

Meeting: EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE

Date and Time: Thursday 5 November 2020 at 2.15pm

Venue: Via MS Teams

Present:	Alex Butler	Executive Chair
	Leda Blackwood	Staff representative (Education and Research)
	Richard Brooks	Director of Human Resources
	Marion Harney	Athena SWAN leader
	Freya Jackson	Community Officer, Students' Union (SU)
	Francesco Masala	President, Students' Union
	Lizzi Milligan	Co-Chair, Equality and Diversity (E&D) Network
	Aurelien Mondon	Co-Chair, E&D Network (EDN)
	Mike Nicholson	Director of Undergraduate Admissions and Outreach
	Anthony Payne	Director of Student Services
	Rachel Willis	Staff Representative (Management, Specialist & Admin)
	Mandy Wilson-Garner	Member appointed by the Students' Union
In attendance:	Georgina Brown	Head of Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI)
	Ben Goose	Student Retention Team Leader (for minute no. 895)
	Caroline Harris	Secretary
	Aiste Senulyte	E&D Officer

ACTION

890. WELCOME

The Chair introduced herself to the Committee, which had received 'A Bit about Alex' (Paper EDIC20/21-010) written by the Head of EDI, explaining that she was passionate about EDI. She was warmly welcomed by the Committee.

It was noted that the Staff Representative (Operational and Facilities Support) had left the University under the University's Voluntary Exit Scheme. AGREED that it was important to fill the post until 31 July 2021 as this job family were generally unable to work from home. The Staff Representative (Management, Specialist & Admin) would contact Unison.

SR(MSA)

891. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chair invited any declarations of interest. There were none.

892. MEMBERSHIP

The Committee AGREED to co-opt the recently appointed Head of the Race Equality Taskforce, Rajani Naidoo, to the Committee until 31 July 2021.

893. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 October 2020, were APPROVED as a correct record and would be signed later by the Chair (Paper EDIC20/21-011).

894. STUDENT RECRUITMENT AND ADMISSIONS UPDATE

The Director of Undergraduate Admissions and Outreach (UA&O) reported on the outcome of the 2020 entry admissions cycle, with particular reference to the University's performance against the Access and Participation Plan (APP) target. In addition to specific targets relating to the home postcode of UK students (based on fee status) domiciled in the UK, which focus on socio-economic disadvantage (IMD) and likelihood of progressing to higher education (POLAR 4), the university also continues to engage in activity that improves participation based on characteristics relating to ethnicity and declared disabilities and/or mental health conditions.

For the 2020 intake, early initial progress in increasing applications from IMD and POLAR 4 quintiles with high levels of disadvantage, and targeted conversion activity to encourage more of these offer holders to make Bath their Firm choice University were undermined by the approach initially used to determine final grades, particularly A-levels. The underpinning algorithm resulted in more candidates from the most advantaged postcodes being awarded the highest grades, and therefore meeting the conditions of their offer. A determination to minimise COVID risks to the campus and local community by rigidly sticking to planned intake targets provided limited scope to accept candidates who did not meet their offer conditions. Later amendments to the A-level grading in mid-August provided some opportunity for the University to address this disparity by accepting students for 2020 entry from the most disadvantaged postcodes, whilst deferring to 2021 those students who were able to access greater levels of support for the unanticipated gap year. Determining the criteria to select students for 2020 entry included discussion with the SU leadership. Our final position was broadly that of previous cycles. This has been mirrored at other academically selective universities.

The disruption during the August results phase meant that the University was not able to engage with the Clearing process. This, when combined with the outcomes from the algorithm-awarded A-level grades, accounts for the fall in the percentage of BAME students in the 2020 entry cohort. The ethnicity of the 2020 intake is still significantly more diverse than in the years prior to 2018.

The proportion of the intake who had a declared disability or mental health condition continued to rise, but this is likely to reflect the very positive engagement that starts in the Admissions process to encourage candidates to declare at an early stage in the application process to ensure appropriate support can be targeted by a range of professional services teams.

There was also a decline in the number of undergraduate entrants who were aged 21 years or over, down from 76 in 2019 to 62 in 2020. This mirrored national trends in the high tariff universities.

The Chair commended the Director of UA&O and his team for their work in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

During discussion the following points were made:

- The Director of UA&O commented that the Access and Participation Plan (APP) had not yet been launched to the University; the Chair agreed that

activities re the APP needed linking; the APP could be added to the EDI resource hob;

- The sector was being challenged to widen their intake and support all students to succeed, which required additional resources; the attainment gap for BAME students and those with disabilities was not owned by any University group;
- Some Black students coming to the University had found the lack of diversity shocking but joining societies had helped them; it was pointed out that this year was particularly difficult for them;
- The Director of UA&O explained that the Gold scholars scheme for students with the most diversity and challenging backgrounds, was a good initiative. He had been involved with mentoring for BAME students and it had been vibrant; opportunities were being built for students to meet outside the classroom.

