



EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION COMMITTEE

Open Minutes

Of the meeting held on Wednesday, 14 June 2023 on MS Teams.

Present:

- Damien Page, Deputy Vice Chancellor
- Charlotte Stewart (Inclusion, Diversity and Disability Manager [Deputy Chair])
- Paul Morgan, Senior Pro Vice Chancellor, Student Experience
- Paulette Morris (PSE Representative)
- Jess Bradbury (Students' Union Vice President: Student Involvement)
- Simon Lee-Price (UCU Representative)
- Emma Binnie (Dean of Students)
- Rachael Cornwall (Director of HR)
- Zahara Chowdhury (HRBP – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion)
- Sarah Jackson (Students' Union HR & Development Manager)
- Louise Harvey (Director, Vice-Chancellor, Communications and Civic Engagement)
- Margaret Rioga (Head of Practice Learning for Health and Social Care)
- Rachel Cragg, Senior Pro Vice Chancellor, Education & Digital
- Ciara Walsh, Committee Officer

In attendance

- Nicola Shepherd, Academic Developer

Apologies:

- Hillary Mullen (Senior Lecturer)
- Carlo Lusuardi (Senior Lecturer)

Welcome/Apologies for Absence

- 23.72 The Chair noting that this was his first meeting at Buckinghamshire New University introduced himself to the Committee who warmly welcomed him. The Chair advised the Committee that that in his previous institution, the University of Wolverhampton he had taken a particular interest in the EDI Committee and there they developed mandatory training for line managers in trans-inclusion and neurodiversity. The Chair remarked that Buckinghamshire New University needs to become known for inclusive recruitment.
- 23.73 The Chair welcomed the new Human Resources Business Partner for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

23.74 The Chair welcomed Committee Members to the meeting and noted the following apologies:

- Hillary Mullen (Senior Lecturer)
- Carlo Lusuardi (Senior Lecturer)

Declaration of conflicts of interest

23.75 No conflicts of interest were declared.

Minutes of the previous meeting

23.76 The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as an accurate record subject to the following amendments:

23.77 Rachel Cragg, Senior Pro Vice Chancellor, Education & Digital was present at the last meeting held on 13 March 2023 and would be added.

23.78 23.50: Students' Union Update was corrected to: 'SU Awareness/EDI Calendar'

23.79 23.53: Students' Union Update was corrected to: 'Vice President Education and Welfare'

Matters Arising/Status Actions

23.80 The Chair advised that there were some actions outstanding from the previous meeting.

23.81 22.3 – Revised Equality Approach – The Director of HR and HR BP EDI advised that the matter had been discussed at a recent UMG meeting and the action was closed.

23.82 23.26 – Race Equality Network Update – The UCU Representative advised that the action had been assigned to them and did not think it was appropriate. The Chair agreed to re-assign the action.

23.83 41.2 – Inclusion and Accessibility Hallmark with respect to C23 – it was noted that this item was on today's agenda.

23.84 42.1 - Suicide Prevention Update – Inclusion, Diversity and Disability Manager advised that the Directorate for Student Success were currently recruiting for a Director for Student Success. The Team had not reviewed out of hours support and noted that it was unlikely to be progressed before next academic year. They were currently only providing that support in emergency instances. Work on out of hours support would be reviewed by Director for Student Success when they had been appointed.

23.85 42.3 – Suicide Prevention Update – The Inclusion, Diversity and Disability Manager advised that work had been undertaken for supervision for starting difficult cases. The team had now implemented and were trialing group supervision sessions which were receiving good feedback. in addition or peer supervision. The Inclusion, Diversity and Disability Manager noted that capacity has improved in the team, there was a new safeguarding officer and a new disability advisor in disability and inclusion services.

23.86 43.6 – Discrimination against women definition – The EDI HR Business Partner advised they would update the Committee in due course.

23.87 46.1 – Update on the progress being made on Drink Spiking Prevention. The Inclusion, Diversity and Disability Manager advised that this is an ongoing piece of work and the University had worked with Thames Valley Police who will be better informed for next year.

The Committee noted that the general consensus amongst students was that accommodation halls and the university campus are the safest places within town centre.

