

## Equality and Diversity Forum

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2009

**Present:**

**Professor Aneez Esmail** – Chair and Associate Vice-President for Equality and Diversity  
**Dr Adel Nasser** – Chair of 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  
**Steve Grant** – Head of Workforce Planning and Skills, Manchester City South Partnership  
**Karen Heaton** – Director of Human Resources  
**Mike Shore-Nye** – Director of STARS (representing the Registrar & Secretary)  
**The Revd Dr Terry Biddington** -Co-ordinator of the Interfaith Forum  
**Veronique Rizzuto** – Equality and Diversity Assistant  
**Paul Marks-Jones** – Equality and Diversity Advisor

**In Attendance:** **Dr Denison Jayasooria** - Visiting Fellow (Malaysia)

**Apologies:**

**Professor Alan Gilbert** – President and Vice-Chancellor  
**Albert McMenemy** – Registrar and Secretary  
**Diana Hampson** – Director of Estates  
**Bev Brown** – Unison  
**Linda Mingay** - Unite

1. **No Matters Arising**
2. **Degree Attainment Update**

**Received:** An oral update from Professor Aneez Esmail

**Reported:**

a) Aneez updated the Forum on the continuing work being carried out by the equality and diversity team on degree attainment. The data has been compiled at a faculty level which shows statistically significant differences with degree attainment based on a (Home) student ethnicity. BME students obtained half the number of first class degrees compared to white or mixed students (9% compared to 17%) and 10% fewer upper second class degrees (48%) compared to (58%) white students.

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b) Patrick highlighted a report by Student Support and Services on academic appeals which has a direct link to degree attainment.

The data shows that ethnic minority students are more likely than white students to make academic appeals: 45% of appeals are made by ethnic minority students, who account for 17% of the student population. There is a range of possible reasons for the apparent difference. Analysis of the details of individual cases would be required to understand the causes of the difference.

c) Aneez proposed that at Faculty/School level:

- need to look at the BME student experience through focus groups and linked to the student survey
- need to look at the issues at a school/programme level in curriculum design, assessment and feedback.
- Statistics and improvements should be monitored each year through OPR.

d) Patrick will be attending the Teaching and Learning Group meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> December to discuss how to move this important issue forward. **Action:** Patrick to report back on progress at the next forum

## 3. Launch of Dignity at Work and Study Policy

**Received:** an oral update from Patrick Johnson

**Reported:**

The Dignity at Work and Study new policy was launched on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2009. 10 Harassment Advisers and 12 mediators for staff and students have been recruited from across the University and they have received appropriate training. More awareness raising sessions are planned over the next three months for operational managers, trade unions and the student union. **Action:** The Policy will be fully reviewed in November 2010 with stakeholders and a report published.

## 4. Academic Promotions

**Received:** an oral update from Professor Aneez Esmail

**Reported:**

a) There has been great progress with recruitment and promotions at the University. Aneez has made recommendations to Faculties on his observations of the promotions process. This has been taken forward by Karen Heaton. Aneez highlighted that fewer females received promotions in Life Sciences and Medicine whereas Humanities are doing well in appointing ethnic minority academic staff. Aneez commented that Positive Action has been developed in the Professional Support Services and other areas of the University to address under representation of BME staff in senior positions.

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## 5. Single Equality Scheme

**Received:** An oral update from Patrick Johnson

**Reported:**

(a) The University has developed a Single Equality Scheme which is a 3 year strategic plan. The Scheme published in December 2009 brings together the existing disability, gender and race equality schemes. The University has made significant progress in recent years to drive forward the equality agenda. Some key achievements include:

- Equality data monitoring and action plan is embedded into the University's annual OPR;
- 'Two Ticks' disability symbol awarded to the University;
- Athena SWAN Bronze awarded to the University and Silver awarded to FLS for commitment to the career advancement of women in Science, Engineering and Technology;
- Launch of dedicated support service for disabled staff;
- Equality Impact Assessment pilot project completed. Assessments encompassed staff and student recruitment and admissions processes, student interruptions, flexible working and procurement;
- North West and Yorkshire regional winner 'Shaw Trust' STAR award 2009 for supported work placements (Directorate of STARS)
- Launch of the Dignity at Work and Study Policy;
- On-line diversity training available to all staff and a pilot taking place for students

## 6. Stakeholder updates

**Received:** An oral update from Dr Hamied Haroon, Dr Adel Nasser, The Revd Dr Terry Biddington, Hazel Kent and Patricia Ross

**Reported:**

a) Hamied Haroon and Hazel Kent reported that there is no wheelchair access in the Postgraduate Burlington Rooms (Schunck Building) and in the Dover Street Building (UoM Staff Association temporary location) and signposting is poor. **Action:** Hamied and Patrick will arrange a meeting with Diana Hampson to discuss the issues raised. Hamied also mentioned a lack of restrooms around the University. This was raised at the meeting of 21<sup>st</sup> May 2009. Patrick mentioned that this is an action in the University's Single Equality Scheme.

Hamied said that the Disability Staff Network should be advertised in StaffNet News/e-Update. **Action:** Patrick will approach Communications, Media and PR about this. Mike Shore-Nye also offered to speak to Alan Ferns about this issue.

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Hamied also mentioned the need for further funding of the network to support reasonable adjustments that they need to make at meetings in the form of a Palantypist (communication support for deaf and hard of hearing people).

b) Terry reported that there had been a marked increase over the last year in student satisfaction (related to faith), which was great. Terry said that he was working with the University on establishing a mechanism for monitoring those offering faith-based pastoral care to students and staff on campus.

Terry spoke of the diversity of faith advisers and chaplains that are now supporting students and staff across Manchester. They all come together at the Interfaith Forum which also includes Pat Sponder and Patrick Johnson from the University.

c) Adel particularly wanted to highlight that there was a re-launch of the BME staff network. This was to increase the membership and diversity of views of the network. Adel has been working with Aneez and Patrick on this, with an event taking place in the Arthur Lewis building recently.

d) Hazel reported that the key concerns at present from the student union, were: creating a maternity policy for undergraduates (Pat Sponder is working with the SU on this); Sexism on North Campus due mainly to the male dominated courses; need support in setting up the disabled students network; and students having to pay for dyslexic assessments. **Action:** If requested, Elaine to discuss assessments further with Student Union.

e) Patricia reported that UCU along with the two other recognised trade unions have been working with the E&D team on developing a working group for impact assessments. Patricia also wanted it noted that UCU were concerned to hear about the problems with disabled access to some buildings and wanted to be kept informed of developments. UCU are currently looking at the Single Equality Scheme with a view to comment on it.

## 7 Date of next meeting

To be confirmed.