

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 20 MARCH 2024 AT 2PM IN ROOM 214, REGENT STREET

PRESENT:	Professor D Anand (Co-Chair) C Benyon S Bunbury Professor P Catterall Professor V Gillies M Linfoot	P Mashumba S Razzaq Dr C Smith J Smith Dr N Weingarten
IN ATTENDANCE:	D Caldron M Chan (Secretary) M Jula J Peck (Minutes 23.39-23.41)	A Ward Z Williams (Minute 23.43) Dr L Wright
APOLOGIES:	T Bangia D de Silva Dr D Husbands (Co-Chair) Dr K Juddoo C Lloyd	T Mills C Molloy Dr C Robertson R Shah R Tully

23.39. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 23.39.1. **Welcome:** The Co-Chair welcomed members and attendees to the meeting.
- 23.39.2. Members welcomed Danielle Caldron, Professional Services (PS) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Lead, and Maria Jula, Co-Chair of Q+, as observers of the meeting.
- 23.39.3. Members welcomed John Peck, Deputy Registrar (Student Administration) and Dr Lucy Wright, Business Intelligence and Institutional Research Manager (BIIRM) to join the discussion of the Religion, Belief and Study Policy and the draft Access and Participation Plan (APP) respectively.
- 23.39.4. Members noted that Andita Ward, University of Westminster Students' Union (UWSU) Interim Director of Membership Services/Advice and Wellbeing Manager attended on behalf of Rosa Tully.
- 23.39.5. **Apologies:** Apologies and absences were noted as above.
- 23.39.6. **Declaration of Interest:** The Co-Chair confirmed that there were no declarations of interest.
- 23.39.7. **AOB and starred items:** Members did not request to add any items to the agenda or to discuss the starred items.

23.40. CO-CHAIR'S REPORT

- 23.40.1. Members heard the following updates from the Co-Chair on the recent activities and progress made since the last meeting:
- Well-attended events organised by the Colleague Networks and Westminster Café series.
 - The University Executive Board (UEB) and the Court of Governors approved the refreshed EDI Policy.
 - The EDI Annual Report format will be enhanced in future to balance brevity and contents.

- A productive session with the Court of Governors on enhancing international students' experience and the measurement of belongingness among international students.
- Lesson learnt from the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) EDI Expert Advisory Group of which the Co-Chair is a member.

23.41. RELIGION, BELIEF AND STUDY POLICY

- 23.41.1. John Peck, Deputy Registrar (Student Administration) briefed members on the refreshed Religion, Belief and Study Policy (Document EDI 240320A), which is applicable to students only.
- 23.41.2. The Deputy Registrar outlined some potential developments of the Policy for members' feedback, including prayer spaces, references to doctoral students, timetabling for religious observance, and a combined policy for colleagues and students.
- 23.41.3. A member pointed out that the refreshed Absence Policy, which is currently under review, will incorporate a section addressing religious observance. Members acknowledged the current absence of a university-wide policy on religious observance.
- 23.41.4. A member queried the feasibility of academic colleagues taking time off during teaching days for religious observance purposes.
- 23.41.5. Another member stressed the alignment of the Absence Policy with the Religion, Belief and Study Policy, as the latter references the Equality Act 2010.
- 23.41.6. Members welcomed plans for a unified policy covering general observances for both students and colleagues. The Deputy Registrar agreed to consult the Director of People, Culture and Wellbeing on this matter.
- 23.41.7. **AGREED** Refreshed Religion, Belief and Study Policy to be submitted to the Teaching Committee.
- 23.41.7.1. ACTION Deputy Registrar** to share a version of the refreshed Policy without any track changes to members.

23.42. CONSULTATION ON THE ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION PLAN

- 23.42.1. Lucy Wright, BIIRM gave an overview on the draft APP (Document EDI 240320B), focusing on data for the at-risk student groups and identifying gaps throughout the student life cycle for undergraduate home students.
- 23.42.2. The BIIRM highlighted the development of a risk register within the APP and that the APP will inform the next Teaching Excellence Framework exercise.
- 23.42.3. During the discussion of the draft APP and the related data, members noted the following:
- The BIIRM will organise dashboard sessions for data correlation, e.g. EDI data in the continuous improvement report.
 - At-risk student group data and the identified gaps have to share more widely across Schools and PS departments to drive more targeted interventions.
 - The BIIRM will engage relevant University stakeholders to make strategic and operational changes addressing the gaps.
 - The EDI Open Forum in June will address the siloed approaches to EDI at School level.
 - Student consultation will be held this summer.
 - The learning analytic dashboard is not considered user friendly.
 - Additional data groups, e.g., student parents, Jewish students, carers and care-leavers, will be included in the next round of data collection.
 - The APP submission deadline to the Office of Students is the end of July 2024.

- 23.42.4. The Co-Chair thanked the BIIRM for sharing insights on the draft document and invited her to suggest topics for the upcoming EDI Open Forum to address the identified gaps.
- 23.42.5. The Co-Chair mentioned that the work of the Committee helps to address some of the identified gaps. He also briefed members on some planned EDI initiatives next year.
- 23.42.5.1. **ACTION Members** to comment directly on the live document of the draft APP on how to address the gaps and to review the methodology set out in the 'Assessment and Performance' section.
- 23.42.5.2. **ACTION Secretary** to share the live document link and the slides presented at the meeting to members.

