

Minutes of the meeting of the Cardiff University Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee held on 14 January 2021 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 Damian Walford Davies, Professor Ian Weeks, and Matthew Williamson.

In attendance: Hayley Beckett, Julie Bugden, Susan Cousins, Karen Harvey-Cooke, Ruth Harwood, Alaw Hughes, Rashi Jain, Chris James, Michelle Jones, Andrew Lane, Ben Lewis (from Minute 752.2), Andy Lloyd, Sue Midha, Catrin Morgan, Charlotte Shand, and Gail Thomas.

Apologies for absence were received from Professor Kim Graham and Claire Morgan.

749 Welcome

NOTED that the Chair opened the meeting and welcomed observers to the Committee.

750 Minutes

NOTED

750.1 that the minutes from the meeting held on 11 August 2020 (20/79R) were confirmed to be an accurate record and would be signed by the Chair.

Resolved

750.2 that subject to the following amendments the minutes of the meeting held on 7 October 2020 (20/335) as a correct record and signed by the Chair:

.1 ***Abyd Quinn Aziz to be recorded as present.***

751 Matters Arising

Received and Noted paper 20/335, 'Matters Arising'.

752 Items from the Chair

Received paper 20/352, 'VC's Diversity in Leadership Task and Finish Group - implementation'.

Noted

752.1 'Our Stories, a Listening Project: equalities impacts of COVID-19' - update

- .1 that the project had been successful in highlighting a number of issues and how the University could provide additional support around these and a toolkit for wellbeing was being developed for launch by early February 2021 and further information would appear in Blas;
- .2 that meetings will take place with the Chief Operating Officer and Director of HR on the findings with a view to promoting the actions taken across the University;
- .3 thanks were extended to Helen Obee Reardon for the extensive work undertaken on this project.

752.2 Vice-Chancellor's Diversity in Leadership Task and Finish Group

- .1 that the paper (20/352) set out the remit of the group, whose work had now concluded, and appended a chart of race equality activity across the University and an action plan which the Committee were asked to discuss and consider;
- .2 that the chart of race equality activity could develop over time to include other groups, including other student groups, where possible;
- .3 a discussion took place on the barriers identified by the group and it was noted that this varied in different situations. For example, it was identified that informal approaches to recruitment or networking opportunities, which fell outside of standard formal processes, could be broadened to be inclusive of under-represented groups;
- .4 that it was essential to foster a culture of inclusion and encourage ambition at senior, and all, levels of the University;
- .5 that it was proposed that the action plan be incorporated into the work of the Race Equality Steering Group who would report to EDI Committee and actions be aligned to and included in the Strategic Equality Plan.

Resolved

- .6 to appoint the Race Equality Steering Group as owners of the action plan to monitor the activities undertaken by the action owners and report to EDI Committee.

753 **College/Professional Services Update**

Professor Ian Weeks, PVC for the College of Biomedical and Life Sciences provided an update on EDI initiatives and activities within the College.

Noted

753.1 that the College was in the process of establishing a College-level EDI Committee which would report to College Board. To date, EDI matters had been considered as part of College Board but it was acknowledged that the size of the College meant more time was required for discussion on the topic;

753.2 that key EDI College activities included:

- a successful pilot scheme which had introduced questions based on values and behaviours as part of the interview process. This had been used by 243 interview panels for 688 candidates. As the scheme had been well received it would now move to business as usual;
- a communication had been circulated throughout the College to encourage disclosure of equality monitoring data to help inform future activity;
- that work was underway to increase mandatory EDI training completion rates across the College;

753.3 a discussion took place on the benefits of sharing good practice and successes across all Colleges and that this be followed up outside of the meeting.

754 **Rhwydwaith, Welsh Language Staff Network**

Received an oral presentation from Cadi Thomas, Co-Chair of the Rhwydwaith Staff Network.

