School of Government

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (ED&I) Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on

Tuesday 9 January 2024 at 11:00 hours, via Zoom

Members Present:

Emily Scott	(ES)	Acting School Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (Chair)
Mwita Chacha	(MC)	School Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
Licia Cianetti	(LC)	Academic
Abena Dadze-Arthur	(AD-A)	Academic
George Kyris	(GK)	Academic
Yuxiang Lin	(YL)	PG student representative
Fatima Madani	(FM)	UG EDI Student Ambassador
Tatheenah Mukulu	(TM)	UG EDI Student Ambassador
Dee Pettifer	(DP)	Professional Services (ED&I Committee Administrator)
Stefan Wolff	(SW)	Academic
Bizuneh Yimenu	(BY)	Academic

In attendance

Laura Jenkins	(LJ)	Academic Lead – POLSIS in Colour

Summary of actions for ED&I Committee

Agenda item	Action	Owner	Timescale
8 – 21.11.23	To report outcome of meeting between DHoC and POLSIS women re promotions. ES to attend for continuity purposes.	MC via ES	TBC
Action Tracker Review – 09.01.24	To confirm available School-based EDI data and set an EDI School Forum date and agenda.	MC (ES)	TBC
6 – 09.01.24	To initiate the rollout of the next EDI newsletter, requesting contributions to the content from EDI members.	ES / SB	TBC
6 – 09.01.24	To update and purge the EDI noticeboards at the point each newsletter is released.	DP	Once next newsletter has been released and then ongoing.

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1.	Apologies Sobia Baig – Professional Services Niheer Dasandi - Academic Ash Stokoe – Academic	

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2.	Minutes of previous meeting Noted: minutes of the meeting held on 21 November 2023 were approved as an accurate record. Action tracker review – those items not addressed elsewhere on the agenda • Recorded EDI-complaints data being accessible to EDI UG Ambassadors: this will be addressed by the School's Student Engagement and Experience Officer as part of a wider action request by UG EDI ambassadors relating to the 'Report and Support' initiative. • It was agreed at the SMT meeting which took place on 4 December that HoDs will add EDI as a standing item for all departmental meetings and for POLSIS this will be included on their away days' agenda. • The EDI Committee Terms of Reference is now updated to include the agreed terms of office and increased WRM points for academic staff. • To produce Terms of Reference for the Athena Swan SAT (Self-Assessment Team): ES reported that no other SAT in the College has a ToR. MC to discuss terms verbally with Athena Swan Leads when forming the SAT. • EDI School Forum: ES is working with the College colleague who presented College-based EDI data at the EDB forum which took place in the autumn 2023, to provide School-specific data as the basis for the agenda for an EDI School Forum. Date of the forum to be decided. EDI Committee Away Day may still take place. **Action**: ES / MC to confirm available School-based EDI data and set an EDI School Forum date and agenda. • Support for cultural events – participating and organising: in view of organising events being time-heavy and EDI members having limited time, there will be a regular invitation in newsletters encouraging School colleagues to approach EDI members if they require an EDI rep or would like practical and / or financial support for an event they are organising.	MC (ES)
3.	Standing item: UG EDI Student Ambassadors' and PG Rep updates YL (PG) noted: • Recent social events promoting inclusion: Halloween and a Christmas dinner. • Within POLSIS, postgraduate students had the opportunity to present their work and receive feedback. FM and TM (UG) noted: • An initiative is in place to ascertain what students would like so that external organisations can be sourced to partner with. This could be in the form of internships, for example. • Guidance is being produced to provide induction handover information for future EDI UG ambassadors. • A pragmatic approach is being adopted to focus on cultural events – looking at these on a month by month basis. An example of this is focusing on Chinese New Year in January, and connecting with activities already taking place within the University. March will be particularly busy with Eid, Ramadan and Women's Day to highlight a few.	

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4.	Standing item: Athena Swan update As the Athena Swan Co-Leads were not in attendance at this meeting, an update will be presented to the EDI committee at the next meeting.	

5.	Working Groups updates
	
	<u>Noted</u>:
	
	REF Environmental Statement
	• ND is engaged in identifying best practice in respect of producing an Environment Statement, looking at those produced internally as well as by other institutions. This will then be used to inform the write-up of the next one.
	• Initial findings: EDI drives Warwick University's Environment Statement, rather than just being mentioned within each area of focus.
	
	Decolonisation of the curriculum
	• School Head of Education is to meet with BBS colleagues next week.
	• BBS' successful action so far appears to be as a result of top-down support.
	• There is some anxiety around the potential tensions this process may cause. Before implementing any model, and in collaboration with the School Head of Education, we will seek to pursue a model that minimises negative impact.
	• Seed funding to be considered, as offered by BBS, to encourage colleagues to assess their programmes and reading lists. This is to encourage wider participation beyond reliance on volunteers who may regularly put themselves forward for such initiatives.
	• DPAP is in particular need of current 'decolonised' materials as they are already teaching international students based remotely.
	• A major obstacle is workload allocation for this process to be implemented:
	    o Split allocations could be considered: one colleague to lead on design and another on content, for example, and allocations to be in addition to those already in place for standard module and programme reviews.
	    o If there is to be a standard allocation of workload points for this process this needs to be agreed at School level to ensure consistent and fair treatment, and to avoid the need to re-negotiate each year. A 20-point allocation may not be enough for a single year, but if allocation is recurring year on year this may be more beneficial to achieve what is expected.
	    o Encouraging an 'opt-in' and a verbal commitment is favoured over an automatic workload points allocation for all.
	• Monitoring decolonising activity: colleagues could be asked to complete a short-page form detailing their actions.
	
