UNIVERSITY OF YORK

Council

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 3 November 2016

Present: The Vice-Chancellor (Chair)
Mrs D Jagger
Dr C Dessent
Dr P Spikins
Dr V Sundaram
Dr R Abeysekera
Dr A Lee
Mr R Armitage
The Registrar and Secretary
The Assistant HR Director
The Internal Communications Manager
The Head of the Equality and Diversity Office
The Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions
The Deputy Academic Registrar and Director of Registry
The Welfare and Community Officer, YUSU
K Stephenson, Vice-President (Welfare and Well-Being,GSA)

In attendance: The Director of Corporate Planning

Apologies for absence were received from Professor Rees-Jones and the President of the GSA

16-17/1 Declarations of Conflicts of Interest

Approved Minutes
Members were invited to declare any potential conflicts of interest relating to the business of the meeting. None was declared.

16-17/2 Minutes
The minutes of the meeting held on 2 June 2016 were approved.

16-17/3 Membership and Terms of Reference
The Committee received and noted its Terms of Reference, which were determined by the University Council. The Vice-Chancellor noted the importance of the Committee exercising a strategic and co-ordinating role in the area of Equality Diversity and Inclusivity. The Committee received and noted both its membership and a draft role description for members of the Committee. It agreed that the Vice-Chancellor and the Head of the Equality and Diversity Office should review the description, to ensure that it was in line with the new strategic approach of the Committee. A final draft would be brought to the Committee’s next meeting for approval.

ACTION: MA

16-17/4 Online Equality and Diversity Module
Arising from M15-16/44, the Head of the Equality and Diversity Office reported that the online equality and diversity module was now complete and running. It would be launched in parallel with the new strategy, when that was finalised.

16-17/5 Accessibility issues in Wentworth and Halifax College
Arising from M15-16/47, the Registrar and Secretary reported that good progress being made on the installation of automatic doors in Halifax and Wentworth Colleges.

16-17/6 Presentation Template
Arising from M15-16/47, the Registrar and Secretary reported that work was in progress to produce an accessible University presentation template via the Communications Office.

16-17/7  **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy**

The Head of the Equality and Diversity Office provided the Committee with an update on the approach being adopted to develop the University’s Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy. The Committee noted that:

- consultation about the strategy had begun in May - to date 120 staff had been involved;
- since August the Equality and Diversity Office has appointed new members of staff;
- a number of focus groups and 1:1 sessions had been held with staff and students in September and October

Feedback had suggested the importance of a strategy being meaningful and ambitious, linked to a plan of action and extending beyond consideration of gender alone. It had been suggested that there should be a strong emphasis on inclusion.

Key priorities proposed for the strategy were the following areas:

- the University as an employer of choice;
- student experience (to include the closure of diversity-related gaps in student application, retention, progression and attainment);
- an inclusive campus agenda;
- a University-wide culture of equality diversity and inclusion.

It had been suggested that the strategy should be accompanied by an implementation plan that covered areas such as roles, responsibilities, governance and monitoring. The intention was to complete the strategy by the end of the year and to launch it in the Spring Term.
In discussion members suggested:

- making use of existing University research expertise in developing this agenda;
- ensuring that the student experience strand extended beyond the teaching and learning experience;
- the importance of linkage to the overall University Strategy and appropriate alignment with the Widening Participation Strategy;
- the need for priorities to be informed by the implications for the University of the Brexit decision;
- the importance of using the strategy to develop a culture of equality, diversity and inclusion across the University;
- the importance of ensuring issues of intersectionality are addressed within the Strategy;
- that a communication plan needed to be developed in parallel with the strategy, to guide its dissemination. The Head of the Equality and Diversity Office agreed to work with the Head of Internal Communication on such a plan.

**16-17/8 Quality Marks, Support Bodies and Networks**

The Head of the Equality and Diversity Office introduced a paper which provided details of the charter marks that were commonly applied for across the HE sector. To date the University’s principal involvement had been with Athena Swan but the University had signed up to the Mindful Employer Charter in May 2015.

Mrs Jagger reported on her experience of the usefulness of involvement in charter mark activity as a way of changing organisational culture in the area of equality, diversity and inclusion. The Head of the Equality and Diversity Office noted that the University was also involved with national bodies such as HEFCE and the 30% club and sought to optimise opportunities to work with the Equality Challenge Unit.
The Committee decided that the Head of the Equality and Diversity Office and Assistant HR Director should review opportunities to engage with other charter marks and bring a proposal to the next meeting. Any suggestion for additional involvement should be justified by its alignment with both the Equality Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and the University Strategy and should include an assessment of the University’s readiness to take on the associated extra work.

**ACTION:** MA and HS

### 16-17/9 Staff Equality Forums

The Committee received reports from the following Staff Equality Forums: INCLUDE; LGBTI Matters and the Staff Race Equality Forum.

