**Minutes of the SBCS Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee Meeting**

**4 December 2020, 11.00-13.00, Microsoft Teams**

1. **Attendance and Apologies for absence**

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| *Attendance:* | *Apologies:* |
| Anna Pachol - Co-Chair (AP)Richard Pickersgill – Co-Chair (RWP)Giulia De Falco (GDF)Angelika Stollewerk (AS)Janelle Jones (JJ)Henry Oamen (HO)Petra Ungerer (PU)Elisabetta Versace (EV)Frances Healy (FH)Christina Kousseff (CA)Sian Cooper (SC)Nathan Emery (NE)Isabel Palacios (IP)Christian Nielsen (CN)Marina Resmini (MR)Catherine Murray - *notes* (CM) | Ellie Marshall (EM)Susanne Steck (SS)Daisy Crowfoot (DC) |

* AP welcome everyone to the meeting and noted apologies for absence
1. **Minutes of the previous meeting**
* The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.
1. **Update on actions from the last meeting**

**ACTION**: FH to investigate if dashboard includes destination of leavers. **UPDATE:** EV said the data are there but they are not representative (very small numbers answered) so can’t be used

**ACTION**: RWP asked EV to make a short case for the survey **UPDATE:** RWP and EV to have a quick chat about the survey – action postponed due to lack of time

**ACTION:** Sarah Heskett/CM to keep a record (of School Committee data) going forward. **UPDATE:** RWP/CM to ask committee chairs to do this going forward. Committee members should be asked if they are happy to declare their gender and ethnicity.

**ACTION:** Contact AP if you are interested in joining the GESAT. **UPDATE:** AP joined GESAT

**ACTION**: RWP to discuss with Sheila Gupta and Philippa and feedback their response to the EDIC (module evaluation pilot study proposal) **UPDATE:** RWP to get a small group together to discuss and come up with a definite proposal before discussing with Sheila. RWP to speak to Sheila on 11th December to see if the School would be allowed to do this. AS noted the change can be minor – it can inform students about biases rather than change the form.

**ACTION**: FH will try to adapt the Induction document to be suitable for PhD students. **UPDATE:** Action carried forward.

**ACTION:** Check whether the background of some of the photos can be manipulated **UPDATE:** GDF contacted Ray and he asked for £75 per photo to blur the background. RWP would like to see one before approving them all. GDF to progress.

**ACTION**: FH to propose a new specific action for Action 2.4 with updated start date **UPDATE:** FH to complete next week. AP to follow up with FH next week.

**ACTION:** SS to share the current rota with the Committee UPDATE: on hold –SS on extended leave

1. **News**
	* MR told the Committee about an event being run by the Royal Society of Chemistry about diversifying chemistry (<https://www.rsc.org/events/detail/45634/further-diversifying-chemistry-a-focus-on-race-inequality-rsc-inclusion-and-diversity-forum-2020>). It is open to anyone who is interested. MR hopes to report back at the next meeting.
	* EDI Business cases - the School has a flagship policy for when T&R staff are on shared parental leave and maternity leave. RWP reported that currently the School can’t generate any salary lines, so all the cases that have been put forward have not been supported by SET. RWP hopes it is a minor suspension, rather than a cancellation. RWP will keep on the case.
	* There is a plan for two PhD studentships for BAME applicants to be ring fenced in the S&E faculty. The scheme is currently at the proposal stage. Students will be required to opt in to the scheme. JJ noted that the projects have to be within the EPSRC remit, so although it is a good initiative, an issue is that a lot of potential PhDs don’t necessarily fall into the EPSRC.
2. **Issues raised**
	* Timetabling semester B – AP reported issues with the timetable, in that all synchronous teaching for some departments in SBCS would be delivered between 9am and 2pm. This would mean some staff members teaching for four hours straight and some students sitting in front of a computer for hours without a break. Teaching at 9am is also difficult for those with caring responsibilities. This was not taken into account before the timetable was released to students and the School was not consulted. AP noted this violated a number of policies (including School policies). There have been some recent developments – an email was sent to staff from DoE, Chris Bray, asking them to submit their flexible working requests, which the school will try to accommodate. In light of this, it is not necessary for the Committee to issue a statement on this.

**ACTION: RWP to seek clarification on whether academics will now be required to submit formal flexible working requests**

RWP also noted that academics should be using MyHR to record annual leave and sickness so that there a record, which is not happening consistently.

* + Parental leave at SBCS – there were some issues raised regarding parental leave requests and how they are being dealt with by line managers (being supportive, but not helpful in arranging it). AP reminded managers about this at the SBCS Senior Executive meeting. The central HR team was developing a check list for line managers, but this was stopped/delayed by covid. PU indicated that there is already a check list on the HR webpages, which she found helpful (both for the person wanting to go on leave and the line manager). The issue could be as simple as not being able to find the information.

**ACTION: PU to forward the check list; AP to put the link to the information on the School’s EDI page.**

1. **Updates from working group leads**
	* Undergraduate (EV) – EV circulated the attached report to the Committee.



