Equality and Diversity Strategy Committee

Minutes of EDSC meeting held on 11 February 2014
Melville Room, Gilbert Scott Building at 10:00am

Present: Mr David Newall (Convener vice Principal Anton Muscatelli), Prof Anne Anderson, Mrs Christine Barr, Prof. John Briggs, Prof. Steve Beaumont, Miss Louise Graham, Ms Elizabeth Gray (vice Miss Rachel Sandison), Miss Jess McGrellis, Mrs Margaret-Ann McParland, Mrs Helen Speirs, Dr Helen Stoddart

Apologies: Principal Anton Muscatelli, Prof. Frank Coton, Prof. Neal Juster, Mrs Christine Lowther, Miss Rachel Sandison

Attending: Mrs Janell Kelly (clerk)

1 Welcome and Apologies

D Newall stated he had been invited by Principal Anton Muscatelli to convene this meeting, as the Principal had to attend another business engagement.

The Convener welcomed members to the meeting, noting the apologies received and acknowledged Ms Elizabeth Gray was in attendance for Miss Rachel Sandison.

2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting – EDSC/20131129/Minutes1.0

The minutes were approved as an accurate record.

3 Matters arising from meeting held on 29 November 2013 – Paper 1

Action Point 1 – Statistics for BME applicants applying to the University but not gaining a place

E Gray reminded members she had recently circulated information electronically in relation to Recruitment and International Office (RIO) investigations into the low disclosure rates for ethnicity by applicants.

She reported the investigations carried out by Robin Gordon, Head of Admissions had confirmed the percentage of students who declared their ethnicity was 1.3% of the total applicants\(^1\).

\(^1\) The University received a total of 35638 applications. 33600 of these chose not to declare their ethnicity by leaving the box blank on their UCAS form. 456 (1.3%) declared their ethnicity. A further 1582 did tick the box but expressly stated they did not want to declare.
H Speirs noted this information had been originally requested in relation a question about the numbers of BME students applying to the University but not gaining a place. She stated, based on the data available, with such a low disclosure rate it made it inadvisable to draw any conclusions in relation to the original question.

M A McParland asked about why the category ‘Arab’ had being used.

H Speirs reported both UCAS and HESA now include ‘Arab’ with the categories for ethnicity.

J Kelly confirmed she would provide confirmation of this to M A McParland after the meeting.

**ACTION: EDU**

**Action Points 2-5**

Members noted the updates provided within Paper 1.

**Action Point 6 – Degree Attainment and Ethnicity - Statistical Report**

H Speirs confirmed, following discussions with Prof Frank Coton, that Planning and Business Intelligence are working on extracting the relevant degree programme data (including the unclassified programmes) and would report back to EDSC once this work had been completed.

**ACTION: EDU/P&BI**

**Action Points 7-10 – Draft Single Equality and Diversity Policy**

The Convener noted these actions had been completed and that the draft policy had been approved by HR Committee and was being taken forward for approval at Court.

The Convener thanked H Speirs for her work on this policy.

**Action Point 11 - Religion and Belief Equality Group Report – ID for Examinations**

J Briggs stated this action had originally been raised following discussions at the Religion and Belief Equality group, in relation to procedures in place to confirm students’ identification for examinations; in particular how those affect veiled women.

J Briggs noted this action now sat with Senate Office and he was working with Registry on this issue.

He reported some solutions had been discussed, such as ensuring a female invigilator is always present at examinations.
He accepted recent press stories had highlighted identification issues relating to examinations and confirmed Senate Office and Registry were still discussing possible alternatives to ensure the issue was handled sensitively.

A Anderson agreed this was a sensitive issue and expressed the view that Senate Office should also be working with the Students’ Representative Council (SRC) to take account of students’ views.

J Briggs confirmed Senate Office would consult with the SRC.

The Convener noted the remaining action points from the previous meeting were still ongoing, had been completed or were on this meeting’s agenda for a further update or discussion.

3.1 – Equality and Diversity Training Update – Paper 2

The Convener noted this agenda item related to Action Point 3 and highlighted the figures shown within Paper 2 had been provided as at January 2014.

