

Equality and Diversity Strategy Committee

19 March 2020 at 10:00 – 12:00

- Present:** Prof Neal Juster (Convener, vice Principal Anton Muscatelli), Mrs Christine Barr, Prof Frank Coton, Dr David Duncan, Mr Scott Kirby, Mr Thomas McFerran, Dr Sylvia Morgan, Prof Jill Morrison, Dr Robert Partridge, Miss Rachel Sandison, Ms Lesley Sutherland, Ms Mhairi Taylor
- Apologies:** Principal Anton Muscatelli, Prof Muffy Calder, Ms Bonnie Dean, Mrs Emma Gilmartin, Prof Roibeard O Maolalaigh, Dr Helen Stoddart
- Attending:** Dr Katie Farrell, Ms Cassie Masterton, Mrs Janell Kelly (clerk),

1 Welcome, apologies and introductions

The Convener welcomed members, both those attending in person and those joining via Zoom and acknowledged the apologies received. The Convener welcomed Dr Katie Farrell, attending to speak to Agenda Item 4, and Ms Cassie Masterton who was observing the meeting as part of her Ambitious Futures placement within the Equality and Diversity Unit (EDU).

2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting – EDSC/20191111/Minutes1.0

The minutes were approved as an accurate record.

3 Matters arising from previous meeting

3.1 – Action Sheet – Paper 1

Action 1 - Recruitment - BAME Application Success Rates

M Taylor confirmed in-depth race equality project work would now be following the commencement of C Masterton's placement.

Action 3 – Honorary Chaplains role descriptions

R Partridge advised there is no specific role description for Honorary Chaplains, however a new clause, relating to upholding the University's equality values and ensuring a commitment to support all students, has been added to the Letter of Appointment.

Action 5 - EHRC Inquiry into Racial Harassment at British Universities

M Taylor referred members to Paper 2, showing the Terms of Reference and Membership of the University's new EHRC Tackling Racism Short Life Working Group, noting the first meeting was held on 16 March 2020.

Action 7 – Disabled Staff Feedback

M Taylor confirmed all agreed actions/recommendations are all progressing:

- Two new e-learning courses on Reasonable Adjustments are now available, with the staff related version now mandatory for all line-managers/supervisors.
- Communications have been profiling both staff and student disability role models.
- Elise Gallagher, Deputy Director of Human Resources is taking forward the resourcing of support services for Disabled staff.
- 'Hidden Disabilities' session for Senior Leadership Forum is planned for 27 May 2020.

Clerk's Note: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic all planned University events from mid-March 2020 onwards have been cancelled.

Action 8 - Student Protected Characteristics Data

M Taylor advised Planning, Insight and Analysis have developed a new student statistical dashboard looking at the protected characteristics. This will allow for better comparisons and analysis going forward. Further information will be provided at the next meeting.

ACTION: EDU

Action 9 – Refugee and Asylum Seekers – CARA hosting

Members noted R Sandison is progressing the hosting of further CARA sponsored academics.

4 Athena SWAN – University Silver submission – Paper 3 & Appendix

K Farrell presented Paper 3, noting the original 30 April 2020 submission date had already been extended until 20 May due to strike action. It is unlikely to be further extended in light of the current COVID-19 situation.

Members reviewed the paper, set out to reflect various areas covered by Athena SWAN, noting the planned Silver submission builds on the implementation of the University's 2016 Bronze award action plan. K Farrell advised Institutional Silver submissions require further reflection on progress, demonstrated impact, along with an assessment of the experiences of career development and progression of our Professional and Support Staff. She stated the Appendices provide strong evidence for all of this, noting highlights as:

- narrowing of the gender pay gap;
- revising recruitment processes and embedding mandatory unconscious bias training;
- enhanced career development initiatives and support;
- significant investment in both women's leadership training and in the Academic Returners Scheme;
- important policy changes or new policies which reflect the family-and carer-friendly stance of the University – e.g. changes to maternity, adoption and paternity eligibility and enhanced payments, the Carers Policy and the new approach to Flexible Working.

K Farrell drew members' attention to the Future Actions shown within the paper, noting there remains ongoing meaningful impactful future work for the University, all of which will be reflected in the Silver submission's Action Plan.

Members discussed a number of areas within the report, noting the inclusion of REF 2014 data, whilst due to be out of date soon, is a specific requirement. Members acknowledged the Paper reflected the huge progress already seen across the University, evidencing a clear, positive direction of travel in this work which should lead to a strong submission. J Morrison thanked K Farrell and M Taylor for their efforts in this and looked forward to seeing a full draft.

Members noted SMG would have the opportunity to review the draft prior to submission.

ACTION: EDU

5 Staff Equality Monitoring Report – 2018-2019 – Paper 4

M Taylor presented Paper 4, the 8th annual Staff Equality Monitoring Report (based on a census date of 9 August 2019) and took members through the main points of note within the Executive Summary.

