**NOTES OF THE EQUALITY & DIVERSITY OPERATIONAL GROUP MEETING**

**Tuesday 31 January 2017, 12pm – 2:10pm, Room MU505/504, City Campus**

**Attendance**

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| **In Attendance** | Dr Emma Wedge (Chair) |
| Dr Andrew J. Cooper |
| Dr Ruth Fairclough |
| Chijioke Obasi |
| Suneeta Patel |
| Kunal Swani |
| Penny Welch |
| Niamh Kelly |
| Clair Jenkins |
| Andrew Philip M Aston |
| Katherine Clough |
| William Cooling (Secretary) |
| **Present** | Phil Gravestock |
| Oriyomi Okeyinka (notetaker) |
| **Apologies Received** | Dr Sammy Li |
| Jon Elsmore |

**Minutes**

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| **1. Welcome and Introductions** |
| EW welcomed everyone to the meeting and members introduced themselves. |
| **2. Notes of last meeting held on 1st November 2016** |
| The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as an accurate record. Please refer to the Action Log for an update on Matters Arising |
| **3. Chairs Items** |
| **Update on University’s Performance in the Stonewall Workplace Index**  EW reported that the University had improved its performance in the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index, raising 61 places from 225 to 164. She praised key individuals in the Division of Human Resources, Equality and Diversity Unit and the LGBT Staff Network for their work in securing the improved ranking. She also cited this as evidence that the institution’s approach to LGBT Equality is working, whilst noting that more work needs to be done to achieve the objective of entering the Top 100 Employers.  **Equality and Diversity Staffing Update**  EW reported on staffing changes in the Equality and Diversity Unit with the Head of Equality and Diversity, Cindy Williams-Findlay, having left the University on the 23rd December 2016, and the Equality and Diversity Coordinator, Balwinder Brophy, due to leave the University on 8th February 2017. She explained that successors would be recruited as soon as possible.  The Equality and Diversity Operational Group thanked Balwinder Brophy for her service to the University, praising the support she had given Equality and Diversity Practitioners across the University. They requested a gift be purchased on behalf of the Operational Group.  **ACTION:** WC to organise collection from Equality and Diversity Operational Group members to purchase present for Balwinder Brophy. |
| **4. Presentation of Inclusive Pedagogy and Attainment Project** |
| The Dean of Teaching and Learning, Dr Gravestock, delivered a verbal presentation about the work of the Inclusive Pedagogy and Attainment Project. Please see the attachment powerpoint presentation for more information.  Following the presentation, the Equality and Diversity Operational Group discussed several issues related to the presentation. Issues raised during this discussion included the need to ensure that any proposed initiatives are supported with central funding and don’t add extra burdens onto teaching staff.  There was also a prolonged discussion, initiated by AA, about how recent changes in the learning support disabled students received had made academic life less inclusive. It was agreed that the Dean of Students should feedback about the concerns raised.  **ACTION:** EW to ask the Dean of Students to feedback to the Equality and Diversity Operational Group about the recent changes to the support that Disabled Students receive. |
| **5. Strategic Plan and Equality Objectives 2016 – 2021** |
| EW introduced the Strategic Plan for 2016 – 2021.   * She explained that the new Strategic Plan is designed to provide all members of the University with a clear explanation about the institution’s priorities by establish a small number of headline ‘goals’ which would then inform the more detailed Key Performance Indicators and related operational targets. * She explained that Equality and Diversity would be embedded within the Strategic Plan with all areas having an E&D dimension i.e. the KPI on student recruitment being focused on both the size and diversity of Wolverhampton’s student body.   WC introduced the Equality Objectives 2016 – 2021, noting that the Equality and Diversity Committee had approved them, and explaining that they largely codified what needed to happen for the University to achieve the relevant Strategic Plan KPI. He noted that the most significant commitment made was the decision to apply for the ECU Race Equality Charter within the next five years.  