

Minutes of the meeting of the Cardiff University Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee held on 7 October 2020 via Zoom

Present: Professor Karen Holford (Chair), Michelle Aldridge-Waddon, Michelle Alexis, Professor Rudolf Allemann, Jane Chukwu, Venice Cowper, Kathryn Davies, Georgie East, Dr Sam Hibbitts, Professor Tim Phillips, Jude Pickett, Helen Obee Reardon, Abyd Quinn Aziz, Claire Sanders, Cadi Thomas, Professor Ian Weeks and Matthew Williamson [from minute 732].

In attendance: Hayley Beckett, Professor Gillian Bristow (for Professor Kim Graham), Susan Cousins, Karen Harvey-Cooke, Natalie Hughes, Rashi Jain, Beth John [from minute 735 to minute 740], Michelle Jones, Andrew Lane, Ben Lewis, Sue Midha, Catrin Morgan, Melanie Rimmer, Charlotte Shand, Tracey Stanley [from minute 734], Gail Thomas and Geoff Turnbull [to minute 737].

Apologies for absence were received from Professor Kim Graham, Carol Merryman-Rees, Claire Morgan and Professor Damian Walford Davies.

729 **Welcome**

Noted

- .1 that the Chair opened the meeting and welcomed new members and observers to the Committee;
- .2 that the University was marking Black History Month with a programme of events for the month. Colleagues and speakers were thanked for their contribution and all were encouraged to participate.

730 **Minutes**

Received paper 19/643, 'Minutes of the Meeting of the Cardiff University Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee' held on 12 May 2020 and paper 20/79, 'Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Cardiff University Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee' held on 11 August 2020.

Noted

- .1 that the minutes from the meeting held on 12 May 2020 were confirmed to be an accurate record and would be signed by the Chair;
- .2 that the minutes from the special meeting held on 11 August 2020 were not confirmed as the Head of Student Support and Wellbeing advised that an amendment was required to minute 726.7 on a point of accuracy. The amended minutes would be considered at the next meeting in January 2021.

Further Noted

- .3 that following the meeting the Head of Student Support and Wellbeing provided clarification on the current provision:

If a student requests a BAME counsellor, the service will seek to offer this. Recruitment channels which are targeted at the BAME community will be used for vacant positions when they are available. The service has qualified BAME staff available if required.

731 **Matters Arising**

Received paper 20/80, 'Matters Arising'.

Noted

Widening Participating Strategy [minute 720.3]

- 731.1 that the Senior Compliance Advisor has joined the Widening Participation Strategy Group and the governance of the strategy is to be resolved;

Measures of Impact of Covid-19 on Working Environment for Staff. 'Our Stories, a Listening Project: equalities impact of COVID-19' [minute 724.5]

- 731.2 that steps have been taken to ensure concerns around the content of any story disclosed can be raised appropriately with HR;

Update on Student Support and Wellbeing [minute 726.6]

- 731.3 that providing a comprehensive breakdown by protected characteristics of students receiving support across the service was limited due to legacy IT systems. It is anticipated that the new case management system currently being rolled-out will help to provide more detailed and useful data for management reporting in future;

- 731.4 that demand on the Counselling service and wider support provided by Student Support and Wellbeing had been substantial through the summer and academic year start-up. Complex mental health needs, sexual assault and domestic violence remained prevalent among those seeking support. The current pandemic impacted on finances as there were fewer opportunities for part-time employment and therefore there had been an increased demand on the hardship fund;

Review Priorities for Strategic Equality Plan: Objective 4 [minute 727.4.6]

- 731.5 that Ceri Davies, Head of IT Architecture has been appointed to represent IT at the Committee on an ad hoc basis;

Strategic Equality Plan – objectives [minute 727.6]

731.6 that the Chair of the Race Equality Steering Group has raised the issue of reporting race incidents and is in discussion with HR;

731.7 a query was raised on the consequences of not completing mandatory training, in particular Understanding Unconscious Bias. It was noted that there were a number of pressures on staff's current working practices and that all should be encouraged to undertake mandatory training.

