

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 15 FEBRUARY 2023 VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS**

PRESENT:	Professor D Anand (Co-Chair) C Benyon H Boahen D Hirani Dr D Husbands Dr K Juddoo (from minute 22.26) Professor M Kirkup	M F Larsen M Linfoot C Lloyd A Norris S Razzaq J Smith
IN ATTENDANCE:	M Aston S Pandya T Patki (Minute Taker)	H Setter (UWSU) C Smith
APOLOGIES:	Professor A Hughes (Co-Chair) O Burchiellaro Z Butt Professor P Catterall H Doon	J Fenton C Hendricks E Mureddu Dr C Robertson D de Silva

22.22. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 22.22.1. **Welcome:** The Co-Chairs welcomed members and attendees to the meeting.
- 22.22.2. **Apologies:** Apologies were noted as above.
- 22.22.3. **Declaration of Interest:** The Chair confirmed that there were no declarations of interest.
- 22.22.4. **Requests to discuss starred items and notification of AOB:**

The Chair agreed to two items of business not on the agenda (see Minute 22.30)

22.23. CO-CHAIRS' REPORT

- 22.23.1. A Co-Chair updated members on recent activities and progress made since the last meeting.
- Overseeing the Annual Action Plan responses which will be presented in the next meeting of the EDI Committee
 - Championing the EDI work by encouraging greater senior leadership participation in EDI matters; promoting cross learning with external organisations; and through sharing information with EOLF
 - Promoting, as a part of their agenda, the EDI objectives of the University of Westminster overseas, in India and in Israel (Jerusalem)
 - Monitoring that all the 15 Black Lives Matter (BLM) commitments are adhered to.

- 22.23.2. A Co-Chair thanked the Communications team for their efforts to make communications more effective which encourages participation in EDI activities with better visibility of EDI objectives on the University website. The team has also been working on communication through the Westminster Weekly newsletter.
- 22.23.3. The members heard that the Co-Chair, Professor Dibyesh Anand, has been elected as the Chair of the EDI network of London Higher. Professor Anand proposed the possibility of a planned activity in summer where several universities could participate and discuss good EDI practices as well as work on challenges together.
- 22.23.4. The Co-Chair urged the members to encourage greater participation in Westminster Conversations and the World in Westminster Festival and informed the members about the launch of the discussion on anti-Semitism on 29 March 2023.
- 22.23.5. The members heard that the Pro Vice-Chancellor (PVC) for People and Culture and The Head of Culture and Inclusion spoke about EDI at a recent joint event of Westminster Business Council and Westminster Business School which was very well received. Two panel speakers from the BME Community, who are entrepreneurs at Media Space, proposed to open opportunities for the students at the University of Westminster.
- 22.23.5.1. **ACTION** All members, if they are engaged in any EDI activity with any external organisation, to send information to the Equality Diversity and Inclusion Officer who can take note and share with members
- 22.23.5.2. **ACTION** The Director of Student & Academic Services to assist the Equality Diversity and Inclusion Officer to communicate with the Head of Research and Knowledge Exchange Office (RKEO) to link up with work that RKEO do to measure impact.
- 22.23.5.3. **ACTION** The Co-Chair to introduce the Equality Diversity and Inclusion Officer to the College Research and Knowledge Exchange Director who has been drafting a report on EDI and Research Excellence Framework (REF).
- 22.23.5.4. **ACTION** Network Co-Chairs to receive a draft report on EDI and the REF from the College Research and Knowledge Exchange Director. They are to provide feedback and make comments.

22.24. EXPERIENCES AND KEY ISSUES FOR SCHOOL EDI LEADS

- 22.24.1. Members were briefed by the Assistant Head of School (Social Sciences) on key issues and the school EDI leads have highlighted the need for:
- a more structured approach to working with EDI Champions
 - joint training for EDI leads across the university
 - opportunities to discuss issues on EDI, not only by reporting through a formal engagement within themselves but also through decentralising the structure so more colleagues can be involved.
 - the summary of discussions in EDI meetings (not just the minutes) to go out to the leads
- 22.24.1.1. **ACTION** The Equality Diversity and Inclusion Officer to speak to the Head of CETI and involve the Assistant Head of School (Social Sciences) on a structure for working with the EDI Champions.
- 22.24.1.2. **ACTION** The Equality Diversity and Inclusion Officer to have a discussion with school EDI leads regarding a different meeting structure in the future.
- 22.24.2. The Assistant Head of School (AHOS) (Life Sciences) presented a verbal report on the issue of postgraduate awarding gaps identified in Master of Science (MSc) programmes.

