



Equality and Diversity Strategy Committee

Minutes of Meeting held on 15 November 2021 at 9:30

Zoom Meeting

Present: Prof Sir Anton Muscatelli (Convener), Mrs Christine Barr, Prof Frank Coton, Dr David Duncan, Prof Moira Fischbacher-Smith, Mrs Emma Gilmartin, Miss Ella McCabe, Dr June Milligan, Prof Jill Morrison, Prof Roibeard O Maolalaigh, Dr Robert Partridge, Miss Rachel Sandison, Ms Eva Simmons, Ms Lesley Sutherland, Ms Mhairi Taylor

Apologies: Prof Muffy Calder, Ms Bonnie Dean, Dr Dania Thomas

Attending: Prof Sara Carter, Dr Katie Farrell, Dr Shammyla Naeem, Dr Nighet Riaz, Prof Thomas Scotto, Mrs Janell Kelly (clerk)

Welcome, Introductions and apologies

Prof Coton opened the meeting on behalf of the Convener. He welcomed members and noted the apologies received. He also welcomed Prof Sara Carter, Dr Shammyla Naeem, Prof Thomas Scotto, who would be speaking to agenda item 4, as well Dr Farrell and Dr Riaz from the Equality and Diversity Unit who were observing.

The Convener joined the Zoom meeting and noted this EDSC would be shorter than normal to allow members to attend a SMG Development session, starting at 11:00, which would be delivered by John Amaechi, organisational psychologist.

The Convener thanked Prof Coton, noting this would be his last EDSC as Disability Equality Champion. Members thanked Prof Coton for his long service as Champion and noted C Barr would now take on this role.

1. Minutes of the previous meeting – EDSC/20210614/Minutes1.2

The minutes were approved.

2. Matters arising – Paper 1

Members noted most actions had been completed. The following updates were provided.

Action 2 – Dignity at Work and Study Policy

M Taylor advised, along with other outstanding EDU ‘owned’ policy reviews, the review of this policy will be undertaken in time for the next scheduled meeting.

ACTION: EDU

Action 5 – Refugee and Asylum Seekers

R Sandison advised there had been no update on the outcome to the submission to become a University of Sanctuary.

ACTION: R Sandison

M Taylor noted, following agreement that Gypsy, Traveller, Roma, Showman and Boater (GTRSB)

issues would fall under the Refugee and Asylum Champion role's remit, no decision had been taken on a possible change to Champion's title to recognise this. Further discussions would be required.

ACTION: R Sandison/M Taylor

Action 10 - Sanitary Bin access in all toilets

D Duncan confirmed B Morton, Director of Facilities Services, was still reviewing the feasibility and costings relating to the provision of Sanitary Bin access across all toilets, including male toilets, ensuring safe and hygienic disposal of sanitary waste, nappies, incontinence pads, and other waste such as wipes not suitable to be flushed down a toilet.

ACTION: D Duncan/Estates

Action 11 - Changing Places facilities

D Duncan advised although there has been no physical progress on installing an accessible toilet for the Committee Rooms area, the existing Carnegie Room has now been identified as the most suitable location. He advised it was hoped this room would be suitable to install a Changing Place facility. D Duncan also advised he continued to work with Estates colleagues to look at potential development sites for further Changing Places facilities across the existing estate and would report further.

ACTION: D Duncan/Estates

Action 13 – Religion and Belief

M Taylor advised Chaplaincy were working with Estates to review the provision and facilities for prayer and reflection spaces across the University. EDSC would receive an update once more progress had been made. M Taylor also noted, following the departure of the previous Religion and Belief Champion, it was hoped the new Champion would be announced soon.

ACTION: EDU

3. EDSC Terms of Reference and Membership – Annual Review – Paper 2

M Taylor referred members to Paper 2, noting the new style Terms of Reference reflects the changes to many other University committees as a result of the recent Corporate Governance project. She noted while the new version may look different, it retains all the previous content while adding clarity on a number of areas such as Scheme of Delegation, quorate numbers and Conflicts of Interest.

Members approved the new Terms of Reference, while noting the Committee's current gender balance does not meet the principle of 40:40:20.

4. Understanding Racism, Transforming University Culture – UoG Awarding Gap Data Analysis

The Convener welcomed Prof Sara Carter, Dr Shammyla Naeem and Prof Thomas Scotto from the College of Social Sciences.

S Carter reminded members her URTUC Commitment was to conduct a detailed data analysis of the awarding gap within the College of Social Sciences to identify and define any key discrepancies by ethnicity. As the cohort of ethnic minority students in the College was too small to allow for this analysis, the data set was extended across all Colleges to look at all UK domiciled undergraduate students.

S Naeem clarified the degree awarding gap is the percentage point difference between the proportion of UK domiciled Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) students and White students awarded a first or 2:1 degree classification upon graduation.

S Naeem took members through the detailed analysis of 7 years of data from 2013/14 to 2019/20.

