

# POWER OF EMPATHY:

## Bruce and Lis Welch Community Dialogue

with Kimberly Jackson Davidson,  
Ombudsperson at Oberlin  
College

*As part of the Welch Community Dialogue programming, The Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue and the Office of Vice-President Research co-hosted a lunch dialogue on the current state of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion at Simon Fraser University.*

The Bruce and Lis Welch Community Dialogue engages the community at large to explore innovative approaches to local issues through cross-sectoral dialogue. In Fall 2019, the Centre for Dialogue invited Kimberly Jackson Davidson to guide this year's conversation around the theme, Power of Empathy. Kimberly is the director of the Yeworkwha Belachew Center for Dialogue and the ombudsperson for Oberlin College – she brings a wealth of knowledge around Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) and the importance of human interaction in this work.

As part of the Welch programming, on October 24, 2019, SFU's Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue and the Office of Vice-President Research co-hosted a dialogue with senior administrators, deans and faculty to engage in dialogue on the current state of EDI at SFU. This created a space to

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This document provides a summary of key themes that emerged from the conversation and aims to inspire ongoing dialogue on the role of empathy in Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion work in our personal and professional lives. P

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establishing spaces for professors and students to have their voices heard in regards to EDI initiatives and issues was illuminated. This not only creates relationships whereby a diversity of lived experience and perspectives can be shared, but fosters a sense of institutional trust whereby diverse stakeholders can feel acknowledged at SFU.

#### 4. UNDERSTAND POWER AND PRIVILEGE

Meaningful engagement in EDI work requires humility and reflection. Jackson Davidson encouraged the group to reflect on the reality that issues are always more complicated than simply right versus wrong – rather, we all must internally reflect on our own positions which are situated in power and privilege. Jackson Davidson emphasized that this calls upon our personal and institutional vulnerability within SFU. Self-reflexivity in exploring our personal power and privilege will support collaborative engagement by acknowledging that all our positionalities are interconnected.

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