Noted

754.1 the aims and objectives of the network include:

- raising awareness and promoting use of the Welsh language for staff and students
- working with the Cardiff branch of Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol
- meeting with the Welsh Language Steering Group
- facilitating a forum for staff to discuss issues arising;

754.2 that past and future events and activities of the network include:

- writing to the Chief Operating Officer emphasising the importance of complying with the legal requirements around the Welsh content of the University's website
- following the restrictions as part of the COVID-19 pandemic activities had moved online and chatting groups now had around 50 participants
- going forward the network will be supporting the Dean for the Welsh Language in promoting the new Welsh Language Strategy following its launch
- the network will co-operate closely with the new cross-institutional academy planned as part of the new Welsh Language Strategy.

755 **Disability Staff Network**

Received an oral presentation from Michelle Aldridge-Waddon, Co-Chair of the Disability Staff Network.

Noted

755.1 that Tracey Evans had recently stepped down following several years as Co-Chair and Emma Jenkins had been appointed the new Co-Chair;

755.2 that past and future events and activities of the network include:

- the network had organised a competition seeking slogans and the winning slogans have been printed on t-shirts and distributed to network members
- the flag had been flown above Main Building for the International Day for Disabled Persons on 3 December however unfortunately, due to the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic, it had not been possible to arrange other activities to mark the day
- the network meets formally every three months and holds monthly informal 'cuppa and catch up' mornings. For the latter they have been joined by visitors on different themes including staff survey, sitting yoga and the University's membership of the Business Disability Forum
- participation with the network had increased since the changes in response to the COVID-19 pandemic
- there had been increased involvement with the Students' Union
- it is proposed to engage on the issue of accessible parking, noting that accessibility went beyond Blue Badges

- the network had proposed the University establish a Disability Equality Steering Group alongside the Gender Equality and Race Equality Steering Groups;

755.3 that the network had provided significant input into the COVID-19 Taskforce Equality Impact Assessments and the Committee thanked the network for their contribution.

756 **Students' Union Update**

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

Noted

756.1 that that the SU was providing significant support to students returning to studies, in person and online;

756.2 that key points of note and activities included:

- a recent student forum meeting raised the issues of the impact on mental and physical health, academic attainment and disability provision
- the issue of self-certification of extenuating circumstances had been addressed
- a grant had been received from HEFCW and work was being progressed with wellbeing officers in Societies and Sports teams to establish how this would be spent
- as in person events are currently on hold an online events calendar has been developed with a number of sessions around anxiety, loneliness, managing wellbeing and mental health training
- engagement with the Privilege Café was being progressed through the Chair of the Race Equality Student Working Group
- the Periods in Poverty Project was continuing, supplying sanitary products for those in hardship
- a student carers project is currently being developed
- ways in which PG students can be supported and engagement furthered are being explored
- nominations for elections have been opened and work is underway to raise awareness of eligibility, and broaden the diversity of nominees;

756.3 the Committee expressed its thanks to the SU and recognised the significant and valuable work they were undertaking in these unprecedented circumstances.

757 **Strategic Equality Plan 2020-24 – Annual Monitoring Report**

Received and considered papers 20/353, 'Strategic Equality Plan - Update on Actions', 20/336, 'Student Monitoring Data Report' and 20/354, 'Staff Monitoring Data Report'.

Noted

757.1 that this is the first report against the Strategic Equality Plan 2020-24 published last year. The key points of note include:

- progress updates on actions cover the 2020/21 activity whereas the data reports cover a reporting period of 2019/20
- the development by the Business Intelligence team of an EDI dashboard to provide high-level and in-depth data, ensuring availability across colleges/departments and providing the opportunity for relevant groups to engage in analysis of granular data that is not possible within the annual SEP report
- the COVID-19 pandemic had impacted upon the progress of many actions however there had been an opportunity to progress other activity which would support the objectives and this had been captured where possible
- a new action plan for the coming year would be developed and published alongside these reports
- that further amendments would be made prior to submission to Governance Committee;

757.2 that members had provided feedback and updates for inclusion in the report ahead of and within the meeting:

- addressing interchangeable terminology
- the Click & Connect service has been reabsorbed into Student Support and Wellbeing, managed by staff rather than SU volunteers

757.3 that any further feedback and updates against objects should be provided to the following:

- Objective 1 – Andrew Lane and Dr Sam Hibbitts
- Objective 2 – Karen Harvey-Cooke
- Objective 3 – Dr Sam Hibbitts

- Objective 4 – Julie Bugden
- Objective 5 – Andrew Lane

757.4 that the revised monitoring report and new action plan would be circulated to members of the Committee ahead of publication.

