Confirmed Minutes

Meeting: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee (EDIC)
Date: 30 May 2022
Time: 1 pm to 3 pm
Venue: Teams

M Jackson - Chair	Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
Shabnam Karim*	Finance Director
Sarah Bailey	Director, Centre for Student Engagement, Wellbeing and Success
Anna Krajewska	Director of the Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning and Head of the School of Business and Accounting
Nandini Canoo	Senior Lecturer, EDI Academic Lead
Dr Nadia Michail	Disability and Wellbeing Manager
Alina Da Franca	Academic Administrator
Charlayne Lewis-Thomas	Admissions Manager
Georgiana Ursachescu	Student Guild Executive
Carmin Wilkinson	Assistant Student Equality Society Leader
Antony Charles	People, Talent and Culture Manager
Lydia Hesketh	Head of Communications
Ramin Nassajpour	Finance and Internal Audit Manager
Arif Zaman	Senior Lecturer, Business
Dr Joan O'Mahony	Director of Academic Development
Slawomir Grzybek - Secretary	Quality and Compliance Manager

1.0 Welcome and Apologies

*Denotes apologies

2.0 Meeting of 23 February 2022

2.1 Unconfirmed Minutes

The minutes of 23 February 2022 EDIC were agreed to be a true record of the meeting and **approved** by the committee.

2.2 Action Tracker/Matters Arising

2.2.1   Minutes of 10 February 2021

2.2.1.1 Item 5c refers

Completed. We are now institutional members of London Higher. This gives us membership of their various networks. The Head of EDI is our institutional representative on the EDI Network. London Higher does not have a BAME Network.

For approval

3.0 Mental Health and Wellbeing

3.1 Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

M Jackson outlined the changes made to the Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy.

M Jackson requested the committee to consider a change to the terminology we use in the document and and more widely, recommending that we replace "disclosing/declaring disability" with something without negative connotations e.g. "sharing" as adopted by a number of providers.

The Student Representative present agreed that the proposed change could have a positive impact on students sharing information about their disability as currently there is a stigma attached to the terminology used. Following a lengthy discussion, the committee noted the value of the proposed change but advised the Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion against it, pointing out that the current terminology is the prevailing one in the sector and beyond, and the recommended change could result in creating confusion for students.

The committee **approved** the Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy subject to the reinstatement of references to "disclosing" and "declaring" in the context of disabilities.

3.2 Student Guide to Mental Health and Wellbeing

M Jackson presented the revised Student Guide to Mental Health and Wellbeing and outlined the changes made.

She sought confirmation from the Academic Administrator concerning the information provided with regards to extenuating/mitigating circumstances and it was agreed that the approach proposed in the document was most effective.

The committee **approved** the Student Guide to Mental Health and Wellbeing.

4.0 Disability Policy and related documents

4.1 Consent to Share Information

N Michail presented the revised Consent to Share Information and a request was made to align the form with House Style.

The Consent to Share Information was approved subject to formatting.

4.2 Disability Office – what we do with your data

A request was made for the following changes:

- Section 3.1.1 Last bullet point, amend to state that the training on the effective use of assistive technologies would be provided by CETL.

- Section 8, sharing information with parents/carers/family members for the students aged under 18 was queried and following a discussion it was agreed that we would not be in a position to share such information unless written consent is received.

The committee **approved** the Disability Office – what we do with your data subject to amendment.

4.3 Student Learning Support Agreement

The committee **approved** the Student Learning Support Agreement.

5.0 Pregnancy, Maternity and Parenting Guide

5.1 Pregnancy, Maternity and Parenting Guide

N Michail presented the revised Pregnancy, Maternity and Parenting Guide and outlined the changes made.

The following further changes were requested by the committee:

- Section 11, paragraph 2 – rephrase to read "Students are encouraged to notify Bloomsbury Institute as soon as possible that they are pregnant so any learning implications during their pregnancy can be considered."

- Section 4.1, revise the entry on 10 consecutive visa contact points in the light of our revised International Sponsored Student Policy and Compliance Procedures.

- Section 10, remove paragraph 3 relating to authorised absences.

- Further textual and minor changes were offered by the committee.

The revised Section 8 on Adoption was commended by the committee.

The committee **approved** the Pregnancy, Maternity and Parenting Guide subject to amendments.

<div style="background-color:orange; font-weight:bold;">Access and Participation Plan 2020-21 to 2024-25</div>

6.0   For consideration

6.1 <u>OfS Condition A1 Action Plan</u>

M Jackson confirmed our compliance with the Strategic Measures.

In terms of individual actions, M Jackson flagged the fact that the deadline for some evaluative reports has been amended by the Action Leads. However, this should have no impact on our compliance with the Strategic Measures.

It was noted that an external consultancy has been contracted to support the evaluative activities related to our Access and Participation Plan.

6.2 <u>KPIs May 2022 Update Report</u>

The May updates to KPIs 2021-22 were received and noted by the committee.