The report indicated how the group proposes addressing some of the issues raised by students. AP asked if the committee were supportive of the actions and how best to proceed.

**ACTION: EDIC members to review the suggestions in the report and let EV know if they have any comments/objections.**

The next step would be RWP confirming whether the School is prepared or able to match the funding (for the paid internships). RWP noted he needs to be clear what the ask is and also needs to find out the reaction from the University, as formally lots of things are on hold relating to finances. RWP to take it away and think about it.

JJ suggested the Office for Students competition might be relevant for this as they would be willing to fund these kinds of initiatives. The deadline for applications is the 28th – Cate Cowton would be able to provide more information.

AP noted that the School is being asked by EDISG what it is doing to handle bullying and harassment (staff and students). Currently, there is the Report and Support page where students can report anonymously. This may not be widely known amongst students. EV suggested posters advertising this service could help. It is unclear what is happening with the Dignity Officers scheme that was advertised. The way the School handles complaints needs to be formalised and included in the action plan. AP suggested revisiting in the next meeting.

**ACTION: AP to ask DC about dignity officers.**

It was agreed that dates for the UG working groups to complete actions should be moved back by one year, due to changes in working group led and disruptions caused by Covid-19.

* + PDRA (CN/HO) - EM updated the SBCS website with Fellowship opportunities. It would be good to have a more diverse list of opportunities– the Committee were asked to keep sending suggestions to CN if you have any.

CN finally received the PDRA recruitment data, split into grade 4 and 5. CN reported that it was hard to make any correlations because the data was not split further into disciplines (and gender distribution is very different across the school) and the numbers were so small. It was noted that named researchers were not included. AP highlighted gender data for 2018/19 showed the School had achieved gender parity. The focus should now be on maintaining it.

The Committee discussed how to get better uptake of the initiatives, as there had been no progress on the actions. Update on the mentoring scheme and other initiatives/courses offered by the CAPD was poor, despite being things that were asked for. One barrier highlighted was time – some post docs didn’t have time to do anything other than the projects they were hired on. JJ suggested a more structured approach might be helpful, thinking about professional training at the point of hiring your post doc and allowing space in the project they are hired on. It was also suggested that the PI might be able to mentor them on some of these issues. To revisit at a future meeting.

* + Governance (RWP) – AP will schedule a separate meeting with the working group to go through the actions and update.

**ACTION: Schedule a meeting for the Governance Working Group to go through actions and update (CM/AP)**

* + Work life balance (NE) – NE would like to recruit more people for the working group. There was one remaining action from before to draft a statement about contacting people on maternity leave.

**ACTION: NE to discuss with AP offline how best to progress.**

NE noted that some actions require funding (support for shared parental leave, carers scheme). He thought it would be useful to have a clearer picture of the uptake of these schemes to see if there is a need for them. RWP noted there was no uptake for the carers (pilot) scheme, which was only agreed for a year, but the shared parental leave scheme has had good uptake and he is frustrated that the School isn’t able to support it at the moment. AP suggested extending the carers scheme for another year, due to covid. As there are ongoing issues with funding, the Committee agreed to add a note to the action plan to revisit this in the academic year 2021/22.

The Committee agreed a note should be added to the website next to any policies/schemes that require extra funding, highlighting the fact they are currently suspended or require support of QM Senior Executive Team. Uptake of the Emergency Network has been very low or non-existent. The network is probably unnecessary as academics had been using sbcs-chat or the academic mailing list to arrange emergency cover and this has worked well.

* + Culture (GDF) – GDF asked for clarity with regards to recruiting new members for the working group. She was advised members can be recruited from anywhere in the School and it is also possible to consult with people informally on particularly issues. After reviewing the actions, GDF felt that some were feasible, like carrying out the AS survey as planned next year, but felt it didn’t make sense to have another New Starter Survey in February 2021 due to the recruitment freeze. She suggested moving the date for this to the end of 2021. GDF also felt that School social gatherings would be difficult to organise virtually, so would like to put this on hold until things are back to normal.

The working group highlighted the mental health of staff and thinking about ways to support them. GDF raised the issue of considering staff without care responsibilities, who may have been overlooked, or overburdened during the pandemic. It was important to raise this issue with line managers. The Committee discussed what they could offer to staff in addition to what the University is offering. NE suggested developing case studies (real or fictional) which included practical suggestions that a person could adopt to address the situations described. NE raised the idea of having a survey, particularly related to covid and working from home. He also highlighted that Mental health.org.uk has some useful and practical advice on how to achieve a work life balance, that could be adapted to our own particular circumstances.

**ACTION: NE and GDF to meet to prepare a list/resources for staff**

1. **SBCS Induction document**
	* AP will circulate over email. The Committee were asked to send any comments by next week. AP will then circulate the final version at next meeting.
2. **QM inclusion review**
	* Governance Working Group to have a short meeting to discuss before the next EDIC meeting.
3. **Date of the next meeting**- TBC