

Kate MacNaughton

1. What does diversity, equity, inclusion and Indigeneity (DEII) mean to you?

It means many things to me currently but I still have a lot to learn. Just personally, it means understanding and fostering the grace, humanity, and desire for dignity everyone amongst us shares and deserves equally; and being willing to evolve in that understanding as it grows. In a very practical sense, it involves identifying and removing barriers that are unfairly affecting some. In the context of my life as elected representative, it also means being aware of the impacts our administrative systems might have on individuals and groups. It is part of my job to ensure there are no negative consequences for individuals based on demographics, their gender, their ethnicity, their sexual preference etc.

A long time ago, I heard someone say, “be kind to people and cruel to systems.” I’ve thought about that often throughout these four years as an elected rep. As a rep, we deal with systems all the time, some that are very visible, some more subtle. It’s part of my job, both at a person and as councillor, to ensure that our systems are fair and treat all appropriately and create no additional burden for some based on meaningless divisions.

There currently are inequities in our systems and I’ve worked a very little bit at chipping at them, primarily by trying to remove barriers that exist for participation in electoral politics for lower income people, women, BIPOC, LGBTQ people; by eliminating the Ontario Planning Act’s enshrined right to evict through our own planning policies, and by looking to lessen impacts of our water/waste water rates on lower income households. There’s lots left to do.

2. What have you done personally or professionally to develop your own understanding of anti-racism?

I grew up in an environment of “polite racism” which even included, for a short time, private schools, private clubs, “us and them” talk, acceptance of racist words and statements etc.. I had some early experiences that were helpful in viewing and struggling against the racist framework I grew up in, and then viewed in the world. I’m not grateful those experiences happened at all—they shouldn’t have—but I welcome the sharpening my sense of justice received. It helped take me on a path that included some learning about the impacts of colonialism and the pain that remains in a post-colonial setting. Personally, my own sense of capacity as an anti-racist ally is still evolving, untutored and a bit klutzy. I have a lot to learn. I recently attended an EDI training and found myself confounded—maybe deeply out of date—by the evolution of the language of inclusion.

Regarding learning about reconciliation, it seems to be a river with a lot of tributaries, and like a river, my understanding is always changing. I’ve had the luck and pleasure to have learned from Indigenous leaders and collaborators first hand. I’ve been so lucky. I advocated with staff during this term for some training. It took a while but we got a little, probably not due to my efforts but it was a sort of bare bones quality module based webinar. It had some good information so I’m not complaining. I was pushing for the Kairos blanket ceremony among other options but COVID was a hurdle there. We’ll see it or similar for the next council.

3. What DEII, anti-oppression and/or cultural competence training have you received and how will you apply what you learned as a councillor/trustee?

Aside from the T&R webinar above, we've not received any training that I can recall beyond what I've sought out myself. I was able to attend a couple of seminars during online conferences and I'm registered for a really exciting year long learning cohort with the Climate Caucus. I'm hopeful the next council will receive anti-bias training, the blanket ceremony or equivalent, and more.

**4. How will you work to ensure that every resident in our community is included?
How will you work to ensure that every student and staff member is included?**

The name of your organization says it all, ALL Welcome here. Emphasis on all. We, as individuals, and I, as an elected representative, have a duty to ensure that everyone in our society can participate without imposed barriers. In a country such as ours, there is no longer any reason or excuse to allow structural disenfranchisement for any member of any group. There never was any reason other than bigotry.

If I'm elected again, I will aim to be on the nomination committee and any HR work group. When so few diverse people are bound to be elected to council, we will need to ensure that work group composition and "hiring" includes some who will be vigilant. Anti-bias training for members of that committee will be essential. I don't have a specific plan beyond what I've outlined here and won't until we see the shape of the next council. I also hope we can look to our neighbours to join us to develop a regional T&R round table that will enable us to understand how we can, as municipalities, look at all of our municipal systems and create shared goals for reconciliation.

I take inspiration from young people and from a couple of groups of students at PEI, one of whom asked me to do more. Collectively, their civic urge is to include all. They're going to be bright lights in a future that needs them. Listening to them now is how I'll start.