

Minutes of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee meeting

29 March 2019 10.00-12.00, Fogg Seminar room 1.02

1. Attendance and Apologies for absence

Attendance:

Anna Pachol - Co-Chair (AP)
Richard Pickersgill – Co-Chair (RWP)
Christoph Engl (CE)
Kristin Hadfield (KH)
Chris Duffy (CD)
Francis Healy (FH)
Marina Resmini (MR)
Peter Heathcote (PHe)
Christian Nielson (CN)
Joanna Szular (JS)
Janelle Jones (JJ)

Apologies:

Fiona Marsh (FM)
Angelika Stollewerk (AS)
Tom Stead (TS)

Catherine Murray - notes (CM)

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

3. Update on surveys

3.1 Flexible working survey

- 3.1.1 Feedback was generally quite positive, particularly for academic staff.
- 3.1.2 There were a significant percentage of people who are not happy, particularly in relation to questions around transparency and fairness. Responses were particularly negative for professional services staff. It was acknowledged that there are some roles where flexible working is not appropriate or feasible, but people reported that they don't feel they were being fairly heard.
- 3.1.3 Feedback from the working group suggests there is a perception, if not a reality, that flexible working depends on rank and favour and that some people who seemingly do the same type of job (student facing) have private arrangements, while other requests for flexible working are refused.
- 3.1.4 With regards to professional services, the recommendation from the working group is to have a panel which comprises of the School Manager (or delegated line manager) and two members of the EDI (the Chair and the Working Group Lead for Flexible Working). RWP has spoken with Sophie Harris, Assistant Director of HR, who has suggested that it might be possible for SBCS to run a pilot. RWP is waiting for Sophie to confirm that the School can go ahead.

Action: Follow up with Sophie Harris with regards to the Flexible Working Pilot Scheme for professional services staff (RWP)

- 3.1.5 Academic staff responses were more positive. Their indifference was around transparency and fairness. It was felt the introduction of the panel will go some way to address that. It was noted that transparency also related to transparency in outcome. The group recommends writing a short report to explain why the panel came to the decision they did.
- 3.1.6 With regards to parental leave, feedback on the whole was very positive. The data shows that staff who had taken parental leave were very positive about the impact on their career and those that haven't, particularly men, think it would be disastrous. An initial solution is to get some case studies. CD plans to interview two male staff members who have taken parental leave. Case studies can then be used in the application (including to get quotes) and/or shared with academic staff to challenge misconceptions. CD plans to put them on the SBCS Parents web pages.
- 3.1.7 Survey showed that line managers are really supportive but their competence in arranging parental leave varies considerably. CD will work with Sunita to draft a very plain English checklist. Introducing a panel to deal with applications, and who will have some experience, will also address this issue somewhat.

3.2 New Staff Survey

- 3.2.1 The survey was sent to all of the new staff hired in SBCS in past 24 months (roughly 100 staff members). 62 members of staff took part.
- 3.2.2 Very few respondents indicated that they were aware of any EDI initiatives, but most of them were impacted by them because most reported there was at least one man and one women on their hiring panel. More than a third had a least one BAME staff member on their panel.
- 3.2.3 When asked why they had accepted the job, about 20% indicated they knew a past or current employee. The flexible working policy also led many respondents to take the job. The website, panellists (gender and ethnic make-up) and parental leave were also mentioned as having an impact. No difference was noted by gender or BAME status.
- 3.2.4 Only 12.1% indicated that policies surrounding staff development were very clear. This was particularly true for new male staff.

