New Women’s Initiative to Launch on March 8

Deborah Stewart, NASA Communications Officer

A new women’s initiative, Works for Women, is being launched on March 8, International Women’s Day (IWD).

What started as a conversation in June 2016 about of the lack of women in leadership roles in Alberta has transformed into a nine person committee that is behind the grass roots Works for Women initiative. The committee is made up of individuals from different organizations including Executive Education, Alberta School of Business, University of Alberta.

According to Works for Women, Alberta lags in several measures of gender equality, which indicates both a perception and a reality issue with women’s experiences in the workplace. They cite a recent study by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) that ranked the 25 best – and worst – places to be a woman in Canada. Both Edmonton and Calgary placed near the bottom of that list at 22 and 23 respectively.

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New Women’s Initiative

Much research has been done about gender inequality and what common challenges and barriers exist. The Works for Women committee believes that it is time to move beyond the why and start actioning the how in order to drive the change that needs to happen.

Conversations about gender inequality and the lack of women in leadership roles need to happen and they need to happen throughout the year. In order to facilitate those conversations, the Works for Women organization will initiate a new solution focused challenge each month that is designed to spark dialogue, build awareness and inspire action. Each action will be supported with information and resources.

The first action is the launch, which takes place on March 8. For this action, 5,000 purple wristbands have been distributed throughout the province. On each wristband are the words #BeBoldForChange. For the March workplace challenge they are asking people to create awareness of International Women's Day:

1. Wear purple and/or the #BeBoldForChange wristband
2. Snap a photo and post it to social media, tagging a friend, using the hashtags: #WorksForWomenAB #IWD2017 #BeBoldForChange

Works for Women encourages everyone to join them in their workplace challenge on March 8. By being part of this action, you are showing your support for women, and also starting a conversation around how to make Alberta a better place for women to work.

For more information or to sign up to be informed about future workplace challenges, see the Works for Women website - http://worksforwomen.org/

Equity Diversity Inclusion Week—March 16-18

Equity at its heart strives for social justice, access, and collaboration to further opportunities for success of students, faculty, and staff in the academy. Diversity of identity, thought, and scholarship advances institutional excellence. Inclusion actively engages the community in change to achieve equity and diversity. The principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion support the University of Alberta’s commitment to create work and learning communities that inspire and enable people to reach their full potential.

The sessions offered during EDI Week create opportunities for faculty, staff, students, and guests to come together to raise awareness, foster passion, fuel commitment, and enhance knowledge and skills.
NASA Holds Education Session For Members

Brendan Van Alstine, NASA Communications Assistant

On February 3, 2017 NASA's Political Action and Member Education Committee held the first in a series of lunch-and-learn information sessions to help familiarize our members with the right to strike, and the implications of the change. Recent court decisions have recognized the constitutional right to strike for public sector unions, including NASA, as well as the employer’s right to use a lockout in the event of a contract dispute; this is a significant change for NASA, and during recent consultations many members raised questions and concerns about what the right to strike could mean for NASA and its members.

An engaged crowd of over 40 NASA members attended the February 3 talk by Athabasca University Labour Relations professor Jason Foster, who provided an overview of the recent changes and what they mean for our union going forward. The discussion, which ranged from the basics of strike and lockouts to questions about the impact of the new regime on the bargaining process and thoughts on what next steps NASA must take, provided a great learning opportunity for the members in attendance and helped to set the stage for future discussions with our membership.

International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

March 21 is the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. The day is a reminder for all Canadians to take a stand against racism.

In 1960, 70 anti-apartheid demonstrators conducting a peaceful demonstration in Sharpeville, South Africa were shot and killed by police. In 1966, the United Nations marked this tragedy by declaring March 21, The International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Canada has been commemorating March 21 since 1989.

March 21 serves as a reminder that racism is still a part of our workplace, our community, our country and our world. We must make anti-racism and human rights a priority in our day-to-day to day life.
Mark Your Calendar

Public Interest Alberta’s 11th Annual Advocacy Conference
Date: March 30 & 31, 2017
Location: Chateau Louis Conference Centre, 11727 Kingsway, Edmonton
For more information: www.pialberta.org/2017conference