

EQUALITIES COMMITTEE

# UNCONFIRMED Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 25 January 2018

Present: Jon Renyard (Chair)

Andy Calvert

Ezra Evans

Carrie-Lee Fassinger

Claire Flexen

Betti Hines

Babak Jani

Karen Ryan

Pauline Smith

Samantha Wallbridge

In attendance: Dr Mary Oliver

Louise Whittaker

Francesca Brownrigg (Secretary)

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| **1.0** | **Welcome and apologies for absence** | |  |
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| 1.1 | The Chair welcomed Babak Jani as a new member of the Committee, representing the Faculty of Media and Performance; and Dr Mary Oliver and Louise Whittaker who had both been invited to attend. | |  |
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| 1.2 | Apologies were received from Heidi Cooper-Hind and Anne-Marie Howat. | |  |
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| **2.0** | **Minutes for the previous meeting** | |  |
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| 2.1 | The minutes from the meeting held Thursday 7 September 2017 were approved. | |  |
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| **3.0** | **Matters arising** | |  |
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| 3.1 | *(minute 4.3 refers)* The Equality and Diversity training module with Marshalls had been launched. Safeguarding and Unconscious Bias training were still being considered and it was anticipated that they would be available in the foreseeable future. | |  |
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| 3.2 | *(minute 9.4 refers)* The Chair had met the newly elected Students’ Union International Officer to discuss satisfaction results for EU students, as the National Student Survey (NSS) results showed that EU students were less satisfied than either UK or Overseas students. There was no obvious reason for the lower satisfaction levels, but it was possible that welcome events were targeted more towards Overseas students, who might also have developed a stronger relationship with the International Office through the application process. This may warrant further consideration. | |  |
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| 3.3 | | *(minute 10.2 refers)* The Chair had also met the Students’ Union LGBT Officers to discuss the findings from the HEPI/HEA Survey where it was reported that the wellbeing of LGBT students was lower than that of other students. Student Services were currently reviewing their processes, and it was anticipated that this might have a positive impact. |  |
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| **4.0** | | **Working Group Updates** |  |
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| 4.1 | | The Committee was invited to note the update of the working groups. |  |
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| **5.0** | | **Demographics Report 2017** |  |
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| 5.1 | | The Demographics Report 2017 reviewed admissions, referral, retention and final classification data against a wide range of variables. Many of the results remained consistent with those reported in previous years. |  |
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| 5.2 | | The University was moving towards portfolio-based admissions within some subjects, rather than requiring applicants to be interviewed. This change to the process was likely to result in offers being made to a wider range of students, which would mean that the results were not comparable over time. This would need to be taken into consideration in future years. |  |
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| 5.3 | | The Committee agreed that the following actions should be progressed:   * Further discussion with the BME student group about their overall experience at AUB * Desk-based research into assessment type, and its impact on the numbers of referrals by specific minority group, especially by domicile * Desk-based research to understand the profile of AUB Foundation students who show higher referral rates and, if appropriate, discussion with relevant academic staff to explore this * Desk-based research to understand the reasons for lower BME progression, the outcomes of which could be fed into the discussion group.   The outcome of this initial work would then determine whether further activity was likely to be beneficial. |  |
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| **6.0** | | **Tackling the BME Attainment Gap** |  |
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| 6.1 | | The Committee received the notes of the ECU seminar ‘Tackling the BME Attainment Gap’ which had been attended by the Widening Participation Manager and the Senior Officer Equalities. The seminar had focused on the persistence of the BME attainment gap in UK Universities, and the need for a strategic approach to tackle the issues, with a particular focus on a sense of belonging, Eurocentric curriculum and assessment. |  |
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| 6.2 | | The Campus working group would be asked to consider issues relating to a sense of belonging, noting that ‘campus’ did not necessarily just refer to the physical environment. The Curriculum working group would consider whether the exemplar table provided within the papers might assist the University in evaluating the inclusiveness of the curriculum, which might respond to issues of both content and assessment. |  |
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| 6.3 | | The ECU seminar had considered alternative conversation methods: Long-table and Porch-sitting. The Committee agreed that the Communication Working Group should explore these non-confrontational approaches further to consider how they might be used to supplement the roundtable programme. |  |
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| 6.4 | | Participants in the ECU seminar had found it a useful day, with a very knowledgeable and interesting facilitator. The Committee also noted that the small proportion of BME staff employed at AUB might also present a challenge, especially in recruiting students from a BME background. This was not easy to address, given the very small local BME population, but consideration could be given to the most effective ways of encouraging applications from prospective BME staff. Appointments could of course only be made from those who had made a suitable application, but it was important to ensure that the University did not unwittingly exclude any potential applicant groups, either through its advertising and promotion, or through its application process. The Senior Officer Equalities would work with HR to consider the options that were available. | Senior Officer Equalities and HR |
