Equality Diversity and Inclusion Committee

Thursday, 3rd November 2022 2:15 pm

Online - Teams joining link in 'Agenda and Notice of Meeting' | Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee

Attendees

Minute by Mollie Kay-Hough

Committee attendance
Rajani Naidoo, Vice-President (Culture & Inclusion) - Chair
Marion Harney, Athena SWAN Lead
Tyben Lozane, Elected Student Representative
Lizzi Milligan, Equality & Diversity Network (EDN) Co-Chair
Cassie Reis, Elected Staff Representative (Technical & Experimental)
Alexander Robinson, SU President
Liz Simmons, Elected Staff Representative (Management, Specialist & Administration)
Joel Staley, Equality & Diversity Network (EDN) Co-Chair
Blake Walker, SU Community Officer
Jane White, Elected Staff Representative (Education & Research)
Mandy Wilson-Garner, Member appointed by the Students' Union
Ania Zalewska, Member appointed by Senate

Additional attendees
Richard Brooks, Director of Human Resources
Abi Phillips, Deputy Director (Culture & Inclusion)
Aiste Zubiniene, Equality & Diversity Officer
Mollie Kay-Hough, Committee Officer (Secretary)
Andrew Ross, Head of Widening Participation (for item 1006)

Apologies
Su McNab, Lay Member appointed by Council
Alice Ludgate, Director of Student Support and Safeguarding
Gareth Eyles, Elected Staff Representative (Operational & Facilities Support)
Tim Ibell, Dean Faculty of Engineering and Design

1000.0 Welcome and Quorum

Minute by Mollie Kay-Hough

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, with a particular mention to new members Alexander Robinson, Blake Walker and Tyben Lozane. The Committee were given assurance that feedback received from members about the format and timing of meeting papers, as well as the designation of titles, had been noted and the issue relating to 'family friendly' meeting times was on the agenda.

1001.0 Declarations of Interest

Minute by Mollie Kay-Hough

There were no declarations of interest.

1002.0 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Minute by Mollie Kay-Hough

EDIC considered the minutes of the meeting held on 9 June 2022 and approved them as an accurate record of the meeting.

1003.0 Actions and Matters Arising

Minute by Mollie Kay-Hough

The Chair informed the Committee that all of the outstanding actions have been addressed in the Chair's Report or elsewhere on the agenda.

EDIC noted the action log.

1004.0 Chair's Report

Minute by Mollie Kay-Hough

EDIC noted a verbal update from the Chair which contained the following:

- The Statement of Equality Objectives was nearing completion and would be circulated to EDIC members for comment before going to UEB and other bodies for approval.
- Work had been undertaken to refresh the networks, which all now have Terms of Reference and a Chair, and two new networks - the aFLAME Network, for people with disabilities, and a People of Colour Network - had been created. A commemoration committee had been formed, consisting of staff and students, to coordinate EDI events across the year.
- It had been decided that the portraits in 4 West were to be changed in the new year due to the feeling that they were not representative of the University community. There were issues relating to insurance and other logistics that would need to be resolved, as well as considerations about what they were to be replaced with.

Committee members queried the timeline for the Statement of Equality Objectives approval and

requested, since it will set out expectations that EDIC would be responsible for, that it was brought to a meeting for discussion before it went to UEB and Council.

The Chair took an action to confirm the deadline for this work and assured the Committee that it would get the opportunity to consider the document at a meeting before it went for approval.

1005.0 Equality Impact Assessments

Minute by Mollie Kay-Hough

The Committee received an update from Aiste Zubiniene and Abi Phillips, Deputy Director (Culture & Inclusion), on work done by the team around Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) which had involved a review of the existing process and comparison against other universities, resulting in simpler and clearer guidance documents which the Committee had sight of in the papers.

It was explained that the application of EIAs helped to inform good decision-making by asking governing groups to consider the possible and actual impact that policies, procedures and other items systems have on all people across the University, and that this approach was best practice across the HE sector.

The Deputy Director (C&I) informed the Committee that EIAs were to be introduced at the point of change, asking those responsible to complete the template as part of the paper that was being tabled for approval by Senate and/or Council. The team proposed that the Equality & Diversity Network be responsible for monitoring the EIAs that were received, assessing each individual EIA as well as evaluating any patterns and overarching themes to measure the overarching impact.

Committee members were satisfied with the proposed approach and noted that there may be some training needs for EDN members to perform that function, along with the reassurance that the workload would not become unmanageable. The team agreed and would have a follow up meeting with the co-chairs to discuss in further detail.

The presenters were asked if implications for part-time staff could be added to the EIA; this was already noted in the document but would be made more explicit.

1006.0 Access and Participation Plan

Minute by Mollie Kay-Hough

The Head of Widening Participation joined the meeting as a guest to inform EDIC about the development of an Access and Participation Plan for 2024 onwards and to invite Committee members to share any initial thoughts and feedback.

The Head of Widening Participation explained that the Access and Participation Plan, which was a condition of registration with the Office for Students, required that a proportion of the higher rate fee charged to undergraduates was spent supporting students with their higher education journey. The OfS would be publishing new guidance on this in March and the plan would be submitted 6 weeks later, therefore the consultation phase was being conducted now

and EDIC would play an important role in helping to identify the key risks to disadvantaged students, and to equality of opportunity in general.

The Chair thanked the Head of Widening Participation for introducing the Committee to this piece of work and invited him to bring a paper to the next EDIC meeting for further consideration and feedback.