Members noted:

- Only two years have **not** seen a significant difference in awarding levels, with BAME students underperforming compared to their White peers. The overall difference being 6.08%. This awarding gap is consistent with results seen in the UK Higher Education sector across the years.
- Within the BAME cohort, Black students significantly underperform overall. Annually the differences have fluctuated but overall are large, at 19.30%.
- Across the Colleges, Science and Engineering has the largest average difference at 10.95%. The Colleges of MVLS and Arts do have the same significant differences.
- Male BAME students significantly underperform compared to Female BAME students. This is seen most prominently in the Colleges of Social Sciences and Science and Engineering.
- BAME Students from lower Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) areas seem to perform relatively poorly compared to students from Higher SIMDs.
- After controlling for sex, SIMD, Parents Education, Disability, and residence circumstances, BAME students still perform poorer than White students. They are 27% less likely to attain good honours.

The Convener thanks S Naeem for her work on this. S Carter noted, while the results were consistent with other UK institutions, they were stark. She asked for members' feedback and comments.

M Fischbacher-Smith noted the Learning and Teaching Committee has discussed potential interventions at their recent Away Day and noted Dr N Riaz, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy Adviser, is currently looking at good practices on curriculum design and assessment.

F Coton suggested further investigation into students' entry grades, in particular grades for Higher Mathematics, may show further correlation, as students from lower SIMD areas have adjusted entry qualifications. He noted this may suggest more academic support is required for these students.

Members recognised students who live with parents may not spend as much time on campus which may suggest the need to provide this cohort with more support for better social and academic networking. Members also noted the change in awarding gap data seen in 2019/20 and suggested this might be related to the 'No detriment policy' in place at that time.

S Carter, S Naeem and T Scotto thanked members for feedback and agreed to undertake further analysis looking at entry grades and to investigate previous work with Planning, Insight & Analytics and report back at a future EDSC.

ACTION: S Naeem and T Scotto

5. Gender Based Violence (GBV) and Sexual Misconduct – Action Plan – Paper 3

The Convener acknowledged three cases involving Gender Based Violence relating to the University had been the subject of news items and podcasts by both BBC Scotland and Al Jazeera. He advised that the University has appointed Morag Ross QC to lead an investigation into the handling of these and other GBV related cases at the University. He pointed out that the remit of the review was not just to look at recent cases highlighted by the media. There had been other concerns expressed by

SRC and he felt it was important to signal to the University community that we would welcome independent scrutiny not only of our processes but for us to reflect on issues around University culture. He noted that therefore the investigation's remit would be wide-ranging, with Morag Ross QC able to look at any case raised under student or staff conduct processes, and he confirmed that the SRC and the trade unions will be able to contribute to the review.

C Barr referred members to Paper 3 and drew attention to the both the Coversheet, Summary document as well as the draft Action Plan. She noted the Action Plan would continue to evolve both during and following the outcome of the investigation.

She highlighted the need to develop behavioural expectations and professional standards for both staff and students, which are aligned with the University's Values. C Barr anticipated a new related training course will be mandatory for all, along with some level of GBV awareness training for all colleagues.

Members noted the expectation that all GBV related investigations will be carried out independently of the areas where the incidents occur. C Barr conceded some GBV complainants have not been well supported by the University and this must change. She referred members to the extensive Action Plan and asked for comments and feedback.

R Sandison commended the Action Plan, but highlighted changes to processes and policies must address the fact that patterns of behaviour are often missed, as highlighted the Al Jazeera podcasts. She endorsed a call for ongoing profiling of anti-GBV campaigning.

E McCabe advised the SRC supported the Action Plan but emphasised the need for the University to create a culture of complete intolerance of GBV, which in turn will help prevent such cases. She confirmed the SRC endorsed the need for mandatory training for all staff and students. E McCabe also emphasised the need for any campaign to be inclusive to the experiences of trans staff and students in relation to GBV. She additionally highlighted the need to provide clear and transparent information on reporting routes, so staff and students are not required to disclose the circumstances of their experiences more than is necessary, as this can cause further trauma, and know what to expect from the processes.

D Duncan stated the current student reporting tool is well used, with clear information on how cases are handed and signposted but agreed this, and related FAQs, could be updated if there was any ambiguity. R Partridge noted the recently revised Code of Student Code will mean both parties will be better supported through the processes.

J Milligan endorsed the Action Plan while noting the need to also ensure a duty of care for those who are the subject of a complaint.

C Barr confirmed an email address will be set up for Morag Ross QC which will allow staff or students to submit information to the investigation. She also clarified the current online reporting routes for staff and students are different and the intention is to have these centralised in one area to ensure consistency of approach.

The Convener thanked members for their support for the Action Plan and asked C Barr and M Taylor to report back at a future EDSC.

ACTION: C Barr

He noted the meeting had now run over its allotted time and requested an additional EDSC meeting be arranged before the Christmas break in order to deal with the outstanding agenda items.

ACTION: EDU

6. Date of Scheduled Next Meeting

21 March 2022 at 14:00 – 16:00