The consensus view was that working together by the various groups already working well on these issues was the way forward (EDIC, APP, widening participation, anti-harassment, civic partners).

895. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Student Retention Team Leader joined for this item. He announced the welcome news that the University had been recognised with a Sanctuary award in recognition of its initiatives, actions and efforts to welcome refugees and asylum seekers; the seventeenth university in the UK to receive the award. The award was granted by the City of Sanctuary charity for three years, following an application made about a year previously; the appraisal had been delayed by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The award acknowledged the University's efforts to support these students financially, academically and pastorally and how research supported this topic. The Student Retention Leader had written the application citing activities already happening collaboratively across the University in the SU, student groups, the University and College Union (UCU), Student Services, PhDs, refugee camps and Widening Participation.

The Student Retention Team Leader was congratulated by the Chair and the Committee on this success.

The SU President expressed his disappointment at the Council/Senate/SU Committee (CSSU) decision that an undergraduate scholarship for a refugee/asylum seeker, proposed by Amnesty, was not feasible.

896. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY NETWORK

The EDN Co-Chair reported that the first meeting of the year was later than usual as he was unsure of the status of the EDN, but that following a stand by the Committee the EDN continued, and that it had committed members. Paper EDIC20/21-012 was an outline of the 7 October meeting. The EDN Co-Chair pointed out that the EDN would continue with a Covid-19 update and an item on the APP at each meeting.

The Chair commented that she would like to meet with the EDN shortly.

897. HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATE

The Director of Human Resources mentioned two programmes that had been initiated but stalled by the Covid-19 pandemic: Gender Pay Gap and Being a Parent. However, he stated that since February Human Resources had undertaken much EDI work as the department had tackled the effects of Covid-19: the medical impact for BAME and Age, mental health issues and support, and the impact on carers and parents. The two new schemes of Furlough and Voluntary Exit had equality implications. There was also evidence of a long-term non-medical impact, for example, on the academic careers of female staff. He explained that the move to working from home had affected different groups of staff, and they had provided support. Covid-19 had been challenging but was a positive experience bringing forward EDI issues.

The Director of HR talked of several good initiatives. The University had been accredited as a Disability Confident Leader in July. Recruitment was being used to address equality issues within the workforce profile. Work would proceed on developing a Trans Policy, one of the SU Top Ten issues. Work on the two stalled programmes would now be continued.

The Chair commented that the update was very positive particularly the widening of the recruitment net and the creative support for all staff through the difficult time. The Director of HR explained that recent staff surveys had shown that the attitude to flexible working and the different blend of work was very positive and it would allow a greater range of people to work at the University. However, many wished to return to normal working, and this would be enabled.

During discussion the following points were made:

- Departmental surveys had shown some positives from working from home but there were challenges such as being less comfortable and taking fewer breaks, and it needed discipline;
- Research showed that working from home in March may have felt exciting, but it was less so in November; it was important for team leaders to encourage breaks;
- Caution was urged as work had moved into the private space and often into the female space; greater flexibility could mean more women taking on responsibility in the home;
- Staff and undergraduates had received e-mails about the pandemic but it was queried what had happened for Early Career Researchers/ Post-Doctoral researchers who already experienced precarious employment; the Director of HR clarified that there was an action plan relating to the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers and support for the group was being led by the Researcher Development Manager in conjunction with the UCU. Agreed to invite her to talk about the action plan at a future meeting.

SEC

898. STUDENT SERVICES UPDATE

The Director of Student Services updated the Committee on Achievements and Priorities as follows:

1. We have greatly improved data collection and analysis and we now understand better the needs those with protected characteristics (staff and students) and others (including asylum seekers, refugees, young carers, care leavers) and how we can deliver services that better address these

needs.

Priority – Establish mechanisms to ensure that these understandings now drive our planning, procedure development and inform our service delivery evaluation

2. We have improved our Disability support services (including those for students with mental health issues) and made some progress on developing institution wide policies that impact on the experience of disabled students and the recognition that improving outcomes for disabled students is a shared responsibility across academic departments and professional services. However, it is clear from recent surveys that the student experience and employment outcomes of some disabled students are significantly compromised. Therefore...

