

Justice, Equity,  
Diversity and  
Inclusion (JEDI):  
JEDI within the AAU  
and in the work of  
the AAU

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# Presenter Introductions

## **AAU JEDI Committee**

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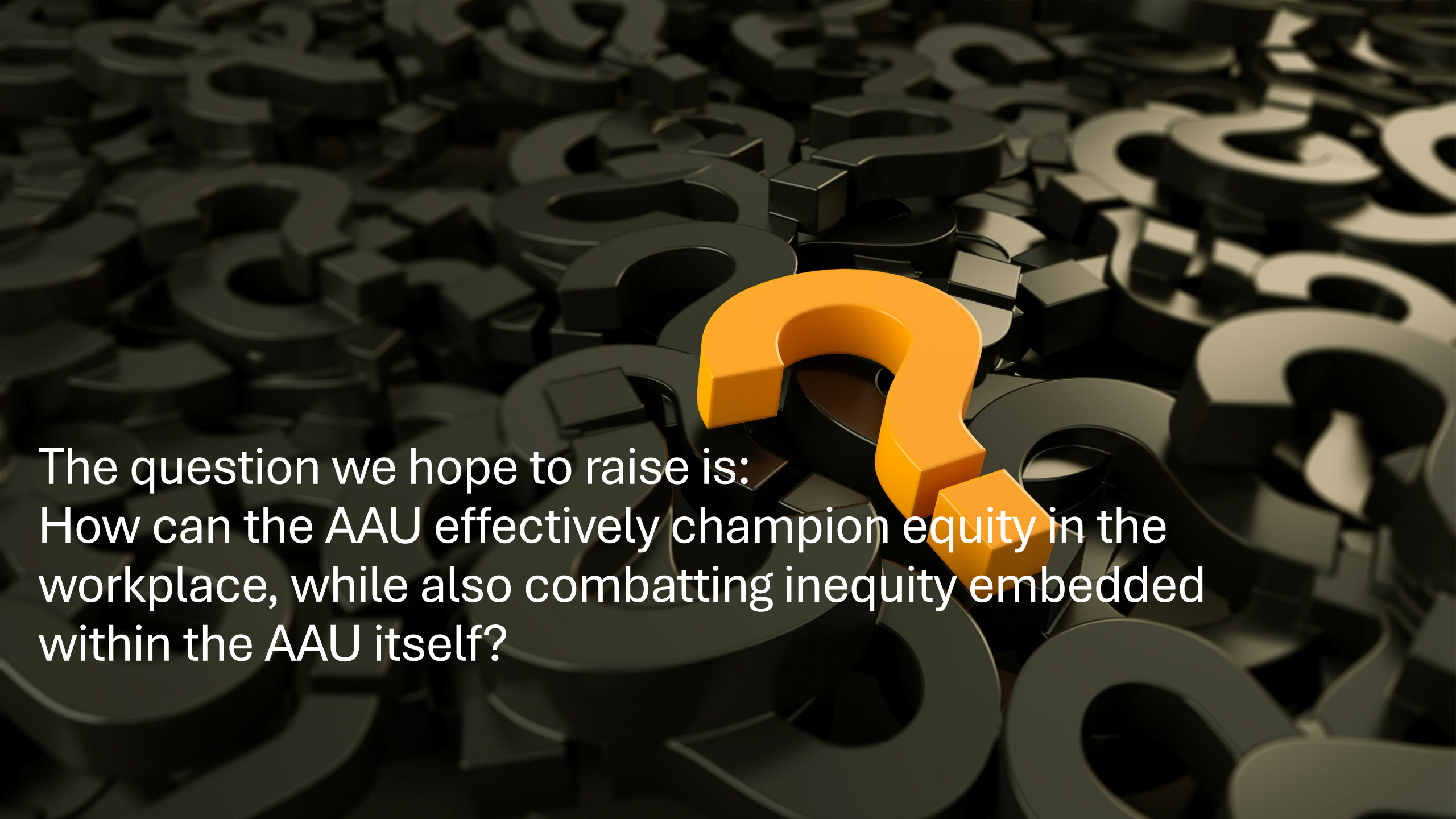
A black and white illustration of a group of people holding a banner that says "SOLIDARITY". The banner is held up by several people, and the word "SOLIDARITY" is written in large, bold, capital letters across it. The background is white, and the people are represented by simple black silhouettes.

SOLIDARITY

**Our voices and your voices:** In the first part of the session, the AAU JEDI Committee will share research and personal experience related to equity and unions in general. The second part of the session is structured to gather your concerns, questions, and ideas about where to go next.

**A union that protects some members but not others is not a union.  
It is a club.**





The question we hope to raise is:  
How can the AAU effectively champion equity in the  
workplace, while also combatting inequity embedded  
within the AAU itself?

