



## Equality and Diversity Committee

### Minutes of the First Meeting of the Equality and Diversity Committee in the 2015-16 Academic Session, held on 15 October 2015, at 2.00 pm, in Room S311, Mary Seacole Building, Avery Hill Campus

#### Present:

Frances Hewison	Director of Human Resources (Chair)
Ami Solomon	Education Liaison Manager (AS)
Claire W Clark	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager (CWC)
Clifton Kandler	Head of Digital Services (CK)
Lucy Pollard	Faculty Operating Officer (Education and Health) (LP)
Patrick McGurk	Faculty of Business Representative (PM)
Tim Barry	Faculty of Engineering and Science Representative (TB)

#### In attendance:

Christine Couper	Director of Strategic Planning (CC)
Frederico Maia	Senior HR Manager (FM)
Karen Taylor	Researcher Development Manager (KT)
Melanie Thorley	Disability Project Officer (MT)
Sara Ragab	Head of Student Finance and Financial Support (SR)
Liz Laurence	Secretary

#### Apologies:

Christopher Hallas	Director of Student Affairs
Robert Mayor	Faculty Operating Officer (Business)
Stuart Ashenden	Faculty Operating Officer (Engineering and Science)
Will Calver	Access and Partnerships Manager

#### EDC/15.1 Welcome and Introduction

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made.

#### EDC/15.2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 23 April 2015 were **agreed** as an accurate record.

### **EDC/15.3 Matters Arising from the Minutes**

#### **14.14 Developing and Agreeing Corporate Equality Objectives**

**Action: Presentation from the Equality Challenge Unit to be considered for the next meeting.**

The Chair apologised for not being able to arrange a presentation by the Equality Challenge Unit for this meeting but assured the Committee that it had not been forgotten and would be arranged for the future.

### **EDC/15.4 Terms of Reference for the EDI Committee (EDIC/15.P01)**

The Chair introduced this item together with an EDI structure chart outlining the current position as referring to paper EDIC/15.P01 and explained that the Terms of Reference were last drafted for discussion in October 2014. The Chair said that it was proposed to amend the name of the Committee to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and that this would be recommended to the Executive Committee. She also mentioned that point 2 of the 'Functions' section, was a new addition. She then asked the committee for their comment.

The Committee discussed:

- The role of the FOOs on the Committee and whether they could send an alternate;
- Whether EDI Champions should be members of the Committee and the value in keeping them separate to the Committee;
- Whether all Directorates currently listed in the membership were required or whether they could be invited to attend as appropriate;
- It was felt important to have representation from the Estates and Facilities Directorate.

The Committee noted a typographical error in point 4 of the 'Functions' section and suggested that 'monitor annually progress...' should read 'monitor progress annually'.

Following discussions it was **agreed to recommend**:

- a change in the title of the committee to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion to Executive;
- a revision to the membership list to remove EDU and amend Directorate names;
- agreed not to include EDI Champions on the Committee; and
- To ask a representative from Estates and Facilities to attend Committee.

## EDC/15.5 EDI Strategy – Update

The Committee received an update on the collection of data relating to the protected characteristics.

Students Data: It was noted that data existed for students for the following equality strands:

- Sex
- Race
- Disability
- Age

The data relating to sex, race and age is believed to be robust. The data relating to disability less so as students can be reluctant to disclose a disability.

The University started to collect data relating to the following characteristics through the registration process in 2015/16:

- Religion and Belief
- Sexual Orientation
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Gender Reassignment

It was noted that data relating to pregnancy and maternity should also be collected and the approach to this is outlined in a new pregnancy and maternity policy for students.

Following on from this discussion SR reported that a new policy for pregnant students had been drafted. She explained that part of it advises on optional declarations on Banner which would be a way of collecting data and it would contain a student support plan which would also help with declaration and record keeping. SR went on to explain more about the draft policy saying that the policy had not been agreed yet, it was non-gender specific and that all pregnant students would have a pregnancy support plan. PM welcomed the policy and that it was needed at the university. LP agreed saying that a lot of work needed doing in this area particularly for breastfeeding and expressing facilities.

CK asked who SR had sent the policy to and SR confirmed she had sent it to Exams and Conferments, Tier 4 compliance, Wellbeing and the SU. SR said she was now happy for it to go more widely as long as the timescale was reasonable. She confirmed that an IMPACT Analysis has not been completed yet as she wanted to get a better brief. The policy was welcomed by the committee.

Staff Data: It was reported that the University had collected for many years relating to Sex, Age, Race and Disability. The same issues relating to declaration as existed for students were also true for staff. In 2014/15 the

University extended its data collection to the other equality characteristics and undertook a data audit to collect additional information relating to Sexual Orientation, Religion and Belief, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Gender Reassignment, Pregnancy and Maternity and to provide an additional opportunity for staff to disclose information not previously provided. There was a good response to the audit.

It was agreed that progress had been made by making it possible to capture data against all protected characteristics in such a short space of time. We should now concentrate on ensuring that students and employees felt sufficiently comfortable to disclose information to us so that we can build robust management information to support our work in all equality areas.

### **15.5.1 EDI Champions (EDIC/15.P02)**

The Chair introduced this item referring to paper EDIC/15.P02 and confirmed that a letter had been sent to the EDI Champions on behalf of the Senior Managers thanking them for taking on the role and outlining the support available. It was also announced that the Vice-Chancellor had agreed to be the EDI Senior Champion.