732 **Items from the Chair**

Received paper 20/81, 'Membership, Officer attendance and Terms of Reference'.

Noted

732.1 Powell Review 2020

- .1 that in light of the Powell Review of the University's governance practices a review of the officers of the Committee had taken place;
- .2 that the Chair has identified the departments from which an officer is expected to attend Committee meetings – Estates, Human Resources, Compliance & Risk, Student Support & Wellbeing and Communications and Marketing;

732.2 Members 2020-21

that Committee meeting efficiency was considered and members were asked to put any further suggestions for improvement to the Chair;

732.3 Annual Statement on EDI Progress and Plans

that the Chair gave a verbal update on the successes over the year including:

- the University is 10th in the UK Stonewall workplace equality index, the top Higher Education establishment, and a Top Trans Employer. Enfys was awarded Network Group of the Year 2020;
- the Race Equality Resource Guide has been published and together with the positive practice case study on our Race Equality Supervisory Panel, will be included in UUK's forthcoming guidance. Thanks were extended to the Senior Compliance Advisor, Race, Religion and Belief and other colleagues for their contribution to this resource;

- our Strategic Equality Plan 2020-24 was completed and published within deadline;
- Student Services and Wellbeing have successfully introduced LGBT and Ally accommodation for students;
- ED&I workshops focusing on ensuring fairness in the REF process have been delivered to the majority of academic staff involved in REF across the University, thanks were extended to the Senior Compliance Advisor, Public and Academic and the College Dean for Research, Innovation and Enterprise (AHSS).

733 **College/Professional Services Update**

Professor Rudolf Allemann, PVC for the College of Physical Sciences and Engineering provided an update on EDI initiatives and activities within the College.

Noted

733.1 that the College EDI Network had been in existence since 2016 and since 2018 had been led by an academic, Professor Tim Phillips - Head of School of Mathematics and that the work of the Network was a standing item on College Board agenda;

733.2 that EDI was a key consideration in College activities including:

- the PDR process and how this could be used to support EDI
- the accessibility and experience of Open Days
- the information contained on the Mental Health z-cards, which had been launched in the previous academic year, was looking at being available online, via an app
- the Senior Compliance Advisor Race, Religion and Belief had attended a network meeting and four members of staff from the College had become members of the Race Equality Steering Panel
- that issues were being raised and work discussed with HR and Estates in relation to the University's membership of the Disability Business Forum;

734 **BAME+ Staff Network**

Received an oral presentation from Michelle Alexis, Chair of the BAME+ Staff Network.

Noted

- 734.1 that the aim of the network is to provide a voice for BAME staff, safe space, promote achievements of BAME staff and to develop and deliver initiatives;
- 734.2 that the membership of the network was up to 53 (an increase of 23% since 2018) and engagement with members had increased during lockdown;
- 734.3 that past and future events and activities of the network include:
- following the name change to BAME+ Staff Network, a logo had been created as a brand of the network
 - the work experience offered to Cathays High School had taken place and had been very successful, with the Lord Mayor attending to present certificates to the participants
 - connections had been made in the community, the Chair had participated in the Grangetown Careers and Role Models week Panel Talk and Empowerment Session in July 2020 and visited the Tiger Bay Boxing Club in August 2020, who were scheduled to come and talk with staff
 - a support session for BAME+ staff following BLM movement had taken place and monthly informal coffee mornings had been planned up until the end of the year
 - a series of Celebrating staff talks had begun with contributions to date from David Gyimah-Dunkley and Susan Cousins
 - an External Speakers Series had been planned: HM Prison Service Sub-Sahara Advisory Panel, Diverse Cymru
 - the network had participated in the consultation on University Artwork in September;
- 734.4 that a proposal was made that some of the current Council members may be willing to contribute as speakers to the network and the General Counsel and University Secretary was happy to approach them on behalf of the network;
- 734.5 that the Chair of the BAME+ Staff network was congratulated on the achievements of the network and it was recognised that this voluntary role was in addition to the Chair's substantive role and that the contribution that Chairs made was vital.

