

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND
INCLUSION STAFF FORUM HELD ON TUESDAY 12 MAY 2021 AT
1400 VIA TEAMS**

M12/21 Minutes of Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 February 2021 were accepted as a correct record.

M13/21 Matters Arising from the meeting held on 25 February 2020

13.1 UUK Report on Racial Discrimination in HE

Completed. Reported on a recent meeting with unions to discuss how to take sexual harassment forward. A Working Group covering staff and students has been established to review our current approach and the operation of the policy. Additional training is also being provided to support staff identified as champions. Raised a query about racial harassment and it was agreed that there was some common ground and learning would be shared.

Continuation Rates from UG/PG

Referred to the minutes circulated from the Student EDI Forum dated 31 March for minute reference M22/22 which related to an update in relation to BAME progression to level seven at UON. Members reported on their presentation regarding the issues for progression at level 6/7 and 7/8 based on home students. Feedback had been invited and would be included in the wider research plan. It was also hoped that funding would be secured for research in recognition of the persistent inequalities to access, experience and success for Black, Asian and minority ethnic students in HE across multiple levels of study. Our own data demonstrates how low the progression rates are to level seven and level eight study. She explained when the data is considered only 5.8% progress to level seven and less than 1% go onto level eight study. Thanked members for the update.

13.2 Workforce Diversity and Inclusion – article in UNIFY

Completed

13.3 EDI Officer

Informed the Forum the post of EDI Officer had been added to the HR budget for 2021/22 and due to the recent IT outage budget approval had been delayed. Once the budgets were approved, she would give a further update to the Forum.

M14/21 Women in Research Workshop

Reported that this paper had been circulated through various forums, discussions had

been positive feedback as way forwards were identified. It was noted that a lot of support structures are currently in place and HR are already listening to staff reasons for reducing their contracts. Confirmed that several issues have been incorporated in the rolling action plan, recognising there was more work to be done in respect of the family friendly policies. Highlighted a national network 'WHEN' (Women in HE Network) which foster the career and leadership development of women. The intention is to establish links with this network and to learn what other universities are doing to progress women in their careers.

Confirmed progress related to training for managers. In addition, work was ongoing with members establishing a package specific for EDI and research.

M15/21 Staff Equality Rolling Action Plan 2020-2025

Workstreams Update

15.1 Governance and Accountability

As apologies had been received a brief update would be requested for circulated following the meeting.

15.2 Workforce Development

Reported that all staff development units (HR SD, L&T, Research Development, and Learn Tech) were on track to progress the actions in the plan related to audit of SD portfolios in relation to EDI. Several actions related to workforce development had been identified in other workstreams, and these are being considered in context of clarifying and possibly expanding the current plan. The members of the workstream agreed a new, more joined up range of actions would come from this consolidation of streams into project plans, and that the workstream would be able to present the revised and expanded plan at the next EDIF meeting. In particular the work and impact of the DELTA group needed to be captured as well as a number of culture change initiatives not directly related to the training portfolio.

15.3 Workforce Diversity and Inclusions

Confirmed that a lot of activity is happening in term of data reviews and reporting – See 18.1 below. A calendar is being completed for data review and will be shared. The intention is to include intersectionality. HR were also focusing on work to support the disability confidence award/statement which required more data to be analysed and benchmarked across the sector. Work has also focused Gender Pay.

15.4 Staff Engagement

Informed the Forum and the group had met to look at enhancing engagement. Action has been taken in relation to encouraging staff to update disclosure information. The EDI priorities had been relaunched through Unify. A proposal was made for pop up events in each of the areas represented across the University and for members to champion the actions of the workstream. An event brief would be produced and circulated once agreed. Suggested that these could be part of upcoming

faculty/department away days, some of which may be held on site. Agreed to highlight this to senior management for support.

Asked via the chat pane what do you anticipate the input, if any, of those members who represent union rather than Faculties/Professional Services? Do you anticipate us having input in all away days as he was happy to be involved? Replied that it would be good if unions took the same messages back to their members re the purpose and work of this Group.

Also via the chat pane it was said it would be really useful in SAS to raise awareness where there perceived a lack of this in general towards EDI. A summary of what the group had done over the last 12 months was requested and it was noted there is a report that can also help which has just been completed.

Requested that all Workstream Leads update their specific area of the Action Plan, so we can capture all the work being completed

M16/21 Gender Pay Gap Working Group

Reported that a small sub group of members had met to look at the data in relation to the gender pay gap and to identify what needed to be progressed. The Gender Pay gap continues to decrease and the data shows equal pay.

