

**Meeting:**               **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY COMMITTEE**

**Date and Time:**   **Thursday 11 June 2020 at 2.15pm**

**Venue:**               **Via MS Teams**

Present:	David Galbreath Leda Blackwood Richard Brooks Marion Harney Alisha Lobo Aurelien Mondon Rachel Willis Mandy Wilson-Garner	Chair Staff representative (Education and Research) Director of Human Resources Member appointed by Senate (from minute 364) Community Officer, Students' Union (SU) Co-Chair, Equality and Diversity (E&D) Network Staff Representative (Management, Specialist & Admin) Member appointed by the Students' Union
In attendance:	Georgina Brown Caroline Harris Aiste Senulyte Cassie Wilson	Head of Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (ED&I) Secretary E&D Officer Vice-President (Student Experience) (minutes 860-861)
Apologies:	Eve Alcock Catherine Mealing-Jones Lizzi Milligan Mike Nicholson Anthony Payne Cassie Reis Susan Sutcliffe	President, Students' Union Lay member appointed by Council Co-Chair, E&D Network (EDN) Director of Undergraduate Admissions & Outreach Director of Student Services Staff Representative (Technical and Experimental) Staff representative (Operational and Facilities Support)

### ACTION

#### **860. WELCOME**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies had been received from those listed above. He mentioned the significance of the recent murder of the black American man George Floyd, which had provoked demonstrations in support of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement. He also talked of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, which was affecting everyone, with an impact on equality groups.

#### **861. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

The Vice-President (Student Experience) (VP(SE)) attended the meeting alone (the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching) being unavailable) to enable discussion on equality and diversity issues relating to students, covering:

- Discussion was ongoing on making ED&I changes across the student experience, though there was no-one with overall ED&I responsibility; it affected all aspects of university life and was hard to bring together;
- It was good that universities had now woken up to systemic racism, and there was optimism that as many people now realised there was a problem and this was the time for changes to be made; resources were needed

rather than simply making statements, but as institutions had no choice money would be found to commit to changes;

- The VP(SE) was thanked for coming from the senior management team; she explained that there was not a lack of willingness to effect changes but perhaps a lack of understanding; she would raise the issues with the University Executive Board (UEB);
- Decolonising the curriculum was being tackled as part of curriculum transformation; however, there was a resource issue;
- Resources were difficult; PVCs had little budget and Deans had an equipment budget but none for ED&I; long term commitment was required;
- The SU Anti-Racism Campus Forum had produced a clear set of actions, some could not be done but it was a good starting point; the SU was appreciative of the honesty of being aware of not having the answers;
- The Committee had been set an assurance task, with no budget or decision-making power; the Chair had been in conversation with the Vice-Chancellor and the Chair of Council about its function;
- The University was in the same position as many others with not knowing what to do about ED&I, but with a strategic interest and ED&I everywhere; some UK and north American universities had a top down and resourced principled ED&I function with a sizeable team as a policy and practice generator;
- As in many institutions there was white patriarchy and it was hard to change the mindset; this was not just the University but societal structure;
- A change of priority was needed, and this was a good time as society would be different post Covid-19; the window of opportunity was small; many proposals were not expensive and prioritised time;
- To date the changes made had been small and many people did not understand why they had been made;
- An audacious plan was required with Council and UEB support.

The Chair thanked the Vice-President (Student Experience) for joining the meeting for this item. The Committee continued further discussion on the topic.

## **862. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Chair invited any declarations of interest. There were no specific conflicts, apart from everyone's roles in general.

## **863. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting were approved as a correct record and would be signed later by the Chair (Paper EDC19/20-025).

## **864. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

### Minute 848: Matters Arising, Terms of Reference

The Chair reported that the working group to discuss the Terms of Reference had met and would be reported on later in the meeting.

### Minute 849: Setting our Ambition

The Chair had raised the issues discussed at the meeting of the Terms of Reference working group.

