

DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGY

**Minutes of the Biology Equality and Diversity Group (BioEDG)**

**held on Wednesday, 4th November 2015**

Present: Lindsey Dalzell (LD), Genever, Paul (PG), Jane Hill (JKH), Antje Kuhrs (AK), Janina Pirozek (JCP), Jen Potts (JP), Ellie Purser (EP), and Mel Smee (MS)

Apologies: Helen Coombs (HC), Calvin Dytham (CD), Adrian Harrison (ABH), Richard Waites (RW)

In Attendance: Andrea Johnson (AJJ)

**15/032 Welcome to new members and introductions to the Group**

JKH welcomed LD, AK and EP to the Group (now called the Biology Equality and Diversity Group or BioEDG for short), and the membership of the Group introduced themselves. It was noted that LD would be attending future meetings as one of the new undergraduate representatives, AK as the Student Disability Officer, and EP as the replacement for JCP (who is leaving the University at the end of November).

**15/033 Minutes of the Meeting 9th September 2015**

The minutes of 27th May 2015 were agreed as an accurate record.

**15/034 Matters arising from the Meeting of 9th September 2015**

1. *15/024 (ii) Engagement of undergraduate students: ideas for summer term activities*

JKH explained to the new members that the Group had been thinking about how to raise the profile of equality and diversity to the undergraduate student body. To this effect, a culture survey for second year undergraduate students had been conducted a few years ago, and it was agreed that BioEDG should now think more broadly about what the Group might do and how to raise the profile. The previous undergraduate representative, Boris Bongalov, had proposed an idea for the post-exam period in the summer but this still needed to be progressed. This will be included as an Agenda item at the next meeting.

Publicising shadow CVs had been suggested by Boris Bongalov, and it was noted that similar discussions had taken place at the ‘coffee and careers’ sessions that Lorna Warnock runs. Discussion about shadow CVs has also taken place with EH and it was suggested that a flow chart could be posted on the careers section of the Biology website which would show career progression via different routes to show ‘failures’ as well as ‘successes’. BioEDG agreed that this was something that should be put in place, and needed someone to lead it. Employing a summer intern to kick start this might be a possibility.

1. *15/024 (vi) Mentoring*

At the last meeting, JKH had advised that she still had to talk to the University Athena Group about setting up an ‘Office for Post-Doctoral Affairs’. The organisation of University Athena Group is currently under discussion.

JKH reported that the current proposal includes Faculty-level AS groups. This is still to be decided, and agreement is still awaited as to how this will work in practice.

It was acknowledged that the University of Cambridge is doing good work in relation to support for postdocs. It was noted that York had put in an application for a silver award at institution level, and had received a bronze award. Initiating something similar to the Cambridge Office for Post-Doctoral Affairs at York might be a good University Initiative.

1. *15/024 (vii) Developing a resource library*

It was acknowledged that there has been progress. The AS pages have been re-located to the left-hand side of the Biology home page to make them more visible and accessible, and have been renamed ‘Equality and Diversity’ and take those accessing it straight to the Biology Athena website. Within the Biology Athena website, the ‘links’ tab has been renamed ‘Resources’ and

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interesting E&D articles have been/will continue to be added here. Books that are available to borrow are now also listed under this tab.

A standing item on the BioEDG Agenda, in future, will be that people should let JKH/AJJ know of interesting articles and research that should be added to the website.

1. *15/025 Review of Statistics collected*

Figure 11, presented at the last meeting, had shown academic recruitment which had led to a discussion about whether the number of applications overall had dropped since the new candidate briefs came out and if they were considered to be too corporate. JKH and JCP had subsequently discussed this separately and it was noted that there had been too few posts advertised at this point to know what impact the new candidate briefs may have. It was felt that the BioEDG Group should keep an eye on this and discuss it again if it appears to be a problem in the future. It’s probably best considered at a University level.

