

**Minutes of the Biology Equality and Diversity Group (BioEDG)
Wednesday, 5th October 2016**

Present: Amanda Barnes (AB), Philip Bailey (PB), Nia Bryant (NB), Eran Cohen (EC), Helen Coombs (HC), Tim Dohan-Adams (TD-A), Calvin Dytham (CD), Paul Genever (PG), Erin Haskell (EH), Jane Hill (JKH), Lucy Hudson (LH), Ellie Purser (EP) and Richard Waites (RW)

Apologies: Lindsey Dalzell (LD), Adrian Harrison (ABH), Antje Kuhrs (AK), Jon Pitchford (JP)

In Attendance: Andrea Johnson (AJJ)

16/024 Minutes of the Meeting 27th April 2016

The minutes of 3rd February 2016 were agreed as an accurate record.

CD confirmed that he had now taken over as Chair of BioEDG in his capacity of Deputy HoD (internal) ex officio.

It was emphasised that the remit has recently expanded to encompass all protected characteristics, and that the BioEDG group would be concentrating on 3 of these, namely gender (with NB as the lead person), disability (with AK as the lead person) and LGBTI (with EP as the lead person).

16/025 Matters arising from the Meeting of 27th April 2016

(i) 16/016 (I) Engagement of undergraduate students: ideas for summer term activities

It was noted that Eran Cohen had now joined BioEDG as a second undergraduate representative, and CD welcomed EC to the group.

(ii) 16/016 (ii) Changes to the Terms of Reference, and discussion regarding the expansion of BioEDG

At the April meeting of BioEDG, PB had agreed to send details of the LGBTI seminar organised by Sheffield University to EP to aid consideration/debate of what could be done at York. PB had subsequently sent this to EP, and it was noted that a seminar/event was scheduled for 13th January 2017 in Sheffield. Both PB and EP will attend this, and feedback with suggestions for what could be done at either Departmental or University level at York. **PB/EP**

EP reported that she had been keeping an eye on Stonewell's scoring system as Stonewall had been in the process of reviewing all their criteria. However an updated checklist of 10 items was still not available (Stonewall have used a similar checklist previously to score against in order to provide the best environment for LGBTI students). However, despite this checklist not being available, EP reported that there were lots of other resources on their website. It was noted that there was a separate workplace equality index, and EP advised that she had escalated this to see if it could be taken forward at University level. Once the 10 items from Stonewall have been laid out then EP will also follow up on that (although it was acknowledged that this may depend on 'University buy-in'). **EP**

EP further reported that the Stonewall season was due to take place over the period 1st to 10th November, and proposed that an event takes place in the Department to promote that. EP asked anyone interested in getting involved to let her know. She would identify a suitable date within that period for something to happen (eg a colourful themed baking competition, or a dress down day in bright colours), and for donations on the day to be made to Stonewall. **EP**

EP reported that she had raised, at the last Include Forum, that Biology were interested in potentially adopting the two ticks charter as a Department, and it had been reinforced that this is not a departmental decision, and would need to be a University one. It was noted, however, that a good external research paper is available that demonstrates that engaging with the two ticks charter has low impact, and may not have the desired outcome. EP agreed to try and get a copy of the paper as evidence to bring back to the group. **EP**

JKH advised that she had met with Faculty representatives and a new Equality and Diversity appointment has been made at a University level and JKH could feed back to them if BioEDG wished to encourage things to be done at a University level. JKH hoped that there would be more action centrally now that people were in place centrally including a new Athena Swan Coordinator.

EP reported that the data she had pulled for support staff from tableau had been put into graph format and this could be circulated to the group with the draft submission that she was preparing for NB in due course. EP confirmed that it was not possible to separate the professional and support staff into sub-groups (e.g. technical, administrative, etc.).

(iii) 16/016 (iii) CROS Survey

JKH and TD-A had met to discuss the data analysis arising from the 2015 and 2013 CROS surveys of postdocs. Arising from this TD-A had produced a few slides and will circulate them to BioEDG along with a commentary. **JKH/TD-A**

TD-A reported that the 2013 postdoc data was unbalanced between males and females so it is difficult to look at trends as they are not necessarily comparable. It was also noted that the number of respondents is low and people may not necessarily engage with services that are not departmentally packaged.

(iv) 16/016 (iv) Outreach Data

JKH queried what data is needed on the Gold submission form in relation to outreach and, once EP has provided that information, JKH will then contact Maggie Smith. **EP/JKH**

HC reported that Chemistry record attendance at outreach events and the proportion of males and females attending (as well as the proportion of males and female staff who are involved in outreach activities). However, getting attendance numbers and gender breakdowns from events can prove difficult. For example it is hard to get accurate numbers when you are holding a stall. However, it was noted that getting information about attendees will be important for the Gold renewal.

(v) 16/016 (v) Update on Qualtrics (for student feedback)

CD provided data in relation to the update on Qualtrics, and summarised the findings for the group. It was noted that the information retrieved from Qualtrics related to first year students but will be available for all student feedback from Nov 2016.

Male and female respondents did not have any difference in average scores, and female staff got slightly higher ratings than male staff did. Interestingly, it was found that female students give different scores to female and male staff with female staff getting a higher score. However, it was demonstrated that there is no obvious consistent bias.

