

CANTERBURY CHRIST CHURCH UNIVERSITY

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY DELIVERY GROUP HELD AT 2.00PM ON TUESDAY 13 NOVEMBER 2007 IN THE FREDERIC MASON ROOM AT THE PRIORY

Present:

Tony Lavender	Pro-Vice Chancellor (Dean of Salomons)
Moira Mitchell	Equality and Diversity Manager
Margaret Scott	Head of Student Support Services
John Hallam	Director of Human Resources
Sue Kendall-Seatter	Head of Dept: Primary Education
Hilary Bungay	Senior Lecturer: Allied Health Professions
Kristina Masuwa-Morgan	Senior Lecturer: Business
Burkhard Scherer	Senior Lecturer: Theology & Religious Studies
Julie Billing	Accommodation Services Manager
Tracy Bell-Reeves	Staff Development Officer
Kathy Chaney	Site Librarian (Salomons)
Phil Poole	Director: Learning & Teaching
John Slater	Director: Admissions and Recruitment
Sheila Bonnage	Human Resources Officer (Salomons)
Penny Stevens	Campus Tutor (Broadstairs)
Jae Fowler	Campus Tutor (Medway)
Brenda Didmon	Administrator (Medway)
Sam Abdiche	Project Director: CEBD
Derek Maslin	IT Support, Unison Representative
Ian Williams	Senior Web Developer
Kathryn Goldfinch	Examinations Manager
Alison Spillett	Student Advisor (International Office)

1. Apologies

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Jeremy Law (Dean of Chapel), Tony Booth (Professor, Educational Research) and Bob Cecil (Senior Lecturer, Social Work, Community and Mental Health).

2. Membership and Introductions

- 2.1 Moira Mitchell welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the Delivery Group and introductions were given. She explained that the Group had been established to replace the single issue working groups, namely, Race, Disability and Gender Equality. The Age, Sexual Orientation and Religion & Belief task groups would now report to the Delivery Group which would be responsible for these areas in future.

3. Terms of Reference

- 3.1 Moira Mitchell directed the Group's attention to the Terms of Reference information distributed prior to the meeting. She explained that she had sought to distinguish the separate roles and responsibilities of the Equality & Diversity Committee and the Delivery Group. Additional information, including the minutes of the Equality and Diversity Committee meetings, would be available on the Equality & Diversity web pages. These pages had not been updated for some time but should be shortly. The Terms of Reference were agreed and accepted by the Group.

Noted

4. The Equality and Diversity Context (presentation)

- 4.1 Moira Mitchell gave a presentation on the background and context to Equality & Diversity at the University (copy attached), and invited questions from the Group. At the end of the presentation she drew the Group's attention to the Equality and Diversity e-learning module *Diversity in the Workplace* available on the university's staff development web pages and asked all members to complete it if they had not already done so. She further asked the Group to promote the module to their faculties and departments.

Action:

Members of the Delivery Group to complete the e-learning module when possible and to promote at faculty or departmental meetings.

- 4.2 It was noted that the primary focus of the University's Equality & Diversity Strategy was within the university setting and there was a discussion about the experiences of students on placement with external partners. The Group recognised that students on placement could potentially be disadvantaged for a range of reasons (for example disability) and that this was of significant concern. It was also noted that all of the University's equality schemes (race, gender and disability) contained requirements to improve the experiences of students on placement.

Although other public bodies (for example schools) are required to publish equality schemes, there is no such obligation on non-public and smaller employers. The Group agreed that there should be a review of current placement agreements to gauge whether they could be improved. Bearing in mind the difficulty in some areas of securing placement partners, it was agreed that any recommendations should be of a 'light touch' nature.

Action:

Members of the Delivery Group to forward to Moira Mitchell any information they can procure about placement agreements (either the agreements themselves or evidence about students' experiences).

Moira Mitchell to review current placement agreements and provide an overview to the next meeting.

5. Equality Action Plans: Update and the Way Forward

5.1 Disability Equality Scheme Annual Report

Moira Mitchell reiterated that the University currently had three equality schemes: race, gender and disability. She explained that annual reports had to be produced for each of these and that the annual report for the Disability Equality Scheme had to be published by 5th December 2007. The Group agreed to check the draft report and forward any comments to Moira Mitchell by the end of November.

Action:

Moira Mitchell to forward the draft and members of the Group to send comments to her by end of November. The Report to also be sent to SMT and the Governing Body, after which Moira Mitchell will incorporate amendments.

5.2 Further Annual Reports

Moira Mitchell explained to the Group that, following the Disability Equality Scheme Annual Report, the three equality schemes (race, gender and disability) will have one annual report, the first of which will be published at the end of April 2008. An early draft of this report will be available at the next meeting.