It had also been suggested at the meeting on 9th September that JKH and JCP could look through other submissions from Universities that are available, to see if there are any good ideas emerging from those around personal communication (i.e. making more effort in encouraging people to apply). JKH and JCP had subsequently discussed this and felt that it may be something that EP could undertake, looking at the recruitment sections of gold and silver departmental awards from the last two years onwards. **EP**

1. *15/026 (i) New Award*

JKH reported that she would contribute to the annual teaching programme review. Showing data for separate undergraduate programmes would be a requirement of Athena going forward. **JKH**

In relation to postgraduates, DTPs were discussed and whether the BioEDG Group could examine gender balance of all applications/appointments of students to DTPs. It was noted that the Department can currently only get access to York data (although it might be possible to encourage other DTP partner Universities to share data with us). The issue could be discussed at the next programme managers meeting and PG agreed to raise this at the meeting. **PG**

Data requirements for the new Athena/ECU gender equality charter mark will be discussed as part of the Terms of Reference (discussed later in the meeting).

1. *15/026 (iii) Departmental committee representation*

JCP confirmed that she would show JKH where data on committee membership and Chairs were kept on the ‘P’ drive.

It was agreed that the Group needed to ensure gender balance of committees (particularly in relation to chair gender), especially as a recent committee was noted to comprise solely of males. BioEDG discussed how they could impact on this and it was felt that DMT could be asked for the matter to be borne in mind before the next jobs allocation. JKH to confirm when this is. **JKH/AJD**

*(vii)* *15/026 (iv) Information on teaching constraints*

It was noted that Carol Wales had provided the information requested.

*(viii)* *15/026 (v) Seminar speakers*

JKH reported that she is gathering data on seminar speakers, and from data collected so far, these appeared to be 40% female. This is excellent, and on-target for 50:50 balance during our Gold period.

*(ix)* *15/026 (vi) Sabbatical requests*

JKH advised that the deadline for the submission of sabbatical requests has now closed, and data should now be available on who has applied for a sabbatical this year.

**15/035 Changes to the Terms of Reference, and discussion regarding the expansion of BioEDG**

It was noted that JKH has Terms of Reference for her role of Departmental Equality and Diversity Champion, that should be posted on the web page. ToRs will be drafted for BioEDG

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recognising its expanded remit.

In looking at the full range of protected characteristics, BioEDG needs to be realistic about which of these to impact on/engage with, and it was proposed that BioEDG should concentrate on 3 or 4 of these (for example gender, race, disability and sexual orientation) to develop new actions. **EP**

As ECU’s Athena Swan Charger and gender equality charter mark have now merged, it was queried if there may be other charter marks that we should consider engaging with at Departmental level. For example there is an ECU race equality charter which will open in 2016. There is also the two ticks charter for helping disabled people, and Stonewall for the LGBT group. It was recognised that there would be resource implications in engaging with other charters in addition to Athena SWAN. The Department will look for guidance from the University in relation to which initiatives they might wish BioEDG to prioritise, and the best route to get this guidance is likely to be through the Science Faculty. In the meantime, EP agreed to gather the information for race, LGBT and disability charter marks, and report back to the BioEDG Group in due course **EP**

The widening of the Group was also discussed. It was agreed that in future Lucy Hudson would be invited to attend as a representative for Professional & Support staff, with an emphasis on technical staff. The new Departmental Manager would also be invited to attend once s/he starts as a representative for administrative and professional staff. BioEDG discussed what other data would need to be collected in view of this widening remit. It was acknowledged that most of the data that are collected for academic/research staff should be easy to collect for other staff groups. It was noted that there is a need to consider intersectionality (but not to collect data). This is the same for trans people (i.e. the narrative on the application form would need to show consideration of this group but data collection is not required).

