

Canterbury Christ Church University
Notes from the Equality & Diversity Delivery Group Meeting
held on 12th February 2008 at 2pm in the Blue Room

Present:

Tony Lavender
Moiria Mitchell
Margaret Scott
Simon Wright for John Hallam
Sue Kendall-Seatter
Hilary Bungay
Burkhard Scherer
Tracy Bell-Reeves
Kathryn Goldfinch
Kathy Chaney

Alison Spillett
Sheila Bonnage
Debbie Christian for Penny Stevens
Jae Fowler/Brenda Didmon
Sam Abdiche
Ian Williams
Jeremy Law
Becci Heard
Derek Maslin
Julie Wiater

Representing

Equality and Diversity
Equality and Diversity (Chair)
Disability Support Services
Human Resources
Faculty Education
Faculty Health & Social Care
Faculty Arts & Humanities
Staff Development Office
Registry
Library Services

International Office
Salomons
Broadstairs Campus
Chatham Campus
Hall Place
Web Development Team
Chaplaincy
Student Union:
UNISON
Equality and Diversity Administrator

Apologies: John Slater (Admissions and Recruitment), Becci Heard (Student Union), Tony Booth (UCU), Sam Abdiche (hall Place).

Absent: Kristina Masuwa-Morgan (Faculty Business and Sciences), Julie Billing (Accommodation), Phil Poole (LTEU), Gareth Waters (Student Union).

Introductions:

Julie Wiater was introduced as the new E&D Administrator. She will be updating the website and any comments or suggestions are welcomed. All the past E&D committee minutes have now been posted on the website.

Minutes of the last meeting: Were agreed.

Points of Discussion:

1. Terms of Reference (3.1 minutes of 13/11/07)

Following the recent restructuring of faculties there may be a change in representation on the group. TL will investigate.

2. Student Placements (following 4.2 of minutes 13/11/07)

MM met with Quality & Standards and the Faculty of Education to look at collaborative arrangements regarding placements. It had been proposed that guidance on placement arrangements be written and this is ongoing as it is difficult to standardize across all faculties. There are specific placement issues in some faculties (eg conflicts of interest where students have relatives at their placements).

MS reported on complaints of racism from students on placements. Does the responsibility lie with the University or the host institution? Need clear procedural route to follow (these might not be included in policies). Need to look at partner and host institutions policies. NHS Trust policies should be readily available to students. Websites should be student friendly with clear instructions of what to do if experiencing discrimination or racism. MS suggested looking at recent case studies. JF commented that training or guidance on how to support students encountering difficulties on placements would be useful. SW suggested the university consider meditative response between the parties so they have an opportunity to resolve issues. It was agreed as an agenda item for next meeting.

Action: MM, MS & JF to write up case studies for next meeting. If anyone knows of any cases please inform MM.

3. E-learning module (4.1 of minutes 13/11/08)

The e-module is now available for students as well as staff and is currently being promoted in the Student Services newsletter, Bob. A certificate can be awarded, if requested by students, on completion. All present were encouraged to complete the module. MM commented that the adaptation of this module and promotion to students, was the kind of example of good practice she is seeking to compile.

4. Faculty/department meetings

At the last meeting members were requested to ask faculties and departments to make equality and diversity a standing agenda item at meetings. This has given rise to discussion about an appropriate approach in all contexts. TL noted that it is appropriate at faculty board level but would be overly burdensome if obligatory at every department meeting. It was decided that members would make individual judgements on how to proceed and to discuss with MM.

6. Format of future meetings and group membership

There was a broader discussion about the role of the E&D Delivery Group, its members and what they can achieve outside of the group. Most have limited time and it was agreed that it was very important to use the time spent in meetings in a proactive way to deliver progress. MM proposed a more hands on and informal format for meetings with the time being spent in a more targeted way. This was agreed. JF suggested that the model used by Sustainability Committee may be appropriate for the group and that it should consider meeting more frequently.

MM said she would contact the Sustainability Committee for further information.

Action: MM to talk to Peter Vujakovic, Chair of Sustainability Committee.

Action: MM to draft roles and responsibilities of E&D DG members.

5. Investors in People (5.6 of minutes of 13/11/08)

TB-R reported that the assessment has been completed and the assessor has made a positive recommendation that CCCU should get full accreditation (not yet officially announced). The University was commended in some areas and everyone's work in this should be recognised. This means that the staff survey is now likely to go ahead and E&D DG will be consulted as to the approach taken.

7. Data

MM talked through paper on Staff disclosure regarding disabilities and sexual orientation. Meeting divided into three groups to discuss.

Group 1

Agreed to recommend that staff should be asked to disclose sexual orientation so that trend based analysis can be made. The group recommended it should be used in both the Equal Opportunities Monitoring form and in the Staff Survey prior to this to be introduced through the Data Verification Process to familiarise people with it and so desensitise it.

The expectation is that disclosure will become a requirement so we should be prepared and shown to be leading the way. It must be made clear that disclosure is optional and confidential with an explanation of why the information is being asked for.

The group believed a rewording of the example given in the discussion paper and the introductory paragraph of the current equal opportunities monitoring form would produce the right format. The group agreed that careful consideration should be given to the categories used. These need to be carefully explained to avoid confusion as it is important that people disclosing use pre-determined definitions.

There was a discussion of problems of confidentiality with the Staff Survey. As the survey would need to collect information regarding grade of staff so confidentiality issues could arise for small departments.

Group 2

Were split 50/50 on sexual orientation disclosure and monitoring. They suggested that a question in the Staff Survey could be: "Had you been asked for disclosure at recruitment how would you have responded?" to gauge response.

Group 3

Discussed the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form regarding disabilities and thought the biggest issue lay in the language which they felt was inconsistent and negative in tone and therefore didn't encourage completion. The group were unhappy with the question "Are you registered disabled"

The University doesn't currently collect information on categories of disability. It was suggested that the same disability categories as used for students are used with tick boxes. The group discussed what else could be done to improve the number of disabled staff recruited to CCCU and agreed that more use should be made of the website and positive case studies showing disabled staff satisfied with CCCU working conditions. These should be highlighted on the vacancies pages. Website must be accessible, up-to-date and informative.

The E&D DG agreed that Sexual Orientation should be monitored through the Equal Opportunities Form and the Staff Survey.

The whole group looked at data regarding Black and Ethnic Minority Staff at CCCU and even given mitigating factors the group were shocked at the low percentages especially in comparison to University of Kent. The trend is going in the wrong direction. The group discussed whether it would be possible to analyse leavers by ethnicity.

8. Senior Managers' E & D Workshop run by STEPS Drama Learning Development

This was in the form of "forum theatre" consisting of real-life scenarios from CCCU re-enacted by STEPS then followed by discussion. It was clarified that this training was for Senior Managers not the SMT alone. The use of real life scenarios very compelling and a good medium for getting messages across. Unfortunately this type of training is not

affordable for all CCCU staff so we need to find creative ways of communicating messages. Discussion regarding trying to re-create what STEPS did, would have to be user-led for example in the case of disabled staff and students. TL & MM to report on this to E & D Committee, any comments are welcomed.

Agenda Items 7 & 8 Communication and Consultation strategies and Equality and Diversity Action Plans were deferred.

9. Any Other Business:

MM announced that that a Sexual Orientation Working Group has been established to draft a position paper for the university. If anyone is interested in joining or contributing, the group is meeting on 26th February.