735 **Students' Union Update**

Received an oral update from Georgie East, Jude Pickett and Jane Chukwu on the activities of the Students' Union.

Noted

735.1 that that the new team of sabbatical and campaign officers was now in place and work had been undertaken to support students and deliver on the actions of the SU;

735.2 that key points of note and activities for the coming year included:

- the SU building was open and students were being welcomed
- new ways of connecting with individuals, particularly around societies and sports, were being introduced but it was too early to have a clear picture of their effectiveness
- the Disabilities Campaign Officer was working to survey disabled students for their experience in the current academic environment
- the Periods in Poverty Project was running, supplying sanitary products for those in hardship
- contributing to the review of the Complaints Procedure and addressing the wait time
- marking World Mental Health day and providing resources and support for those experiencing loneliness and isolation
- making Black History Month a year-round event
- working with students at the University of South Wales to provide feedback to the Welsh Government on issues within the BAME Community
- Blogs based around intersectionality were being launched to raise awareness and reach out to students;

735.3 a discussion was held regarding supporting students around mental health issues and isolating in particular and how members of the University might work to support this e.g. alumni. The Chief Operating Officer would consider this alongside the ongoing communication support such as the Student Connect group and parent helpline.

736 **Order of Business**

Agreed to take Agendum 14 'Annual Report from Estates' after Agendum 7 'Students' Union Update'.

737 **Annual Report from Estates**

Received an oral update from Geoff Turnbull, Deputy Director of Estates (Operations).

Noted

- 737.1 that the accessibility audit was due to start at the end of October 2020 and will be undertaken by external surveyors supported by internal surveyors;
- 737.2 that the work undertaken by the Estates team on establishing routes around the campus which would be compatible with social distancing requirements had a positive outcome in that it had given a greater insight into accessibility in general;
- 737.3 that items of note included:
- the route around and access to John Percival Building was unsuitable for wheelchair users
 - hand sanitisers needed to be at kitchen bench level
 - all washroom facilities currently available were gender neutral and there was scope for further provision if required
 - quiet rooms had remained available
 - a revised timescale of the accessibility audit would be shared.

738 **Gender Equality Steering Group**

Received an oral update from Helen Obee Reardon, Chair of the Gender Equality Steering Group.

Noted

738.1 Athena Swan

- .1 that the University had applied for an extension to submit its application, as had several schools;
- .2 that the Business School were submitting their application for a Bronze award and the School of Dentistry for a Silver award in November 2020;
- .3 that action plans had been reviewed and amended where necessary in light of the impact of COVID-19

738.2 Staff Survey

that gender would be considered where it is linked with other demographic data;

738.3 Equalities project

- .1 that stories had been received both positive and negative and more serious issues raised have been referred to HR;

- .2 that it had been noted that contributions had not been received from frontline staff and consideration would be given as to how to reach out to them;
- .3 that a concern had been raised around the wearing of face coverings;
- .4 that everyone was thanked for their contributions;

738.4 that any queries on face coverings should be forwarded to the Chief Operating Officer and that plans were underway for Public Health Wales to talk to University staff on this topic.

739 **Race Equality Steering Group**

Received an oral update from Michelle Alexis, Chair of the Race Equality Steering Group.

Noted

739.1 that work was underway with HR in relation to the inclusion of BAME staff on interview panels and interview questions. The outcome of this would be reported to the Committee at a future meeting;

739.2 that a review of activity across Schools was being planned to share best practice and consider how any gaps may be filled;

739.3 that the Students Race Equality Working Group were thanked for their work in arranging a series of lectures to commemorate Black History Month.