M Taylor highlighted the low rate of disclosure for many of the protected characteristics, advising the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) have already highlighted this as an area for improvement for the University.

She drew members' attention to what appears to be better outcomes for BAME job applicants, noting this will be further investigated as part of the work to be undertaken by C Masterton. J Morrison suggested the comparator used within the Summary for the University's BAME UK staff; the BAME population of Glasgow (12%), may not be a suitable comparator as this figure includes children and younger people, noting the working age BAME population within Scotland would be more suitable. M Taylor agreed to look at this further.

ACTION: EDU

Members approved the report for publication, subject to the removal of both the Case Management section (marked as Confidential) and the detail relating to SMG disability disclosures within the Executive Summary. M Taylor advised Court would receive the publication version of the Monitoring Report via HR Committee.

ACTION: EDU

6 REF2021: Staff Circumstances that affected Research Productivity – Paper 5

M Taylor presented Paper 5 on behalf of Dr Allison Jackson and Dr Mark Mortimer of Research and Innovation Services. The paper provides information on the number of reductions submitted and approved and the Units of Assessment requesting a reduction in Outputs and then outlines the first stage Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) on the selection process of Research-only staff as independent researchers.

M Taylor advised over 400 requests for output reductions were received via the University's online portal, all of which were initially checked/verified by both central and local HR teams and College Research Offices, then reviewed by the REF2021 Staff Circumstances Equality and Diversity Group, which was co-chaired by J Morrison and C Barr.

M Taylor advised early indications are that the University received more requests for reductions than other similar institutions, noting however many requests did not meet the strict criteria. Members noted this may have resulted from both University and College's regular communications encouraging staff to submit requests on a voluntary basis.

J Morrison noted this was a particularly challenging process for both the staff submitting requests and those involved in checking and reviewing cases, in terms of the disclosure of difficult and complex circumstances. She stated the amount of work involved for all throughout should not be underestimated. M Taylor noted lessons must be learnt by both the University and REF themselves on the implementation of the processes required for future REF exercises.

M Taylor highlighted the EIA section of the paper details a statistically significant impact on BAME research staff being less likely to be deemed independent researchers. This will be investigated as part of C Masterton's race equality project work.

Members commented the technical nature of the statistical information within the EIA paper made it difficult to read and analyse. It was suggested, as the University is legally required to publish the EIA, it should be revised prior to publication. M Taylor agreed to pass on EDSC's comments to the authors.

ACTION: EDU

7 SFC and EHRC Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) – Paper 6 and Annex 1&2

Members discussed the recent MoU signed by the EHRC and the SFC and the possible implications

for the University relating to the regulation of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). M Taylor stated the EHRC were concerned the PSED had not targeted and addressed inequalities effectively and by working with the SFC, it would help focus Further and Higher Education institutions on the most pressing areas.

Members noted there were concerns with the SFC now becoming both funder and regulator and it was unclear at this time what affect this would have on the ability of the University to set its own targets and goals in such areas as the Outcome Agreements or Equality Outcomes.

M Taylor advised there may be positives, as it may allow a consolidation of the many different Action Plans which the SFC have recently required of the FE and HE sector, e.g. British Sign Language Action Plan, Institutional Gender Action Plan and Gender Based Violence.

Members discussed the ability of the University and FE/HE sector as a whole to effect change through some of the required Action Plan areas, where Government, early years education and employers need to implement changes to see real and sustainable outcome improvements.

M Taylor suggested the University should join the SFC Evidence Group in order to be able to offer expertise and influence the direction of travel. Members agreed the University should offer a suitable representative.

ACTION: EDU

8 Student Items

8.1 – Disabled Students and COVID-19

T McFerran expressed concerns for Disabled students and those with Mental Health issues noting any feelings of isolation and anxiety will be magnified during the current situation and hoped the University will continue dialogue on support for and communication with these students.

J Morrison assured T McFerran the needs of disabled students were at the forefront of the University's COVID-19 Response Group's discussions and planning.

9 Equality Champions Updates

9.1 – Disability

F Coton reported the Disability Equality Group (DEG) has recently discussed the issue of students' Assistance Dogs in classroom situations. While officially accredited Guide Dogs and assistance dogs are highly trained, there remains an issue with owner-trained dogs, together with health and safety concerns around any dog, such as severe allergic reactions. F Coton noted DEG have referred the issue to the Health and Safety Committee asking for the development of University policy and guidance in the hope of balancing the disability related needs and rights of individuals with the health of others.

He also noted DEG had tasked Estates with finding a suitable location for an accessible toilet for the Committee Rooms area on Level 4 in the Main Building. The lack of one impacts on the many internal and external events held in this area; guests attending graduations were highlighted as experiencing particular difficulties accessing suitable facilities. D Duncan confirmed Estates were already looking at possible options.

