Equality and Diversity Strategy Committee

Minutes of EDSC meeting held on 22 May 2014
Melville Room, Gilbert Scott Building at 2:00pm

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

Apologies: Prof. Frank Coton, Miss Rachel Sandison

Attending: Miss Breffni O’Connor, Mrs Janell Kelly (clerk)

1 Welcome and Apologies

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

The Convener noted Prof Anderson had indicated she would be arriving late to the meeting and the agenda would be reordered to accommodate this.

2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting – EDSC/20140211/Minutes1.0

The minutes were approved as an accurate record.

3 Matters arising from meeting held on 11 February 2014 – Paper 1

Action Point 3 – Equality and Diversity Training Update

M Taylor tabled an updated report showing an increase in the numbers of staff completing the Equality and Diversity Essentials training course by 12% to 44% since mid-January. The majority of Schools have seen an increase in completion rates, with University Services seeing the biggest percentage increase from 47% to 62%.

Members welcomed the overall increase and the Convener again agreed to work with A Anderson, C Barr and EDU to send out an all-staff email to try to encourage the staff to complete the course.

ACTION: Con/AA/CB/EDU
Action Point 4 – Staff Equality Monitoring Report
C Barr drew members’ attention to the update in Paper 1 and advised the change in reporting period would allow the data to be reported based on the academic year.

J McGrellis requested an update on the introduction of scholarships for refugees and asylum seekers.

J Briggs advised meetings had been held with former refugees and the local business community and progress was being made with these proposals.

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

3.1 Council of Senate Gender Representation – Paper 2
J Briggs presented Paper 2 which showed the female representation on the new Council of Senate was 31%.

Members noted supplementary elections were to be held in September 2014 in order to fill the small number of vacant positions on the Council of Senate.

J Briggs welcomed the suggestion from M Taylor that Senate Office use positive role profiling in future, to try to encourage a more diverse range of people to stand for election to all of the University’s high level committees.

4 Student Equality Monitoring Information – Paper 4
M Taylor introduced Paper 4, highlighting student monitoring information would now be provided by Planning and Business Intelligence (PB&I) through the University’s BIOnline tool.

She drew members’ attention to changes in age categories and the inclusion of Open Studies students in the undergraduate figures which will have had an impact on College of Social Science figures.

She also advised since there were discrepancies between the recent data and that of 2011/12 and 2012/13, caused by a coding issue. As a result PB&I have recently removed all Ethnicity data from BIOnline. They are working with MyCampus to correct the information. EDU will notify members when this updated information is available for review.

**ACTION: P&BI/EDU**

During discussions on the Degree Classification and Benchmarking information J Briggs informed members a subcommittee of Academic Standards Committee is looking at degree attainment, which may tie into the Equality Outcome relating to degree attainment.
5 **2014 Staff Survey – initial results**

C Barr provided a verbal update of the initial results from the recent staff survey.

Members welcomed the increase in response rate from 33% to 60% and noted the University scored well in 10 of the 14 main subject areas within the survey.

C Barr advised:
- Respondents were 57% female and 43% male.
- 93% of respondents described themselves as having no disability.
- 2.5% of respondents described themselves as from a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnicity (BAME) background.
- 94% responded positively to the questions relating to how well the University did on equality and diversity related issues. When looked at by the individual protected characteristics, all except ‘Age’ scored above 90%.
- Completion rates by job family were:
  - 43% Research and Teaching
  - 38% MPA
  - 8% Technical and related
  - 8% Operational

M A McParland suggested that for future surveys, Operational staff should have the survey posted to them, as this may help to increase completion rates.

C Barr noted the process for distributing and providing time for completion of the survey had been agreed by a working group which had trade union representation, but agreed to take this suggestion forward for consideration by the working group for the next survey.

**ACTION: CB**

6 **Volunteer Harassment Advisers Network – annual report and monitoring information – Paper 5**

M Taylor presented Paper 5 and drew members’ attention to sections 6.3 and 7 – Conclusions and HVN Developments. She noted the network is an underutilised resource and the University would benefit by sensitively highlighting the network to both staff and students.

J Briggs welcomed the possible addition of the SRC Advice Centre staff to the Network in principle, as some student cases are escalated to the formal stage may have been resolved informally if the students were aware of the support available.

S Beaumont welcomed the proposal to promote the Network to the PGR community and recommended the Network is highlighted within the relevant researchers training programmes.
M Taylor agreed to discuss this further with both Dr Elizabeth Adams, Researcher Development Officer and Staff Development Services.