	BAME awarding gap / POLSIS in Colour
	• There is a 58-page report which will be released next week.
	• School Head of Education will support any actions highlighted, and the report has been shared with the Education Committee.
	• This report will be produced bi-annually rather than annually to allow time for action to be implemented.
	• The report will be released by email and will link with the action plan for addressing the awarding gap.	

Agenda Item	Agenda Item	Action

	• Students will have the opportunity to attend feedback events alongside opportunities within seminars, and a seminar forum – as participation and inclusion in seminars is sometimes problematic.
	• Reporting mechanisms to be enhanced – addressing the issue that students are often overwhelmed by which option to follow to seek advice and support, and if their particular issue is big enough to report. Providing information on the front page of Canvas is being considered as an option. Options available to report through include: The University's Report + Support provision; student reps; department staff; Complaints Procedure.
	• Staff / student forums to be regular events.
	• Video to be produced which will draw out and focus on particular areas within the report. POLSIS in Colour committee students can then present this at events such as staff away days, providing the opportunity for staff and students to discuss particular areas formally.
	
	• As a UG-led initiative, POLSIS in Colour activities are primarily open to POLSIS and IDD students, although postgraduates have attended some of the events. The name of the group has been queried in light of this, if it is to widen its membership across the School.
	
	• Upcoming events include:
	    ○ Report launch event.
	    ○ 24 January – games night.
	    ○ An alumni event – invited participants to make presentations.
	    ○ Cultural Festival: students share food and make presentations focusing on their culture. Staff and students invited.
	    ○ Coffee chats, and a sports-related event may also be in the pipeline.
	
	• Future activities:
	    ○ Once the steps regarding decolonisation of the curriculum have been decided, involving students in the process would be welcomed.
	    ○ Involving the EDI Committee in addressing some of the action points in the POLSIS in Colour report would be beneficial as 28 recommendations from the report are EDI-related.
	    ○ EDI Committee members could attend POLSIS in Colour meeting(s).
	
	• Proposed reasons for the School of Government's recent achievement in narrowing the BAME awarding gap:
	    ○ Data focuses on 'Good Honours', which includes 2:1 awards as well as First Class. First Class data alone would not be as favourable in evidencing an improvement. The data also looks different depending on whether EM (ethnic minority) students are compared with white students or whether you break it down by specific ethnicity. So, for example, the data looks worse when black students are compared with white students.
	    ○ There is a general commitment to inclusion across the School in this regard, and so increased awareness by staff and students may have resulted in improved dedication to addressing this issue. Other elements that may have helped include the creation of POLSIS in Colour, inclusive classroom guidelines, community building events such as Cultural Festivals, alumni and career events, internships in St Lucia spearheaded by Richard North with the Caribbean Elective; although the POLSIS in Colour report highlights that	

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	there are still issues with comfort and belonging, seminar teaching, the curriculum and structural obstacles. For example, 38% of ethnic minority students do not feel comfortable being themselves in the department/School compared with 8% of non-ethnic minority students. 44% of ethnic minority students feel uncomfortable participating in seminars during discussions related to ethnicity, race and religion compared with 24% of non-ethnic minority students). 47% of ethnic minority students do not feel reflected in the curriculum compared to 10% of non-ethnic minority students. In terms of structural obstacles, ethnic minority students were nearly three times as likely as non-ethnic minority students to experience issues with timetabling, caring responsibilities or institutional prejudice. o Kerrie Myers' achievements, as the School's Student Engagement and Experience, have been outstanding and in particular with regards to having an impact on career networks and graduate destinations. Kerrie's Get Ahead scheme, for example, should be noted as excellent practice in this regard. **CoSS Equality Scheme** • The deadline for this has been postponed and data collation will be dealt with by email.	
6.	Dissemination of agreed Complaints Procedure Noted: Complaints procedure to be disseminated: • Via HoDs. • Via School EDI intranet, and usual platforms, linking it to the University's 'Report + Support' page. • Link to be provided in the EDI newsletter. Newsletter action: • ES to liaise with SB to roll out the next EDI newsletter, requesting other members to contribute to content. • Each time the newsletter is distributed, the EDI noticeboards will also be updated and purged.	ES / SB DP
7.	Women's writing retreat update ES noted: • There are a number of women's writing retreats being organised, including one which will bring together colleagues from across the School.	
8.	Standing item: budget overview DP noted: • Out of the £7,650 budget allocation, circa £1,000 has been spent to date on staffing costs. • Other costs in the pipeline include: Athena Swan focus groups, Women's writing retreats, Sara Ahmed visit.	

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9.	Any other business None reported.	
10.	Date of next meeting To be confirmed.	