Minutes of the Equality & Diversity Committee held on Thursday 26th February 2015
in the Principal's Meeting Room

Present: Mrs Christine Goodyear (Chair),
Mr Majid Hawa
Ms Sidonie Bertrand Sheldon, SU Vice President Welfare & Diversity

In attendance: Mr Simon Higman, Registrar and Secretary
Mrs Cheryl Newsome (Director of HR),
Professor Katie Normington (Vice Principal Staffing)
Mrs Susan Lee,(Equal Opportunities Adviser)
Mrs Hilary Baker (Governance Assistant)

1. APOLOGIES
There were no apologies. 15/01

2. MEMBERSHIP & TERMS OF REFERENCE
NOTED that the Co-President Welfare & Diversity had been added to the membership of the meeting. 15/02

APPROVED the revised membership and terms of reference. 15/03

3. MINUTES
The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 14th October 2014 (M14/52-14/66). 15/04

4. MATTERS ARISING
There were no matters arising. 15/05

5. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY STEERING GROUP

RECEIVED the minutes of the meetings of Equality & Diversity Steering Group held on 30th September 2014 and 12th January 2015. 15/06

NOTED that the changes to the disabled student allowance had been delayed. College would need to bear some of these costs but the changes would only effect a very small number of students. Some universities had introduced Fitness to Study guidelines for prospective students. However, Support & Advisory Services were able to identify most students who needed extra support and put appropriate support packages in place. The College would continue to monitor whether this type of policy would be helpful. 15/07

NOTED that work on the Athena Swan and Gender Equality Mark (GEM) would be combined so that the work was co-ordinated in one place rather than different parts of the College. The Vice Principal (Staffing) would present a paper to College Executive about this. Noted that the Strategic Development Unit would collate the data required on annual basis. The data collection and bench marking against other institution could be problematic as the requirements tended to change slightly each year and it was hard to identify which institutions to benchmark against. 15/08
6. **EQUALITY & DIVERSITY ACTION PLAN**

RECEIVED an update on the progress against the Equality & Diversity Action plan.

**Student Objectives**

NOTED that good progress had been made and the Committee noted specific progress on some of the objectives.

*Objective 1 Promote diversity in the student body.*

NOTED that most of this objective had been achieved.

*Objective 2 – Improved percentage of student disclosure of equality data.*

NOTED that this was an ongoing project with IT and Student Life team looking at what data was required and how it could be collected at sign up. It was unlikely that the new system would be in place for 2015/16 sign up.

NOTED the data was collected at different points e.g. through UCAS and that the amount of information required by HESA had increased. It was also important that students should be encouraged to keep their records up to date. Noted that international students were not used to being asked for equality monitoring data.

ACTION an update on progress would be provided to the committee before the next meeting.

*Objective 3 Provide timely and regular management information, such as student, attainment by protected characteristics and underrepresented groups’ participation in different discipline or subject areas e.g. STEMM, to key decision makers and develop action plans as appropriate.*

NOTED that there was already an analysis of groups with protected characteristics as part of the work to review the curriculum. Strategic Development Unit were working on a reporting policy which was due to be completed by March. There was a need to move beyond looking at the data and put initiatives in place.

ACTION Reporting Policy to be circulated to Committee.

*Objective 4 Embed equality and diversity monitoring in all aspects of student engagement not just those linked to learning and teaching.*

NOTED that progress on this was linked to objective 2. Work was on going.

*Objective 6 Improved take up of services from those with mental health conditions and/or learning impairments*
NOTED that a training module on Moodle was being developed to provide guidance to staff on supporting students on the autistic spectrum and with other mental health conditions.

NOTED that an award for academic staff supporting disabled students had been developed by Support & Advisory Services. The first presentation had taken place in June 2014. Nominations had come from staff and students.

Objective 8 Embed equality impact assessment in curriculum development.

NOTED that working was ongoing to develop a set of guidelines for departments to ensure that protected characteristics were taken into account during programme development.

STAFF OBJECTIVES

The Committee noted progress on all the objectives and more detailed progress was noted on the following objectives.

Objective 1: Promoting equality and diversity in the College’s council, senior leaders and management team.

NOTED that equality & diversity of the College Council now had to be reported to annually to HEFCE.

NOTED that Equality and Diversity training was not currently included in induction training for new Council members. The Secretariat would be working with HR to develop this.

NOTED that Equality & Diversity training was being undertaken throughout the College and that Council Members should also receive training.

ACTION Secretariat to follow up Equality & Diversity training for Council members.

NOTED that job descriptions for roles such as Director of Graduate Studies and Director of Research were being reviewed to monitor for potential bias that could discourage under-represented groups to apply.

Objective 2: Improved percentage of staff disclosure of equality data.

NOTED that work was ongoing to improve the accessibility of Myview.

Objective 4: To increase the representation of Black, Asian, Ethnic Minority Staff particularly at senior academic and professional service level.

NOTED that work to support the Race Equality network was ongoing and that the next meeting would be held the following week. Organisational Development would be ensuring that the developmental needs of BME staff were taken into account with initiatives including the Coaching and Mentoring scheme.

NOTED that it was planned to develop a scheme similar to that developed for women. 14 BME women had taken part in this group. The Committee was pleased to hear that out of the staff that taken part in this scheme three women had received promotion to Chair, one had been made a Reader and two were now Heads of Department.
Objective 6: Promote an inclusive environment where LGBT staff are able to be open about their status which will help improve representation of staff who declare their LBGT status.

NOTED that the LGBT network group was going well.  

NOTED that a clear policy and guidance to support “coming out” staff was being developed.  

Objective 7: Ongoing monitoring and progress of action plan from Equal Pay Audit 2012 and to conduct second Equal Pay Audit in 2014.

NOTED that the Equal Pay Audit had been completed and the report would be considered at College Executive. This would be included in the agenda for the next meeting of this Committee.

Objective 8: Remove or minimise the disadvantages experienced by staff due to their protected characteristics in relation to the way they are managed.

NOTED that the Staff Engagement Survey had been completed in November 2014. Scores for the equality sections had been high. The report would be disseminated and action plans for individual departments developed. The survey for the Race Equality Charter mark had been run at a similar time.

7. RACE EQUALITY CHARTERMARK

RECEIVED a verbal update on the progress of the Race Equality Charter Mark. NOTED that three sub groups had been convened to look at different areas: staff career progression, student pipeline and curriculum and pedagogy. It was intended that the application would be completed by the end of March in time for submission on 14th April 2015. The result would not be received until mid-June.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Noted that the Co-President Welfare & Diversity would be attending the NUS Liberation Conference.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS

8th June 2015 at 9.30
6th October 2015 at 9.30