**ACTION: EDU**

In answer to a question from J McGrellis, M Taylor advised that whilst the advisers are trained in mediation techniques, the Network is not a mediation service. She noted a mediation service would require to be more formalised due to the extra time commitment required.

7 **Equality and Diversity Champions – Current Developments**

The Convener noted no report was required from the Disability Equality Group.

7.1 – Age Equality Update

S Beaumont tabled a paper for information on the analysis of the equality and diversity implications of selection for REF2014.

He drew members’ attention to the cover sheet summary in relation to female staff and staff aged between 56-65.

C Barr agreed to investigate if the University’s Voluntary Severance and Early Retirement (VSER) scheme, which was in place during the period covered by REF2014, had resulted in higher than normal levels of selection eligible staff in this age range leaving the University.

**ACTION: CB**

7.2 – Race Equality Update

J Briggs advised he would be reconvening the Race Equality Group and presented Paper 6, the draft Terms of Reference for the Group for approval.

Members approved the Terms of Reference.

He noted the group would be focussing on 3 areas initially:
- Degree Classification
- Student application and admissions rates
- Staff interview and appointment rates

C Barr reminded members staff appointment statistics may be affected by direct appointments to PGR posts.

7.3 – Refugee Equality Update

J Briggs noted work on scholarships in this area had already been discussed earlier in the meeting and acknowledged the contribution of Keith Hammond, from the Glasgow Refugee, Asylum and Migration Network for his assistance with this work.
The Convener advised members of a case where, because of their status, a talented prospective student had not met the criteria for a Widening Participation scholarship. However a fee waiver had been provided by the University thus enabling the student commence their Undergraduate studies here.

7.4 – Religion and Belief Equality Update

N Juster noted the University’s former Catholic Chaplain, Father John Keenan had been installed as Bishop of Paisley in March and advised the University had presented him with a specially commissioned crucifix.

He advised members the University was at an early stage of looking at the implications for Muslim students during examinations when these fall during Ramadan. The University will be able to learn from the experiences of universities in England and Wales as Ramadan will fall in their exam diet before Scotland.

C Lowther noted this subject was also being looked at by the Academic Registrars Council.

M Taylor advised members the University Chaplain, Rev Stuart MacQuarrie had met with the Glasgow University Muslim Students Association (GUMSA) as they had planned to run a student petition seeking more dedicated prayer space on campus.

7.5 – Sexual Orientation Equality Update

D Newall advised members the network of gender neutral toilet and changing facilities on campus is to be expanded in the near future.

He reminded members the University agreed earlier this year that the Chapel and Ceremonial Rooms should become places where same sex marriage ceremonies can take place. However the Church of Scotland had recently issued guidance to Rev Stuart MacQuarrie which indicates they would not allow him to officiate at these marriage ceremonies.

7.6 – Gender Equality Update

A Anderson advised members the Gender Equality Steering Group had met recently where discussion topics included:

- the University’s nursery provision;
- the new mentoring scheme and possible alternative support mechanisms; and
- how best to assist returning staff to allow them to concentrate on research.

She noted there was much work to be done on these topics.
8 Athena SWAN – Current Status Update – Paper 3

A Anderson drew members’ attention to Paper 3 which detailed the results from the November 2013 Athena SWAN Bronze departmental submissions and an update on the recent April 2014 round of applicants for both Athena SWAN and the Gender Equality Charter mark awards.

She noted the unsuccessful Athena SWAN application made by the Institute of Cardiovascular and Medical Sciences (ICAMS) and outlined full feedback had been provided to the Institute.

M Taylor stressed the need to address any ‘tick box’ mentality, highlighting only 70% of the applicants in the November 2013 Athena SWAN round of awards were successful.

A Anderson highlighted the need to ensure the Athena SWAN and GEM Action Plans are moved forward with real commitment.

9 Items for Information

9.1 – Evaluating the effectiveness and impact of the Athena SWAN Charter including ECU’s response – Paper 7

S Beaumont drew attention to the recommendations for ECU within the report and asked if ECU should have addressed some of these before now.

A Anderson noted she had not had sufficient time to review the background research.

10 Any Other Business

No other business was brought to the meeting.

11 Date of Next Meeting - To be confirmed

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1 Clerk’s Note

Analysis by RS&IO of the equality and diversity implications of selection for REF was based on the eligible population as at 31 October 2013.

Staff had to be employed by the University at that date to be eligible for selection for REF. Therefore the VSER scheme which ran in 2010 and 2011 would not have impacted any of the protected characteristics as staff who took advantage of VSER would have left the University before that date.

No further investigative action is required by CB.