Resolved to Recommend to Governance Committee

757.5 that, subject to the inclusion of any further amendments, the Annual Monitoring report and action plan be approved for publication.

758 Disability Steering Group

Received and considered paper 20/337, 'Disability Steering Group – terms of reference and membership'.

Noted

758.1 that the group was being established, following a proposal by the Disability Staff Network, to support the work of the University around the disability agenda, including submission to accreditation schemes such as the Disability Confident Employer;

758.2 that the group would sit alongside the Gender Equality and Race Equality Steering Groups in the University's EDI structures;

758.3 a query was raised on how the group would be supported and it was noted that this was still under consideration;

758.4 a discussion took place on the membership. It was noted that physical and digital accessibility would be key and these were currently areas covered by the proposed membership. A proposal was made to include the area of Research. It was further noted that a flexible approach would be required and membership could be re-visited as the group evolved.

Resolved

758.5 to approve the Terms of Reference and proposed membership.

759 Adoption of the IHRA definition of Antisemitism and the All-Party Parliamentary Group of British Muslims' definition of Islamophobia

Received and considered paper 20/335C, 'Adoption of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's Definition of Antisemitism and the All-Party Parliamentary Group of British Muslims' definition of Islamophobia'.

Noted

- 759.1 that the paper gave background to the proposal for each definition, putting them in the context of University policies and practices, outlining the benefits and risks, and how these definitions had been approached by other HE institutions;
- 759.2 that the proposal had been considered by UEB and would be further considered by Governance Committee, Senate and Council;
- 759.3 a discussion on the IHRA definition of antisemitism took place following queries raised on the publicly widespread concerns about the impact on freedom of speech, how the definition could be interpreted or misinterpreted and the government influence;
- 759.4 that it was clarified that should the IHRA definition of antisemitism be adopted the two clarifications provided by the House of Commons Affairs Committee should be included alongside the definition to mitigate any ambiguity around freedom of speech;
- 759.5 that to support the adoption of the definitions, activity would need to be undertaken to implement these. Decolonising of the curriculum, providing guidance and advice as part of current University processes would form part of this;
- 759.6 that the definitions would not prevent the application of University policy or undermine legislative obligations but would be a definition to work with and not to;
- 759.7 that the adoption of the definitions was put to a vote;

Resolved to Recommend to Governance Committee

- 759.8 that the proposal be considered further following discussions and a vote at EDI Committee which, by a majority of 9 votes in favour, 1 against and 6 abstentions, recommended the adoption of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's Definition of Antisemitism and the All-Party Parliamentary Group of British Muslims' definition of Islamophobia.

760 BAME Awarding Gap Task and Finish Group

Received and considered paper 20/338, 'BAME Awarding Gap Task and Finish Group update'.

Noted

- 760.1 that meetings were currently taking place with Heads of School to report on the findings of the group and to provide advice and guidance on developing a three-year action plan;
- 760.2 that an action recommended within the action plan, regarding BAME counsellors would need to be considered by Student Support and Wellbeing as they were best placed to provide this in addition to

consideration of other forms of support their department provides that may also prove valuable to the action plan. Further discussions would take place with the Head of Student Support and Wellbeing;

Resolved

760.3 that, subject to the removal of the action regarding BAME counsellors, the School plan and EDI Data Dashboard be approved.

761 Items received for information

Noted the following papers received for information:

Paper 20/339C, Equal Pay Audit Report 2020

Paper 20/340, Equality Impact Assessment – new template and guidance

Paper 20/356, College EDI Updates

Paper 20/341, Staff Equality Networks Update

762 Date of next meeting

Noted the date for the next meeting: 12 May 2021 at 14:00.