23.43. EDI COMMUNICATION UPDATES

- 23.43.1. Zoe Williams, Communication Officer, updated members on the following:
- Colleague Network intranet pages are live.
 - The Westminster Café series is prioritised for the Communication team due to resource constraints.
 - Colleague Network event promotion could leverage the social media managed by the EDI Officer.
 - Event dates are published in the All Staff Calendar to avoid scheduling conflicts.
 - Monthly catch-up with the UWSU and the Social Media team on EDI communication.
- 23.43.1.1. **ACTION Communication Officer** to share the Colleague Network intranet pages links with members.
- 23.43.2. The Communication Officer suggested the following actions to meet the growing demand of EDI promotion:
- Review the internal EDI communication approach.
 - Share event information with the Communication team via the EDI Officer.
 - Reach out to EDI Leads for promotional stories.
 - Address increasing workload for EDI communication.
 - Feature key events in the communications to prevent last-minute cancellations after Westminster Weekly publication.
 - Utilise the general EDI social media platform as a one-to-go link for all EDI promotion.
- 23.43.3. Noting the heavy workload of the Communication Officer, members highlighted the need for a sustainable approach to meet the increasing demand for EDI promotion.
- 23.43.4. A member put forward the idea of establishing a dedicated Conference Office to streamline event organisation and promotion, drawing reference from practices at other universities.
- 23.43.5. Members agreed to centralise Colleague Networks promotion on a single social media platform for efficiency.
- 23.43.5.1. **ACTION EDI Officer** to coordinate with Colleague Networks on common social media handles for all networks together.
- 23.43.6. The Co-Chair and members thanked the Communication Officer, the wider team and the external teams for their efforts in promoting EDI across the University.

23.44. MID-TERM REVIEW OF EDI STRATEGY: WHAT IMPACT?

- 23.44.1. The Co-Chair invited members to share their views on how to enhance the impact of the EDI Strategy (Document EDI 240320C), which will inform the next annual EDI action plan and will be shared with the UEB.

- 23.44.2. Members identified **lack of accountability** as the primary issue with the Strategy, highlighting the uncertainty regarding EDI actions within offices and the accountability gaps in target setting and evaluation, especially at the middle management level. This was seen as leading to inconsistency across the University as well as gap between strategy/policy and actual experience of work in some parts.
- 23.44.3. In addition to the concern on accountability, members also noted the following:
- **The Strategy is making impact:** Integration of EDI into major University processes and plans, appointment of EDI Leads, showcasing EDI through various events, good progress in curriculum decolonisation and inclusion of diversity in assessments in a School.
 - **Challenges ahead:** Cultural change to fully embed EDI in daily work, clearer goals and stronger targets, colleagues' engagement, internal processes review, unawareness of the Strategy among the University community, staffing challenges in supporting EDI.
 - **What could be done more:** Develop a robust EDI action plan, incorporate EDI in the physical environment, integrate EDI into the continuous improvement process, maintain regular regulatory contact, conduct PS EDI survey, encourage proactive EDI responsibility among PS colleagues, unify university policies, enhance presentation of the document.
- 23.44.4. The Co-Chair suggested including EDI in the next Executive and Operational Leadership Forum agenda, inviting School and Department heads to discuss their EDI efforts.
- 23.44.5. The Co-Chair suggested inviting the Heads of School and senior leaders to share their EDI plans with the Committee at a meeting in the next academic year.
- 23.44.6. Members heard about the ongoing work in the UEB on sustainability and inclusion.

23.45. UPDATES ON MEMBERS' EDI ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE THE COMMITTEE

- 23.45.1. Members' EDI activities outside the Committee were covered in the discussion of other agenda items.

23.46. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

- 23.46.1. **AGREED** Members confirmed the minutes of the meeting of 31 January 2024 (Document EDI 240320D) as an accurate record.
- 23.46.2. Members noted a summary of progress in actions from previous meetings (Document EDI 240320E) and confirmed the completed actions.
- 23.46.3. The Director of Global Recruitment, Admissions, Marketing and Communications (GRAMC) informed members that the on-campus digital screen calendar covers relevant EDI events except those for the Westminster Café and the Westminster Festival.
- 23.46.3.1. **ACTION Co-Chair and EDI Officer** to provide relevant EDI event information to the Director of GRAMC after the July meeting for the 2024/25 annual promotion calendar.

23.47. SCHEDULE OF BUSINESS

- 23.47.1. Members noted the updated schedule of business 2023/24 (Document EDI 240320F).

23.48. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

29 May 2024
24 July 2024
9 October 2024
4 December 2024

5 February 2025
19 March 2025
4 June 2025
23 July 2025

All meetings take place between 2.00pm and 5.00pm and are held in person.

23.49. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

23.49.1. Members did not raise any other matters for discussion.