- 22.24.2.1. The measures, taken to reduce the gaps in achievements and distinctions between home and international students, ensuring more students go on to receive their full post grad qualification, include:
- More support for all the postgraduate students, not just the international students
 - More timetabled sessions focused on academic skills and support for referencing.
 - Automatic text marking for submissions and warnings of plagiarism issued to students who have more than 40% of text marking. Doing this early in the first semester to ensure students can get more help early on.
 - Proactive support from course leaders and personal tutors to close the gaps
 - EDI champions to help in discussions with international students
- 22.24.2.2. The Director of Student & Academic Services shared that the Academic Skills team in the library can offer very good support through Academic English modules which the students can access. A member raised concerns that students were unaware there was support available.
- 22.24.2.3. **ACTION** School EDI leads to reach out and spread information to all colleagues and students, including post graduate students that academic studies support is available. (<https://www.westminster.ac.uk/current-students/studies/study-skills-and-training>).
- 22.24.3. Members were updated on the development of environment and infrastructure in relation to EDI through the launch of the Equity Forum, made up of staff and students who discuss and drive forward ideas about EDI. The AHoS (Architecture and Cities) explained that Equity Forum highlights school specific as well as general matters and aligns with the University values.
- 22.24.3.1. The members were introduced to Urban Equity, an online resource (digital archive) that can be used to support staff and students if they wish to pursue EDI through their work. The AHOS (Architecture and Cities) demonstrated how the website works and how the resource can be used as a library, recruitment and work exchange platform and as a medium for students to reflect, give suggestions, provoke debates, and drive actions to make the learning spaces in University more EDI friendly.
- 22.24.3.2. In response to members' queries the AHOS (Architecture and Cities) clarified that the website for accessing the Urban Equity resources is www.urban-equity.net. There is a plan to merge this site with resources available on the University of Westminster website in the future and plans for digital accessibility assessment are in progress.
- 22.24.3.3. **ACTION** The AHOS (Architecture and Cities) to circulate the Urban Equity website link to school EDI leads.

22.25. EDI FORUM UPDATE

- 22.25.1. A Co-Chair updated the members on the EDI Forum
- 22.25.1.1. **ACTION** The Equality Diversity and Inclusion Officer to co-ordinate with school EDI leads to work together and present three or four themes through which the schools could participate on initiatives related to students and EDI for the EDI Open Forum on 1 June.
- 22.25.1.2. **ACTION** The Network Leads to write to the Equality Diversity and Inclusion Officer with two or three topics for presentation and to share their ideas for the EDI forum planning.
- 22.25.1.3. **ACTION** The Co-Chair requested the members of the EDI Committee to support the planning of the forum and to contact the Co-Chairs if they can volunteer.
- 22.25.2. In response to a members query the Co-Chair explained that they want to include presentation work from schools and networks together to celebrate achievements as well as work on challenges in the EDI Forum and clarified that it is appropriate to invite internal speakers only so there can be a more open discussion.

22.26. TWICE YEARLY REPORT ON EDI AND SENIOR PROMOTIONS

- 22.26.1. The Human Resource Adviser (MI & Systems) presented the twice-yearly report on EDI and senior promotions (Document EDI 230215A)
- 22.26.2. The presentation included the overview of senior colleagues' promotions, the EDI profile of the Senior Colleague Group and the diversity profile of internal and external promotions. Data from the report suggests that there have not been substantial changes to the overall diversity of the Senior Colleague Group in the past year. The full impact of the Voluntary Release Scheme and the on-going recruitments will likely be known by January 2024.
- 22.26.3. Members discussed the report and comments included:
- In response to a member's query, it was clarified that there was no diverse representation in Senior Colleague roles of Level 3 and above for Professional services colleagues and the roles of College Research and Knowledge Exchange Directors
 - It was suggested that it will be more effective to have an action plan to show how the University is using recruitment and promotions to bring diverse representations forward rather than just reporting the available data.
 - A member pointed out the need to encourage more colleagues to declare their disabilities as the available data does not reflect the real numbers. Members agreed that it was important to communicate to all colleagues the need to disclose disability so the University can provide help with their accessibility needs.
 - The Head of Culture and Inclusion informed the members that the communications team is encouraging colleagues to declare their ethnicity, sexual orientation as well as disability and HR is working to ensure that colleagues declare information at their recruitment stage.
- 22.26.4. In response to a Co-Chair's question about the positive actions taken to increase representation, the PVC (People and Culture) responded that the members can expect to see a positive shift in EDI representation in colleagues in the next six months. As a result of the VRS scheme and the rotation of the senior leaders, recruitment agencies have been instructed to focus on increasing EDI representation.
- 22.26.4.1. **ACTION** PVC People and Culture to request all Heads of College to take positive action in incorporating diverse and inclusive recruitment practices to actively address underrepresentation through VRS opportunities
- 22.26.4.2. **ACTION** Head of Culture and Inclusion to note action with HR SMT to request HR recruitment team to recommunicate and reinforce inclusive recruitment practice on job adverts, panel diversity and interviews
- 22.26.5. Head of Learning and Development informed members that new Recruitment Workshops will be made available from April 2023 that will focus on developing inclusive interview and selection practices and will build on the current recruitment and selection (R&S) briefing.
- 22.26.6. A member informed that the Library & Archives Service has done substantial work to promote inclusive recruitment and the Research & Knowledge Exchange Office is looking at ways to flow the same across the professional services.
- 22.26.6.1. **ACTION** The Director of Student & Academic Services (DSAS) to connect Head of Library and Archives with Head of Culture and Inclusion to discuss and explore opportunities and any follow-up actions.
- 22.26.7. The PVC for People and Culture explained the importance of the job application document for schools. The document should explicitly mention that the school values are in line with EDI and clearly mention that they are looking for diversity in the job specification. The culture of inclusion