H Speirs asked members to note the increase in the numbers of staff having completed the Essentials course. She advised EDU had provided all HR Managers with reports showing details of staff within their areas who have completed the courses.

H Speirs also reported she had attended the Chief Advisers of Studies meeting to highlight the Essentials training course and other additional equality related training resources which are now available. She confirmed they had all been sent the access instructions for the Essentials course and had been asked to ensure the Advisers of Studies they had responsibility for undertook the training.

The Convener thanked H Speirs for the update. He hoped to see a larger improvement in completion figures by the next EDSC meeting in May 2014.

C Barr noted the completion figures had been reported at the University Services Management meeting, who had agreed this could not be driven solely by Human Resources.

H Speirs agreed, as much better completion rates had been seen in areas where a ‘campaign’ had taken place with the encouragement coming from Heads of School or Subject.

A Anderson expressed her disappointment with those areas which were showing particularly low completion rates. She confirmed she would be happy to send an email message to her own College requesting staff complete the training but asked if Communications could be approached to assist with engaging staff more fully.

Members agreed Phil Taylor Internal Communications Manager should be approached for assistance.
The Convener agreed there was a need to for senior management to encourage staff to complete the training. He would agree wording for an all staff email and an article for inclusion in Campus e-news.

**ACTION: Convener/AA/CB/EDU**

3.2 – Staff Equality Monitoring Report 2012-13 – Paper 3

This report had previously been presented to EDSC in May 2013 in which concern had been raised with regards to potential under-reporting of disability within the Core HR system. Following investigation, a data cleansing exercise has been completed and enhanced control checks have been implemented.

Discussion took place around the updated analysis and commentary given that 18.8% staff had elected not to divulge this information. Members noted the forthcoming annual report for 2013-14 is due shortly and sought a commitment to encourage and maximise disclosure of diversity related information.

There was discussion on the gender pay gap within the institution against UK average and HE sector comparisons.

C Barr confirmed an action plan is in place, covering a variety of initiatives, in efforts to address this issue.

In addition, debate included the lack of applications for reward and recognition at Grade 5 and below; this will be incorporated into the relevant action plans going forward.

The Committee noted the reported BME data to be above the national average of 4%, although below both UK average (10.1%) and Glasgow City (11.7%).

Furthermore, only 30% of University staff reside within the City boundary therefore Greater Glasgow (6.1%) data is most relevant for comparative purposes. Research & Teaching and Clinical job families report higher than average percentages of BME staff.

J Briggs informed the Committee plans to launch the STELLAR Scotland leadership programme had been shelved due to lack of interest from other institutions. SDS is exploring with BME staff, having expressed an interest in this programme, the most effective approach for enabling to access to relevant leadership development opportunities within the institution.

EDU was tasked with highlighting (in the forthcoming report) the initiatives being undertaken at University level to address the issues raised from last year’s reporting. Further, this should include and enable benchmarking and comparative information with other HE institutions.

**ACTION: EDU**

H Speirs introduced Paper 4, highlighting the notable updates as shown on the paper’s cover sheet and asked members for comments.

The Convener thanked H Speirs for the updates and noted the many areas where progress was evident. He asked if there were any areas where progress had not been made.

H Speirs reported most actions were progressing but drew attention to Actions 2.5 and 2.6, relating to Degree Attainment, which had not progressed as much as other areas; in particular Action 2.6 which had its original timescale set as 2011/12.

She reminded members she had presented the initial Degree Attainment report at the last EDSC in November 2013. She highlighted the action plan’s overall timescale was up to 2015 but agreed further work was needed to ensure these actions were delivered within that timeframe.

J McGrellis noted the Guide to Supporting Disabled Students had been completed and asked how this was being advertised to academic staff to ensure they were aware of it.

H Speirs advised the Guide had been produced by the Learning and Teaching Centre and made available on their Best Practice web pages but she was not aware of any specific intention by the Learning and Teaching Centre (L&TC) to highlight it further. She confirmed she would contact the L&TC to find out if they planned to publicise it further for academic staff.

ACTION: EDU

J Briggs asked for Action 2.7 to show the Refugee Champion rather than the Race Champion, under the Lead and Partners column. He also asked for the Race Champion to be added into the Lead and Partners column for Action 5.7.

