



EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION COMMITTEE

Open Minutes

Of the meeting held on Monday, 11 March 2024 at G5.05, High Wycombe Campus and MS Teams.

Present:

- Damien Page, (Deputy Vice Chancellor, Chair)
- Charlotte Stewart (Inclusion, Diversity and Disability Manager [Deputy Chair])
- Paulette Morris (PSE Representative)
- Jess Bradbury (Students' Union Vice President: Achievement & Belonging)
- Simon Lee-Price (UCU Representative)
- Rachael Cornwall (Director of HR)
- Zahara Chowdhury (HR BP – 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)
- Yetunde Dairo (Deputy Head of School - Health & Social Care Professions)
- Ciara Walsh, Committee Officer

In attendance

- Elif Ozberk (Data Analyst, Strategic Planning and Change)

Apologies:

- Carlo Lusuardi (Senior Lecturer)
- Imam Haseeb Jahangir (Inter-Faith Chaplain)
- Paul Morgan, (Pro Vice Chancellor, (Education))

Welcome/Apologies for Absence

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

- Carlo Lusuardi (Senior Lecturer)
- Imam Haseeb Jahangir (Inter-Faith Chaplain)
- Paul Morgan, (Pro Vice Chancellor, (Education))

Declarations of conflicts of interest

24.02 There were no conflicts of interest to declare.

Minutes of the previous meeting

Buckinghamshire New University

24.03 The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

Status of actions / Matters Arising

24.04 The Committee noted the status of actions.

Chair's Action

24.05 There were no Chair's Actions to note.

Promotions Panel: Update

24.06 The promotions panel was forthcoming and the deadline for applications was the end of April. There would be a dual process this year as there was a transition into new academic pathways. The Chair advised the panel was smaller and there was more diversity and inclusion. The panel would be held at the end of June.

Everyday Inclusion

24.07 The HR BP – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion advised this item had come from the hidden load of being a minoritised community certain colleagues and students experience and it was not tangible. The Chair and HR BP – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion wanted to lead an everyday inclusion campaign to try to amplify those experiences.

24.08 The Chair advised the Committee that they wanted to ensure the campus was inclusive and wanted to know about everyday problems colleagues and students experienced. The Chair noted the canteen did not have halal stickers.

24.09 The Committee agreed that the small changes made significant impact on everyday life and there needed to be an option to report anonymously. An approach called 'Report and Support' was used in the Directorate for Student Success where a link was clicked and input concerns, ways forward and solutions. This was anonymous.

24.10 The Committee was assured that whilst the reporting was anonymous, the identity of reporters could be found. Furthermore, if concerning reports had been made that required investigation they would be given due diligence.

24.11 The Director of Vice-Chancellor, Communications and Civic Engagement expressed their support for the campaign and suggested there be short pieces to camera for the audience to understand.

24.12 The Committee was in favour of the campaign and noted a report would be brought back in due course.

Funding for Events and the Interfaith Chaplaincy

24.13 The HR BP – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion advised the Committee the Chaplaincy needed a budget to fund events and awareness days noting these celebrations should include food and drink. They were advised that a budget for the Chaplaincy had been approved in October and it still had funds left. There were discussions with the Interim Director for Student Success to increase the budget in the business planning round.

24.14 The Committee considered how to celebrate and which activities were going to be recognised centrally and individually. It was suggested that individuals should be asked to share direct experience to give personal experience as conducting research seemed impersonal. This work needed responsibility and ownership. The Committee agreed there needed to be a centrally agreed strategy.

- 24.15 It agreed there should be one calendar and authenticity pieces to amplify voices with 8-10 events chosen to mark collectively. The events chosen should be a collective responsibility.

Gender Pay Gap Report

- 24.16 The HR Business Partner (EDI) presented the paper which summarised the University's gender, ethnicity and disability pay gaps for 2023. The formal report would be published in April 2024.
- 24.17 The Committee recommended the report to Council for approval.

Access and Participation Plan 2029/30 & REC Award

- 24.18 The HR BP – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion advised the University needed to submit its Access & Participation Plan (APP) in October 2024. The 5 year plan which outlined how the University was going to serve and make an impact on the outcomes and access and participation of our marginalised students and underrepresented student groups outlined by Office for Students risk registers.
- 24.19 There had been discussions regarding how the various levels of the University had a responsibility to contribute to the access and participation plans. The Committee was requested to consider how it can actively support the APP intervention strategy. The Committee noted the University's progress with the APP and that it was at the 'Objectives' stage which queried its specific objectives the APP will achieve and where its focus was.
- 24.20 Colleagues were asked to collaborate and explore interventions. They were requested to consider which policies would continue, adapt and introduce to close the gaps to increase access and participation to support attainment and awarding of students. The APP was a collaborative effort for academic and professional service employees.
- 24.21 The Strategic Planning and Change team had:
- Examined all the University's internal data,
 - Reviewed all dashboards provided externally by the OfS, looked into equivalences of all risks identified by OfS within the University
 - Examined the University's internal and external data regarding the Equality of Opportunity Risks defined by OfS
 - Identified areas that posed a risk to the University in terms of Equality of Opportunity
- 24.22 The Committee noted the objectives and evidence for selecting those objectives. The Committee members were requested to consider how they could support APP and what strategies or projects they were involved in that could reduce inequality and increase access and participation.
- 24.23 It was suggested that it should consider the services the University offers and review the student population to consider what services are needed and how to use them efficiently. The Interim Director for Student Success advised there were plans to introduce bursaries for international students and apprenticeship students. The Director, Vice-Chancellor, Communications and Civic Engagement advised the University should consider marketing and include stories from the student population and it was important to be mindful of language used and to be careful to avoid phrases that could cause offence.
- 24.24 The APP was linked to REC as the data analysis mirrored the APP. The data would strengthen the REC application due to the granular analysis that had been done. The APP

and REC looked at marginalised communities and increasing equity and awarding at the University.

Professor Update: Profile

24.25 The Chair advised the professors had been appointed and were due to begin imminently. They would be line managed by Heads of School but would retain a dotted line to the Deputy Vice Chancellor.

Students Union Update

24.26 The Committee noted the SU's EDI Committee had been put into abeyance as EDI was embedded across Union activities and day-to-day operations as standard best practice. They had proposed the abeyance to the Union's Governance Committee where it was approved. The Committee would be re-instated if necessary.

24.27 The Vice President of Achievement and Belonging was organising an Eid celebration and a pride event to be held on 1 June. On 8 March, the Union celebrated International Women's Day and attended the Women in Business and Law Conference. The Committee noted the participation data. The EDI initiatives were showing a positive impact. The Union had recently qualified for Disability Confident – Committed Employer status and signed 'The Mental Health at Work Commitment'.

Date of next meeting

24.28 The date of the next meeting was 10 June 2024.