9.2 – Gender

J Morrison reported the following updates and activities:

- University's Gender Based Violence Working Group will look at research however this will be put on hold due to the current situation.

- The successful International Women’s Day launch of the recreation of the 150-year old Professor’s Lion and Unicorn photo with nearly 60 of the over 200 senior women included in the new photo and social media video. This received lots of positive press coverage. The launch event was well attended and the ‘ideas board’ had resulted in variety of good suggestions, from possible Honorary degrees, commissioning photographic portraits of senior women and displaying them across the University, to replacing certain paintings in the Melville Room with either a suitably framed version of the new Lion and Unicorn photo or a portrait of Dame Katherine Grainger, alumna and the recently announced next, and first woman Chancellor.

9.3 - LGBT+

M Taylor reported on behalf of R O Maolalaigh:

- Following a submission to Stonewall’s Workplace Equality Index, the University has placed 148th out of 503, noting this was a significant improvement from the previous submission in 2011 (162nd out of 378). Feedback from the submission has highlighted further work for both the University and the staff LGBT+ Network.
- February’s LGBT History Month celebrations were a success with more events than ever being hosted by the SRC, student societies and student unions. The University’s main event, ‘In conversation with Jordan Daly’ was firstly postponed due to strike action. The rescheduled date of 19 March has now been postponed again. The hope is to reschedule again in Autumn.

T McFerran provided details of the many SRC events held and the successful #IAMPROUD video, noting his thanks to the SRC LGBTQ+ Officer, Indigo Korres, for her hard work organising these.

9.4 – Mental Health

D Duncan noted the last meeting was held in January, where the group discussed the additional £200,000 funding from the SFC, which he’d advised EDSC of previously.

He acknowledged the current COVID-19 situation will be a real challenge for staff and students. S Kirby stated again students’ already high levels of anxiety will only increase during this uncertain time. R Partridge confirmed the University would maintain student counselling facilities and will continue to signpost to Big White Wall service. He noted the expectation is there will be a spike in queries once the assessment arrangements are communicated. C Barr reminded members staff have access to PAM Assist as the University’s Employee Assistance Provider.

9.5 – Refugee and Asylum Seeker

R Sandison detailed recent activities in this area:

- It is hoped the University would become a ‘University of Sanctuary’ by June 2020. She noted there is a lot to do and has begun to meet with refugee staff and students to understand their lived experiences and what the University can do.
- The University has signed the pledge towards the UNHCR goal of 15% of refugees in higher education by 2030.
- 9-13 March 2020 was the STAR (Student Action for Refugees) Action Week. The University’s STAR group hosted an information evening for refugees and asylum seekers to raise awareness of the University’s existing support and routes to higher education.
- The University had hoped to host the Scottish Refugee Council’s AGM but this will not now happen due to COVID-19.
- Sabit Zazai, the Scottish Refugee Council’s Chief Executive has offered to deliver some staff training to the University.

- External Relations are hosting a Scottish Refugee Council volunteer. They are working with Widening Participation colleagues.

9.6 - Religion and Belief Update

The Convener reported the Glasgow University Muslim Students Association (GUMSA) had held their annual Islam Awareness Week in February.

He also advised the new University Chaplain, Rev Carolyn Kelly, was due to start on 1 April 2020. Rev Stuart MacQuarrie will provide a handover period until the end of April.

9.7 – Race

M Taylor reported, on behalf of B Dean, the University's 'Decolonising the University' conference, was planned for 23 March 2020 but this has been postponed. The hope is to reschedule it for October to coincide with Black History Month, with C Masterton providing support for it.

M Taylor noted she was not aware of any recent work or reports specifically relating to Age.

10 Items for Information

10.1 – Content Advice Guidelines – Paper 7

M Taylor advised the Content Advice Guidelines had been presented and approved at the recent Student Experience Committee.

10.2 – Equality and Diversity Essentials Training Statistics – Paper 8

Members noted the current overall completions figures, remain below the target 90% and indeed are slightly down since the last report and asked EDU to continue working with the Schools, Research Institutes and Services on how to target those who have not undertaken the mandatory courses.

ACTION: EDU

10.3 – University of Glasgow Draft Climate Change Strategy – Paper 9

M Taylor advised Dr Stewart Miller, the University's Sustainable Environment Officer, had asked for EDSC to review the draft Strategy, noting any specific comments or requests for amendments will be collated by M Taylor.

ACTION: All/EDU

11 Any Other Business

COVID-19

M Taylor reported she was aware of complaints of racial discrimination experienced by students who choose to wear face masks. T McFerran advised all the incident reported to the SRC have been off campus and there is no evidence any of the perpetrator were students or staff.

Members discussed the impact of the current COVID-19 pandemic, noting the many equality and inclusion challenges which will be faced by the University, staff and students by any 'lockdown' if imposed by the Scottish and UK Governments.

12 Date of Next Meeting

24 June 2020 at 14:00 – 16:00