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| **7.0** | | **Annual Recruitment Report 2016/17** |  |
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| 7.1 | | The Annual Recruitment Report 2016/17 was a summary of equalities data in relation to recruitment to established posts. |  |
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| 7.2 | | It was reported that there had been an increase in disabled academic applicants during 2016/17, whilst the proportion of disabled professional services applicants had remained stable. |  |
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| 7.3 | | There had been a significant decrease in the proportion of applicants to academic posts within the 20-30 age bracket, but members considered that the entry qualifications for an academic position might deter applicants due to a lack of relevant qualifications and/or experience. It was more common for those in the creative arts to work in industry before returning to complete their doctorate, which would often make them slightly older before they applied for roles. | HR |
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| 7.4 | | It was noted that Creative Skillset had identified a significant decline in the representation of **Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (**BAME) workers, when analysis data from the last census, and its own Employment Census. Almost 2,000 BAME workers had left the creative industries since 2009, reducing the representation to just 5.4%. This information was passed to the Senior Officer Equalities for the detailed findings to be presented to the Committee at the next meeting. | Senior Officer Equalities |
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| 7.5 | | The Chair thanked the Human Resources team for providing the report. It was noted that future reports would benefit from an additional comparison between shortlisted applicants and those who were successful at interview or appointed. |  |
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| **8.0** | | **Gender Pay Gap Report** |  |
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| 8.1 | | The Chair gave a verbal update on the Gender Pay Gap Report. All data had been collected, but further work was still required to analyse how the different employment contracts (established, Visiting Tutor and casual) might impact on the overall pattern. |  |
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| 8.2 | | The Chair noted that the final version of the report would be circulated to Committee members for comment, prior to being published before the deadline in April 2018. | Chair |
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| **9.0** | | **South-East Equalities Network (SEEN) Meeting** |  |
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| 9.1 | | The Committee noted the minutes from the South-East Equalities Network (SEEN) Meeting. |  |
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| **10.0** | | **Equality Challenge Unit (ECU)** |  |
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| 10.1 | | The Committee received a paper which confirmed that UMT had agreed to continue the ECU Subscription for 2018. Also attached was the paper which had been presented to UMT, which set out the rationale and also highlighted the subscriber benefits. |  |
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| 10.2 | | The Committee was reminded that all University Staff were able to access the ECU Web Portal to view reports, training resources and guidance. Support was available from the Senior Officer Equalities if anyone required any assistance with accessing the portal. |  |
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| **11.0** | | **AUB Student Profile** |  |
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| 11.1 | | The Committee received for information a paper outlining AUB results in conjunction with the HEFCE data analysis summary 2016/17, which had been presented to the Committee at the last meeting. The HEFCE report gave an analysis of the questions posed to entrants on their sexual orientation, gender identity and religion or belief. The Committee had agreed that it would be of benefit to compare the data with that of AUB entrants. |  |
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| 11.2 | | The paper reported that both gender identity and sexual orientation indicated little variation across institutions and subjects. Distribution of religion and belief varied a little, mostly between Christian, Muslim, no religion and information refused. The Committee considered that the most significant variant was the high number of AUB students who refused to provide information, compared to the rest of the sector. |  |
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| **12.0** | | **Access Agreement 2016/17** |  |
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| 12.1 | | The Access Agreement Monitoring Report 2016/17 had been submitted to the Office of Fair Access (OFFA) by the deadline of 17 January 2018. The papers also included the Commentary, which provided further detail in support of the numbers provided in the formal tables. No response had yet been received from OFFA. It was noted that the new Access and Participation Statements, replacing Access Agreements, were due to be written in the coming months. |  |
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| **13.0** | | **Disabled Access Report** |  |
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| 13.1 | | The Disabled Access Report detailed that no formal complaints relating to issues of physical disability had been received. However, there had been multiple lift issues reported. The Chair noted that the report was disappointing, as historically the lifts had been in good working order, but there were now more issues occurring than expected. The report was for information only, but this matter should be kept under review. |  |
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| **14.0** | | **Any Other Business** |  |
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| 14.1 | | There was no other business. |  |
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| **15.0** | | **Date of next meeting** |  |
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| 15.1 | | The meeting had been brought forward to start at an earlier time. The Committee considered that this was a more convenient time and it was agreed that all future meetings would start at the earlier time. |  |
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| 15.2 | | The date of the next Equalities Committee meeting was **Thursday 10 May 2018 in UH211 University House Boardroom, starting at the new time of 08:45 am**;refreshments will be available from 08:30 am. |  |