

Equality and Diversity Forum

Minutes of the meeting held on 14th May 2010

Present:

- Professor Aneez Esmail** – Chair and AVP (Equality and Diversity)
- Dr Blaise Nkwenti-Azeh** – BME staff network
- Dr Hamied Haroon** – Chair, Disabled staff network
- Patrick Johnson** - Head of Equality and Diversity
- Patricia Ross** – UCU Equal Opportunities Rep
- Elaine Shillcock** – Head of Disability Support Office
- Hazel Kent** – Student Union Women's Officer
- Vicky Thompson** – Student Union Welfare Officer
- Dr Pat Sponder** – Head of Student Support and Services
- Karen Heaton** – Director of Human Resources
- Mike Shore-Nye** – Director of STARS
- Revd Nathan Eddy** – Interfaith Forum
- Diana Hampson** – Director of Estates

Apologies:

- Professor Alan Gilbert** – President and Vice-Chancellor
- Albert McMenemy** – Registrar and Secretary

1. Matters arising from previous minutes

Point 6a – Patrick reported that Mike Shore-Nye had spoken to the Director of Communications and gained agreement that the disability staff network and other equality network groups can use e-update to promote their group.

2. Financial Prudence and the potential discrimination issues

Received: An oral update from Professor Aneez Esmail

Reported:

Concern was raised about funding that is currently being met by Schools for disability support / reasonable adjustments. The Head of Faculty Administration for Humanities raised this issue with Aneez. Currently within the Faculty of Humanities they top slice money from each School to create a central pot to support maternity cover. There has been a great deal of positive feedback about this with a feeling that it takes the pressure off Schools and potentially takes away problems for Schools having to think about funding when looking to recruit staff.

A discussion took place regarding whether a similar central pot should be created for disability support.

Action:

The Head of Faculty Administration, Humanities and the Head of Equality and Diversity to write a paper on this issue, with recommendations. The AVP to present this paper and have a discussion with budget holders (Deans).

The Head of the Disability Support Office reminded Forum members that if an application to Access to Work is made within the first six weeks then 100% of the costs for reasonable

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adjustments would be met. It is important to continue to raise awareness amongst managers about this.

3. Degree Attainment Update

Received: an oral update from Professor Aneez Esmail

Reported:

The paper (attached with agenda) was presented to the Teaching and Learning Group and Senate. There was strong agreement that the University needed to investigate why Manchester has this issue. It was noted that this was a national issue and that every University has a similar issue with regards to the attainment gap between BME and White students. Manchester is being pro-active in trying to find out what the issues are and attempting to address them.

A working group has been convened and is chaired by Dr Rodger Edwards who is a member of the Teaching and Learning Group. The working group includes academics and professional colleagues who have particular experience and expertise in this area.

Action

The working group will report on progress periodically to this Forum, the Teaching and Learning Group and Senate.

4. Single Equality Act

Received: an oral update from the Head of Equality and Diversity

Reported:

The Equality Bill was given royal assent on 8th April and the majority of the provisions in the (now) Equality Act 2010 will come into force in October replacing existing discrimination legislation.

The Act creates a new single public sector equality duty which will continue to cover race, gender and disability but will be extended to cover age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment. This part of the Act is due to come into force in April 2011. The University is well placed with its Single Equality Scheme that sets out a strategy that supports the new equality duty.

For more detail on the Equality Act 2010 and its implications for higher education, please visit: <http://www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/equality-act-2010>

5. Recruitment and Selection Policy

Received: An oral update from the Director of Human Resources

Reported:

The University has updated its recruitment and selection policy and the final paperwork is being prepared and should be introduced in the summer. The updated policy includes best practice. Equality and Diversity have been involved in updating the policy and an equality impact assessment was also done at the same time.

New training modules have also been developed and approved. There will be mandatory training for recruitment panels. The key elements the training will cover include: job

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description, person specification and short-listing. The modules will be rolled out in the autumn.

6. Research Profiling Exercise (RPE)

Reported:

Aneez had the opportunity to comment on the RPE criteria in relation to equality and diversity. The Preliminary figures suggest that women are less likely to achieve an 'A' grade compared to their male counterparts. Aneez will be following this up with Dame Nancy Rothwell.

7 Unconscious Bias

Reported:

Patrick reported that the E&D Team were working with Professor Geoff Beattie from the School of Psychological Sciences conducting research into unconscious/implicit biases in recruitment and promotions.

The specific goals of this research would be:

- To develop a robust Manchester Implicit Association Test (IAT) with the right psychometric properties, to measure implicit attitudes to ethnic diversity and gender;
- To investigate explicit and implicit attitudes towards ethnic diversity and gender in a university sample;
- To investigate the impact of these explicit and implicit attitudes on actual behaviour in interviews. The focus would be on subtle forms of nonverbal communication which we know impact significantly on the dynamics and course of the interaction;
- To analyze how impressions are formed and judgements made on the basis of the subtle nonverbal signals of the interviewee;
- To draw together these different threads to determine the nature and importance of unconscious biases in affecting interview/promotional panel outcome;
- To explore how to change implicit attitudes using various kinds of persuasive messages;
- To produce a handbook to outline how to conduct selection interviews (and promotions committees) with a view to compensating for the possible role of unconscious biases.

The results of the first stage of the research will be completed by the end of the summer.

8 Stakeholder updates

Disabled Staff Network

- A good relationship has developed with the Directorate of Estates. Brent Wills attends network meetings and keeps disabled staff up-to-date with developments. This has included sorting out a stair lift in Dover Street for Well being week; and reporting on the access audit that says what will be done on accessibility around campus.
- The network has been helping to test accessibility for the upcoming University data audit.
- The network has been discussing the implications of the changes to Access to Work funding.
- Hamied has spoken to the disabled students forum and offered support.
- Mike Shore-Nye has offered to help the network find a suitable venue on campus for the network to have a social gathering.

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BME Staff Network

- The re-launched network group has its first meeting on 9th June. There has already been an open meeting and a planning meeting with an extended committee. The network are concentrating on developing an action plan for the coming year.
- The network is still keen to get more BME senior managers/academics involved.
- A concern was raised about meeting attendance at lunchtimes. This was very difficult for some staff and the network would welcome an arrangement where staff are given time off to attend meetings during the working day. **Action:** Aneez to discuss this issue further.
- Equality Impact Assessments of grievances and the current ERVS was seen as very important.

Students Union

- There has been a re-branding of Freshers Week to Welcome Week and the Freshers Ball to the Biko Ball. It is hoped that this will be more inclusive and recognises the change in the make-up of the student body.
- Recently there was the launch of the Black Students campaign.
- A student parents society has been set up and is very welcomed by students
- The Union was keen to have an up date on the Burlington Rooms. **Action:** Brent Wills from Estates to provide an update.

UCU – Equalities rep

UCU had a number of questions they required answers to:

- How many people who were on the redeployment register in 2004 are still on the register?
- How many people from the redeployment register have taken up ERVS?
- How many grievance cases have been resolved/upheld and how many were also upheld at stage 2 of the process?
- Has there been any management training in terms of culture, language, attitudes and behaviours in respect of equality?

Action: Director of Human Resources

9 Any Other Business

The next Equality and Diversity Forum will take place on **Friday 5th November 2010**, 10.00 – 12.00, Knowles Committee room, Whitworth Corridor.