### Minute 851: Being a Parent

The Director of Human Resources reminded members of the three items (1) a greater range of maternity pay options (2) shared parental leave arrangements (3) a

returner's package. The paper had been seen by the Committee and the University Executive Board (UEB) and been well-received; the Vice-Chancellor had seemed sympathetic. However, the Covid-19 crisis had diverted all decision making elsewhere and provoked a deficit in the accounts hence these issues were not progressing at that time.

He was questioned on when it would be possible to take non-crisis decision and responded that matters would be clearer once student recruitment was known at the end of September. There were other priority issues such as Brexit/EU visas, which the University had to consider. Routine business could be considered once the financial position was clearer. BLM issues would be considered outside UEB, but these parental issues would be a UEB decision.

Minute 852: Annual Equality Returns 2020

The returns had not been requested in spring 2020.

Minute 853: BAME Experiences, World Café

The Secretary to check whether the presentation was available with the committee papers on the BSS system. *(Post meeting note: this has now been uploaded).*

SEC

Minute 858: AOB, ED&I Business Case

The Head of ED&I explained that preparation of the Business Case had started but needed re-energising.

HoED&I

**865. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY NETWORK**

The EDN Co-Chair reported that some of the planned meetings had been cancelled or postponed due to the strike and the Covid-19 pandemic. They had held two 1-hour meetings with good discussions. A Covid-19 survey had produced some interesting responses. The final meeting of the year was the previous day with a focus on Covid-19 and BLM. The SU Community Officer had developed the SU report on response to BLM issues and the EDN had agreed to support the statement. He stated that the actions were not just empty words and that they would be discussed further at the next EDN meeting.

**866. STUDENT DATA WITH EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY METRICS 2018/19**

The Committee received Paper EDC19/20-026, student data with equality metrics for 2018/19. The Chair stated that the Chair of Council was concerned about the lack of analysis behind the data.

The E&D Officer explained that the data was a good resource for departmental Athena SWAN studies and that it would be shared with them for analysis and actions. The outcome would be brought back to the Committee.

E&D Off

It was pointed out that just prior to the pandemic faculty degree outcome workshops were planned to study data and formulate responses. These would be held when possible.

The Chair pointed out the Committee's assurance role was to ensure that the University responded with appropriate actions. He wished to understand better how the data for the diverse student population with reference to race and Polar was obtained.

CHAIR

## 867. EFFECT OF COVID-19 ON EQUALITY GROUPS

The Head of ED&I explained that guides had been produced and support groups formed to mitigate against the effect of Covid-19. She was working collaboratively with other universities and would share the information after the meeting. Equality Impact Assessments would be revisited and once back at the University action and consideration would be required. She expressed the view that there had been two pandemics – Covid-19 and BLM. The E&D Officer pointed out that feedback was being gathered via the Athena SWAN mailing, with several responses on the disproportionate effect of lockdown on female academics.

HoED&I

During discussion the following points were made:

- At the EDN these issues had been discussed: the communication to students about examination dates had caused stress to staff and there could have been more clarity; there were effects on women and carers; there was not enough support to those with disabilities; there had been some good practice;
- The Director of Human Resources spoke about the ongoing staff survey, which would close on 16 June: there had been 1473 responses; it would provide a data set to judge the impact by gender/age/ethnicity/caring responsibility/part-full time; it would also provide well-being and qualitative data;
- The Head of ED&I thanked Human Resources for support in producing the guides;
- The pandemic had highlighted working from home and working flexibly and it was hoped that mental health issues would be considered;
- Council wanted to look at the disparate effect of working from home;
- It was pointed out that many professional services staff were women and there was also an impact on them; anecdotally there were technical disparities between academics and professional services staff;
- The Academic Staff Committee was thinking about how to take the disparate effects into consideration when considering promotion.

## 868. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY COMMITTEE GOVERNANCE

### (1) Terms of Reference

The Chair reported that at the working group meeting to discuss the Committee's Terms of Reference (TOR) (Paper EDC19/10-027 refers) the members present felt that the TOR went beyond assurance and were more action-orientated; they also commented that the Committee needed to ensure it met them. The addition of point "(b) To challenge the University as an institution in terms of our practice, approach and development of equality and diversity, and in particular where progress is limited or, in support of under-represented or disadvantaged individuals and groups" was proposed. Senate and Council would need to agree the amendment to the TOR.