6.3 <u>Travel Bursary Scheme: Evaluation Report</u>

R Nassajpour presented his interim report evaluating one of the main measures introduced in our Access and Participation Plan namely, the Travel Bursary. He explained that the aim behind the interim evaluation was to assess the effectiveness of the Travel Bursary in increasing the engagement (attendance) and submission rates of those within Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) Quintiles 1 and 2, those from both BAME and Black backgrounds, and those with declared disabilities.

R Nassajpour explained that his evaluation had been hampered by the fact that the September 2021 cohort had been relatively small and that there had been relatively few students from within that cohort who did not take advantage of the travel bursary. In the circumstances, R Nassajpour decided to compare engagement and submission rates for the four target groups within our September 2021-22 cohort with the same groups from previous years. The committee welcomed this approach.

R Nassajpour informed the committee that the data available does not provide evidence that the Travel Bursary has had a significant impact, however, he remarked that qualitative data would be a useful indicator given the relatively small population and other factors that could have influenced the results.

The committee commended the report for its clarity. Following a discussion, the recommendation to include more qualitative data in a follow-up report was welcomed and the committee offered suggestions concerning the methodology.

It was noted that a Student Focus Group would be convened later this year and that it would give us the opportunity to engage with students on the effectiveness of the Travel Bursary to produce additional qualitative data.

The Travel Bursary Scheme: Evaluation Report was received and noted by the committee.

7.0   For confirmation

EDIC Observations on the SEWS Evaluation Report relating to actions under the following Strategic Measures:

7.1 <u>Strategic Measure 2: PAL scheme</u>

7.2 <u>Strategic Measure 3: Predictive Data Analytics</u>

7.3 <u>Strategic Measure 4: Disability and Wellbeing</u>

M Jackson presented the SEWS APP Evaluation Report February 2022: Observations by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee (EDIC) and explained that the document was based on the discussion had on the original report submitted to EDIC in February 2022.

The committee agreed that the February EDIC discussion was correctly reflected in the document and approved the Observations document to be submitted to the next meetings of the Senior Management and Leadership Team (SMLT), Academic Committee (AC) and Board of Directors (BoD). It was noted that the SEWS team had made some changes to their original APP Evaluation Report based on the EDIC Observations and that it would be this amended version of the Evaluation Report that would be submitted to the SMLT, AC and the BoD rather than the original report.

For information

8.0 Inclusive Britain: Government response to the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities

M Jackson flagged the recommendations arising from the government's response to the report by the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities and said that the following would be the most relevant to us:

- Recommendations 1a and 1b: Challenge racist and discriminatory actions.

- Recommendation 6: Replicate the factors of educational success for all communities

- Recommendation 8: Advance fairness in the workplace

- Recommendation 15: Empower pupils to make more informed choices to fulfil their future potential.

- Recommendation 17: Encourage innovation.

- Recommendation 24: Disaggregate the term 'BAME'.

Given time constraints, it was agreed that the committee would revisit the above at its next meeting.

9.0 UNESCO Gender Equality: How global universities are performing

The committee received and noted the UNESCO Gender Equality: How global universities are performing Part 1 and Part 2 reports.

In addition, A Zaman flagged for the committee a collective work by the Runnymede Trust and the Fawcett Society entitled Broken Ladders: The myth of meritocracy for women of colour in the workplace.

Given time constraints, it was agreed that the committee would revisit the above at its next meeting.

10.0 Update from EDI Academic Lead

N Canoo informed the committee that the first meeting of the Academic Salon took place on 1 March. She said that the purpose behind this initiative was to provide support to academic colleagues and to

foster a sense of belonging and collegiality at Bloomsbury Institute. However, attendance at the Salon was open to all staff.

The next session is planned to take place by July 2022.

11.0   Update from Disability and Wellbeing Manager

N Michail informed the committee that a new wellbeing app would be introduced soon for use by both students and staff. She also reported that we entered into a partnership with UMO services who provide psychological support through the processes of mentoring and coaching that positively impacts mental health and wellbeing.

A query was made concerning the use of our current app TalkCampus and it was noted that the main reason behind looking for another provider was the limited engagement with the app by our student body.

It was noted that a dyslexia assessment would be available for our students with effect from the new term, and we would cover the cost of an independent assessor for each student expressing interest.

A recommendation from the Student Representative was made to consider providing counselling services for students. N Michail explained that we currently do not provide such services, but encouraged anyone who feels they might need counselling support to contact her or B Collins for advice.

Any Other Business

12.0   Any Other Business

- A Charles informed the committee about the mental health training he and colleagues had received from Rethink Mental Illness.

- A suggestion was made to A Charles for consideration to be given to a weekend retreat for staff to support their wellbeing.

Date and venue of next meeting

13.0   15 July 2022, 1 pm – 3 pm, Teams Meeting