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Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee

Minutes of the First Meeting of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee in the 2016-17 Academic Session, held on 20 October 2016, at 2.00 pm, in Room G104, Grey Building, Avery Hill Campus

Present:

Frances Hewison	Director of Human Resources (Chair)

Barry Palmer	Head of Catering and Conferences (BP)
Christopher Hallas	Director of Student Affairs
Clifton Kandler	Head of Digital Services (CK)
Luke Ellis	Student Union Vice-President (LE)
Patrick McGurk	Faculty of Business Representative (PM)
Tariq Effendi	Faculty of Architecture, Computing & Humanities Representative (TE)
Tim Barry	Faculty of Engineering and Science Representative (TB)

In attendance:

Christine Couper	Director of Strategic Planning (CC)
Frederico Maia	Senior HR Manager (FM)
Rachel Flood	Athena SWAN Project Officer (RF)
Liz Laurence	Secretary

Apologies:

Lucie Pollard	Faculty Operating Officer
Paul Nicholson-Lewis	Head of Facilities and Operations
Simone Murch	Senior Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer
Will Calver	Access and Partnerships Manager

EDIC/16.1   Welcome and Introduction

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

EDIC/16.2   Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 11 February 2016 were **agreed** as an accurate record.

EDIC/16.3   Matters Arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising.

EDIC/16.4   Business of the Committee for the Coming Year

Implementing a schedule of business for the year and how this might support the consideration of EDI business in Faculties and Directorates was discussed. As part of the discussion the issue of completion of the EDI on-line training was raised and the difficulties of encouraging staff to do so. It was reported that the appraisal process was being revised and that the possibility of including essential training requirements automatically into the development section of the on line form for the next appraisal round was being explored.

Agreed:

a) To circulate a summary of EDI Strategy and action plan and a schedule of business for the remaining two meetings of the academic year before the February meeting for member comments.

b) That the schedule of business for the committee would take into account the best time for the Faculties to work on EDI business – November to December.

c) That a report on EDI training, including completion rates and the outcome of the recent review would be brought to the February meeting.

EDIC/16.5   EDI Accreditations

16.5.1 Stonewall WEI Submission and LGBT Report

Received:

The LGBT+ Network events programme.

Reported:

a) That the Stonewall WEI submission had been made with the result due in January 2017. The University aimed to at least maintain its position of 80 in the Top 100 employers and hoped to improve.

b) That new Stonewall arrangements meant that all universities that wished to retain Diversity Champion status should also operate within the Global Champion framework. The university had already become a Global Champion in 2015-16 in anticipation of this change and a submission within Global Champion framework was underway.

c) That through the programme of events the Network was hoping to focus on new areas around international issues and community links and was keen to work with other staff networks to develop links and have joint activities.

d) In answer to a question from member of the Committee that there was no policy on supporting LGBT staff and students undertaking placements overseas but guidance was available from Stonewall on many countries which could be shared with staff and students.

Agreed:

a) That the Chair would write to the International Office to ask whether there is any briefing provided to students on the culture of a country they are visiting ahead of a placement.

b) The Chair would ask at the next FOO's & COO's meeting whether there was any local practice in place for supporting students undertaking a period of study or placement overseas.

c) That should any work in this area be undertaken it would be done in partnership with the Students Union.

16.5.2 Disability Confident

Reported:

That Disability Confident had replaced the Two Ticks Scheme and that the university was at level 2. The university was working to maintain that level and work towards level 3.

Agreed:

a) To support the work towards achieving level 3 accreditation;

b) To aspire to level 3;

c) To pursue collaborations with local disability groups to support the aspiration of achieving level 3 accreditation;

d) To invite a representative of the Estates and Facilities Department to brief the Committee on how it addresses issues relating to inclusive learning spaces;

e) To ask the DNC's about the support provided to students and particularly to identify any good practice in this area which could be shared;

f) To promote the good work done in this area throughout the university.

16.5.3 Race Equality Charter

Reported:

a) That the Vice-Chancellor had committed the University to making a submission for the Race Equality Charter within two years.

b) That a plan had been put in place to work towards the achievement of the Charter. It was noted that the requirements of the Charter required

dedicated staff resource. This was not common for other accreditations. However, work could progress and the staffing resource identified in due course.

c) In response to a question that the main issue in this area of work as it relates to students was the attainment gap of BME students and work was in progress to address this including a collaborative bid to HEFCE to support a project in this area. In relation to staff the main issue was progression for BME staff and there were a range of projects in place to address this, including career pathways and job families, revision of promotion mechanisms and development initiatives including workshops on Professorial and Reader promotion and coaching.

16.5.4 Athena SWAN

Reported:

a) That a new project manager, Rachel Flood, had been appointed.

b) That the focus was now on departmental accreditations. The first department submissions had been made by Psychology & Counselling, and had been unsuccessful. CIS, Maths and Paramedic Science are to submit in April 2017.

c) That Heads of Departments were being contacted to confirm the date for their submissions either April or November.

d) That an Athena Swan event would be held at Medway in December to help with the departmental application process.

EDIC/16.6   HR Policy Updates

16.6.1 Transitioning at Work Policy

Received:

A draft policy.

Reported:

a) That the policy was not for circulation pending formal sign off by VCO.

b) That consultation had been undertaken with staff groups, staff representatives and external bodies in drafting the policy.

c) The Student Affairs and Support was drafting a similar policy for students using the staff policy as the basis.

Agreed:

a) That the Committee supported the introduction of the Policy and that the checklist for managers was particularly helpful.

b) That the Students' Union would be involved in the development of the student policy.

EDIC/16.7   **Sharing of Best Practice**

Reported:

a) That this item was an opportunity for areas to raise work that they are doing which might be adopted in other areas or publicised to the wider University community.

b) That gender neutral language was now being used in the Academic Regulations and for the staff ID cards. Student Union by laws also used gender neutral in language.

c) That the Student Union held Liberation months and it would be good for staff to join in with those.

d) That Science and Engineering successfully employed a student intern to work on EDI matters for the Faculty but who had also supported University events.

Agreed:

a) To produce a single Equality Events Calendar;

b) To promote the work on Gender neutral Language through the HR Newsletter 'HR Matters'.

c) To receive an annual update on Student Union Equality Activities.

EDIC/16.8   **Any Other Business**

There were no items of any other business.

EDIC/16.9   **Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 9 February 2017.

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