and wellbeing needs to be specified in the job description. There must be opportunities for candidates to ask questions.

- 22.26.7.1. **ACTION** The Co-Chairs to write to each HOS to contact School EDI leads if they need help designing advertisements for recruitment. The Co-Chairs to also write to the School EDI leads to empower them with support if they need help with designing an advertisement.
- 22.26.7.2. The PVC for People and Culture discussed the idea of producing a video of experiences of the colleagues (new starters as well as existing colleagues) to show why Westminster is a great place to work. The video will be an opportunity for people who apply for a job to get a flavour of the inclusive culture and experiences of working at Westminster.
- 22.26.7.3. The Co-Chair expressed the need for EDI leads to be involved in panels so they can be empowered to make a difference.
- 22.26.7.4. The Head of Learning and Development informed the members that they are introducing refresher training which includes new workshops on recruitment training, interview skills and practice.

22.27. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

- 22.27.1. **AGREED** Members confirmed the minutes of the meeting of 30 November 2022 (Document EDI 222230B) as an accurate record.
- 22.27.2. A member suggested the Action 70, Minute 22.15.4.1 from 30 November 2022 be assigned to the Equality Diversity and Inclusion Officer
- 22.27.2.1. **ACTION** The Equality Diversity and Inclusion Officer to communicate the non-confidential matters of the EDI meetings to all the networks and EDI Leads once the minutes are approved
- 22.27.3. Members noted a summary of progress in actions from previous meetings and confirmed the completed actions (Document EDI 230215C)
- 22.27.4. A Co-Chair updated the members on Action 71, Minute 22.16.5.1. and informed members that he had a meeting with the Professional Services (PS) Directors about representation of EDI in senior PS roles and about the possibility of departmental EDI leads. Members noted that the PS Directors will have a more open discussion amongst themselves at their Away Day in March and come up with a clear response and possible solution before 31 March.

22.28. SCHEDULE OF BUSINESS

- 22.28.1. Members noted the updated Schedule of Business 2022-23 (Document EDI 230215D)

22.29. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Wednesday 26 April 2023 at 2pm
 Wednesday 14 June 2023 from 12.00pm to 5.00pm
 Wednesday 26 July 2023 at 2pm

Meetings take place via Microsoft Teams¹ except the EDI Committee meeting on 14 June 2023 which will be held in person

22.30. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 22.30.1. **Recognition for professional services (PS) colleagues who wish to engage in EDI work**

¹ Onsite facilities can be arranged for those who have difficulties participating remotely

- 22.30.1.1. A member expressed their concern that PS colleagues are not given enough time to engage in EDI activities and this remains a barrier to active involvement.
- 22.30.1.2. The members also heard that the PS teams are already stretched, and work deliveries and deadlines may be affected if colleagues are given time off for activities.
- 22.30.1.3. Suggestions for the recognition of the time for EDI activities, included:
- a written policy or make participation a part of organisational development (PD)
 - a proposal to the University Executive Board
 - PS Directors have agreed to provide possible solutions for this in March 2023
- 22.30.1.3.1. **ACTION** The Head of Culture and Inclusion to consult the interim University Secretary and COO and Director of Finance to develop a process for ensuring opportunities and recognition for all PS colleagues who wish to engage in EDI work
- 22.30.2. **Update on Apprenticeships**
- 22.30.2.1. The PVC (People and Culture) informed members that:
- the University has accumulated a significant amount of funds in a reserve account which the HMRC requires employers to spend on training and development, especially apprenticeships.
 - the funds could be used to help individuals to do training or gain experience to progress at a level above their current level.
 - the funds could also be donated to other organisations to gain work-based experience or work exchange benefit