A range of questions and observations were made:

- still a significant number of females in lower graded roles
- look at perception and use of terminology and language.
- questioned what happens at grade 10 where there is a drop off in female progression - what is the reason behind this?
- women in research and the data behind this - do they have more responsibility and how does fractional hours impact on the data and if FT/PT role puts people off from applying
- shared parental leave and why is the take up so low and what do we need to do to address this issue,
- gender split between AP and Professors' roles
- level of education for staff, is this linked to progression
- questioned ALs and how many become permanent and the gender split.

Actions in relation to Gender Pay are included on the Gender Pay Gap Report.

Commented that with regard to shared parental leave – noted there was lack of knowledge what the policy is and assume this is paid at the cap and as a result thought staff wouldn't take up the initiative as the cap is so low. It was also noted he personally had never been asked if he wanted to take parental leave. Clarified that the pay was linked to the sharing of maternity pay. The legislation was brought in about 5 years ago and allows a sharing of leave with partners and pay equates to approx. £150 per week.

members experience similar issues when he applied for parental leave. Noted maybe there should be a standard template informing staff of their options and agreed to take this forward.

Members support colleagues comments the discussions were about how the University can be supportive and to highlight the options available for staff. Suggested the information could be shared at the pop-up events.

Asked via the chat pane if it was possible to see 'ethnicity' pay gap and grade data, looking at some of the indicators highlighted by the update. Confirmed this was being analysed.

M17/16 Staff Networks

Update on Staff Networks

17.1 LGBT+

Reported the network had been focussing on linking with other departments such as Changemaker and the SU to raise awareness. Preparations are underway for Pride

events. Met with all the network leads to share and support – the networks were also being highlighted during the staff induction process which has resulted in increased membership across the networks. The leads are discussing a cross network event.

17.2 *Disability*

Pleased to inform the Forum the network has now been established. Most of activity had focussed on getting to know each other and a new co-chair has been appointed. Focus now on raising awareness across the institution.

Monthly newsletter will be established and look at a theme each month to provide information. The networks are also keen to support taking the disability confidence statement forward to level 3. This requires an external audit for disability, but he was aware of conversations needed prior to progressing.

Suggested working with the leads in terms of accessibility and suggested keeping the forum updated as the members of the Digital Steering Group are acting as contacts for the university to progress this.

Commented on the work in relation to Access Able and asked if members could talk to the network about this initiative. This was welcomed.

17.3 *GEM*

The network was looking at research opportunities and issues which relate to people of colour in HE and also with the use of social media aimed to keep staff up to date on events being organised, engaging the target audience, to encourage involvement and to have events which help promote people of colour. Noted the JADE event which has taken place and mentoring scheme also. A planned day of activism was scheduled for 25 May.

A written update was provided which related to the following:

JADE CONVERSATIONS – March 17

GEM presented the first staging of JADE Conversations (Justice, Anti-Racism against Discrimination and the fight for its Elimination) which is a series of talks on current issues in race equality in the Higher Education sector and the wider community. This was held on March 17 to observe International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. The speaker was a Lecturer of Race, Ethnicity, and Health at the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine in the Usher Institute, University of Edinburgh. Notably, the event was supported by local stakeholder organisations including the Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust and the *Northampton Borough Council* who advertised the event on their social platforms. Up to 70 participants joined the online event at the peak, even though those who registered on the day were not able to log in due to the IT outage.

JEWELS – Career MasterClass – May 20

Job-seeker support for Ethnic-majority youth Wellbeing, Employability and Livelihoods for Success (JEWELS)

JEWELS is a project created by GEM to provide targeted mentorship and empowerment workshops for ethnic majority youths, with the intent to tackle barriers to employment, education or training emanating from experiences of racial inequality and structural discrimination. In the first phase of the JEWELS project, GEM has partnered with the Employability and Enterprise department to present a Career Master Workshop to students of colour from Levels 6 to 7.

The 90-minute Master Class online session that will be held on May 20, will be conducted by one of the UK's leading career coach Bukola Adisa. She is the Founder/CEO of Career MasterClass, and has held senior roles at some of the world's largest financial services organisations such as Barclays, HSBC, RBS, JP Morgan and Deloitte.

