

Minutes of the SBCS Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee Meeting

17 January 2020, 13.30-15.30, Fogg1.02

1. Attendance and Apologies for absence

Attendance:

Anna Pachol - Co-Chair (AP)
Richard Pickersgill – Co-Chair (RWP)
Daisy Crowfoot (DC)
Marina Resmini (MR)
Giulia De Falco (GDF)
Christoph Engl (CE)
Chris Duffy (CD)
Kristin Hadfield (KH)
Frances Healy (FH)
Angelika Stollewerk (AS)
Mitsy Powell (MP)
Dunja Aksentijevic (DA)

Apologies:

Joanna Szular (JS)
Janelle Jones (JJ)
Christina Kousseff (CA)
Christian Nielsen (CN)
Henry Oamen (HO)
Petra Ungerer (PU)
Peter Heathcote (PHe)

Catherine Murray - *notes* (CM)

AP welcomed the new committee members to the meeting.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting from 10th October were approved.

Update on actions:

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

Action not yet completed.

The EDIC had proposed conducting a pilot study in Semester B for module evaluation where one half of the evaluation questionnaires have a preamble on unconscious bias and the other half does not.

The EDIC previously referred to three papers, one of which found that students that were warned about unconscious bias at the start of the evaluation were more balanced in their feedback.

NEW ACTION: Re-send references to papers on teaching evaluation to RWP (AP)

The EDIC agreed to trial this on two or three carefully selected SBCS modules (JJ previously raised concern about rolling it out across too many modules in case it has a negative effect). Details to be finalised. There is quite a tight timeline if the School wants to roll this out in Semester B (questions go out at beginning of March).

NEW ACTION: DC and RWP to take forward.

PREVIOUS ACTION: Maternity check-list for managers/ contact with staff

Update:

- Pre-maternity leave check list is already happening at a central HR level - one of the HR partners has produced a draft and the central EDI team will review it before it is circulated more widely to Schools.
- The School needs to clarify situation around keeping in touch with staff on maternity leave. It was agreed that the School needs to put together/issue a statement / reminder and think about how best to disseminate this information.

ACTION: Draft a statement / reminder about contacting staff on maternity leave (DA) - EDIC to review before being sent to HR to check. Once finalised, RWP to send out/communicate to staff.

3. News

3.1 LGBT history month - AP was contacted by a staff member who wants to organise events for LGBT month. The plan is to organise some workshops based on the book "the velvet rage". Also one student is keen to organise a stall. AP to discuss event details/budgets next week.

ACTION: Contact CM to discuss catering for the LGBT history month events (AP)

3.2 Flag Raising Ceremony, 3rd February – In addition to the rainbow flag, QMUL will be flying the trans and bisexual flags to show its support for the LGBTQ+ community, including its commitment to championing trans and bi inclusion. The event is being organised by the EDI team and QMOut, the staff LGBT+Network. Daisy encouraged the EDIC to attend and show support if they are free.

3.3 Use of pronouns – The EDIC felt it would be useful to have some guidance around the use of pronouns. Daisy and her colleague produced a leaflet on pronouns (what they are, how to use them, best practice and why they matter) and it was felt the School should promote the work Daisy has done to avoid repetition. The EDIC also discussed including something about pronouns on staff introductory slides and it was agreed it would be helpful to do so, if the staff member was comfortable. Examples were given of other universities and the mechanisms they have to let students know they are a trans ally.

4. Issues arising

4.1 a) Psychology external examiner issue (KH, AP)
Issue raised regarding an external examiner who felt that LGTBQ and single parent scenarios used in Psychology exam papers might be distracting to students. The Psychology department are seeking advice on how to deal with the external examiner in this case and also asking whether the School could write a clear position statement advising that it supports diversity in exams.

Action: RWP to meet with the external examiner and to have an informal chat

Action: Draft a position statement, which can be used by exam board chairs when they invite external examiners to scrutinise exam material (UG working group)

- 4.2** b) EDI awareness of PhD students at SBCS (AP, FH)
Issue raised with regards to cultural/racial insensitivity. It highlighted the issue that there is no EDI training for students at the moment, only a document we can refer them to. This is not an isolated issue. The EDIC discussed how to raise awareness of the school policy amongst post docs and PhD students and felt it would be helpful to add an EDI section to the PhD supervisor initial and refresher training, as there is nothing included currently. It was felt that key slides from the existing staff training could be added. The School is not responsible for PhD initial or refresher training.

ACTION: Introduce Daisy to Zi Parker to discuss PhD initial/refresher training course (FH)

In the meantime, the School could send the dignity at work guidance to all PhD students and post docs. Dignity at work is currently being updated at the EDI steering group. It was agreed that the School should also remind students, that when these incidents happen, that they can use 'report and support'.

The EDIC discussed whether it would be helpful to produce a checklist for supervisors, PhD students and postdocs in the labs. It was agreed the committee would revisit this in a future meeting.

DC informed the Committee that Laurence Gouldbourne will be looking at developing a more comprehensive suite of training for staff, including online training. He is currently trying to gain approval for this.

- 4.3** Breastfeeding policy at QMUL and expressed milk storage at Fogg (DA)

There is a policy, but we do not have a milk expression room in SBCS, and never had one. There is designated room at each campus for staff to use. At Mile End, there is currently a room in the nursery and there will be a new room in the Queen's Building. People returning from maternity leave will be given guidance regarding where they can go/how to arrange access to these rooms. Expressed milk can be stored in any fridge available in the school but has to be in a double container and has to be clearly labelled as human milk.

DC flagged that the policy on the website is wrong. It is thought the new policy will be attached to the information new mothers get. It was noted that people may not be aware of this information and it should be communicated to staff.

ACTION: Link to the new HR breastfeeding policy on our SBCS parents page/include in the newsletter (AP/MP)

5. SBCS Athena SWAN Action plan

- 5.1 The EDIC reviewed the action plan to ensure people were aware of the actions assigned to them and they knew how to deliver them.
- 5.2 It was noted that the action plan was simplified in order to make it readable for the application panel.
- 5.3 AP will refer staff to the new action plan at the next School Staff meeting
- 5.4 AP has been discussing using a new EDI newsletter template with Mitsy for her regular communications. It was agreed that members of the EDIC would also feedback on relevant EDI initiatives at department meetings.
- 5.5 There are plans to run a new staff survey (GDF will take over from KH).
- 5.6 It was agreed that the School EDI page is a better place to keep information about EDI initiatives than the QMPlus staff page, which is difficult to navigate.
- 5.7 Committee agreed it would be useful to have a female PDR studies Director, when David Clayton completes his three years in August.
- 5.8 Staff Services Officer, HoS and EA to start thinking about how to formalise exit interview.
- 5.9 Initiative to support parents to attend conferences hasn't had any uptake.
ACTION: Send a reminder to staff about the initiative to support parents attending conferences (AP); EDIC members to promote the initiative at departmental meetings.
- 5.10 Timing of some of the School's social events has come up as an issue, as the majority take place outside of core hours. The difficulty is that teaching has to take priority. EDIC agreed it is something to bear in mind, especially if for those involved in organising events.

6. AOB

- 6.1 A photographer has been organised to take a picture of the EDIC next week.

7. Date of next meeting – TBC.

ACTION: Find a date in March/April (CM)