



Policy Consensus Decision	Replaces former policy: <input type="checkbox"/> Title: Click or tap here to enter text. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
	Date Effective: 2026-04-02
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	Contact: Kathy Davidson, Executive Director, SGSA

Policy Statement

The Board applies a consensus decision process during all Board meetings as outlined in the *Consensus Decision Making Guidelines*. The process is followed for Discussion, Recommendation and/or Decision items on a meeting agenda prior to any vote and resolution documented in the minutes, unless a resolution is being presented and voted on electronically. Some routine resolutions, such as approval of a consent agenda or past minutes, do not require a consensus approach. The *Guidelines* outline available actions if consensus is not achieved.

The College intentionally facilitates consensus processes that avoid reproducing existing power imbalances, exclusion, or silencing, particularly for Indigenous people and other equity-denied groups.

We choose to follow an adapted First Nations Circle protocol toward consensus, as described in the *Guidelines*. In this way, the College supports legal pluralism in its governance processes and decisions in accordance with the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (DRIPA) and the *Health Professions and Occupations Act* (HPOA).

1. Policy Rationale and Purpose

This policy establishes a consensus-based approach to Board decision making. It sets out how the Board comes together to make decisions in a good way, grounded in relationship, respect, and shared responsibility. Consensus-based decision-making processes support compliance with the Guiding Principles of the HPOA, specifically to support and promote awareness of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP) and of reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. Applying a consensus approach to decision making at Board meetings upholds the legal pluralism framework as set out in BC’s *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* Action Plan.

Consensus processes also support the HPOA’s anti-discrimination objectives by intentionally addressing the limitations of traditional majority-rule governance models, which have historically marginalized Indigenous Peoples and other equity-denied groups. Consensus-based decision making cultivates culturally safer practices and applies anti-racism approaches and tools in practice by valuing lived experience, relational



accountability, and multiple ways of knowing. These processes invite the Board to slow down, adjust power dynamics, and act with care to strengthen trust, accountability, and shared responsibility.

2. Policy Scope

This policy applies to the Board and each Board member in all governance processes and decision-making activities.

3. Duties and Responsibilities

Team Members

Team members supporting the Board are familiar with the policy and Guidelines and use them to develop accessible briefing materials and guiding questions that invite dialogue, multiple ways of knowing, and diverse perspectives, and that reduce barriers related to language, power, or prior governance experience.

Board Members/Chair

The Board Chair is familiar with the policy and Guidelines and leads meetings in a manner that upholds the values, principles, and relational responsibilities of the consensus process.

Board members are familiar with the policy and Guidelines and participate in meetings in a manner that upholds the values, principles, and relational responsibilities of the consensus process.

All are expected to ask for advice or assistance, if needed, from the Registrar, staff or Knowledge Keeper in conducting consensus processes.

4. Legal and Regulatory Authority

This policy is linked to the following legislation and regulatory documents:

- Health Professions and Occupations Act (HPOA) S14, S15
- BC Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA)
- CHCPBC Bylaws 2.11, 2.29, and 2.31

5. Other Relevant Policies and Documents

This policy is linked to the following other relevant policies and documents:

- Board Manual (in development)
- Board and Committee Code of Conduct
- Consensus Decision Making Guidelines

6. Key Partnerships

Key partnerships include:



Indigenous Governing Bodies and communities whose perspectives and protocols inform culturally safe governance practices.

Knowledge Keeper(s) who provide cultural guidance and accountability.

7. Definitions

Anti-racism means the practice of actively identifying, challenging, preventing, eliminating, and changing the values, structures, policies, programs, practices, and behaviours that perpetuate racism. It is more than being non-racist – it is acting to create conditions of greater inclusion, equality, and justice.

Discrimination means targeting an individual or group of people for negative treatment because of specific characteristics such as race, religion, gender, disability, or other protected characteristics protected by the BC Human Rights Code. Discrimination can occur at an individual, organizational, or societal level. It occurs when a particular social group is denied access to goods, resources, and services, either through action or inaction.

Equity-denied is a term used to refer to communities and groups that experience significant collective barriers in participating in society. This could include attitudinal, historic, social and environmental barriers based on age, ethnicity, disability, economic status, Indigeneity, gender identity and gender expression, nationality, race, sexual orientation, etc. Equity-denied groups are those who identify barriers to equal access, opportunities and resources due to disadvantage and discrimination and actively seek social justice and reparation. Sometimes “equity-seeking” or “equity-deserving”.

Knowledge Keepers are those who have extensive knowledge in Indigenous ways of knowing and being and who are invited to witness to the Board’s work. They provide guidance, advice and teachings, grounded in BC First Nations and Indigenous protocols; Their presence supports the Board’s collective responsibility to uphold cultural safety and humility and to ensure discussions are safe and respectful.

Power refers to the capacity of individuals or institutions to influence, lead, dominate, harm or otherwise impact the lives or actions of others. In settler-colonial society, privileged individuals and institutions hold higher amounts of power.

Privilege is the unearned benefits, advantages and opportunities held by those who are members of specific (dominant) groups in society. Privilege can be based on a variety of social identities including race, gender, sexuality, religion, socioeconomic status, ability, age and education. Privilege and power often co-exist, and members of dominant groups determine and shape social norms, values, and structures within society, creating standards others are typically expected to follow.

8. Process Check

The following documents have been consulted and applied to this policy.

- Policy Development Framework (required)
- Anti-Discrimination Measures (S14/15 HPOA) (required if applicable)



- Safe Spaces Playbook (required if applicable)
- In Plain Sight Report and Recommendations (required if applicable)

9. Resources/References

British Columbia Law Institute (2023) Legal Pluralism in Canada (Primer 3)
<https://www.bcli.org/wp-content/uploads/PRIMER-3-Legal-Pluralism-in-Canada.pdf>

Harmony Johnson, October 2024. Memo from Harmony Johnson to BC Health Regulators (BCHR) re: Model Bylaws, Standards, and Guideline, October 2024, p. 14

Health Standards Organization: BC Cultural Safety and Humility Standard, Annex B

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