ACTION: EDU

S Beaumont noted Action 3.2 related to REF2014, and advised the Equality Impact Assessment for REF Selection seemed to be showing a higher than expected selection rate for males over females but would report further on this to the Senior Management Group.

The Convener thanks H Speirs for the updated action plan.

5 Gender Equality Steering Group – Revised Terms of Reference – Paper 5

A Anderson advised members the University’s Athena SWAN Self Assessment Team (ASSAT) met on 29 January 2014.

She advised due to a change in focus, from overseeing the University’s Athena SWAN Bronze submission to implementing the related Action Plan; to reflect the
University’s involvement with the trial Gender Equality Charter Mark (GEM) and to reflect the current and future aims of the Team and the University, ASSAT team members had reviewed and updated the Terms of Reference.

A Anderson advised the team felt this change in focus should also be reflected in a new name - Gender Equality Steering Group (GESG).

She reminded members that the ASSAT/GESG reports to EDSC, and as such EDSC are now asked to approve the new Terms of Reference and the change of name.

A Anderson also noted the membership had been expanded to include student representation from the SRC.

EDSC members agreed both the revised Terms of Reference and the new group name ‘Gender Equality Steering Group’.

6 Equality and Diversity Champions – Current Developments

6.1 – Age Equality Update

S Beaumont reported he had been made aware of only two recent issues relating to age equality. Both were minor and in connection with recruitment and he confirmed these were being looked into to see how best to resolve them.

6.2 – Disability Equality Group (DEG)

H Speirs provided members with an update on behalf of Prof Frank Coton.

- Brian Husband of AV-IT provided DEG with information on the facilities provided by the University for those with a hearing impairment. The University currently has infra-red hearing assistance systems available for students and the public. It was noted that whilst this system provides many benefits to users, it requires a receiver to be worn round the neck and as such, highlights users. With this in mind, the University has now also invested in Induction Loops in those venues where public events take place. This system allows users much more anonymity. DEG members noted the main lecture theatres in the Boyd Orr building, which are used extensively for public events, due to its late opening hours, had not been included in this investment plan. Following discussions funds have now been made available and the induction loops will be installed in these rooms during the summer break.

- Student representatives on DEG can now have their service recognised on their Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR), subject to meeting agreed levels of attendance and evidence provision. DEG is the only equality group where student service has been recognised in this way, as it is the only group which has additional student representatives, drawn from
students registered with the Disability Service, in addition to those from the SRC whose service is already recognised on their HEAR.

- Campus Accessibility Maps were discussed as the current maps are out of date and are not available in printed format. A project is currently ongoing, funded by the Chancellor’s Fund and supervised by Dr David Forrest to populate a geodatabase of the University campus from which it is hoped a variety of printed and on-line maps can be generated. This work is currently ongoing but may require further funding to see the full benefit from the geodatabase.

6.3 – Gender Equality Update and University’s updated Athena SWAN Action Plan – Paper 6

A Anderson reported both Athena SWAN and GEM applications are progressing well, with a number of departmental applications going forward for the April 2014 submission date.

A Anderson referred members to Paper 6; the updated University level Athena SWAN Action Plan. She highlighted Action 1.3.2 and advised members the cohort of women with leadership potential has now been identified. She stated that in identifying this group expectations will have been raised and the University will need to reflect on its capacity to assist these people to reach their potential.

C Barr welcomed the identification of the cohort but noted the large size of the group identified meant the University would need to carefully manage expectations. She suggested there may be a need to look at prioritising some people for support.

The Convener and A Anderson commented on the size and complexity of the Athena SWAN Action Plan and noted that ensuring its completion would be a major undertaking for the University.

There have been issues with the significant amount of data gathering required for both the Action Plan and the ‘departmental’ applications and, whilst some higher level actions may appear simple, the underlying supporting actions have been and will continue to be very time consuming and resource intensive.

A Anderson highlighted the key elements for EDSC to consider were the data issues and the need to ensure enough support is provided to drive the Action Plan forward; both of these elements would need to be kept under review by EDSC and by SMG.

