

Office of the President

June 12, 2019

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Announcement of Appointment of the Inaugural Vice-President, Equity, People and Culture

I am delighted to share with you that the search for York University's first Vice-President, Equity, People and Culture (EP&C) has reached a successful conclusion.

Following consultation with York's community regarding the VP EP&C role and position profile, a search committee was established in the fall of last year. After an extensive search which attracted numerous outstanding candidates, I am pleased to announce that the search committee has recommended the appointment of Dr. Sheila Cote-Meek to this important role. The Executive Committee of the Board of Governors accepted this recommendation and appointed Dr. Cote-Meek to a five-year term. She will be taking office on October 1, 2019.

Dr. Shelia Cote-Meek is an experienced leader in higher education and brings with her a vast array of knowledge and skills that will allow her to support the growth of equity and a positive organizational culture at the University. In this newly created role, Dr. Cote-Meek will integrate and organize responsibilities which have until now resided in several different areas of the University. She will lead a team including the AVP of Labour Relations and the AVP of Human Resources, and will work to ensure that York's employees, culture and equity principles are key considerations in developing and implementing the University's strategy, priorities, and policies. She will also head the development and execution of a progressive and effective EP&C strategy and structure that will advance the University's mission and cultivate an equitable, inclusive, respectful and healthy work environment.

Dr. Cote-Meek is Anishinaabe from the Teme-Augama Anishnabai. She joins York from Laurentian University after more than a decade as part of their senior leadership team. Most recently in her role as Associate Vice-President, Academic and Indigenous Programs, she was responsible for university faculty relations as well as leading the development of Indigenous academic development across various disciplines. She played a lead role in the development of the Indigenous Sharing and Learning Centre, the Master of Indigenous Relations program and the Maamwizing Indigenous Research Institute at Laurentian. She has also been a member of several strategic planning committees, including for Laurentian's two most recent strategic plans and the Health Science/Health Science North Research Institute Strategic planning committee. Beyond Laurentian, she also served as Health Director for the Union of Ontario Indians and Interim Dean of the Anishnaabe Studies Division at Cambrian College. In these various roles, Dr. Cote-Meek has applied her understanding of the importance of building strong foundational relationships with key stakeholders by collaborating, consulting and engaging with all communities that belong to the university and that the university serves.

Dr. Cote-Meek holds a PhD in Sociology and Equity Studies from the University of Toronto, as well as an MBA and BScN from Laurentian University. She was a full professor in the



School of Rural and Northern Health at Laurentian with a cross-appointment to the Northern Ontario School of Medicine. Author of *Colonized Classrooms - Racism, Trauma and Resistance in Post-Secondary Education*, she is an active researcher and has extensive experience working with Indigenous communities regionally, nationally and internationally on social justice, education and health-related issues. In 2016, she was nominated as an Indigenous Role Model for the Council of Ontario Universities Future Further Campaign, and in 2013, she was the recipient of a YWCA Women of Distinction Award. A champion for equity, diversity and inclusion, Dr. Cote-Meek has a strong history of building relationships that provide synergistic opportunities to advance institutions, and she is committed to working toward accessible higher education for all.

We are grateful to Dr. Cote-Meek for her enthusiasm in taking on this role, and we look forward to welcoming her to York in the fall. I also wish to thank the search committee for their contributions to this process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rhonda L. Lenton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent loop at the end.

Rhonda L. Lenton,
President & Vice Chancellor