

**APPROVED MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION
COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 19 MAY 2021 VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS.**

PRESENT:	Professor D Anand (Co-Chair)	C Lloyd (from 20.32)
	Professor A Hughes (Co-Chair)	P Mehta
	D Barratt	A Norris
	C Benyon	S Razzaq
	Professor P Catterall	Dr R Schiano-Phan
	E Evans	J Smith
	Dr D Husbands (until 20.44)	A Soni

IN ATTENDANCE:	B Berakhy (Secretary)	P Crispin (until 20.42)
		H Doon
		Z Butt

APOLOGIES: Professor M Kirkup

20.39. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 20.39.1. The Co-Chairs opened the meeting by welcoming everyone including two colleagues from the Student Union who were shadowing for the outgoing President of the Student Union, Padamjeet Mehta and the Head of Communications and Public Relations, Poppy Crispin, reporting on the work of the EDI Committee's Communications Sub-Committee (see Minutes 20.40).
- 20.39.2. Members accepted apologies as noted above.
- 20.39.3. Members did not declare any interests.
- 20.39.4. There were no starred items to discuss. The Co-Chairs informed members that the Committee will discuss two items under any other business (AOB): the release of a statement by the Women of Westminster on Gender-Based Violence and a paper by the Head of People and Culture on hardship support for colleagues with caring responsibilities (See Minutes 20.38)

Co-Chairs report

- 20.39.5. The Co-Chairs briefed members on their activities since the last meeting. These included:
- Early indications from QHT on the EDI bid has been positive.
 - Discussions between the EDI Committee Co-Chairs and EDI leads in Schools were very informative and highlighted a number of key issues. Chief among them was the need for improved communications of activities in Schools and the auditing of EDI support resources, for colleagues and students.
 - A small group set up to review EDI related charter marks has had its first meeting and is on track to submit a paper and inform related discussions at the next EDI Committee meeting.
 - The BME Network has called and chaired a meeting for a BME network of networks for universities in the London region. The meeting was successful and emphasised the need for joint and collaborative work to eradicate racism.
 - Colleagues in Human Resources have been working to add to the list of gender identifier on the SAP system (the system that holds our personal information). In addition to 'Man', 'Woman', the system now also offers 'In another way' and 'Prefer not to say' as additional options.

- HR and ISS are jointly working on procuring a new system for recruitment. A system analyst working on the specification met with the EDI Co-Chairs and the Secretary to take note of EDI data needs linked to the system.
- The University has drafted terms of reference for a new working group to review and further strengthen the University's policy on freedom of speech. The new group will have the task of ensuring that the University is not only legally compliant but also a leader in enhancing academic freedom and eliminating discrimination and bigotry.

20.39.5.1. In response, a Member reminded everyone that it was important that the debates did not fuel a culture war or was used as a weapon by those on the political right.

20.39.5.2. **ACTION The EDI Co-Chairs to meet with the Secretary** to set a date and debrief on the outcomes of the meeting with EDI leads and implement all relevant actions.

20.40. EDI COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

20.40.1. The Head of Communications attended the meeting to offer members a detailed account of the steps that have been taken so far to improve communications on EDI and mentioned the following outputs:

- New and refreshed EDI web pages published at the beginning of this month
- A new page for Black History Year
- A detailed action plan informing the day-to-day communications activities linked to EDI
- A plan to develop a business case to add a dynamic page to the existing EDI web pages to keep content fresh and up to date reflecting activities in the ground.
- EDI special for Westminster Weekly
- Ensure that all content is guided by the principles of representation in tone, language and images; inclusivity and the use of lived experiences to bring stories to life, and a two-way communication where feedback is activity encouraged.

20.40.2. A member of the EDI Committee Communications Sub-Committee also briefed members on the lack of consensus as to the benefits and use of an allyship statement for colleagues instead of or in addition to the use of pronouns stating that they were seen as tokenistic.

20.40.2.1. **ACTION The Secretary** to set up regular meetings with the Communications team to update them on all EDI related activities from across the University

20.40.2.2. **ACTION The Secretary** to invite Zoe Williams to attend the next EDI lead in Schools meeting and discuss how she may best support them to communicate their EDI activities more widely.

20.41. BLM/EDI MONITORING REPORT

20.41.1. The Secretary presented the latest update on BLM/EDI Commitments Monitoring Report stating the progress made since the last report and the areas where progress was lacking. He went on to add that whilst the reports received from Commitment owners was useful and informative, the absence of a clear project plan and clear milestones made the assessment of some projects difficult.

20.41.2. Given the nature of the Commitments and the multiple ownership of some commitments, a member asked if the feedback received from the Monitoring Group could be expanded to specify what was required from whom.