Membership

- 23.88 The Inclusion, Diversity and Disability Manager requested the Committee to consider an including the Academic Developer for C23 in its membership. The Committee noted that the Academic Developer had been part of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Committees in previous institutions.
- 23.89 Members of the Committee queried whether appropriate for the Academic Developer to join as the previous post holder was only in attendance. It was clarified that the Senior Pro Vice Chancellor (Education & Digital) was a member to represent the overall curriculum development and another person's membership could duplicate knowledge. The Committee, having carefully considered the matter, directed that the membership should not be changed to include the Academic Developer permanently.
- 23.90 At its previous meeting, the Committee had noted that there was a vacancy for a Professional Services Employee and there should be an advert on BEN. The Committee Secretary advised the Committee that the deadline had been extended twice and it had only received one application. The Committee accepted the Executive Assistant to the Deputy Vice Chancellor and Senior Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education & Digital)'s nomination.

Action: Committee Secretary

Inclusion & Accessibility Hallmark in respect to C23

- 23.91 The Committee noted the contents of the paper it has requested which would outline the fifth hallmark detailing how the C23 curriculum would be designed to be inclusive and accessible. The fifth hallmark underpinned the approach and philosophy that drove the vision for BNU to have an inclusive and accessible curriculum. The C23 blueprint defined this as: *'Inclusive and intercultural competencies, addressing inequalities, awarding gaps and differential experiences'*. Furthermore the inclusive and accessible hallmarked aligned with the University's Equality Strategy.
- 23.92 To aid the consultation and engagement plan to integrate the fifth hallmark within the curriculum, the C23 team had appointed a full time Academic Developer in post who would work with the School Directors of Education to support the integration of C23 hallmarks into the University's curriculum. There had been risk, equality, environmental and social responsibility impact analyses. There were areas that needed more development to ensure the University delivered an inclusive and accessibly curriculum.
- 23.93 The Senior Pro Vice Chancellor (Education & Digital) advised the Committee that there was confusion about where those conversations regarding the fifth hallmarks for C23 were taking place. It was agreed it would be useful to know how it is developing or how those conversation are captured.
- 23.94 The Committee's attention was drawn to the table which showed where the University was with 2021/22 data. The Students' Union HR & Development Manager noted the sector data separated Asian students from Black but the University's data was for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students. The Students' Union HR & Development Manager then queried what the separate percentages looked like and why they were in the same group.

- 23.95 The Academic Developer advised that the table showed the most detailed information available on Tableau and that there was no breakdown between different ethnic groups that matched the sector.
- 23.96 The Committee agreed it was helpful to see the information and it showed there was good inclusivity work across the institution. Furthermore, it was useful to explore what the University can do to improve.

Suicide Prevention Update

- 23.97 The Pro-Vice Chancellor (Student Experience) and the Dean of Students presented the paper on 'Draft Suicide Response and Policy' and took the paper as read. They were in the process to recruit a Directorate for Student Success and Head of Student and Wellbeing and so were representing the Directorate for Student Success. It was agreed that student wellbeing and prevention of suicide is a University approach.
- 23.98 As part of the review process, the University had worked closely internally with different department to establish information sharing protocols and with Bucks Council Public Health (BCPH) and Public Health England around best practice and reporting.
- 23.99 Following a recent meeting with BCPH it was agreed to collaboratively progress and complete the work stream to ensure the University's preparedness regarding suicide prevention and incident response. The BCPH gave a list of documents that needed to be updated to ensure the University was following best practice. Once those had been updated and still working collaboratively with BCPH, the action plan would be considered by UET and then it would be brought back to the Committee.

ACTION: Pro Vice Chancellor (Student Experience) & Dean of Students

- 23.100 It was agreed that it was positive to have a plan and subsequently queried how incidents of this nature are reviewed and learned from. The Dean of Students advised that there was a serious cases investigation group which had been formed as part of response to any serious cases where lessons need to be learned. After the investigation a report will be written and sent to UET then any changes will be raised with UMG to implement.
- 23.101 The Committee agreed that particular importance should be placed on how the plan would be socialized within the University and to ensure that managers are reminded of employee assistance programme. It was agreed that there should be a communication sent to staff advising how to access it and that it would be good to incorporate signposts. There were a range of areas related to this and UMG have an opportunity to raising awareness and duty of care of staff and students.

