers with Disabilities.
 - Human Rights and Equity Conference (2023).
- United Nurses of Alberta (UNA)
 - Equity Caucus meet at AGM and quarterly.
 - Indigenous Workers of Alberta, Mental Health Caucus, Pride Caucus, Young Workers.
- Manitoba Nurses Union (MNU)
 - No Equity or Diversity Committees.
- Ontario Nurses Association (ONA)
 - Nurse Practitioner Focus Group.
- Nova Scotia Nurses Union (NSNU)
 - Education Committee.
 - Representation on Nova Scotia Federation of Labour equity committees.
 - Governance structure includes elected representatives from various components including VP of Licensed Practical Nurses.

To summarize, the current committee structure at SUN includes: Executive, Finance, Nominations, Provincial Negotiations, Constitution Bylaws and Resolutions (CB&R), Community Connections, AGM Planning Committee, and appointed representatives on SFL committees, including the equity committees. We propose that the following caucuses be developed to enhance engagement, diversity and productivity of SUN. Suggestions of this discussion paper include establishing diversity and equity

committees including: Solidarity and Pride, Workers of Colour, Indigenous, Men in Nursing, Young Workers, Workers with Disabilities and minority designations which comprise SUN, the Registered Psychiatric Nurses (RPN) and Nurse Practitioners (NP).

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