



EDI COMMITTEE

Open Minutes Of the meeting held on Thursday 14 July 2022 on MS Teams

Present:

Professor Nick Braisby (Vice Chancellor [Chair])

Charlotte Stewart (Inclusion, Diversity and Disability Manager [Deputy Chair])

Karla Inniss (HRBP - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion [Secretary])

Rachael Cornwall (Director of Human Resources)

Sarah Jackson (Students' Union HR & Development Manager)

Louise Harvey (Head of Communications)

Professor Rachel Cragg (Pro Vice-Chancellor and Race Equality Charter Self-Assessment Team Chair)

Anthony Murphy (Independent Member of Council)

Pia Carnegie (Head of School [School of Business and Law])

Dr Paulette Morris (PSE Representative)

Katie Collins (PSE Representative)

Simon Lee-Price (UCU Representative)

Hilary Mullen (UCU Representative)

Associate Professor Margaret Rioga (BAME Steering Group Chair)

Shilpa Manek (Minute Secretary)

1. Welcome / Apologies for Absence

1.1 The Chair welcomed Committee Members to the meeting, including a warm welcome to member of Council Anthony Murphy, and noted the following apologies:

- UCU Representative Dr Carlo Lusuardi.

2. Declaration of conflicts of interest

2.1 No conflicts of interest were declared.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting

3.1 The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as an accurate record without amendment.

4. Matters Arising / Status of Actions

4.1 The Chair requested that all previously completed actions that had already been notified to the committee be removed from the Actions table in future and an update provided on the ongoing actions only.

5. EDI Terms of Reference/Membership

5.1 The Committee considered the Terms of Reference and Membership. After a broad discussion the Committee agreed the following amendment to the Terms of Reference: the Committee minutes should be Open Minutes.

ACTION: Shilpa Manek

5.2 The Director of Human Resources (HR) Rachael Cornwall commented that the Committee was not a gender-diverse group and that its membership should be reviewed again to ensure gender balance/parity.

5.3 It was highlighted that all committee memberships needed to be diverse across several characteristics.

5.4 It was agreed that the Director of HR and the HRBP – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Karla Inniss would review the Committee's membership and bring any proposals for amendment to the Chair.

ACTION: Rachael Cornwall / Karla Inniss

5.5 The Students' Union (SU) HR and Development Manager, Sarah Jackson, offered to share student equality data and requested that a mature students' officer was added to the membership.

ACTION: Sarah Jackson

6. Thrive 2028 Strategy Feedback

6.1 The Committee received a paper on the feedback to the draft Thrive 2028 strategy prepared by Equality, Diversity, Inclusivity (EDI) HR Business Partner, Karla Inniss. She drew the Committee's attention to the following points:

- Initial staff feedback in the consultation sessions enquired how the new strategy could more strongly outline the University's approach to EDI. As a result, further consultation sessions had been held with the BAME network, the EDI working group and the BAME steering group.
- It was proposed that inclusivity should be added as a theme in the new strategy and align to revised EDI priorities.

6.2 The Chair thanked Karla Inniss for the paper and commented that Thrive 2028 had been revised to take comments on the paper where appropriate. Much strategic work had already been undertaken on inclusivity and Thrive 2028 as an overarching strategy. More detailed strategic commitments should be reflected in a new EDI Strategy in a similar way for other broad strategic commitments, e.g., sustainability.

6.3 The Chair advised that the final version of Thrive 2028 was to be approved by Council on 19 July 2022.

6.4 The Chair requested that Karla Inniss present a paper on the EDI Strategy at the next meeting.

ACTION: Karla Inniss

7. Student Futures Manifesto & wider EDI Work

7.1 The Committee received a paper from the Dean of Students, Emma Binnie on the call from the UPP Foundation Student Futures Commission for joint action between universities and students to address problems arising from the Covid-19 pandemic. The paper included a blueprint on how universities and students could work together to develop their Student Futures Manifestos, which would set concrete actions to improve the student experience.

7.2 The Dean of Students was working on co-creation with students to identify their needs and would then ask for staff feedback.

7.3 Ms Binnie also gave a brief update on the University Mental Health Charter. BNU was one of 23 universities that had committed to create the Charter. BNU intends to adopt a whole university approach to mental health and promote the mental health and wellbeing of all members (staff and students) of the university community.

7.4 There were two elements to the Charter: The Charter Programme and the Charter Award. Applications to join the programme had only recently opened; BNU would join the programme for the 2022-23 academic year and planned to apply for the award in 12 to 18 months. BNU aimed to consider lived experiences and learn from them.

7.5 Independent Member of Council, Anthony Murphy, commented that these were excellent pieces of work.

7.6 The Inclusion, Diversity and Disability Manager, Charlotte Stewart, asked at what stage Student Services would be involved and was informed that a working group had been set up to create a piece of work on engagement and to drive the project forward.

7.7 The Committee was reminded that all BNU staff were responsible for the wellbeing of students.

7.8 The Chair was delighted that work had progressed in these areas. Both strategic commitments are part of Thrive 2028.

8. Reasonable Adjustment Policy

8.1 The Committee considered a revised Reasonable Adjustment Procedure Policy. The Inclusion, Diversity and Disability Manager advised the Committee that the policy had been reviewed in light of recent changes in the Disability & Inclusion Team, the case law impact of the *Abrahart v University of Bristol* case and to bring the policy in line with the Equality Act 2010. The Committee held a thorough discussion of the policy which noted the following points:

- the Committee queried if it might be more appropriate to use 'share' instead of 'disclosure' but was informed that 'disclosure' was used for legal purposes.
- The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education and Digital), Professor Rachel Cragg, commented that the policy needed to be enacted and Education Committee could track progress on this.