1007.0 Digital Accessibility Report

Minute by Mollie Kay-Hough

EDIC considered a verbal update on digital accessibility in which the Chair explained that the University had been minimally compliant with regulation in this area up to now. The Chair outlined three main issues - a lack of responsibility in the leadership team for driving this work forwards, the absence of a digital accessibility strategy, and there not being a culture of staff ensuring digital accessibility across the University.

The Chair advised that she and Chris Youles, DDaT Chief Officer, were now responsible for digital accessibility and a task force would be created with the purpose of a) coordinating a whole-organisation approach and embedding the culture across the University, and b) conducting a review of the accessibility of all digital platforms. The Committee was informed that a work plan would be brought to the next meeting for consideration by members.

1008.0 Update on Accessibility Audit Plans

Minute by Mollie Kay-Hough

The Committee received an update from Joel Staley who informed them that the action from the last meeting to meet with the Deputy Vice Chancellor has been completed, followed by a revised paper from one seen by EDIC at the last meeting being presented to the newly formed Estates Strategy and Buildings Board. Joel advised that the paper outlined key issues to be addressed identified from the 2019 accessibility audit and buildings survey results as well as the most recent two years' SU Top 10. This included accessibility improvements, more inclusive spaces and aiming for organisational best practice when considering new builds and refurbishments. The Estates Strategy and Buildings Board welcomed the report and accepted that the work fell within its scope. Follow up discussions had taken place to begin to address these issues and embed EDI into the estates strategy. One result of this was the recognition that EDI representation was needed in that group to identify and highlight these types of issues going forwards.

Blake Walker praised those involved in moving this forward and gave thanks on behalf of their colleagues at the SU.

1009.0 Gender Identity Update

Minute by Mollie Kay-Hough

The Committee was reminded of the gender identity policy which was approved at UEB in April and went live on the website in September following engagement with Heads of Departments over the summer to uncover any concerns. The Deputy Director (C&I) updated members that, since then, HR and Student Services teams had been developing their knowledge of the policy and its importance and Kaleidoscope were planning to publish a blog at the end of November to highlight the policy and signpost to helpful resources.

The Deputy Director (C&I) went on to give an update on the Tell It Once service, which aimed to reduce the number of touchpoints a person must go through to change their gender identity within the University. The Committee was informed that Terms of Reference had been drafted and would go to the Executive Board Standing Group to identify resource requirements on 22 November.

1010.0 Family Friendly Meeting and Workshop Times

Minute by Mollie Kay-Hough

Liz Simmons shared her experience as a part-time member of staff and raised that it can be difficult to take part in a broad range of activities such as committees, workshops and other training due to meeting times and conflicting responsibilities.

The Committee heard how missing out on these sorts of opportunities could have long-term implications for part-time staff such as hindering development and progression. Committee members discussed the importance of this piece of work and that, with the rise of hybrid working since the pandemic, these considerations applied to many members of staff with a range of working patterns across the University.

Aiste thanked Liz for raising these issues and proposed that this item go to the Equality & Diversity Network for a wider consultation to gather feedback and insight into people's experiences, and then develop possible solutions to more effectively include part-time members of staff and those with caring responsibilities.

1012.0 Athena Swan

Minute by Mollie Kay-Hough

Aiste Zubiniene updated the Committee on progress with Athena Swan, as follows:
- The Department of Social & Policy Sciences, the only remaining department without an award, submitted for their bronze award at the end of September. If successful, the University would become the second institution in the UK to achieve a full house of Athena Swan awards.
- The Department of Psychology was preparing to apply for its silver award at the end of November.
- As an industry leader in this work, the University had been involved in advising a number of institutions across the UK such as St Mary's University, UWE, Warwick University and Imperial College London. The University had benefited from these partnerships too, as the C&I team had received feedback on EDI initiatives such as the Equality Impact Assessments.

The Committee was also informed of two projects that had stemmed from the Athena Swan action plan:
- The Department of Economics was leading on a piece of work in collaboration with the GW4 Alliance to consider mechanisms for academics returning to work after taking family leave, and exploring perceptions around the amount of leave taken for this purpose
- A small task and finish group had been set up to explore the scope of a 'gender differences' project evaluating the notion of 'thankless tasks' and the weighting of promotable vs non-promotable activities among different genders.

Committee members congratulated the team on their work in this area and recommended that the group link up with Academic Staff Committee to review the University's promotion criteria. It was noted that there may be some work to do in terms of challenging perceptions, where people are unable to recognise these issues due to they themselves having been able to reach a certain position. It was suggested that, when looking at the data in relation to promotions, it could also be an opportunity to review any similar trends around the allocation of sabbaticals.

1013.0 Harassment Prevention Working Group

Minute by Mollie Kay-Hough

The Chair updated the Committee that the Harassment Prevention Working Group had now become 'Respect', a sub-group of the Student Experience Advisory Board, and that she was due to meet with its Chair to discuss how the group would report into EDIC.

1014.0 Equality of Pay

Minute by Mollie Kay-Hough

The Committee was updated on changes to the gender pay gap work which previously sat with the Pay and Reward Team in HR and would now be part of the Culture & Inclusion Team's remit. The Deputy Director (C&I) informed Committee members of the Government requirement to report on the University's gender pay gap each March and explained that the C&I team was intending to widen the scope to equality of pay, which would analyse any correlations in pay looking at grades, length of service and protected characteristics. The Deputy Director (C&I) summarised the methodology that had been agreed and advised that, when analysing the categories, a 5% difference in pay would trigger a deep dive into the difference to identify any patterns or causes for concern.

1015.0 Any Other Business

Minute by Mollie Kay-Hough

The Chair noted that it was Cassie Reis' last EDIC meeting due to her upcoming departure from

the University and thanked her on behalf of the Committee for her contribution.

There was no other business raised.