Priority – Address the outcome differential for some disabled students

3. Following on from Mike's very helpful presentation, we have made some progress on ensuring that students from less privileged backgrounds not only gain entry to the University but succeed both academically and in their personal and professional development. Programmes such as the Gold Scholars, Hardship Fund and our Retention work have developed significantly over the past two years.

Priority - We now have the opportunity to build on this progress particularly by developing our capacity to identify students who are at risk of disengagement or failure, addressing attainment gaps and improving the quality of our personal tutoring

4. Our joint work (with SU, EDI, HR and external organisations such as SARI) on addressing harassment, bullying and sexual violence through Report and Support, Dignity and Respect, Discipline and complaint policies. These changes have made a real difference to the lives of our students and staff, however ...

Priority - There is a long way to go particularly in relation to racism which is a key priority for us in the coming 12 months.

The Chair commented that with the negative impact of Covid-19, financial pressures and higher levels of stress, it was easy for issues to disappear from the agenda. She offered Committee assistance to progress on these priorities.

During discussion the following points were made:

- Domestic abuse was a challenge for some cohorts, for example PGR students, and Student Services were working with HR and the SU to develop support;
- Power differentials that existed in the close relationship with supervisors could be an issue, but was not seen as domestic abuse;
- Diversity of mental health counsellors for students was queried; a range of services were available: Be Well – Talk Now a 24-hour phone, video call or live chat service and counselling with access to a diverse range of counsellors with plans to extend the service where possible for international/BAME/LGBT students.

899. STUDENTS' UNION

The SU Community Officer updated the Committee as follows:

BHM reflection and what we are doing to continue work and events beyond the month

Wrote a blog to reflect on SU organised events and what progress has been made since the anti-racism report

Inclusivity Award- Award which SU groups can take part in. Must put together an action plan of how they are going to be more inclusive to at least 2 underrepresented groups and progress is monitored at the end of the year to decide whether they achieve the inclusivity award. This year, each Diversity and Support group will be running a training session to ask Frequently Asked Questions. E.g. LGBT+ are often emailed a lot throughout the years by other groups so having a training session will allow for less time taken up by committee and sessions will be recorded for other groups to watch if interested.

EDI project plan, 3 key issues for this year

Trans Inclusive SU

- Make enacting a universal trans policy a Top Ten item 2020-21 and work with University to create and implement this. (completed)
- Engage with LGBT+ student group and trans representatives to identify barriers for trans students within SU and University life.
- Put on activities as an SU to recognise LGBT+ History month and Trans Day of Remembrance.

Black Lives Matter

- Increase representation of black students in the SU. Engage with black students to identify how representation should be increased.
- Make decolonising the curriculum a Top Ten item 2020-21 and lobby the University to make and implement a cross-faculty plan.
- Upskill SU staff and officers on the topic of race and racial inequality.
- Work with University to ensure the #NeverOK project broadens to include racial discrimination/harassment/abuse and hate crime. Implement actions to ensure our students are aware of this and are confident to report incidents.
- Work with black student representatives on the Student Anti-Racism Action Group (SARAG) to hold University's work on anti-racism (including the Race Equality Task Force) to account.

Accessible Union

- Produce disabled student survey with Student Services to identify impact of Covid-19 and blended learning approach on disabled student experience (including students with mental health conditions).
- Lobby University for recording of all lectures beyond Covid-19. (This is on Top Ten 2020-21).
- Work with the student Disability Action Group to build their membership and committee.
- Review internal SU practices to ensure our activities are as accessible as possible. Carry out SU-wide review of standard operating procedures and produce a recommendation report to Board of Trustees. All areas to have at least 1 area of improvement to work on.

The SU President added that he had been in discussion with the Head of EDI and HR to develop a Trans Policy for students. His paper to CSSU had been well

received and that Committee had been in favour of creating a policy. He commented that nationally trans people were most at risk of mental health issues, physical harm and low attainment.

900. ANNUAL EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION REPORT 2019-20

The Committee considered the annual Equality, Diversity and Inclusion report for 2019/20, for submission to Senate and Council (Paper EDIC20/21-013).

A couple of clarifications were requested:

- P&S on page 10 should read PSS;
- The phrase “commitment to..” in the Athena SWAN 5 year action plan was queried and explained that this was from a report to the University Executive Board to prepare the ground for the final SMART actions.

AGREED to recommend the report to Senate.

SEC

901. ED&I INITIATIVES

There was no time to hold this discussion session and AGREED to hold a workshop-style meeting to consider the questions posed.

SEC

902. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair was thanked for inspiring the Committee with her passion for EDI.

The Chair thanked the secretary for her support.

903. PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS

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

- 11 February 2021
- 22 April 2021
- 10 June 2021

The meeting concluded at 4.15pm

Chair: