

Minutes of the SBCS Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee Meeting

12 February 2021, 10.30-12.30, Microsoft Teams

1. Attendance and Apologies for absence

Attendance:

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)
Isabel Palacios (IP)
Christian Nielsen (CN)
Marina Resmini (MR)
Ellie Marshall (EM)

Apologies:

Susanne Steck (SS)
Daisy Crowfoot (DC)
Sian Cooper (SC)
Nathan Emery (NE)

Catherine Murray - *notes* (CM)

- AP welcome everyone to the meeting and noted apologies for absence.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

- The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

3. Update on actions from the last meeting

- AP noted that most actions from the last meeting were updated in the action log, however some actions from the previous meetings were still outstanding.
ACTION: AP to follow up with Committee members via email re actions outstanding from previous meetings (January, April, June and September)
- JJ asked for an update on the module evaluation action. JJ noted she had prepared a brief outlining what the issues are, some evidence and highlighted some steps that could be taken but wasn't sure if RWP had heard from Stephanie Marshall or Sheila Gupta, or where she should send it. RWP noted that he hasn't had a chance to raise it but asked JJ to send it to him so he could open the lines of communication.
ACTION: JJ to send module evaluation proposal brief (informing students about biases) to RWP

4. News

- MR updated colleagues on the Diversifying Chemistry forum that took place in December 2020. The Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC) published a diversity report, looking at access and progression in the chemical sciences. There were two things highlighted as a major concern – the first was the number of black chemists. There are 0 (+/-3) black chemistry professors in the UK. The second was around disabilities. There is a serious drop in both these groups. The RSC has highlighted a series of actions that will be taken to address this. One project will focus on supporting black chemists starting at school level and then supporting progression and then there will be a series of actions around this. The other project is around

engaging more with members who identify as having a disability (either mental or physical) to understand what the limiting factors are and what can be done to facilitate change.

5. Issues raised

- **SWARM workload allocation (CB)**

Chris Bray, DoE, joined the meeting to discuss workload allocation. CB highlighted his concerns about the accuracy of SWARM and the amount of effort it takes to populate various aspects of it; as well as the fact that people approach SWARM differently. CB believes the purpose of SWARM should be a tool to make sure that the workload of staff is managed in an equitable way such that the School is not massively overloading some staff.

CB informed the Committee that he had spoken to the Senior Executive and proposed that SWARM should be simplified, certainly from a teaching perspective. AP suggested bringing this to the EDI Committee as workload allocation is an EDI issue.

CB would like support from the EDIC to try to make the workload model as fair and equitable and useful and easily updated as possible.

There were discussions around various aspects of how workload is captured in SWARM, such as whether the number of hours that is currently allocated for the various different modules is a true representation of what staff who teach on them have to do, whether we should continue to assign different levels different workload allocations, whether there is an increase in work as the number of students increases, and whether departments should be compared.

CB was unable to stay for the full discussion, but asked if AP could feedback any views/comments for him to take on board.

RWP noted that he wasn't looking for the EDI Committee to make any recommendations, instead he asked members to go away and consider it in more detail because the implications would be significant. He noted that it is clear that SWARM is not supposed to count every hour an academic works, it is to give a broad picture of what an academics contribution is to the school.

There were a lot of different ideas and issues raised, with many different points of views so AP suggested that members take some time to think about it a bit more and asked them to comment on a document that she will put together summarising some of the issues raised in chat and in the meeting.

AP noted that her understanding is that the Committee is not being asked what should be included in SWARM, but how the teaching should be counted – the Committee is not being asked to come up with a formula, but can comment on it.

ACTION: AP to prepare a summary of the discussion in a document; Committee members to add their comments

- **EDISG actions vs QMSET decisions (AP)**

AP highlighted the list of actions suggested by the QMUL EDI Steering Group (EDISG). These actions are supposed to be implemented by Schools, with the aim of improving BAME representation, as well as gender representation. AP asked the EDIC to consider each of the actions proposed – for each action, there was a brief

discussion during the meeting to hear the views of the Committee, then Committee members were asked to say if they agreed with the actions proposed or not by answer in a poll. The following provides a summary of the committee members' views:

