

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

First off, I had to research what DEII actually means because the indigeneity component was new to me – so there is a starting point

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Here is a definition I found that makes sense to me. DEII is a term used to describe policies and programs that promote the representation and participation of different groups of individuals, including people of different ages, races and ethnicities, abilities and disabilities, genders, religions, cultures and sexual orientations. This also covers people with diverse backgrounds, experiences, skills and expertise.

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The aim is to encourage tolerance instead of bias, acceptance instead of rejection.

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This is critically important in building a fair society that allows all people to have equal opportunities.

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

Although I have always considered myself to be completely inclusive and find racism a completely foreign concept, I have now become aware that simply being a white male (an older one at that) growing up in Canada means that I probably have an implicit bias and suffer from homophily (a preference for interacting with those with similar traits).

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So, I continue to study – and there is a lot of new material out there – so I can be a better inclusive, non-discriminatory, non-racist person.

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On Council, I have recently supported adoption of new HR policies which are a vast improvement over the previous ones. We will, however, need to monitor staff performance to ensure they are more than just policies and their intent is carried out in real life.

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Working hard to not practice white blindness.

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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?

Following the 2020/2021 highly publicized debate over the fate of the MacDonald sculpture, As a Council member I was offered and completed a multi-part online course entitled “Canadian Indigenous Culture Training - Truth and Reconciliation Edition”

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I found this an eye opener to learn much more about Canada’s indigenous history from the indigenous perspective. An important takeaway was better understanding of how and why indigenous peoples have been mistreated and misunderstood by generations of governments. Plus the course offered learning on how to approach the complex question of reconciliation.

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Putting this to use has involved supporting more inclusion of First Nations in committees – for example, I am the Council rep on the new DMO Visit the County and one of our first actions was

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to invite MBQ to appoint a board member which they did. Josh Hill has been a valuable addition to the Board.

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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?

Going forward, I will encourage every County organism with which I am involved to include consideration of First Nations participation, the principles of the Truth and Reconciliation commission report and ensure that policies, terms of reference, etc. include anti-racism, anti-discrimination, etc. provisions.

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