Responsibility for tracking progress would be agreed after the policy was approved and published.

- The Independent Member of Council queried BNU's position regarding the Disability Confident Scheme and offered to assist with it as he had been involved with setting up the scheme. The Committee was informed that it was due to be reviewed.
- The Chair commented that the policy had been clearly written, but suggested it was important to clarify what 'reasonable' meant for staff members who would need to implement the policy.
- It was suggested that understanding competence standards was crucial and that training, and guidance would be required for those staff needing to authorise and revise modules, programme specifications and handbooks.

8.2 The Committee recommended the revised policy to the University Executive Team for approval.

9. EDI Data

9.1 The Committee received a paper on the University's revised approach to EDI from. Karla Inniss advised the Committee that the paper demonstrated compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and associated public sector duties. The new revised priorities, objectives and activities had received positive feedback and endorsement from the University's Governance Committee.

9.2 The Committee discussed the revised approach and commented that as there was a considerable amount of detail, which was important and necessary, it would be helpful to produce 2-3 succinct, key messages for all staff and students.

ACTION: Karla Inniss

9.3 The Committee agreed that a 'One University' approach, involving collaborative working with the Students' Union, and BNU's partnerships, was essential to achieve BNU's EDI objectives.

9.4 The Committee also agreed that the priorities needed to be highlighted with a greater level of detail in the report.

ACTION: Karla Inniss

9.5 The Committee noted the paper.

10. Students' Union EDI Committee Update

10.1 The Committee received a verbal update from the Students' Union HR & Development Manager, Sarah Jackson.

10.2 The Committee was advised that the SU EDI Committee consisted of Executive Officers, Lay Trustees and student Sabbatical Trustees, and met three times per year.

10.3 It had been identified that there was a lack of ethnic minorities representatives in the SU. The SU were working on a campaign to recruit more BAME students. The recruitment process had been reviewed and some criteria removed to encourage more diverse recruitment.

10.4 Sarah Jackson congratulated everyone on the NSS 2022 results.

10.5 In 2022-23, the SU would increase its contact with Asian students by delivering activities and programmes that were not located in and around the SU bar and by organising more religious celebrations and events across BNU.

10.6 The Committee welcomed the new SU Vice President Student Involvement, Jess Bradbury to the Committee. Jess Bradbury informed the Committee that PRIDE 2023 would normally take place in August 2023 but as there would not be many students on campus in August, it would be moved to 3 June 2023 to allow a large community celebration.

10.7 The Committee noted the verbal update.

11. Challenging Islamophobia Update

11.1 Karla Inniss presented an update on BNU's work to challenge Islamophobia. The Committee was informed that an online panel, consisting of a range of specially selected experts as well as BNU staff and students, had met in May 2022 to discuss definitions of Islamophobia, its damaging impact, and how the university could support its Muslim community. The paper presented the group's work to identify an agreed definition of Islamophobia and noted that further work needed to be undertaken.

11.2 A supplementary and more focused meeting was planned to consider the different definitions of Islamophobia.

11.3 Following these meetings, consultation would take place with external experts on a final agreed definition, and this would be recommended to the EDI committee in September 2022.

11.4 The Committee noted that the work may entail the University creating its own definition and that BNU would be one of the first universities to do so.

11.5 Independent Member of Council Anthony Murphy suggested contacting local organisations to devise a definition together.

11.6 The Committee was informed that the plan was that BNU would develop its own definition and then encourage others to engage with its work on this. Work was already taking place with Buckinghamshire Council.

11.7 The Committee fully supported the plan to create a BNU definition, and particularly thanked former BNU student and employee Zeshan Ashraf for his involvement in this project

11.8 The Committee noted the paper.

12. Inclusion Passport

12.1 The Committee received the paper from the Inclusion, Diversity and Disability Manager, on the proposal to introduce an Inclusion Card and Passport.

12.2 An Inclusion Passport template was presented to the Committee. It would be a voluntary and informal tool.

12.3 The Committee held a wide-ranging discussion of the proposal. Points made by the Committee included:

- the idea was good, but the word 'passport' seemed formal and bureaucratic;
- students and staff would need to be encouraged to use the passport and trained to understand it;
- a passport was already used in the sector for autism and worked very well;
- training, communication and confidentiality were very important
- all training needed to be joined up.

12.4 The Committee was informed that the card, if approved, would be launched in the autumn at the start of the academic year.

12.5 The Committee recommended putting a communication and training plan in place for students and staff before launching the card.

12.6 Charlotte Stewart suggested that the card could be launched at the start of the academic year and the passport later once training and communication were in place.

12.7 The Committee approved the introduction of the Inclusion Card in the autumn. However, the introduction of the passport at this stage was not approved, and the committee asked that further work be undertaken to address the committee's concerns before this item returned to the committee for further consideration.

13. Transgender Policy

13.1 The Committee received a paper from, Karla Inniss on the updated transgender policy.

13.2 The Committee discussed the amendments and agreed that the policy was informative.

13.3 The Chair suggested that it was important to review whether the University was doing enough to support transgender staff and students now, and it would be important for the lived experiences of trans students and staff to be reflected in future iterations of the policy.

ACTION: Karla Inniss

13.4 The Committee recommended the policy to UMG for approval noting the need for the new amended policy to be communicated widely across the University. It would be shared at Senate for information.

14. Items for next meeting

14.1 The Chair asked that any proposed agenda items for the next meeting should be sent to the Committee secretary.

15. Date of next meeting

15.1 The Chair informed all that the date of the next Committee was Monday 19 September 2022 at 3pm on MS Teams.