Equality and Diversity Strategy Committee

Minutes of EDSC meeting held on 26 February 2015
Melville Room, Level 4, Gilbert Scott Building

Present: Prof. John Briggs (Convener vice Principal Anton Muscatelli),
Mr Iain Banks (vice Mrs Margaret-Ann McParland), Mrs Christine Barr,
Prof. James Conroy, Mr Liam King, Mrs Christine Lowther,
Miss Breffni O’Connor, Dr Helen Stoddart, Ms Mhairi Taylor

Apologies: Principal Anton Muscatelli, Prof Anne Anderson, Prof. Frank Coton, Prof. Neal Juster,
Mrs Margaret-Ann McParland, Mr David Newall, Miss Rachel Sandison

Attending: Dr Katie Farrell, Ms Lesley Sutherland, Mrs Janell Kelly (clerk)

1 Welcome and Apologies

Professor Briggs stated he had been invited by Principal Anton Muscatelli to convene this meeting, as the Principal was abroad on a business engagement.

The Convener welcomed members to the meeting, noting the apologies received and acknowledged Mr Iain Banks was in attendance for Mrs Margaret-Ann McParland.

The Convener also welcomed both Ms Lesley Sutherland, General Council Member on Court, and Dr Farrell, Gender Equality Officer and invited introductions.

2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting – EDSC/20141125/Minutes1.0

The minutes were approved as an accurate record.

3 Matters arising from meeting held on 25 November 2014 – Paper 1

Action Point 3 – Consent Workshops

B O’Connor advised members the SRC are in the process of developing Consent Workshops for students. Internal contributors include Student Services and Campus Security and externally Rape Crisis Scotland, Sexpression and the Scottish Government’s Rape Task Force. It is hoped these will be launched in September 2015. The workshops will be accompanied by an awareness raising campaign.

C Lowther advised she had attended two recent conferences where ‘consent’ was discussed which showed it was becoming more of a focus.

B O’Connor noted, with the involvement of the Scottish Government, the workshops could be rolled out nationally and universities may have to develop policies and procedures to assist and support anyone involved in on campus incidents.
Action Point 9 – Staff Equality Monitoring
M Taylor advised members rather than using Campus E-News, an all-staff email had been issued on 24 February 2015 to encourage staff to update their diversity information on the HR Core system. Human Resources were planning to issue the email reminder on a quarterly basis.

Action Points 7 & 16 – Race Equality Group (REG)
The Convener and M Taylor confirmed progress had been made on agreeing the membership for the REG and it was hoped to have the first meeting before the next EDSC.

C Barr advised HR Recruitment was currently undertaking analysis of job applicant conversion rates and noted the results would be a topic for discussion at REG.

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

4 Staff Survey – Disabled Staff Focus Groups Feedback
M Taylor reported three Focus Group meetings had been held during February. All staff that self-identified on the HR Core System were invited to attend, although the numbers actually able to register had been restricted to allow for more individual discussions at the meetings. Staff who were unable to attend had been invited to submit their comments via email.

The three meetings, held under the Chatham House Rule, were chaired by Prof. Frank Coton in his capacity as Disability Champion. Discussion were focussed around the main areas of concern for disabled staff, as highlighted by the staff survey results - Leadership, Equality and Diversity, Communications and Job Satisfaction.

M Taylor informed members a follow up meeting had already been arranged for mid-April 2015 to discuss all the feedback/comments from the three focus group and any written submissions to agree a way forward. M Taylor advised she and Professor Coton would report further at the next EDSC meeting in May 2015.

ACTION: F Coton/EDU

5 Public Sector Equality Duty – Mainstreaming Report - Paper 2

M Taylor presented the Mainstreaming Report (MR) which, if approved by EDSC, was intended to address the legislative requirement for the University to provide a progress report on components of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which were set in April 2013. If members approve the MR it will go forward through the formal approval processes; via the upcoming Student Support and Development Committee (SSDC) and HR Committee and then Court, before the 30 April 2015 publication deadline.

In response to the Convener’s question, M Taylor noted the MR had been produced following guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), noting no template has ever been provided by either the Scottish Government or the EHRC. She highlighted a third of public sector authorities had been asked to revise their original Equality Outcomes and was pleased to note the University was not amongst these.
Members discussed the structure of the MR, as laid out in Paper 2, and agreed this. They welcomed the approach of linking mainstreaming examples to the General Duty and noted the comprehensive nature and breadth of the information provided within Section 5 - Equality Outcomes Update.

In response to B O’Connor’s question, M Taylor confirmed student retention would continue to be a focus for the University’s Retention and Success Working Group.

In response to H Stoddart’s question in relation to whether there were actual ‘widening participation’ target figures, M Taylor agreed to provide H Stoddart with a link to the University’s Outcome Agreement 2014-15 – 2016-17 which provides more detailed information on this.

**ACTION: EDU**

In response to I Banks question relating to the continuation issues highlighted for the protected characteristic of Age, M Taylor advised she would be meeting with the Age Equality Champion to discuss these as well as those raised issues raised via the Staff Survey results.

