

Minutes of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee meeting

10 Oct 2019 10.00-12.00, Fogg1.02

1. Attendance and Apologies for absence

Attendance:

Daisy Crowfoot (DC)
Chris Duffy (CD)
Kristin Hadfield (KH)
Frances Healy (FH)
Peter Heathcote (PHe)
Janelle Jones (JJ)
Christina Kousseff (CA)
Christian Nielsen (CN)
Henry Oamen (HO)
Anna Pachol - Co-Chair (AP)
Richard Pickersgill – Co-Chair (RWP)
Thomas Stead (TS)
Angelika Stollewerk (AS)
Petra Ungerer (PU)
Susanne Steck - *notes for Catherine Murray* (SS)

Apologies:

Giulia De Falco (GDF)
Christoph Engl (CE)
Catherine Murray (CM)
Marina Resmini (MR)
Joanna Szular (JS)

AP welcomed the new committee members to the meeting.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting from 13th Jun were approved. Minutes of the August meeting to follow.

Update on actions

These had already mostly been discussed at the August meeting.

Flexible working workshop: This has been passed up the chain and response is awaited about suitable dates from the workshop provider.

3. News

- 3.1** Black History Month will include a screening of the movie “Hidden Figures”. DC will forward an invite to a long table discussion hosted by the School of Physics and Astronomy, for which panel members are still required. Afterwards a reception will be held to which SBCS already contributes.

ACTION: DC to forward email to Physics long table discussion for Black History month to SBCS EDIC committee members

- 3.2** The new examination period in Sem A poses challenges for staff with children due to the impact on the Easter holiday. The schedule is set for this year but the College welcomes improvement suggestions for future years.
- 3.3** A vigil and film screening will be held for Transgender Day of Remembrance in Nov. There will also be information on the QM fertility policy in an upcoming e-bulletin.
- 3.4** The SBCS Menopause Guidelines will be adopted College wide.

- 3.5 The College is looking to amend its flexible working policy, which requires improvement.
- 3.6 The College is looking into the provision of gender neutral toilet facilities.
- 3.7 AP advised that she had submitted the “intent to submit application” to the Athena Swan committee and thanked all EDIC members for their contribution to the application.

4. Teaching Evaluations ([link1](#), [link2](#), [link3](#))

- 4.1 Sources suggest that a large body of research has demonstrated that student evaluations of teaching (SETs) are weakly related to student learning and are often biased against female, non-native language speakers and ethnic minority members of staff. As a result it can be seen as unfair to use SETs in appraisals and promotion considerations.
- 4.2 Providing students with unconscious bias training is unlikely to be successful as students tend to resist the idea that they might have any biases.
- 4.3 SETs should measure the teaching, not the deliverer but due to biases might be influenced by factors such as size and confidence of the speaker. Other issues such as Qmplus problems and the difficulty of the subject matter also tend to influence SETs.
- 4.4 SETs are not a promotion metric but merely a point for discussion, the most poignant feature of a low performing module are persistently high percentages of F grades.
- 4.5 Making comparative SET scores across modules available at meetings might be demoralising for some staff members but on the other hand represent an opportunity to congratulate staff with well performing modules.
- 4.6 Module evaluations and questions are set by the Centre and are therefore outside the committee’s control. The only possibility is through change suggestions to Taught Programmes Board (TPB) but these should be based on solid data. The Nanchang programme is following its own module evaluation procedure and question set.
- 4.7 It was **DECIDED** to look into the possibility of conducting a study, which could take the form of a T&S paper analysing current SET data for the School and conduct a pilot study in Sem B for module evaluation where one part of the evaluation questionnaires have a preamble on unconscious bias and the other half does not.

ACTION: RWP to ask Stephanie Marshall if she authorises SBCS going ahead with SET data study.