- Action 1: Ensure that selection panels are balanced – This action is already implemented at the School. Staff Services Officer (SSO) monitors this closely. When an advert goes out, SSO contacts the recruiting manager to get a list of panel members and ensures there is a gender balance. There are not enough BAME staff to balance the board. A record is kept of all panels.
- Action 2: Advertise all academic roles on a part time basis – Committee agreed that there needs to be a clear university wide policy on job sharing before asking the school to implement this.
- Action 3: Make clear in your recruitment advertising that you are happy to talk about 'flexible working' – Committee agreed that job advert templates should be streamlined so that we can include a statement on flexible working. Committee were asked whether they agreed that the recent statements by SET is supportive of flexible working. RWP noted that we have to be careful about the business need. To the question: "Recent decisions by SET seem not to be caring about the right to flexible working." 12 agreed, 1 was neutral. AP noted she was not sure if she will put that forward.
- Action 4: Use positive statements in recruitment adverts where the data shows that you are underrepresented – The Committee noted that they need to make sure this is being done at local level using school data and not institutional level.
- Action 5: Check your adverts and job specifications for bias – The Committee noted that no one currently does this. Members agreed this could be done by HoDs or whoever is writing the adverts.
- Action 6: Consider where you advertise your roles – The Committee noted that there is a cost involved in advertising in some of the places suggested. AP suggested that somebody at EDISG/HR checks which websites are available without any additional subscription fees and publishes an updated list. It was noted that not all of the suggestions were appropriate. We need to establish if additional funding is available to advertise. The Committee discussed whether roles should be advertised on FB or Twitter. EM said she currently advertises on Twitter, but not FB as it is a predominantly student audience. AP suggested we EM can take forward an action to check how we can better target academics via social media.
- Action 7: Cross institutional selection days – The Committee agreed this should be led by the University.
- Actions 8, 9, 12, 13, 15, 16, 18 are already implemented at the School. Actions 10, 11 do not seem feasible (A10) or needed (A11).
- Action 19: Pay for a researcher to continue research activity during parental leave – This is something the School already has in place and we have been implementing it since 2012 but now none of our recent business cases have been approved. AP asked the Committee if they support asking SET to give a clear commitment for this action – the Committee was in agreement on this point. RWP suggested that it would be better to say that we support this action.

ACTION:

EM to take forward an action about how we better target academics via social media and widening the advertising of the hob ads across the networks.

AP to feedback comments to the EDISG's actions at the next Faculty EDI Committee meeting.

- **EDI Funding (AP)**

The Committee briefly discussed two initiatives that it could potentially provide EDI funding to support. AP was contacted to ask if the EDIC could help fund a summer project of two UG Chemistry students. The Committee discussed whether it should be providing funding just to chemistry, or open this up more widely within the school and put out a call for applications for summer projects. The second initiative was around mental health support, which could be used for students and staff. The organisation, TLC Lions, addresses mental health issues and resilience through storytelling and was brought to RWP's attention by the Psychology department. RWP noted that he had tried to engage the University on this but hasn't had a response. As the leaflet has not been shared with the Committee in advance, RWP suggested circulating it before discussing it further on another short follow up meeting.

It was agreed that the Committee would review the information from TLC Lions and then members could consider the two proposals and let AP know which one they preferred.

ACTION: CM to circulate the leaflet; Committee members to email AP regarding their preference. AP to set up a short follow up meeting.

6. Culture survey at SBCS discussion & decision

- The Committee needs to make a decision about whether to run the culture survey this year or whether it should be postponed. JJ and GDF discussed and would like to go forward and include questions on Covid and its impact. AP suggested that we also include a question on bullying and harassment.

7. Updates from Intersectionality WG (IP)

- IP gave a brief update from the 'Action Group'. The aim of the group is to increase minority representation in PhD posts at group leader level and the key to achieving this is to identify where to get funds from. The WG has contacted the Alumni office for help. IP's understanding is that the Alumni office is asking us to identify who we want funding from. She thought this was a route to help us understand who might be interested and for the Alumni office to approach them for us.

RWP suggested organising a follow up meeting and noted that they are a small alumni group serving the whole of the university with only one major fundraiser, so they will probably need help.

ACTION: CM to set up a follow up meeting with IP, RWP and the Alumni office.

8. Date of the next meeting - 22 April 2021