# How the AAU JEDI Committee is beginning this work



- **Moving from anecdotal evidence to research-based evidence for decision making (focus groups with Employee Resource Networks (ERN), AAU-wide survey)**
- **Compilation of the evidence with recommendations in a report to be shared with all AAU members.**
- **Creation of a JEDI page on the Union website to connect, ask questions, share resources**

# One Off Equity Training Sessions



## What this looks like:

- Single session on unconscious bias, inclusion, disability awareness etc
- A box gets checked
- No change in the power structures and systems of privilege that produce harm

## Why it fails:

- Focus on **individual attitudes** rather than
  - collective agreements
  - grievance processes
  - leadership structures
  - how power and credibility are assigned

**Training without structural change is about optics, not justice.**

# Talking About Equity is Not Doing Equity

## What this looks like:

Equity statements, land acknowledgements, solidarity posts

But no changes to:

- budget allocations
- grievance processes
- leadership composition
- collective agreement language

## Why it fails:

- erodes trust among racialized, disabled, Deaf, and 2SLGBTQ+ members
- creates a gap between values and lived experience
- often asks marginalized members to “be patient” while harm continues

**When solidarity is only visible publicly, it's performance rather than commitment**



# Expecting Marginalized Members to Fix Problems They Did Not Create

## What this looks like:

- Equity work downloaded onto marginalized members
- Unpaid and under-resourced
- Professionally and emotionally risky (labelled as a complainer, missed promotions)
- Criticism if change is “too slow” or “too confrontational”

## Why it fails:

- Reproduces the very inequities unions claim to oppose
- Leads to:
  - burnout and withdrawal
  - continued reliance on “equity champions” rather than collective responsibility
  - tokenism instead of power-sharing

**Equity work cannot be the responsibility of  
those most harmed**



# Equity Committees Treated as Symbolic Not Structural



## What this looks like:

- Committees with no budget and no decision-making authority; advisory status only
- Recommendations that can be ignored
- No direct line into bargaining, grievances, or executive power

## Why it fails:

- Equity without teeth becomes consultation theatre
- Research shows committees are effective only when they:
  - control or influence resources
  - have formal authority
  - are embedded in decision-making, not parallel to it

**Meaningful equity work requires redistribution of resources, real power, and decision-making, not symbolic inclusion**

Collective  
agreement  
language that  
names specific  
groups and  
guarantees  
specific  
protections, not  
vague goodwill  
clauses

- Article 12: Workplace Diversity

- Article 13: Appointment and Termination of Employment

Interpretation and accessibility built into union meetings, not added as an afterthought when someone asks

Accessible documents



Transcription



Translation



Proper audiovisual equipment

Equity seats on bargaining teams and in leadership with real decision-making power, not observer status



Vice President Organizational Structure and Inclusion (VP OSI)



Voting member of Executive



Leads committee selection



Leads JEDI committee



Shout out To Ontario Public Service Employees Union for its 7 member Equity Executive Board

Policies audited regularly for hidden bias, including rules that look neutral but land harder on some members than others

- Review of Constitution and Bylaws yearly
- Review of Policies every 2 years
- Review of Committee Terms of Reference first meeting of each committee

Shout out to NSGEU: Ad-Hoc Structure Committee

Training that  
assigns  
collective  
responsibility  
to the whole  
membership,  
not to the  
people already  
most harmed

Canadian Labour Congress  
May 13, 2026 “We Fight For  
Justice” Action plan

- Calls for transformative changes to Canada’s Employment Equity Act

Shout out to CUPE – anti-racism strategy

- <https://cupe.ca/cupes-anti-racism-strategy-ten-key-goals-and-actions>

Grievance processes that move fast, stay confidential,  
and believe people when they come forward

## Article 11: Complaint, Grievance and Arbitration Procedure

21 days for complaint

Within 42 days of initial  
issue a Grievance can  
be filed

Within 14 days initial  
grievance meeting with  
College

Within 14 days of the  
meeting, there must be  
a response

Within 14 days of the  
response, it can be  
escalated to Step 2



**NOTE: be aware of what can be grieved and what cannot be grieved**

# Why JEDI belongs in union work

## 1 Rights

Members need protection that reflects human rights, dignity, and real workplace safety.

## 2 Representation

NSCC serves diverse communities. Members and students need to see themselves reflected in who has voice and power.

## 3 Collective Strength

A union is stronger when every member can participate, speak, be heard, and be protected.

## Goal

**What changes for members do you want to see after we leave today?**

# From evidence to member priorities

We have heard what fails. We have heard what works.

**Now we need to hear from you! What do you**

- **see**
- **need**
- **and want prioritized?**

Your input will help shape our AAU JEDI Committee work moving forward.

**30-MINUTE ACTIVITY**

**Listen. Reflect. Name priorities. Report back.**

# Let us move from talk to action

## STEP 1

### Reflect & respond

Pick a mode of contribution. Share what you notice, what concerns you, and what you want prioritized.

## STEP 2

### Name priorities

What should the AAU protect, change, stop, or build next?

## STEP 3

### Debrief together

We will listen for patterns. No one has to represent a whole group or disclose personal harm.

**Bottom line: a strong union protects every member in practice, not only in principle.**

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This is an anonymous survey



# Choose how you want to contribute

## Small group discussion

Talk with people near you. Choose one person to share a priority.

## Paper or post-it notes

Write privately or with your table. No names needed.

## Quiet reflection

Step away, grab a coffee, think, then add your response.



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## What happens next?

We will gather the input, look for patterns, and report back to members.

**NO SINGLE  
RIGHT WAY**

# Thank you for engaging with us!

**Your AAU JEDI Committee**

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