In respect of INCLUDE, the Committee noted the need for a new Chair, the current incumbent being about to step down after several years in the role. With regard to the Staff Race Equality Forum it was suggested that its Chair consider how the Forum’s role might be broadened, to incorporate both the University’s relationship with the Home Office over staff visas and the impact of the Government’s Brexit policy on staff.

### 16-17/10 Athena SWAN

The Committee received an update from the Registrar and Secretary on the University’s new Athena SWAN governance structure. It noted that:

- an Athena Swan Steering Group was chaired by the PVC (Research)
- an Athena Swan Forum was convened by Professor Walton.
- an Athena Swan Co-ordinator had been now been recruited
- Faculty AS Steering Groups were about to be established.
- a clear quality assurance process for making submissions had been established and
- a report from the Steering Group would be a standing item on EDI Committee agendas.
Members sought reassurance that the workload associated with developing Athena Swan submissions was being recognised in departmental workload models. The Committee noted that academic departments were required to recognise citizenship activities in their workload allocation models but agreed that it would be useful if this specific requirement was to be emphasised to departments by the Chair of the Athena Swan Steering Group.

**Action:** DS

The Committee discussed the appropriateness of the University marking International Women’s Day. The Committee noted a range of views among members and diverse practice at other organisations within and without higher education. It decided to delegate to the Vice-Chancellor a decision on how to proceed in a safe, positive and constructive manner that was consistent with the University Strategy, with his decision to be informed by further consultation with staff in the Communications Office.

**16-17/11 Accessibility of Campus**

The Committee received an update from the Registrar and Secretary on work being undertaken to improve the accessibility of the campus. The Committee noted that there were separate strands of activity addressing estates matters and the issues to do with the academic interface/academic resources, the latter led by Helen Petrie.

The Committee was informed that the Freshers’ Survey had been analysed to compare the responses of all students with those with declared disabilities. There had been a marked difference in levels of satisfaction which had led to further work currently being undertaken to identify reasons for the differences and how they might best be addressed.

**16-17/12 Disabled Students’ Allowance (DSA)**
The Committee received an update from the DSA Working Group. It noted that DSA replacement funding totalling £120k in first year had been made available by UEB. The Committee noted the need for effective internal communication to ensure that the availability of this sum was widely understood.

16-17/13 Work Being Progressed by Human Resources

The Assistant Director of HR provided an update on work being progressed by the HR Directorate in the areas of equality, diversity and inclusion. She drew particular attention to the following:

- the establishment of the Mental Health First Contact network, developed in response to concerns that had emerged about staff stress in the Staff Survey. The network would be launched in January 2017;
- the promotion of the Movember initiative;
- the launch of an adoption leave and pay policy;
- the development of guidance on supporting staff with caring responsibilities;
- the Equal Pay Audit, which had been considered by UEB in June and on which further work was now being undertaken before an update was taken back to the Board;
- work with the CBI on equality and diversity issues, following on from the University’s involvement in the Excellence in Diversity awards earlier in 2016;
- Unconscious Bias training.

With regard to the Equal Pay Audit, the Vice-Chancellor reported that gender pay gap reporting would be mandatory from 2017 and that the University was well placed to meet the associated reporting requirements.

On unconscious bias training the current conclusion was that it should not be mandatory but be promoted in line with the launch of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy. The Committee agreed that an on-line module should be
developed with a view to optimising take-up of training. It noted that the issue was a significant one nationally in student recruitment and admissions and that SRA had an expectation on all of its staff and those involved in admissions tutor roles in departments to undertake training. In this regard the Committee noted the importance of applicant attributes flagged in admissions to seek to understand requirements of disabled students, being appropriately withdrawn/securely stored at later stages in the student records cycle.

**ACTION:** SJW

16-17/14 YUSU Report

The Committee received a report from the YUSU Student Welfare Officer. The Committee noted that the consent talks at the start of the Autumn Term, the content of which had been approved by the University, had generally been well received. YUSU was considering whether it would have been more appropriate to make the talk compulsory in 2017. The Committee decided that this issue should be discussed at a later meeting.

The Committee was informed that in the Spring Term, YUSU’s focus would be on the harassment and the inappropriate use of social media.

16-17/15 GSA Report

The Committee received a report from the GSA President. The GSA had supported the YUSU initiative on consent talks to new students. Its restructured Council was currently auditing its activities in the area of equality, diversity and inclusion. A survey of mental health had just been concluded.

16-17/16 Home Office Select Committee Report: Antisemitism in the UK

The Committee received a summary of the Home Office Select Report: Antisemitism in the UK. A detailed report on any subsequent actions would be brought to a later meeting.
16-17/17 Date of Next Meeting

The Committee noted that its next meeting was scheduled for Thursday 2 March 2017 at 2.15 pm