A Anderson expressed the view that there was still a need to gain full support from across the Colleges for gender equity initiatives and as such presentations will be made to College Management Groups in the upcoming months.

J Briggs highlighted Action 1.1.1 relating to the gender balance on Senate. He reminded members the University was proposing the introduction of a Council of
Senate. If approved, he stated this would provide a good opportunity to increase female representation on a top level decision-making body.

A Anderson concurred stating this opportunity had already been identified by the Gender Equality Steering Group.

J Briggs welcomed this and agreed to discuss with A Anderson, in his capacity as Clerk of Senate, how best to encourage qualified women to apply for Council of Senate positions.  

ACTION: JB/AA

6.4 – Race Equality Update

J Briggs highlighted the previous work done by H Speirs on Degree Attainment and noted the numbers of students, when disaggregated by programme, were very small.

He also noted the admissions investigations undertaken by Registry in relation to ethnicity that were discussed early in this meeting. He stated he was unsure what, if anything, the University could do to address the apparent very low rate of ethnicity disclosure seen by UCAS.

J Briggs expressed the view there may be merit in re-establishing the Race Equality Group and would discuss, this along with the BME student focus groups, which are mentioned in Action 2.6 of the Equality and Diversity Strategy plan, with Mhairi Taylor on her return from maternity leave.

ACTION: JB/EDU

6.5 – Refugee Equality Update

J Briggs advised members the Glasgow Refugee, Asylum and Migration Network (GRAMNet) have been working to try to understand the scale of the challenge.

He reported he has been exploring the potential for scholarships, working with Prof Alison Phipps, to find funding for them from more unconventional sources such as the established refugee community in Glasgow who may be willing to assist those new refugees in need.

Members suggested Development and Alumni Office and Widening Participation may be potential sources of scholarship funding.

6.6 – Sexual Orientation Equality Group (SOEG)

The Convener reported the LGBT Staff Network is currently without a lead representative and some thought will be required about how to reinvigorate the Network.

The Convener advised members that, following the Scottish Government passing the Marriage and Civil Partnership (Scotland) Bill, he had supported a proposal by the University Chaplain, Rev Stuart MacQuarrie, that the University Chapel and Ceremonial Rooms should become places where same sex marriage ceremonies
can take place. The first ceremonies are expected to take place once the Bill becomes law in the autumn of 2014.

The Convener advised a number of student activities had been taking place recently which had been reported at SOEG and asked L Graham to detail these for EDSC members.

L Graham reported the Rainbow Flag has been flying on the North Flag Pole since it was raised at the start of February. The flag raising ceremony was followed by a reception in the Gilchrist Club.

She advised the SRC’s Sexual Orientation Officer was currently researching the history of the University’s Gay Society, which is now the students’ association GULGBTQ+, as its 40th anniversary is approaching.

L Graham informed members SRC was working with the Glasgow University Sports Association (GUSA) on the FairPlay Campaign, which is a joint initiative to promote inclusiveness in sport and recreation.

6.6.1 – Equality Poster Campaign – Paper 7

The Convener advised SOEG members had suggested the University have a more visible commitment to equality and proposed rebranding of an original poster which was part of a Stonewall Scotland poster campaign.

Stonewall Scotland had given their permission to rebrand the poster for the University’s use and the final poster was shown as Paper 7.

H Speirs noted, if approved, the poster would be used as part of the launch and advertising of the new Equality and Diversity Policy, once this had gained its final approval.

Members agreed to use the poster across the campus to accompany the launch of the new policy.

The Convener noted no report was available from the Religion and Belief Equality Champion, Prof Neal Juster, who had sent his apologies for this meeting, as Religion and Belief Equality Group had not met since the last EDSC meeting.

7 Any Other Business

7.1 – Vote of Thanks

The Convener noted this would be H Speirs last EDSC meeting, as she would be returning to her role within the SRC when Mhairi Taylor returned to the University at the end of her maternity leave in March.
The Convener thanked H Speirs for her commitment to her role as Equality and Diversity Officer and for her contribution to the work of EDU during her time on the group.

As there was no further business, the Convener closed the meeting.

8 Date of Next Meeting

22 May 2014, 2pm – Melville Room