Concern was expressed that the Committee was not meeting its TOR and that it was not being properly used as a governance committee.

AGREED to incorporate the additional point (b) as given above and recommend the amendment to Senate and Council.

CHAIR/  
SEC

(2) Membership

The Committee considered the current membership of the Committee detailed in Paper EDC19/10-028.

AGREED to continue with the membership as previously, with the addition of the Athena SWAN lead as a co-opted member.

**869. SENATE EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW**

The Committee considered Paper EDC19/20-029, an extract from the Senate Effectiveness Review (SER) relevant to the Committee.

During discussion the following points were made:

- There was some reluctance to the Committee being renamed the 'Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee', but general agreement;
- The SER stated that providing the minutes to Senate simply for noting was to be replaced by adding ED&I on the agenda;
- E&D Network:
  - Concern was expressed about the proposal that the E&D Network should be watered down, with no strategic role;
  - Members came from every single community in the University and spent time at 6 x 2-hour meetings; it was queried whether the time would still be in the workload model;
  - The EDN members worked hard and it was vibrant;
  - The EDN Co-Chair had run the meetings over the past year with no administrative support but felt that lack of central support sent a poor signal;
  - It was suggested that the SER was not well advised in relation to the E&D Network, or ED&I as whole, and that the Committee had a responsibility to make sure that the consequences were understood;
- The University was now more awake to the importance of the ED&I agenda following the BLM movement; it was hoped this would supersede the SER recommendations; the Committee was the body to lead the University in making changes.

AGREED that the Chair write to the Chair of Senate stating that the Committee considered the proposal for the E&D Network in the Senate Effectiveness Review was entirely inappropriate.

**CHAIR**

**870. ATHENA SWAN ANNUAL REPORT**

The E&D Officer presented the Athena SWAN annual report (Paper EDC19/20-030) pointing out that there had been a great deal of departmental activity and that the University was now preparing for an institutional silver submission. The Chair and the Athena SWAN lead would present the ambitious action plan to the University Executive Board on 30 June.

During discussion the following points were made:

- It was unfortunate that the annual lecture had not been held; an online version could be considered;
- The BLM agenda could be used as a vehicle for improvement by considering the intersectionality between gender and ethnicity;
- The Race Equality Charter award was important and gained by other silver Athena SWAN award holding universities.

**871. RESEARCH EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK (REF) 2021**

The Head of ED&I explained that she had read every environment statement, more than 50 in total, prepared for REF 2021 and that it had been a challenging experience. She had provided overall guidance, relevant tools and coaching opportunities for individual feedback.

She stated that many of the statements had concentrated on gender and early career researcher status but had not mentioned BAME or disability. Departments were largely unaware of disability and race disclosure rates; however, the lack of disaggregation of BAME data by Black/Asian/Minority Ethnic and indigenous/overseas caused issues. She was working with the Head of Research Information & Impact to encourage departmental ownership of ED&I, which would also help when applying for grants.

**872. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY NETWORK MINUTES**

The Committee NOTED the minutes of the network meeting held on 17 February 2020 (Paper EDC19/20-031).

**873. HARASSMENT PREVENTION WORKING GROUP**

The Committee NOTED minutes of the meeting of the working group held on 5 February 2020 (Paper EDC19/20-032).

**874. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chair thanked those leaving the Committee having completed their term of office: Eve Alcock, Alisha Lobo, Catherine Mealing-Jones, Marion Harney, Mandy Wilson-Garner, Christopher Lai and Souvik Saha.

**875. PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS**

The programme of meetings for 2020/21 was NOTED (all meetings on Thursdays at 2.15pm):

- 1 October 2020 (if required)
- 5 November 2020
- 11 February 2021
- 22 April 2021
- 10 June 2021

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The meeting concluded at 4.50pm

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Chair: .....