740 **Student Pregnancy and Maternity Policy**

Received and considered paper 20/82, 'Student Pregnancy and Maternity Policy'.

Noted

740.1 that the key updates to the policy were to provide clarity on who the policy applied to, to make the language inclusive and to consider the support available;

740.2 that consultation had taken place and feedback had been received and incorporated where appropriate and consideration was to be given on communicating the new policy via the intranet and other internal channels including Tutor's guides;

740.3 that matters raised by the Committee for consideration included:

- clarifying the support for those who decide not to continue with the pregnancy

- guidance for staff to signpost students reflecting on continuing the pregnancy to qualified individuals and that staff are not to convey personal views
- greater understanding on the impact of pregnancy and when extenuating circumstances applied
- clarifying the duty of care owed to the student and foetus/unborn child, the insurance status when delivering abroad and issues impacting on visas.

Resolved

740.4 to approve the policy subject to the amendments.

741 Staff Survey – EDI Report

Received and considered paper 20/83, 'Staff Survey – EDI Report'.

Noted

741.1 that the paper presented a breakdown of the demographic analyses arising from the staff survey in November 2019. Analysis of on characteristic or intersectionality by career pathway offered opportunity to target support and identify common themes. Dashboards of information have been developed to extract and identify areas for development;

741.2 key items highlighted by the report included:

- 32% of BAME staff, 80% of disabled staff, 82% LGB staff, 52% female staff and 48% male staff responded to the survey
- T&R male staff, T&S female staff and disabled staff indicated more negative responses than their counterparts
- Negative responses were received in relation to female staff feeling confident reporting bullying and harassment and academic promotions;

741.3 that some of the issues raised were already being addressed, in particular there is ongoing work with future development planned around the academic promotions process, where data is broken down by stage and analysed to influence activity;

741.4 that further dashboards on characteristics and demographic categories were schedule to be introduced and members were asked to provide any feedback on proposed next steps.

742 **LGBT+ Students and Allies Accommodation**

Received an oral update from Ben Lewis, Head of Student Support and Wellbeing.

Noted

742.1 that 28 students had selected this option last year, with 24 this year. Approximately 4-5 other higher education institutions were now offering this option in their accommodation;

742.2 that there had been no welfare concerns raised by last year's residents and plans were being considered to carry out a survey to capture their experiences;

742.3 that the Head of Student Support and his team were thanked for their work in piloting this project and that the Committee had no objections to this project being continued as a standard operating practice.

743 **Policy on Face Covering – Equality Impact Assessment**

Received and considered paper 20/84, 'The Use of Face Coverings Within University Buildings – Equality Impact Assessment'.

Noted

743.1 that this paper was submitted for information. It was one of the first Impact Assessments to be carried out following lockdown and established some common themes that would be relevant to other activities around returning to campus and working in a different way;

743.2 that concerns had been raised in relation to the expectation for teaching staff to refrain from wearing face coverings and it was proposed that this query be referred to the Health and Safety team. The Chief Operating Officer confirmed that the University has taken and will continue to take guidance from Public Health Wales and that the current advice available indicates that if 2m apart, face-to-face delivery of teaching without a face covering is deemed to be safe for teacher and student.

744 **Race Equality Supervisory Panel – Annual Report**

Received Paper 20/85 'Race Equality Supervisory Panel – Annual Report'.

Noted that questions had been raised which would be addressed outside of the committee meeting.

745 **Papers for Information**

Received and Noted the following papers:

20/86 – College/Professional Services Equality Networks

20/87 – Staff Equality Networks Updates and 2019-20 Budgets

746 **Any Other Business**

Noted that a request had been made on behalf of International students for the exam timetable to be provided as early as possible to give students an opportunity to plan for travel. The Chief Operating Officer will address this request.

748 **Date of next meeting**

Noted the date for the next meeting: 14 January 2021 at 13:30.