There then followed a discussion about the Strategic Plan, in which the following points were raised:   * EW confirmed that the baseline for any Strategic Plan Goal or KPI would be our performance in 2016. She also explained that whilst the University is currently committed to comparing its student and staff demographics against the Black Country average (along with the weighted national average as outlined in the HESA WP Benchmarks), that this is currently under review. * There was a discussion about the level of information provided by HR about the demographics of the University’s workforce. NK explained that HR had provided extensive information to the last Equality and Diversity Committee, and that the forthcoming Aggresso Data Cleanse would further enhance its ability to provide accurate and detailed information about staff demographics. * KS and PS both stressed the need to increase the number of BME staff members at senior levels. NK explained that the University had made significant investment in developing BME Staff Members through the provision of mentoring programmes but that it was too early to measure the impact of these initiatives. She did however note that the number of BME Staff Members at UW4 and UW8 (grades previously identified as problem areas) had grown in recent years. * There was a broader discussion about the demographics of senior leadership. EW explained that the recent Guardian article that claimed Wolverhampton had no BME senior leaders was based on an incorrect analysis of HESA Data and the University has been liaising with HESA as to what it can do to ensure this confusion doesn’t happen again. * RF explained that while she supported the objectives outlined in both the Strategic Plan and the Equality Objectives, she noted that the forthcoming initiatives had to have a meaningful impact on the challenges identified.   **ACTION:** EW and WC to note the Equality and Diversity Operational Group’s feedback when making further amendments to the Strategic Plan KPIs and Equality Objectives. To update the Equality and Diversity Operational Group about any further developments.  **ACTION:** WC to update the Equality and Diversity Operational Group about the Race Equality Charter at its next meeting. |
| **6. Equality and Diversity Policies** |
| WC explained that the Equality and Diversity Policies need to be reviewed as they are due to be updated. He is looking to bring amended drafts to the next meeting of the Equality and Diversity Operational Group, so that they can be sent to the Equality and Diversity Committee for final approval in June. Due to lack of time, he asks for Operational Group Members to email him any feedback.  **ACTION:** ALL Equality and Diversity Operational Group Members to email any feedback about the Equality and Diversity Policies (see attachment) to Will Cooling ([w.cooling@wlv.ac.uk](mailto:w.cooling@wlv.ac.uk)) by Friday 21st April 2017. WC to liaise with EW and NK about changes to policies, and bring proposals to next meeting of the Equality and Diversity Operational Group. |
| **7. Representation of Women within University of Wolverhampton** |
| WC introduced a paper calling for the University to establish a Women’s Staff Network like the existing ones for BME, LGBT and Disabled Staff Members. There was support for the idea in principle but it was felt more consultation with women staff members was needed. NK suggested that the proposal could be included alongside a possible Carer’s Network in the forthcoming HR Pulse Survey on Equality and Diversity.  **ACTION:** WC and NK to liaise about HR Pulse Survey on Equality and Diversity. |
| **ANY OTHER BUSINESS** |
| RF raised the problems for disabled staff members caused by the temporary reduction in the number of disabled parking spaces due to ongoing building work. She suggested that the University look to rent council parking spaces until the current situation is resolved. EW promised to investigate the issue.  **ACTION:** EW to raise issue of limited disabled parking during building work with the Director of Estates.  EW noted the recently published Bell Review into higher education statutory bodies and the recommended merger of the Equality Challenge Unit with the Higher Education Academy and Leadership Foundation for Higher Education. After a brief discussion, WC promised to distribute a recently published article that explains the rationale and possible consequences of the merger.  **ACTION:** WC to circulate article on Bell Review and resulting changes alongside these minutes.  AA suggested that some disabled students need a quiet room on campus. EW promised to raise the issue with the Dean of Students.  **ACTION:** EW to raise the possibility of creating a quiet room for disabled students with the Dean of Students.  AA noted that he had been supporting a distressed student. He was urged to refer the student to the Student Counselling Service, so that they can receive the support they need.  **ACTION:** EW to send information to AA about the “Three Minutes to Save A Life” scheme and raise issues surrounding staff/student representatives providing pastoral support with Claire Dickens. |