



Message from the Chair of the Federation Board of Directors

April 8, 2021

Dear members of the social science and humanities community,

Today, I am very pleased to inform you that after six months of independent research and extensive consultations, the Congress Advisory Committee on Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Decolonization (AC-EDID) has released “Igniting Change,” its final report and recommendations. The report is a call to action, and a valuable new resource, for the Federation, scholarly associations, universities and the entire social science and humanities community.

We are grateful to the Committee for their profound knowledge, talent, and generosity, which made this report possible, and for the leadership of their Chair, Dr. Malinda S. Smith, and Vice-Chair, Dr. Noreen Golfman. Their 43 recommendations are part of a living document that will help us better listen, learn, and understand the diverse perspectives, needs, and experiences of our community, and – most importantly, act on them.

These recommendations are, in the Committee’s words, “a recognition of the harm caused by, and the need to move away from, the injurious performativity of conventional equity, diversity and inclusion committees”, and of “checklists” that achieve, at best, superficial changes. The Committee recommends bold but practical processes for achieving transformative change in Part II of the Report, “On the Second “D” in EDID: Decolonization Principles, Guidelines, and Promising Practices,” and in Part III, “Better Practices for an Inclusive Conference: An Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Decolonization Guide.”

Taking action

Our move to action will be swift. A number of recommendations are already being implemented; others require additional coordination with scholarly associations or university partners; and a handful need further research, discussion and assessment before pressing forward. Building on the advocacy of the Black Canadian Studies Association, we are following through on our commitment to plan a future, face-to-face Congress with a theme centred on the experiences and scholarship of Black and Indigenous peoples.

To meet the report’s ambitious call to action, the Federation’s Board of Directors has approved a three-year, \$500,000 investment in EDID initiatives, as part of the new [action plan](#) we are announcing today. Also under that plan, we are creating a standing committee to oversee the report’s implementation; adding new personnel, including a senior position to plan and support EDID work; and adopting a monitoring and reporting framework to ensure we are taking meaningful action in response to the recommendations, and being accountable to our members.

An EDID Charter

“Igniting Change” includes a Charter on Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Decolonization in the Social Science and Humanities. The Charter is our commitment to implement action plans that address all forms of discrimination, bigotry, prejudice, and injustice, and calls for urgent action by all of us across Canada. The goal is to address obstacles that have negative impacts on the career trajectories and lived



experiences of individuals from diverse communities, including women; Indigenous peoples; members of visible minority/racialized minority communities; persons with disabilities; members of LGBTQ2S+ communities; and linguistic, religious and cultural communities.

The Federation's Board has adopted the Charter, and we encourage members of our community – associations, institutions, organizations, and individuals – to read, discuss, support and promote it. It is vitally important that we take up these commitments to action and incorporate them into our daily lives and workplaces. [You can sign the Charter here.](#)

New opportunities for dialogue

We have invited our community to participate in a presentation on April 9 at 1 pm (EDT), during which the AC-EDID Chair and Vice-Chair will formally present the report. Please [register here to attend](#). Other opportunities to engage in dialogue with the Federation and other members of the HSS community will be announced shortly, including dates and registration details.

As we prepare to begin these new conversations, we have also been listening to the many voices that have been critical of the Federation recently. In doing the work required to transform ourselves, and to create safer, more equitable spaces, we will be striving to earn the trust of our Black colleagues, and to build a new relationship with the Black Canadian Studies Association.

I would like to end by noting that “Igniting Change” and the actions that we introduce today are only the beginning of our journey. We are committed to sustained and transformative change. We know that this will require evaluation, adjustment, and learning. We are prepared to do what it takes. We also urge you to participate in meaningful efforts to effect change. Through forums, outreach, and ongoing conversations, we hope to establish a dialogue that will build shared accountability and inspire collective action. Deeply rooted, systemic forms of racism, exclusion and oppression need our collective efforts for structural and transformative change to happen. We are best equipped to make real change happen when we work together.

We look forward to your feedback on the report, and to continuing the conversation well into the future.

Thank you.

Patrizia Albanese
Chair, Board of Directors
Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences