UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Equality and Diversity Network

Notes of the Meeting held on 28 April 2014

Present: Darren Wallis (Chair)
            Sandra Beaufoy (Secretary)
            Darani Anand, Rachael Brogan, Sue Burrows, Julia Carroll, Rachel
            Corke, Judith Everington, Hannah Harding, Louise Hasler, Gemma
            Hearndon, Brenda Jones, Rachel Leonard, Claire Martin, Helen May,
            Anne Maynard, Claire O'Leary, Martyn Potts, Stephanie Smart, Yulia
            Timofeeva, Laura Townsend, Mandeep Tutt, Despina Weber

Apologies: Rachael Barnes, Alison Bell, Helen Blunt, Paul Brown, Georgina
            Copeland, Mairi-Ann Cullen, Rona Freeman, Janet Keene, Alastair
            Kirk, Andrea Klaus, Charlotte Lewis, Clive Letchford, Colin
            MacDougall, Donna McIntyre, Philip Moore, Ayesha Rahman, Shirin
            Rai, Julia Rogers, Jenny Rooney-Kennedy, Angela Roxburgh,
            Margaret Shrewring, Julie Taylor, Leonie Walls

In Attendance: Oliver Cooper (WBS), Jennifer Henderson (WBS), Sandy Sparks
            (LDC)

1. Notes of last meeting

    RESOLVED:

    That the notes of the meeting of the Equality and Diversity Network held on 21
    January 2014 be approved.

2. Matters Arising

    a) Athena SWAN

        REPORTED: (by the HR Adviser, Equality and Diversity)

        That Computer Science will be submitting for a Bronze Athena award in
        April 2014 and Psychology will be deferring their Silver Athena submission
        until November 2014.

        Both the Athena Network Group and Steering Group continue to meet
        regularly. At the last Network meeting, Gareth Bennett from WBS presented
        the WBS Workload Allocation Model.

    b) PULSE survey (Minute 2(c) refers)

        REPORTED: (by the HR Adviser, Equality and Diversity)

        That examples of best practice and progress on Departmental PULSE
        Action Plans will be published on the University website prior to the next
        PULSE survey, scheduled for April/May 2015.

c) Staff Network Groups (Minute 6 refers)

REPORTED: (by the HR Adviser, Equality and Diversity)

That details and web links of Staff Network Groups are now included in the online Staff Induction site.

3. ECU Gender Equality Charter Mark (GEM)

RECEIVED: (by Oliver Cooper and Jennifer Henderson from WBS)

A presentation on the experiences of WBS staff in completing a submission for the Equality Challenge Unit Gender Equality Charter Mark trial. The presentation outlined the benefits and the challenges of working through a submission and included 'top tips' for departments. These included:

(i) That the Head of Department Chair GEM meetings;
(ii) That it is vital to request data from central administration as soon as possible and to keep a tracker to chase data requests. Data collection is a fundamental requirement of the submission, but was the biggest challenge;
(iii) Selection of staff for the Self Assessment team, ensuring that key staff, such as Admissions Tutors are included, but also that staff involved have a real interest in what is trying to be achieved.
(iv) Assign colleagues to draft specific responses to questions within the submission.
(v) A departmental representative to attend Athena Network meetings to share best practice.

The WBS application will be submitted to the Equality Challenge Unit by the 30th April 2014 deadline.

REPORTED:

A discussion took place with regard to the impact that Athena initiatives are having on departments and how the initiatives were being measured. Examples were given which included, the increased uptake of mentors, number of female seminar speakers, improved visibility of role models and attendees at awareness events, such as the 'Demystifying the Promotion Process' at Warwick.

RESOLVED:

That Arts and Social Sciences departments be encouraged to investigate the possibility of starting their GEM work prior to the formal launch of the Charter Mark in October 2014.

4. Unconscious Bias

RECEIVED: (by Sandy Sparks, LDC Adviser)

A presentation on understanding Unconscious Bias. The presentation included examples of unconscious bias and what individuals can do to mitigate it. The group discussed when unconscious bias may be take place, such as in student admissions, assessments, recruitment of staff and promotion. Unconscious bias

can be influenced by individuals' backgrounds, cultural environment and personal experiences.

5. <u>Update on Disability Student Support Services</u>

    REPORTED: (by Despina Weber, Disability Coordinator)

    (a) That Disability Services Support has been has not had capacity to meet demand and therefore had prioritised their workloads as efficiently as possible. The team have been required to be creative in how to offer services, which have included 'drop in' sessions and working with a number of consultants in order to reach as wide an audience as possible.

    (b) That a Disability Advisor has been appointed as a temporary measure on a six month fixed term contract until September 2014.

    (c) That Term 3 will focus on special examination arrangements and the HESA return.

    (d) That on 7 April 2014 the Government announced measures to modernise the Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs) available to HE students from England. The changes are aimed at modernising the current system, ensuring that public funding for DSAs is targeted in the best way to achieve value for money. Key changes are:

        (i) DSAs will now only pay for higher specification or higher cost computers where a student needs one solely by virtue of their disability. The DSA will no longer pay for standard specification computers or the warranties and insurance associated with them. DSA are changing their approach to the funding of a number of computer equipment, software and consumable items.

        (ii) Students with Specific Learning Difficulties will continue to receive support through DFSAs where their support needs are considered to be more complex.

        (iii) DSA will fund the most specialist non-medical help.

        (iv) The additional costs of specialist accommodation will no longer be met by DSAs, other than in exceptional circumstances.

        These changes will apply to all full-time, full-time distance learning, part-time and postgraduate students applying for DSA for the first time in respect of an academic year beginning on or after 1 September 2015.

    (e) These changes have the potential to dramatically impact on the recruitment, retention and achievement of many disabled students. The stated intention to shift the cost burden onto universities will disproportionately affect those who have been most successful in recruiting disabled students.

    (f) The Government will look to HEIs to play a more proactive role in supporting students with "mild difficulties", as part of their duties to provide reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010.

(g) The proposed changes would significantly impact the University financially, as well as possibly discouraging disabled people from studying at university.

(h) This matter is being discussed at national and institutional level, as well as by Students' Unions and Student Assessment Centres, who have not been consulted by the Government prior to the proposed changes being announced.

(i) The National Association of Disability Practitioners (NADP) are demanding that the Government have an urgent rethink on these proposals which could seriously impact on numbers of disabled students in HEIs.

RESOLVED:

That the HR Adviser, Equality and Diversity circulate the ministerial statement by David Willetts plus responses to the statement, to Network Group Members for dissemination to their Departments.

6. Dignity at Warwick for Staff and Students

REPORTED: (by the HR Adviser, Equality and Diversity)

(a) The drafting of the revised Dignity at Warwick for Staff and Students Policy is now in its final stages.

(b) A number of new Dignity Contacts have been recruited, increasing the number from 7 to 22 Dignity Contacts, ensuring a more diverse range of contacts for staff to choose from.

(c) In consultation with the Dignity Contacts, appropriate training sessions are being planned for the contacts to be undertaken before the launch of the revised policy.

(d) Photos and a short profile of each Dignity Contact will be listed on the Dignity at Warwick web pages.

(e) Communication of the revised policy and details of a 'Dignity at Warwick' event will be made later in 2014.

RESOLVED:

That the HR Adviser, Equality and Diversity circulate the draft policy to the Network for comments.

7. Equality and Diversity Training

REPORTED: (by HR Adviser, Equality and Diversity)

(a) New training dates are being published on the LDC website for all of the Equality and Diversity training sessions: 'Think What you Think'; 'Types of Discrimination'; 'Disability Awareness' and 'Mental Health Awareness'.

(b) Since March 2013 the following number of staff have taken the sessions:

'Think What you Think' – 126

'Types of Discrimination' – 100
'Disability Awareness' – 71
'Mental Health Awareness' – 50

On-Line Modules:
'Recruitment and Selection' - 245
'Diversity in the Workplace' - 277

(c) The MIND Bus 'Journey' will be coming onto Campus on Wednesday 7 May and Wednesday 28 May 2014 and will be parked in the Piazza by the Students Union building.

8.   Staff Network Groups

REPORTED: (by the HR Adviser, Equality and Diversity)

(a) The LGBT Staff and PhD Student Network Group continues to meet regularly on every second Wednesday lunchtime of each month. Drinks are also held on Tuesday evenings on the fourth Tuesday of each month.

(b) The Returning Parents Network Group meeting was held on 28 April. The meeting discussed transition of working parents back into work and sharing maternity leave between parents.

(c) The Network for Disabled Staff will be discussed at the next Disability Interest Group.

RESOLVED:

That the following will be investigated:

(i) That the maternity returners checklists are sent to the appropriate line managers before the employee returns from maternity leave.

(ii) That baby changing facilities be accommodated in some of the toilet facilities across campus.

(iii) That gender neutral toilets, breast feeding facilities and baby changing facilities are included in the interactive campus map which is currently being designed by Estates.

9.   Items for the Equality and Diversity Committee

REPORTED: (by the Chair)

(a) That departments understand the benefits and challenges as well as the resource implications of working towards the Gender Equality Charter Mark, and consider starting work on their GEM submission as soon as possible.

(b) That the success of the Returning Parents Network Group is noted, along with their request for improved baby changing facilities across campus.

10. <u>Any other business</u>

REPORTED: (by Y Timofeeva, Computer Science)

That one academic department appeared not to be permitting periods of study leave for only one term for their academic staff, which was not believed to be in line with the Study Leave Policy.

RESOLVED:

11. That the HR Adviser, Equality and Diversity raise this issue with the relevant HR Adviser for clarification.

12. <u>Date of next meeting</u>

TO REPORT:

The dates for the Network meetings in the academic year 2014/15 will be announced later in the year.