5.3 Analysis of current activity

Prior to the meeting the Group had received amalgamated versions of three sections of the race, gender and disability equality action plans: organisational development, staff and students. Moira Mitchell distributed a discussion document which outlined how the following key issues cut across the three schemes:

- Consultation, Communication and staff networks
- Faculty and Department Meetings
- Staff survey
- Dignity at Work and Study
- Staff Development
- Gender Specific

5.4 Consultation, Communication and staff networks

Moira Mitchell informed the Group that she is developing a consultation and communication strategy for equality and diversity and there was a general discussion about the engagement of staff and students with equality and diversity issues. It was recognised that equality and diversity were often not high on the agenda and that engagement was not strong. The following reasons were suggested:

- Lack of awareness and clarity over personal responsibilities
- Time and work pressures
- Fear of tackling the issues in the wrong way
- Not knowing where to start
- Lack of personal incentives to get involved

During the discussion the following points and suggestions were noted:

- It is important to distinguish between, and provide for, the needs of staff and students to communicate their concerns and the need of the institution to consult with its stakeholders.
- There needs to be greater engagement of the Student Union with equality and diversity issues.
- With regards to staff it would be useful to approach equality and diversity on a role by role basis in order to make it relevant to people.
- Although valuable for information sharing, there should not be over-reliance on websites: people need to talk to each other.
- If equality and diversity issues could be linked to the development of skills (eg communication skills) people may participate more in training.
- Identifying good practice within the institution and disseminating it would be a positive way of promoting equality and diversity.
- Schemes at other institutions (eg the Listening Ears support at the University of Greenwich) should be investigated.
- A staff survey would be a valuable tool for consultation on certain issues.

5.5 Faculty and Department Meetings

The Group discussed the effectiveness of faculty and department meetings as a mechanism for implementing the Equality & Diversity Strategy and the three equality action plans. It was thought that chains of communication hindered progress on particular issues and it was recognised that equality & diversity was rarely high on agendas. Therefore equality & diversity needed to be more readily accessible and tailored to what individuals needed to know, e.g. issues faced by academic or support departments.

It was agreed to have equality & diversity as a standard agenda item for faculty and department meetings. Members of the Group would select specific issues to discuss with departments and would also consult as broadly as possible with staff about issues that concern them.

Action:

Members of the Group to select three requirements from either the Gender or Race Action Plans (available on the website) and, at their next faculty/department meeting, to gauge their colleagues' level of knowledge of and engagement with those requirements – and report back to Moira Mitchell before the next meeting.

5.6 Staff Survey

Further to discussions in Item 5.4 (above), John Hallam appraised the Group of the current position regarding the implementation of a Staff Survey. Much of the necessary background work has been undertaken, including consultation with external organisations. Despite this, the University has not yet committed to conducting the survey, possibly due to unfavourable timing. However it was believed there is commitment at SMT level to take this forward in 2008.

Although a staff survey would have a much broader remit than equality and diversity issues, it would be a valuable means of consultation on these issues. The Group discussed the need to establish the approach and focus of the survey and John Hallam explained that the survey working group had considered conducting initial staff focus groups. The Group agreed its full support of the survey and urged that the survey working group be reconvened as soon as possible.

Action:

Once Investors in People is concluded, John Hallam to stress to SMT the importance of the staff survey from the equality and diversity perspective and to reconvene the working group.

5.7 Dignity at Work and Study Policy

Moira Mitchell and Simon Wright, the Assistant Director of Human Resources, were currently working on the policy. The existing policy had been ratified, but the mediation issues had not been. Meetings with Trade Unions regarding the mediation issues have taken place. The process was moving forward on the basis that any proposed mediator did not need to be a member of the Trade Union. John Hallam reported that some Human Resources staff had received training in mediation, but how to define the roles of such staff.

Action:

Moira Mitchell to forward draft policy to members of Group when ready.

5.8 Staff Development

There was a discussion about the need to monitor staff development and it was agreed that this is important for two reasons: to ensure that equality and diversity is being promoted through the staff development programme, and to ensure that there is equity in the uptake of staff development opportunities in all groups.

Tracy Bell-Reeves reported that the current system did not allow for meaningful monitoring and that regionally, CCCU was in a minority in not being able to do this.

Action:

Tracy Bell-Reeves and Moira Mitchell to continue to work towards improved monitoring and to report progress at next meeting.

General Discussion

5.9 Disclosure

Following the discussion about monitoring staff development, there was a more general discussion about monitoring equality and diversity statistics across the university. It was noted that it is an individual's personal right whether or not they wish to declare a disability or his/her ethnic origin, and that some choose not to. It was therefore important to clearly explain why the data is important.

Moira Mitchell stated that it was a requirement of the Disability Action Plan to obtain higher disclosure rates. She suggested this could be accomplished by more clearly explaining to people the importance of disclosure and crucially, communicating to people what the university does to support disabled staff.

5.10 Impact Assessments

Moira Mitchell explained that impact assessment was a fundamental part of the university's Equality and Diversity Strategy. This involves evaluating the university's policies to gauge any potential detrimental impact on specific groups. Although a substantial number of policies in key departments (eg Human Resources) has already been undertaken, there is still a lot to do. Moira Mitchell asked the Group to consider any relevant

policies in their faculty/department and to spread the word about the importance of impact assessment to colleagues.

Date of next meeting

Tuesday 12th February 2008.