CWC reported that the first EDI Champions meeting had taken place in August and the main discussion surrounded the issue of workload, time and authority. FM said that although there will be extra work at first it would get better with time and once embedded will become second nature. SR said that the initial job description worried people as it was thought to be too big with too much responsibility. CK added that concerns were raised about the resources for the role, the workload and the idea that the role was being done 'on the cheap'. SR reported that EDI was a standing item on the agenda of her Directorate's SMT meetings and said that this wasn't the case for other colleagues.

The Chair asked whether the amended job description was better and SR thought that it was.

CK suggested that the EDI Champions should remain as a network and not attend the committee.

LP suggested that there should be a launch event celebrating and promoting the role and its importance this academic year.

TB remarked that he thought there was nothing wrong with the role but was concerned about possible resistance to raising the profile of EDI in the Faculty. He suggested a review of the role after six months and a letter to go to key Faculty staff explaining the role.

CWC explained that the next steps were for the EDI Champions to look at their Faculty\Directorate Equality Objectives with their senior managers and to have an EDI standing item on the Faculty SMT meetings

The Chair summed up the **Actions** as follows:

- Organise an EDI Champions event;
- EDI Champions to remain as a network;
- Review progress in 6 months;
- Consider sending information about the role to other key staff;
- Reword point 4 of the EDI Champions Expectations regarding attendance at committee;
- EDI standing item on the Faculty SMT meetings.

## **15.5.2 EDI Networks**

Updates on current and possible networks were received as follows:

### **15.5.2.1 Religion and Belief Open Meeting**

CWC reported that the open meeting was held on 14 October with 10 people in attendance and a good discussion had taken place. She explained that the next steps were to start discussions on the student side, look to set foundations and start to develop support and guidance for religion and belief.

### **15.5.2.2 Disability Forum**

CWC said she had been liaising with the Head of Student Wellbeing regarding the forum and the Disability Named Contact group as the majority of members attended both meetings. She said there was a need to rebrand the network and make it more robust like the LGBT Staff network.

### **15.5.2.3 LGBT Staff Network**

SR reported on events held by the LGBT Staff network which included Older Persons Day, the AGM and the Anniversary celebrations. She also mentioned that Greenwich is the first university to become an accredited training partner with Stonewall which means the university is now recognised as a centre of excellence for training schools about issues relating, in particular, to homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying.

MT queried the name of the network and FM confirmed that the new name was LGBT+ Staff Network and that the network would be rebranded and an announcement made.

### **15.5.2.4 BME Network**

CWC reported that a BME Network would be set up in the future which would form part of the submission for the Race Equality Charter.

### **15.5.2.5 Other Networks**

KT mentioned the former Women Professors Group that was currently not meeting. She was keen that it be revamped and revised and it was suggested that there was a need for a focus group to work on this.

## EDC/15.6 EDI Accreditations – Update

The Chair explained EDI accreditation has now been moved and managed centrally by Human Resources Directorate through the EDI workstream.

### 15.6.1 Race Equality Charter (EDIC/15.P08)

The Chair reported that the University's commitment to achieve the Race Equality Charter would be signed by the Vice-Chancellor.

CK explained paper EDIC/15.P08 and how the Charter ran in a similar way to AthenaSwan and was a driver for cultural change and the progression of minority staff. He said that a pilot for the Charter took place last year and 8 institutions achieved the Bronze Award. He said that the Equality Challenge Unit were evaluating the pilot and intended to have a launch of the Charter in January 2016. CK went on to say that it needed to be led by Senior Management and embedded in to university policies and the university needed to have the Charter.

Discussion was then held surrounding the Charter. LP said that the university should work out what we are not providing and find out how to tackle it. She also said the university was one of the most diverse and we needed to celebrate that and lead the way. The Chair agreed that we need to celebrate what we do well and try to improve and raise awareness before going for the Charter. CWC remarked that last year's annual report showed that 22.6% of staff and 54% of students were BME which was high than national average. LP said that we needed to look at how many senior managers and professors were BME and CK said that going for the Charter would highlight this and start the conversation.

Chair summed up the **Actions** as follows:

- Establish a task group;
- Start promoting and raise awareness
- Commit to going for the Charter;
- Get guidance from ECU on how other institutions are managing the accreditation.

The Chair confirmed that in relation to the other accreditation updates referred to on the agenda there was nothing to agree. She asked that the following be noted:

- the update paper (EDIC15.P06) from KT on AthenaSwan;
- the submission for the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index; and
- the renewal of the Two Ticks Scheme.

## **EDC/15.7 EDI Annual Report 2014/15**

CWC informed the committee that she was about to start the process of writing the annual report. She said she would highlight in this year's report; the changes compared to previous year 2013/14 and it would be submitted to the committee for review and comments.

## **EDC/15.8 Any Other Business**

### **15.8.1 ILS Action Plan (EDIC/15.P07)**

CK introduced this item referred to paper EDIC/15.P07 and reported that the ILS Action Plan would focus on the area of accessibility which the Directorate had an opportunity to make an impact. He confirmed that the Directorate would:

- Work to increase participation in 'Equality and Diversity Essentials' and improve completion rates;
- Instigate and encourage additional training for managers through the 'Managing Diversity' online course;
- Identify best practice in conjunction with student accessibility team, bench mark current systems against this best practice and develop action plan by 1<sup>st</sup> January 2016;
- Ensure that accessibility is considered at the inception of new projects and implementation of new systems by 1<sup>st</sup> January 2015;
- Ensure that Web editors and authors are aware of their obligations with regards to accessibility, are trained and have access to tools to monitor and improve the accessibility of their web pages to an agreed standard by the 1<sup>st</sup> March 2016.

## **EDC/15.9 Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 11 February 2016

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