5. Maternity vs contact by e-mail

- 5.1 CD reported survey findings that staff have mixed views on the appropriateness of being contacted while on maternity or paternity leave.
- 5.2 QM policy dictates that while staff on maternity leave can elect to have 14 “stay in touch” days, there is no obligation for these.

- 5.3 Often the requirement to have to contact staff on maternity leave results from unforeseen crises rather than a lack of planning.
- 5.4 It was **DECIDED** to draw up a check list for managers to go through prior to staff going on maternity leave and for the draft list to be approved at School level
ACTION: CD to draft a pre maternity check list for Line Managers
ACTION: DC to check with HR what existing guidance is in place on pre maternity check lists
- 5.5 Items to be included in the check list: staff should be asked whether or not they opt for being contacted during their leave (where this is not the case, an out of office message can inform of staff absence and give alternative contacts), potential marking responsibilities, H&S risk assessment for pregnancy while still in the workplace

6. SBCS Athena SWAN Survey results

- 6.1 There is general awareness of and support for Athena Swan initiatives in SBCS but with a slight decrease from the previous survey.
- 6.2 Overall staff slightly agreed on the importance of AS and EDI initiatives but were neutral on impact.
- 6.3 Staff slightly agreed that SBCS treats staff on their merits and disagreed that they had experienced a situation where they felt uncomfortable due to certain characteristics.
- 6.4 The top three workplace descriptors chosen by staff were 'supportive', 'welcoming', 'pressurised'. The stressful work environment might be partially down to REF and TEF and uncertainties in the funding environment.
- 6.5 Most staff occasionally attend SBCS networking events.
- 6.6 Most staff agree that SBCS celebrates success, whereas the second highest number of respondents answered 'yes, but not every time'
- 6.7 Respondents slightly agreed that SBCS was a diverse and inclusive work place and that this was reflected in promotional material. Staff were neutral on whether SBCS displays diverse and inclusive imagery. There is an action point on the update of imagery, which also includes a School photo.
- 6.8 Staff were neutral on support for career advancement and communication of career advancement related information. Staff slightly disagreed that career progression decisions were fair and transparent. Research expectation criteria have recently changed, which caused some confusion.
- 6.9 Staff slightly disagreed that the SBCS workload allocation model was fair and transparent and that roles were rotated frequently enough. Staff were neutral on whether they felt they had sufficient input into work allocation. Overall, these survey results constitute an improvement over previous years.
- 6.10 Survey participation was in line with previous years.

7. QMUL Staff Survey results (paper 1: 01-RAG-Report-QMUL-Staff-Survey.pdf)

- 7.1 The Faculty of Science & Engineering scores a yellow flag (5-10% worse than university average) on staff perception of QM's reputation, 'would recommend

QM to a friend', pride in working for QM, view on work life balance and view on stress support.

- 7.2 QM has 'workplace options' in place to help staff alleviate stress but this is quite an impersonal experience as outsourced to an external provider. Staff cannot access the Advice & Counselling on campus and get referred to mental health professionals in their area.
- 7.3 SBCS is scoring a red flag (10% or higher worse than Faculty average) on view that things turn out well at QM and 'would recommend QM to a friend'.
- 7.4 SBCS is scoring yellow flags (5-10% worse than Faculty average) on encouragement of varied viewpoints, pride working for QM, aspects relating to workload and work life balance, QM support for future development.

8. Impact of Athena SWAN Survey results (paper 2: Athena-SWAN-Impact-Evaluation-2019.pdf)

- 8.1 Women tend to be happier with career progression than men.
- 8.2 This agenda item will be taken up again in more detail at a later meeting.

9. SBCS Athena SWAN application (status, issues etc.)

- 9.1 AP thanked all staff involved for their hard work on the application.
- 9.2 The Google doc version is now closed and further work and proof reading will take place over the next few weeks.
- 9.3 The census date for this application is 17/18, the application is to be submitted in black and white and adhere to a word count specification.

10. AOB

None.

11. Date of next meeting

The next meeting will take place in either Dec 2019 or Jan 2020.