**ACTION: EDU**

L Sutherland commended the University on the report and suggested the Equality and Diversity Unit consider how best to use it to promote and inform internally to ensure engagement with equality across the institution.

**ACTION: EDU**

M Taylor agreed a small number of revisions would be required to the commentary as well as the removal of the confidential Continuation Statistics prior to taking the report to the next approval stage.

**ACTION: EDU**

Subject to these amendments, she asked members to approve the report.

Members confirmed EDSC’s approval and the Convener thanked M Taylor for her work on the report.

6 **Athena SWAN – University and wider developments - Paper 3**

K Farrell outlined the content of Paper 3 on the Athena SWAN Charter, explaining

- the current gender equity awards held across the University
- the expansion of the Athena SWAN Charter to include arts, humanities, social sciences, business and law departments and including other areas of enquiry
- how this expansion affects the decision process behind when the University submits its Bronze Renewal
- future planned School/RIs submissions – up to 11 between the two submission deadlines in April and November 2015
- the current known funding implementations.

Members noted the 3 unsuccessful submissions in 2014 and asked if lessons had been learnt from these. M Taylor reminded members the award process was not a ‘tick box’ exercise, as shown by the overall success rate of just 69% in the latest round of awards.

C Barr advised members that whilst the Equality and Diversity Unit provides advice and guidance to the individual self assessment teams, applications must be led and written by the teams.
themselves. Assessment panels are experienced and will spot deficiencies in both content and perceived commitment to Charter’s the ideals/principles.

K Farrell advised she, M Taylor and the Equality Challenge Unit’s Athena SWAN Advisor had met with the three self assessment teams to discuss the submission feedback in detail. All three areas will be resubmitting revised applications and action plans.

Members discussed the pros and cons of the two possible submission dates for the University’s Bronze Award renewal and suggested submitting an application under the new expanded charter in April 2016 would tie in with the University’s proposed new Strategic Plan. They noted it would also help to address the resourcing demands which would be encountered by submitting in earlier in November 2015.

7 Equality and Diversity Champions – Current Developments

M Taylor tabled a written update on the work of the Disability, Gender, Religion and Belief and Sexual Orientation Equality groups on behalf of the Equality Champions who were unable to attend this meeting.

7.1 Disability Equality Group (DEG)
M Taylor referred members to the previous discussion relating to Disabled Staff Focus Groups and highlighted some of the other areas discussed by DEG, as detailed.

7.2 Gender Equality Steering Group (GESG)
M Taylor drew members’ attention to the update from GESG and highlighted the item relating to the University’s Athena SWAN Action Plan about establishing a policy to improve female representation on key Court and Senate and their sub-committees.

She noted from the minutes of the 2 February 2005 Court meeting, shown in the tabled paper, this had been raised with Court in the past and as a result Court had issued guidance to all sub-committee conveners at the time. She asked members to discuss whether there was a need to establish a formal policy or not.

After a short discussion, members requested M Taylor discuss this issue further with the Secretary of Court.

ACTION: EDU

7.3 – Religion and Belief Equality Update
M Taylor advised EHRC guidance on gender segregation at meetings/events had been incorporated into all relevant University processes and procedures, including making event organisers aware via Timetabling’s room booking system. She noted the SRC had also incorporated this guidance into the student societies affiliation processes.

B O’Connor noted the SRC had responded to the UK Government’s consultation on the Prevent Strategy and asked if the University should refer to this in the Equality and Diversity Policy.

M Taylor agreed to discuss this with Campus Security and the Secretary of Court who had led on the University’s response to the consultation once guidance on the legislation had been received.

ACTION: EDU
7.4 – Sexual Orientation Equality Update
M Taylor highlighted, from the other items shown in the tabled paper, the growth in the membership of the GULGBTQ+ students’ association which the association’s President attributed in part to the University’s maximum score in Stonewall’s Gay by Degree survey.

7.5 – Age Equality Update
J Conroy advised there were no issues requiring members’ attention.

7.6 – Race Equality Update
The Convener noted reconvening the Race Equality Group had been discussed earlier in the meeting and confirmed recruitment and retention ethnicity statistics for students and staff would be an early investigation priority for the group.

7.7 – Refugee Equality Update

The Convener advised:
- Talks with local businesses on scholarships have ended but were unfruitful.
- As a result of the unrest in their country Libyan students are having issues with the receipt of their stipend and they are being assisted by the University.

B O’Connor asked about the possibility of sourcing scholarship funding through alumni. M Taylor noted she was meeting with Kate Richardson, Scholarships Development Officer from Development and Alumni Office and would raise this with her.

ACTION: EDU

B O’Connor highlighted the Scottish Refugee Week is held in June each year and asked in the University would be marking it this year.

M Taylor noted the University’s Glasgow Refugee, Asylum and Migration Network (GRAMNet) normally host events to mark this.

8 Any Other Business

No other business was brought to the meeting.

9 Date of Next Meeting – 5 June 2015