DAY OF ACTIVISM – May 25

A Day of Activism is being staged on May 25 by GEM in acknowledgement of how the painful death of George Floyd has contributed to the heightened awareness of race equality in HEI and the wider society. The focus of the Day of Activism will be on employing digital and broadcast media to spotlight the Anti-Racism agenda, and the need for continued action to redress systemic and structural racism. GEM has partnered with Northampton's leading community radio station Inspiration FM, to showcase the Day of Activism from 9:00 to 12 noon on air. This will be streamed live on social media platforms of Facebook, Instagram and You Tube. Stuart Lawrence – Graduate of Graphic Communication at University of Northampton will be the featured guest for the Day of Activism. He will be interviewed on Inspiration FM by Mark Dean on the morning programme on May 25 at 10 am. Stuart will also discuss his recently published book 'Silence is Not an Option'. Members of the GEM network will also participate in the Day of Activism broadcast on May 25 and also on NLIVE radio.

17.4 *Women's*

Reported that the network had a successful last meeting discussing the gender pay gap and actions coming from the report. The had also liaised with, Security staff, about safety and security on campus and what is in place for all staff and particularly for women, picking up on social media campaigns outside of UON and it was hoped to have more on this over the summer and autumn terms.

They were also looking to have a network lead drop in event and to create a Q&A session to gain maximum impact and there will be more on this in due course. Consideration will also be given to what events the network will be supporting as there are so many, but one focus will be to support the lead up to Menopause Day in October. Thanked the network for the great work in relation to the menopause initiative and raising the awareness across the institution.

Also said the network had discussed the COVID/wellbeing survey and conversations were positive. The network were pleased that issues raised had been incorporated into the new ways of working initiative.

Thanked the network leads for their updates and the work being progressed.

M18/21 EDI Data

18.1 Recruitment

This had been highlighted as an area for a deep dive and the group noted data and the report highlighting issues and outcome of good practice. The aim of the data analyse was to identify issues and improve on outcomes. The current information was being further analysed and split between Faculty/Professional Services, FT/PT, for age and sexual orientation.

The plan going forward is for two members of the work stream to help analyse the data. HR are currently looking at anonymous applications and had introduced further training, including unconscious bias training.

Asked if the menopause had been factored into the data. Confirmed this isn't something we ask but could look at that age group and to feed this into the WG. Said a lot of work has been done and there is an accreditation from Henpecked which she thought would be something that could help with the work of the WG. Agreed to pick this up with colleagues and progress.

Asked in terms of disability there was a lot already being done reasonably well but as part of the positive action is to learn from our strengths, look at any underperforming things and to look at any actions we have done in the past. Agreed this was a good way forward

Said via the chat pane the topic of disclosure is systemic and is a complex issue with a fear of disclosing a disability. It was agreed this work should continue and comments were made suggesting UON did feel a safe place to make a disclosure.

Also said via the chat pane members would be interested in getting more people who participate in panels (not just chairs of recruitment panels/managers) to participate in our Recruitment Fair Practice training and Interview Skills as we do have scenarios /discussions/specific training around bias in recruitment.

Asked what the group might want to look at in the next meeting and agreed to look at the pay gap report.

M19/21 Update from Student Equality Diversity and Inclusion Forum– minutes of meetings

The minutes of the Student Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Forum had been circulated to the Forum for information.

Gave an update in terms of SD and informed the Forum he had a very good response to the EDI confronting gender bias and LGBT awareness sessions and would be seeking further dates.

Gave an update on DELTA (decolonising project) which she was working on and she said there wasn't a lot of change since the last meeting but there had been a number of SD events in CAN DO and plans were in place to create additional sessions.

Said DELTA is doing lots of good work, but attendance at the events was poor. Asked how we can attract people outside of DELTA, so that sessions are not preaching to the converted. Also commented on the lack of engagement from senior staff with the events. Suggested to link with the engagement group to see if there is additional coverage for this.

Members of the group raised issues with the timing and current workloads.

Commented on how events were communicated as the sessions were perceived to be for academics and not relevant for Professional Services. Agreed and could see why a session on decolonising curriculum would not seem relevant to many. Confirmed that decolonising is about broader issues across the environment and was relevant to all staff. NC asked how this could be addressed? Said there is a time element on what staff can commit to especially on smaller teams. Suggested that members organise a dedicated session for Prof Services.

M20/21 Any Other Business

Nothing further to discuss.

M21/21 Future Meeting Dates

2021/2022 dates to be confirmed in due course