- 3.2.5 Induction and mentoring were identified as areas to focus on.
- 3.2.6 Most respondents were quite negative about induction and mostly hadn't taken part in any of the activities. Respondents also indicated not being informed about policies such as flexible working, which was one of the reasons given for accepting the job. There were quite a lot of suggestions to improve induction. The Committee felt there were things that could be introduced relatively easily to help improvements, such as creating a checklist, and ensuring things are set up in advance. It was also noted that the teaching induction that Tony Michael used to run was useful but too infrequent (and has since been cancelled). It was suggested that the induction could be recorded and put on Q-Review, or that members of TIGER could meet with new staff (individually or as a group) to provide a teaching induction. Other suggestions included an email for new starters with relevant links and information or a booklet or handbook. It was noted that there was a staff handbook and this could be updated.
- 3.2.7 With regards to mentoring, it was felt that staff in probation should be made aware that although a mentor is appointed for them, they have the opportunity to change the mentor if they identify someone more suitable.
- 3.2.8 The HoS Board was highlighted in the survey. There are plans to put up posters of SBCS Committee members on the wall opposite. These will be digitally produced and will include a brief description of the Committee if there is space. There are also plans to put up images around the School, including some of individuals and one of all staff. CE, RWP and Sam Court have identified some potential spaces, which include the Fogg Foyer. It was suggested that someone update Dave Hone as he uses the lobby for his displays. CD and Guy Hanke asked their students to record podcasts and videos about scientific topics. It was felt some of these could be displayed around the school – possibly on the screen in the Fogg Foyer.

3.3 Future survey

- 3.3.1 The Committee agreed to consider running another new staff survey in October.
- 3.3.2 There will be another survey on flexible working in October.

4. Prizes

- 4.1 As part of the QM Model module, Grand Challenges, students were offered the opportunity to take part in the Telegraph STEM Awards competition. A group of CE's students entered and were delighted to come 2nd in the Healthcare section out of 10,000 applications.

5. PhD Recruitment and Selection Policy

- 5.1 FH, MR and AP met to revise document.
- 5.2 With regards to advertising, they proposed the template should ask people to include details about the research environment and information on training and development opportunities. A diversity statement will also be included in all PhD adverts. Adverts will also be put through an online gender decoder tool. They have suggested that the period for advertising should be around 3 weeks.

ACTION: Update the PhD advert template and circulate it to the EDIC to review (FH)

- 5.3 With regards to the recruitment panel, the Committee agreed it must include three members of academic staff who can be from anywhere in the School (or outside the School if they have the relevant expertise) and that the panel must include at least one male and one female member of staff.

6. Menopause guidelines

- 6.1 The original document was changed, following advice from HR so that it was a guidance document, rather than a policy. AP has since been asked to remove references to SBCS so that the document could be adopted more widely.

ACTION: Remove references to SBCS in Menopause guidelines (AP)

- 6.2 The School has also been contacted to share the document with the Institute of Health Sciences
- 6.3 AP will send an email to all staff promoting the guidelines and will put it on the EDI pages of the website
- 6.4 It was suggested it could be helpful to circulate an e-bulletin to staff, following each meeting to update staff on progress of EDI initiatives
- 6.5 The Committee discussed how to engage more with UG students on EDI issues. It was agreed that this could be done via KH's working group.

7. Update on priorities

- 7.1 With regards to BAME representation at all levels, the School is not currently asking staff to consider having BAME representation for academic staff but it could start keeping a record on who is on interview panels.
 - 7.2 With regards to the workload model, it was felt it would be helpful to re-circulate the list of people who can update SWARM
- ACTION: Circulate contact details for SWARM (CM)**
- 7.3 The Committee was unsure whether a Dignity and Disclosure Officer had been appointed in SBCS.

8. PDRA recruitment & career development working group update (CN)

- 8.1** The uptake of the mentoring scheme was very poor (2 mentors volunteered – 1m, 1 female, and 1 male mentee showing interest). One mentor was matched and one wasn't. The mentee found a mentor outside QMUL.
- 8.2** When post docs were asked what they would find helpful they indicated mentoring. However despite being sent reminders about the scheme, there was a poor uptake.
- 8.3** It was felt there might be more engagement if we link help to careers. It was noted that CAPD offers a number of courses, but it is unclear how well informed post docs are about these courses.

9. AOB

- AP sent a link to the application files and divided responsibility by sections
**ACTION: Read though and update application sections by end of May
(Working Group Leads)**

10. Next meeting – 13th June 2019