The expanded brief was also discussed in terms of data collection (eg race, disability) and more work is required to address what data/information is available in relation to this. JKH reported that she will examine the potential to analyse the destination of student leavers by gender (DLHE data), and would report back to BioEDG with the outcome of this in due course. **JKH**

The Group needs to investigate what data are available in terms of race and disability (and in particular in relation to recruitment). BioEDG should look at the Department’s policies, procedures and practices to this effect. One suggestion was that the University could ensure that guidance was in place on the web for those applying for posts (i.e. a ‘CV template’) in an effort to avoid unconscious bias, and JCP will feed this back to HR accordingly. **JCP**

JCP clarified that data on race and disability are kept when people apply for posts, and can be got from HR. However there was a need to ensure that individuals cannot be identified, particularly when numbers are small. This relates to both applications from prospective employees and also applications from students applying for degree courses, and it was agreed that this should be discussed at the next meeting (when ABH was present) to see what information is available through UCAS. **JKH/ABH**

It was debated whether for each protected characteristic there should be a nominated person from BioEDG to take the lead. This was deemed to be a good idea as it would be difficult for one person to look at all the characteristics, but it was agreed to wait for the full membership, and then ask for volunteers. **JKH**

**15/036 CROS Survey**

JKH explained that the CROS Survey was carried out on a regular basis surveying postdocs. JKH now had the data for both 2015 and 2013 surveys. The number of responses were low (9 in 2013 and 40 in 2015), but JKH advised that she would bring some summary information back to the next meeting. It was noted that BioEDG may then need to do their own culture survey arising from the outcome to explore any issues that arise. **JKH**

Jane Dalton in the University has looked at the CROS survey; JP also reported that she had to submit a response in relation to the CROS data, but BioEDG will look at the survey specifically from a gender perspective. It was noted that Leonie Jones in Chemistry has picked out some questions for the Chemistry Group’s consideration that will be used to focus the BioEDG analyses. **JKH**

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**15/037 Outreach Data**

JBP had provided some information based on staff involvement in outreach. BioEDG appreciates the improvements to the data collection & presentation for these important data.

These data will be analysed by gender. It was agreed that there needs to be a robust way of collecting and presenting these data in the long term, perhaps e.g. including them in workload models and/or performance review objectives in the longer term.

**15/038 Report on Beacon Activity/News for the Website**

JKH reported that she had recently visited the University of Birmingham as they had invited her to talk to about Equality and Diversity. The format was a 45 minute seminar with a ‘question and answer’ session following. The audience was staff and students (it had been advertised as a department seminar) but with selected people invited to a discussion afterwards.

It was discussed whether a similar session could be arranged here, and JKH will explore this, potentially inviting a speaker in Biology Open Lecture slot. JKH will progress this accordingly. **JKH**

Other Beacon activities that had occurred included a visit to Nottingham by JKH and visits to the Department of Biology at York by small teams from UCL (in September 2015) and Warwick (in November 2015).

The website will continue to evolve to reflect changed/expanded BioEDG remit. The Group discussed whether some of the tabs would need renaming, and whether the ‘news’ tab should be dispensed with as it related solely to gender. However, it was agreed that it should remain for the time being as Athena’s focus is still on gender equality and promoting women in science.

**15/039 Items to be communicated to the next Academic Staff Meeting**

JKH will take the findings from the CROS survey, and the data relating to the ‘destination of student leavers’ to the next meeting. **JKH**

It was noted that there is a postdoctoral research meeting soon and the feedback on CROS could be given at that meeting. It could also be used as an opportunity to discuss whether postdocs would feel a postdoctoral office would be useful. Postdoc rep to let JKH know.

**15/040 New postdoctoral representative**

MS advised that this was her last meeting as postdoctoral representative on the Group, but she confirmed that Tim Doheny-Adams (a postdoc with Sue Hartley) has volunteered to take her place. MS would pass on Tim’s details to JKH and will also let the Postdoc Society know. **MS**

**15/041 Date of Next Meeting**

Wednesday 3rd February 2015, 1.00 to 3.00 pm, venue to be confirmed.

*AJJ - 17/11/2015*