MINUTES OF THE EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (EDI) STEERING GROUP

16th January 2018

Present: Nishan Canagarajah (Chair) (Pro Vice-Chancellor, Research & Enterprise) 
Alvin Birdi (Academic Director of Undergraduate Studies) 
Tracy Brunnock (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager) 
Samantha Budd (Chief Executive, Bristol SU) 
Sue Clyne (Head of Organisational Development and Deputy HR Director) 
Paula Coonerty (Academic Registrar) 
Susan Harrow (Head of School of Modern Languages) 
Jonathan Sandy (Dean of Health Sciences) 
Deborah Wilson (Faculty Research Director, Social Sciences and Law)

In attendance: Stephen D’Evelyn (Chair of Disabled Staff Forum) for agenda item 6 only 
Tina Hitchens (Secretary to Group)

Apologies: Mark Ames (Director of Student Services) 
Lucy Collins (Head of UK Student Recruitment) 
Desiree Ibekwe (Equality, Access and Liberation Officer, Bristol SU) 
Rashi Jain (Senior University Lawyer) 
Wendy Merchant (Chair of the Carers’ Network)

1. Welcome and introductions
   1.1 NOTED.

2. Apologies
   2.1 NOTED.

3. Minutes of the last meeting
   3.1 NOTED: Minute item 9.4. The Head of Organisational Development and Deputy HR Director reported that work is ongoing with the Resourcing Manager to draft a flexible working opt-out proposal.
   3.2 AGREED: Minute item 10.3. It was noted that the Tyndall Place Programme was not included as an agenda item for today’s meeting. The Programme Manager and Academic Director are meeting the Staff Network Chairs on Monday 22 January where issues connected to EDI will be identified and discussed. An update will be provided to the next meeting.

ACTION: EDI Manager

4. Action Register
   4.1 The Steering Group discussed the Action Register entry from 17 May 2017 – minute point 6.3. The Chief Executive of Bristol SU reported that the BME PowerList was launched on Monday 15 January. The Chief Executive of Bristol SU and Bristol SU Equality, Access and Liberation Officer are promoting this via local radio, through a series of regular sessions. The sessions will cover various aspects of race equality, and will help demonstrate the University’s commitment to race equality.
5. **Chair’s Report**

5.1 The Chair reported that the University Board of Trustees have now recruited Nicky McCabe to be Chair of the Human Resources Committee, who has a commitment to EDI. The Chair and Steering Group welcomed this appointment.

5.2 The Chair informed the Group that the Mayor is considering a race equality charter for the city. The Chair is involved in ongoing discussions regarding this, and will update the Steering Group with progress.

5.3 The Chair reported that there is a desire to ensure equality and inclusion issues are fully considered in the development of the University’s new Temple Quarter campus. The Chair is connecting with various groups across the city to hold workshops and make recommendations to the University. The Chair will provide updates as this work progresses.

5.4 The Chair informed the Group that the Chief Executive of Bristol SU attended the Big City Gathering in December 2017 and was invited to sit on an Inclusive City Taskforce.

5.5 The Chair reported that he has been appointed to be one of ten new Bristol Race Equality Commissioners. The Steering Group will be kept updated with future work in this role.

5.6 The Chair updated the Steering Group on gender pay gap work. A report will be published on 8 March 2018 - International Women’s Day. A narrative for the report is being developed, to demonstrate how the University is addressing areas of concern. AGREED: The EDI Manager will circulate the narrative to Steering Group members for information prior to publication.

**ACTION: EDI Manager**

5.7 The Chair reported that the EDI Team’s new website will be finished by the end of February. AGREED: The EDI Manager will circulate the web content to Steering Group members for comment prior to the website being made live.

**ACTION: EDI Manager**

5.8 The Chair reported that the EDI Team will begin recruiting for a new Officer role in the week commencing 22 January. The focus of this new role will be race equality.

5.9 The Chair reported that a request for funding has been made to support University Athena SWAN activity by locating responsibility at Faculty levels.

6. **Reasonable Adjustments: It’s About Time**

RECEIVED: paper reference EDI/17-18/04

6.1 The Chair of the Disabled Staff Forum presented the joint paper on behalf of both the Disabled Staff Forum and the Carers’ Network and the following items were discussed:

6.2 **Paper 1, section F**

A common recommendation of the paper is that the EDI Steering Group would benefit from Trade Union representation. 

**NOTED:** The Chair noted that membership of the EDI Steering Group would be discussed later in today’s meeting (Agenda point 7) - Trade Union membership would also be discussed.
6.3 Paper 1, Section 4.1
Forum members felt the University would benefit from participation in the Disability Confident accreditation scheme, and is already achieving many competencies of ‘Disability Confident Committed’ (Level 1). Forum members feel the self-assessment involved in the process would help the University to continue to improve support for disabled staff, bringing it in line with other protected characteristics.
AGREED: The Steering Group agreed the University is already achieving many of the criteria for the Level 1 accreditation, and should aim to sign up to Disability Confident by the end of the 2017-18 academic year.

ACTION: EDI Manager

6.4 Paper 1, Section 4.3
The Steering Group was reminded that reasonable adjustment requests must be considered against the institution’s overall budget rather than individual Schools’.

6.5 Paper 1, Section F
Forum members’ feedback that it is difficult to locate clear guidance on reasonable adjustments.
NOTED: The Chair noted that the EDI Team’s new website will bring together reasonable adjustments guidance for all staff. Rather than introduce a separate service, relevant HR Teams should be contacted by staff for advice on reasonable adjustments.

6.6 Paper 1, Section 4.4
The Group discussed the current process for funding reasonable adjustments requests, with a particular focus on issues with Access to Work funding. It was suggested that the Chair of the DSF gathers examples to provide more clarity on the difficulties encountered by disabled colleagues. This could then inform solutions.