20.41.2.1. **ACTION The Secretary** to revise and expand the last feedback given by the BLM/EDI Commitments Monitoring group to offer more clarity as to what was required to be done by whom.

20.42. DIGNITY AT WORK AND STUDY POLICY

20.42.1. The Director of HR updated members on the latest developments with the Policy, indicating that there will be an interim update this year, with further work next year. Meetings between the key stakeholders, HR, Registrar and Student and Academic and Student Services are ongoing. Feedback is also being gathered from UWSU.

20.42.2. Members also discussed the difficulty of having to implement new areas of work without additional resources.

20.43. RECRUITMENT, RETENTION AND PROGRESSION

20.43.1. The Director of HR introduced the item and described the processes for members and its expected outcomes. Three topic areas were chosen, and members were divided into three groups to discuss and identify one key priority action for each. Topics for discussion included: recruitment, career and progression and pay and reward.

20.43.2. **AGREED** Members agreed the following priority actions:

Recruitment

- Name-anonymous recruitment (where feasible)
- Clear commitment to EDI in recruitment, internal and external
- Clear commitment to safety and wellbeing at work
- Diverse, informed and well-trained recruitment panels

Career and progression

- Transparency on promotional process, opportunities, criteria and essential requirements
- Workshops to demystify the promotion process
- Job share and rotating roles
- Attending to large gaps in progression

Pay and reward

- Recognising and rewarding all forms of 'good-work' not just some
- Widening access to recognition other than through pay (e.g. Westminsterstars, Professional Membership etc...)

20.43.2.1. **ACTION Secretary** to gather and collate notes from group exercise and forward it to the Director of HR and the EDI Co-Chairs.

20.43.2.2. **ACTION The Director of HR** to share the outcome of the exercise with the Pro Vice Chancellor for People and Culture and report on progress with clarity on timeframe and resourcing before the next EDI Committee meeting.

20.43.3. In relation to progression, a member highlighted the importance of reviewing our current job evaluation system and its capacity to support EDI goals in progression.

20.44. THE EMERGING EDI STRATEGY

20.44.1. The EDI Co-Chairs introduced the latest iteration of the draft EDI Strategy and invited members to approve the strategy in principle.

20.44.2. **AGREED** Members agreed the draft EDI Strategy in principle.

20.44.3. The Secretary informed members of the preparations that are underway for the EDI Strategy Open Forum workshop on the 26th of May, 10 am – 12 pm, and encouraged them to take part and support the event as attendees and/or group discussion facilitators.

20.45. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

20.45.1. The minutes of the meeting held on 24 March 2021 were agreed as an accurate record.

20.45.2. Members reviewed a summary of the actions from previous meetings and noted those that were now complete.

20.46. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

All meetings take place between 14:00 and 17:00 via Microsoft Teams

21 July 2021

20.47. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

20.47.1. Women of Westminster co-chair asked as to the views of members on the actions that need to be taken following the release of their statement regarding gender-based violence and the five B's pledge

20.47.2. **AGREED** Members discussed the pledge extensively and agreed on the following:

- Explore the extension of Green Dot training to all colleagues and of Report and Support to colleagues. The latter exploration is already in hand in HR.
- Engage EDI leads in Schools and enable improved take-up of training in Schools
- Further clarify and communicate the university's policy and support for taxis for colleagues working late

20.47.2.1. **ACTION** The Head of Learning and Development and the Head of Student Support and Residential Life to jointly plan and resource a roll-out of Green Dot training for all colleagues and report on progress at the next EDI Committee meeting.

20.47.2.2. **ACTION** The Co-Chair of Women of Westminster and a colleague from Student Support to join the Secretary at a suitable EDI lead in Schools meeting and explore the support that EDI leads can offer to further extend the Green Dot training to all colleagues.

20.48. SUPPORT FRAMEWORK FOR COLLEAGUES WITH CARING RESPONSIBILITIES FACING CRISIS

20.48.1. The Head of People and Culture briefed members on the work that he has done together with colleagues in HR to identify existing support measures as well as additional measures that can be offered to colleagues with caring responsibilities, facing crises. The issue was highlighted and put forward by colleagues from the Women of Westminster network, due to the difficulties that colleagues with caring responsibilities face, especially since the start of the Covid pandemic.

20.48.2. Members found the document useful in bringing together the various provisions that the University had and advised that it was critical that all colleagues had access to the information. That said, and the usefulness of the information provided notwithstanding, some members expressed dismay at the actual offer. They felt that the hardship support framework for colleagues with caring responsibility did not match their expectations or indeed what other universities are currently offering.

20.48.2.1. **ACTION** The Head of People and Culture to review the hardship support framework for colleagues with caring responsibilities and explore additional measures that may be offered and update the EDI Committee at the next meeting.