ACTION: Inclusion, Diversity and Disability Manager & Director of HR

Disability Inclusion Institutional Framework

- 23.102 The Inclusion, Diversity and Disability Manager presented their paper to the Committee and advised that the Framework was a good mechanism. They had spoken to other universities about using and implementing Framework noting that it was a research-based checklist.
- 23.103 The Committee noted that at BNU disabled students are more likely achieve higher degree results whereas elsewhere they generally have poorer access to university, are more likely to drop out and achieve lower degree results. The Committee agreed that the University was weaker on assisted technology software but there were other areas where it was stronger. The Inclusion, Diversity and Disability Manager advised the Committee that the

Framework applied to staff and students. It was agreed that the Framework was a comprehensive framework which covered every aspect of a students' experience and it would benefit every student at the institution. The Framework was inclusive and the first of its kind in terms of disability and could be used to formulate actions and equally celebrate strengths.

- 23.104 There was a concern as to how to embed the Framework within the staff's remit as there are so many pieces of work which are a priority. It was important to consider how to implement the Framework intuitively.
- 23.105 The Inclusion, Diversity and Disability Manager advised that in the first instance they would collate information to understand what the institution does and does not offer and would be checking with other departments. Furthermore, with any adjustments that need to be made would ensure that the University is legally compliant. It was noted that the University was above the sector in student support and attainment.

National Inclusion Week and Inclusive Employers: EDI Calendar

- 23.106 The Committee considered and approved the proposed calendar of EDI activities from the University and Bucks Students' Union. The Committee noted the paper which listed a varied and inclusive range of activities hosted by the Students' Union.

Inclusive Recruitment

- 23.107 The Committee noted the contents of the report on Inclusive Recruitment at BNU in which it was highlighted that all BNU Managers and Leaders or those involved in recruitment and career progression understand the importance of bias, stereotypes, assumptions and behaviors in influencing every stage of recruitment, career progression and retention. The focus was on removing bias from systems and processes.
- 23.108 The Director of HR advised that they had proposed changes to recruitment to the University Executive Team become more inclusive about recruitment practices. The Director of HR advised that the University Executive Team had agreed the following changes: removing desirable criteria from person specifications, providing the interview questions on request and changing the rhetoric around part time working, ensure all candidates are asked questions about inclusivity as relevant to their role and instructing that all interview panels are intersectional and no panel has a lack of diversity.

Pay Gaps

- 23.109 The Director of HR was advised that the gender pay gap had been published as part of the statutory requirement. Since 2020, the institution monitored and reported on ethnicity and disability pay gaps. The Committee noted that the gender pay gap at the university was below sector average. There was a discussion whereby part time employees could be contributing to the gender pay gap and how this is measured against the decreasing pay gap. It was noted that condensing working hours and 4 day working weeks were becoming more popular in the UK.

Flexible Working Policy

- 23.110 The Committee noted that the Flexible working policy had been in place since 2014 and it has been updated to ensure it would be compliant with legislation due to come into effect in 2023. Amendments to the policy included legislation which meant employees could make 2 requests per 12 month period however the University allows employees to make unlimited

flexible working requests in any 12 month period. It was hoped the amendments would help with pay gap.

SU Update

- 23.111 The Committee took the paper as read. The paper gave a brief overview of discussion at the Students' Union Equality Diversity and Inclusion Committee which detailed campaigns for the next year. The Students' Union Vice President: Student Involvement's role had changed from Vice President: Student Involvement VPSI to in Vice President: Student Belonging. There had been an EDI workshop at a recent staff day which was a success and reviewed how different departments could work together. There would be Union Black Training for SU Leaders. The Students Union had reviewed and revised recruitment procedures to make applying for vacancies more accessible.
- 23.112 There would be a new standing agenda item named: the 'Equality Impact of Decisions Made' to ensure that no decisions made would negatively impact groups of students and to discuss the positive impacts. There had also been accessible seating installed in the lounge and student feedback positive.
- 23.113 The Students' Union HR & Development Manager advised that there will be focus on some of the team who had undertaken team training as Mental Health First Aiders. This had not promoted enough and a part of the summer would be spent making those people visible and accessible.

Date of next meeting

- 23.71 The date of the next meeting was 5th October 2023.