ACTION: Chair of DSF to provide examples to EDI Manager

6.7 It was agreed that current data monitoring categories produced in our EDI Annual Monitoring Report would be reviewed and consideration would be given to including related grievances and other staff-related processes.
AGREED: to be discussed as future agenda item.

ACTION: EDI Manager

6.8 Paper 1, Section F
The Group discussed Forum members’ feedback that reasonable adjustments do not always fully account for the time required for disabled staff to undertake their roles, and their recommendation that this be considered in Workload Modelling. Members feel flexible working should be a valuable tool for disabled staff, but requests are considered inconsistently.
NOTED: The Steering Group noted that Workload Modelling is utilised for academic staff, but not in Professional Services. It is hoped, however, that the New Ways of Working scheme will provide an opportunity for improved flexibility of working for Professional Services staff. Any future review of flexible working provisions would take account of EDI implications.

6.9 Paper 1, Section F
The Steering Group discussed Forum members’ recommendation that a Staff Disability Service be introduced to provide more holistic support for disabled staff and carers – in a similar model to the existing Student Disability Service.
NOTED: Each operational HR Team was equipped to advise and support disabled colleagues on matters connected to support, adjustment and funding.
AGREED: This should be promoted more widely to disabled colleagues.
6.10 **Paper 2, Section A**

**NOTED:** The Group discussed the recommendation that the University should capture data to show how many staff are carers. It was noted that current HR systems do not allow for this.

6.11 **Paper 1, Section F**

The group discussed the recommendation that carers would benefit from additional counselling sessions. It was acknowledged that access to counselling was a problem for all staff and there are waiting lists for appointments. Action is being taken to address this and the Carers’ Network will be informed of progress.

6.12 The Chair thanked the Disabled Staff Forum and the Carers’ Network members for their input.

7. **EDI Governance: Draft Proposal**

**RECEIVED:** paper reference **EDI/17-18/05**

7.1 The Chair noted that the EDI Steering Group has achieved a number of successes in its current form, including increased enthusiasm and support across the University.

7.2 **AGREED:** It was agreed that going forward, the group designed to take over the EDI Steering Group’s activities will be strategic rather than operational – the EDI Strategic Review Group.

7.3 **NOTED:** The Chair noted that some current EDI Steering Group members will not be included in the newly-formed group.

7.4 The EDI Manager outlined that the proposed new group’s priorities would shift to embedding EDI considerations into University processes as well as encouraging an increased sense of shared ownership across the institution – for example ensuring EDI criteria are included in all job descriptions across the University. The Group noted that these criteria are currently included in some job descriptions, particularly in Head of School job descriptions. The criteria are tested during recruitment for these roles, via Focus Groups.

7.5 **AGREED:** The Steering Group noted that integrating EDI issues across the University depends in part on the visibility of senior leaders supporting those issues. However, the Steering Group agreed that it would be beneficial for the new EDI Strategic Review Group to be structured to report to the University Management Team (UMT) rather than taking membership from the UMT.

7.6 The Academic Director of Undergraduate Studies reported that Senate is considering incorporating EDI achievements into the criteria for the Academic Promotion and Progression process. It is hoped this will encourage consistent good practice. The Group noted that some Schools are already working in this way - Modern Languages has already incorporated these criteria into their Promotion and Progression reports.

7.7 **AGREED:** The Steering Group agreed that there will not be specific student representation on the new EDI Strategic Review Group as other committees exist to consider student issues. Further consideration needed to be given to how to effectively address staff and student-related areas; this reinforced the need for the review of membership and terms of reference.

7.8 **AGREED:** The Steering Group agreed that the new EDI Strategic Review Group membership should have representation from Finance, Estates, Governance and
Communications and Marketing. There should be at least one Divisional Head and one Dean. Clarity would be required on their role in feeding back to their constituents.

7.9 AGREEED: It was agreed to consider Terms of Reference and membership for the EDI Strategic Review Group at the next Steering Group meeting.

**ACTION: EDI Manager**

7.10 AGREEED: The Steering Group agreed that an EDI Staff Engagement Group should be formed, as proposed in section 3 of the document. Actions from the Group could be fed back to the new EDI Strategic Review Group. Membership of this Group would extend to Trade Union representatives. The EDI Manager will develop a proposal for consideration at the next meeting.

**ACTION: EDI Manager**

8. **Report from Chairs of the Gender Equality Group (GEG)**

8.1 The Group was provided with a verbal update from the first meeting of the GEG, held on 29 November 2017. The meeting was productive and the Terms of Reference were agreed. The GEG will report to the EDI Steering Group.

8.2 The Co-Chairs reported that one of the GEG’s functions is to oversee Athena SWAN activity across the University. The Athena SWAN criteria has now expanded to include Professional Services staff.

8.3 The Co-Chairs reported that the GEG is considering the difficulty of obtaining data for Athena SWAN purposes, but noted that the recent appointment of a Data Analyst in Human Resources will help work in this area. The Data Analyst has been invited to attend the next meeting of the GEG to provide further clarity in this area.

9. **Any Other Business**

9.1 The Chair reported on the concept of ‘Democratising Diversity’, a system used by Australian companies – staff are asked to identify changes that would improve their work life. Staff focus groups are formed to consider those issues, and the organisation facilitates, directs and mentors the groups. The Head of Organisational Development and Deputy HR Director reported using a similar approach previously at other organisations, known as the ‘Equality Circle Approach’. It was agreed resources are imperative for this type of activity to succeed, and acknowledged that we were not in a position to introduce this at this time due to other changes.

10. **Date of next meeting**

10.1 Tuesday 27 March, 10:00am – 12:00pm

Room 3.15, Senate House

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22 January 2018