

**Minutes of the SBCS Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee Meeting
19th November 2021, 11:00-13:00, Microsoft Teams**

ACTION SUMMARY

1.	Review the ToR and let RWP know if you have any changes/comments	ALL
2.	RWP/Committee to work with IP to include the work the intersectionality working group are doing on the AS action plan (where to put it/how best to cover the action/timeframe)	RWP/IP

MEETING NOTES

1. Attendance and Apologies for absence

Attendance:

Richard Pickersgill – Chair (RWP)
Giulia De Falco (GDF)
Angelika Stollewerk (AS)
Nathan Emery (NE)
Ozge Eyice (OE)
Isabel Palacios (IP)
Petra Ungerer (PU)
Elizabeth Quinn (EQ)
Louise Gathercole (LG)
John Apergis-Schoute (JAS)
Elisabetta Versace (EV) – part of the meeting

Apologies:

Sian Cooper (SC)
Susanne Steck (SS)
Ellie Marshall (EM)

Catherine Murray (CM) – notes

In attendance: Gabriel Cavalli (GC)

- RWP welcome everyone to the meeting and introductions were made. RWP noted apologies for absence.
- RWP welcomed new members to the Committee: John Apergis-Schoute, new UG Working Group Lead; and Elizabeth Quinn and Louise Gathercole, new PhD Student Representatives.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting

- The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

4. Inclusive curriculum

- Gabrielle (SEMs) joined to talk about the inclusive curriculum. Gabrielle is on the inclusive curriculum work stream, part of a central QM project to develop the curriculum. Both the work stream and project are led by Janet De Wilde.
- An inclusive curriculum section is being developed on the QMUL website which will include case studies and guidelines.
- Initial engagement with this project will be at Faculty level. There will be some workshops and schools will be asked to select people to champion the inclusive curriculum.
- Specifically for S&E, the faculty has created, and is soon to launch, the 'Centre for Academic Inclusion for Science & Engineering'. They will carry out the initial workshops at the launch, which will be around February. Gabrielle will keep the Committee updated.
- GDF asked what the best approach would be to talk about an inclusive curriculum working on a TNE programme, when some of the topics are taboo. One approach suggested is to bring alive those behind the development of the content you are sharing with students, which you can do without making any commentary, just

showing who they are. RWP added that there is considerable diversity in our lecturers and that in itself will be an example to them.

5. News/updates

- RWP noted that before Anna left they did a presentation to the EDI steering group on the School's EDI work which went really well. The group is chaired by Sheila Gupta the VP for People, Culture and Inclusion.
- RWP would like the committee to review and agree the ToR, which is on Teams.

ACTION: Review the ToR and let RWP know if you have any changes/comments (All)

- RWP is working on a generic role descriptor for working group leads. RWP noted that in the last meeting it was agreed that we would move to a 4 or 5 year term, where possible.
- RWP has uploaded the Equality Impact Assessment document and guidelines on Teams in files under general. These documents can help us consider the impact on equality in everything we do.
- The schools current Athena Swan renewal goes through to 2025. The School will retain its silver award until it applies for a departmental restructuring award. Advance HE will be producing a new form early next year which covers departmental restructuring and has agreed that the School should wait until the new form arrives before we go through this process.
- RWP asked the Committee whether they think it would be good to restart the parental leave support initiative, if the school gets back the resources to be able to do so. The Committee was supportive of trying to restart it. The group felt, because we are saying 'PDRA', it is important to make clear that the initiative will also support teaching in the school.

6. Updates from Working Group Leads

a. UG Working Group

- i. EV welcomed John, as a new member of the UG Working group. EV shared a report with the group which gave an update on actions and potential future actions (reports in March 2022 meeting folder on teams).
- ii. EV asked RWP if it will be possible to get support from central admissions to deliver on its objectives. RWP noted there is a new Head of Admissions and we could invite him to a future meeting, once he has settled in.
- iii. EV noted that last year the internships targeted BAME and they would like to move to a focus on 'traditionally under-represented groups'. To build on success of last year, they will advertise earlier.
- iv. EV asked about a possibility of a budget to support this initiative and asked if the Committee could help write a business case to request this. EV noted that other funding options can be explored for future years, but there won't be time for 2021/22. RWP had some concerns due to the limited number of internships on offer. Others felt that the process of writing the application and engaging with potential supervisors itself is very beneficial for students and will have a wider reach as long as they are advertised early enough. It was noted the scheme has other benefits such as raising awareness about funded routes into research, and how to make it work as a PhD student. RWP suggested calling the internships 'pathways to research internships' and using it to try to encourage our students into research. RWP asked LG and EQ if they would work on this with EV.

b. Intersectionality WG

- i. The group continues to work on a project to get positions from PhD to Lectureships for under-represented groups, with the long-term aim of getting money from the Alumni office. They have an alumni list and will start working on it to see which people/institutions might be interested in supporting this project. They have asked at the School which research projects, or other

projects they have with underdeveloped communities so that they can talk about these projects with the alumni that they decide to approach and they can find specific projects they may be interested in. IP will keep the committee updated with progress on that.

- ii. RWP noted that this work is not part of our current action plan but it should be included.

ACTION: RWP/Committee to work with IP to include the work the intersectionality working group are doing on the AS action plan (where to put it/how best to cover the action/timeframe)

c. Work Life Balance Working Group

- i. The group would like its remit to be more inclusive, to benefit everyone who would like to achieve a health work-life balance, targeting different groups with different types of support. The culture survey highlighted that people felt they were being disadvantaged because they didn't have caring needs.
- ii. PU understood that line-managers were getting guidance from HR around how to deal with flexible working. The policy on the website is still the one from 2014. The current form is not flexible and requests a permanent change to the contract. Others agree that this puts staff off applying for a flexible working arrangement.
- iii. NE highlighted issues faced by staff working on TNE programmes remotely. Due to the time differences, and the way meetings are scheduled in the UK, staff are often working extremely long hours. RWP is aware of the issue and appreciates the efforts of those staff enormously. Although there are no obvious solutions, it was agreed that there shouldn't be any expectation on these staff members to attend meetings outside their responsibility for the TNE programme, which seems like the most practical way to help.
- iv. The Working Group has discussed some actions relating to the culture survey. These included: carrying out more research to identify the extra tasks people are being asked to complete (often at short notice) and not being rewarded for (so that it is possible to identify solutions); investigating networks/support available to support staff in the university around health and wellbeing (are they fit for purpose?/how can we increase visibility?) and developing case studies in the school to signpost how to seek assistance; investigating issues/barriers to promotion faced by staff who work flexibly. RWP added that the culture survey identified that promotion is an area that needs improvement, and there is work to be done in the school to raise awareness of promotion and the process, including the things staff should be doing to get promoted. NE noted it might be helpful to give advice about how best to approach promotion for those on a flexible working arrangement.
- v. The final point was not an action, but reiterated the importance of staff taking a lunch break, ideally away from their desks (although not being prescriptive about when they should take this break) and the role of line managers in encouraging that.

7. Date of the next meeting

- 2022 TBC