JKH proposed that the information be presented at the next Academic Staff meeting, and CD also agreed to tidy up the information/findings so that they could be displayed on the website. **JKH/CD**

(vi) 16/016 (viii) Coffee and Careers sessions

At the last meeting AB presented some data/graphs to BioEDG in relation to this which showed attendees by gender and speakers by gender, which she would share more widely/email to BioEDG. It had further been noted that there would be a re-launch of the aims of the 'Coffee and Careers' sessions and this data would be presented there.

AB advised that this had not yet happened as it was subsequently felt that it would be better to wait until the start of the academic year. However, she would proceed with this now and will continue to collect data. **AB**

(vii) 16/016 (ix) Survey of new staff groups

EP reported that culture surveys had taken place of both the academic and support staff, and gave a summary of the findings:

Within the academic staff group, 72% had responded. Feedback overall was generally positive, although it was recognised that there is a general feeling that not everyone is fully engaged and Athena is seen as a 'badge' but some staff question what the Department gets out of it.

Within the support staff group, only 35% had responded. Of those, 40 were female and 15 male. It was noted that there was a lot more negative feedback received from support staff, and this may be because Athena has not been associated with this group of staff before. EP advised that she would do a piece on this at the next staff meeting. **EP**

This in turn may prompt the need for a session around the fact that some staff in the department may feel 'put to one side' because of Athena (i.e. that it is positive discrimination). However, the message needs to be reinforced, and there is a lot to do to ensure that people are aware that this is not just a badge but that the department is operating in best practice where there are opportunities for everyone. It was felt that a better promotion job needs to take place and it was noted that getting the right people involved and engaged was an important step, and things like the unconscious bias talk that Paul Walton gives would be of help in this respect.

JKH updated BioEDG on the work that EC had done over the summer on 'career trees' as this would help in promoting the aims of BioEDG/Athena. Originally it had been proposed that 'shadow CVs' be produced for some members of academic staff which would show struggles and set-backs along the way. However, it was agreed that the 'career tree' that EC had designed was a good compromise as shadow CVs were not particularly positive. It was hoped to agree the 'tree' appearance that should be adopted, and then produce these for around 20 members of academic staff and get them up on the website. EC had prepared two different designs for JKH using NB's career path as an example: JKH explained the different layouts of the two trees, and the majority of BioEDG members felt that the preferred design was for the tree going down (top to bottom) as that is the way people read. It was agreed to adopt that model accordingly, and it was proposed that 10 'female' trees and 10 'male' trees could be done and loaded onto the Biology website by Christmas. Further down the line it might be possible to do something similar for professional and support staff, but it was thought that trees for academic staff should be done first, and the academic members on BioEDG would make a good starting point. It was suggested that the trees would need to be on one page on the website, and that the graphics may need some thought. JKH advised that there was some free software (Canva) that could be used for these and she will talk to Graphics in due course. **JKH**

(viii) 16/016 (x) Writing references

At the last meeting, EP had agreed to follow up the possibility of offering bite-sized sessions on reference writing with RW, and EP reported that since then she had been working on a draft format of what could be offered and what she thought would work within the Department. Ideally this would be a session aimed at academic staff (although others who write references could attend). The format could comprise 10 minutes given by RW talking about the importance for future careers, 10 minutes for EP/NB to talk about the language used in references and then 10 minutes for EP to talk about the law around references. The sessions would be light touch and would be factual and informative, lasting no more than 40 minutes (which would include a question and answer session within that period). It was felt that this was a good way forward, and timely. Moreover, if the legal implications/ramifications are part of the session, then there would be better attendance. JKH commented that she was interested in data protection issues around references and this was likely to be of interest to other staff. HC suggested it may be possible to offer sessions jointly to Chemistry academics as well as Biology/Biochemistry ones, and EP will discuss this possibility further at a meeting she has in Chemistry in the next few days. EP will also discuss the issue further with RW/PG. **EP**

(ix) 16/020 News for the website

It was noted that any interesting items for inclusion on the website should be sent to AJJ. Arising from this there was a discussion about what items were appropriate for placing on the website. HC reported that in Chemistry most things go on their main departmental website. They use their Equality and Diversity site to highlight where individuals have gone out and given lectures on equality and diversity (e.g. particular activities linked to disseminating good practice on equality and diversity).

(x)16/022 Unconscious bias

CD advised that he had been an unconscious bias observer for the BMS Lectureships (3 Lectureships). CD had not yet analysed the data. There had been some interesting observations (e.g. an assumption had been made that when one of the candidates had been a postdoc that his/her PI had been male). It was felt that it would be good to clarify what should be done with the information gathered. It was agreed that once appointments had been made following the BMS lectureship interviews, CD would give a report on it.

CD

HC advised that Chemistry had a Google sheet shared, where unconscious bias observations were noted down, which highlighted both the positives and the negatives and how the negatives were dealt with. For example, whether the unconscious bias observer had a quiet word with the perpetrator of any irrelevant comments after the meeting – or whether the meeting was interrupted by the observer to highlight or correct any assumptions. The other thing that is produced in Chemistry is a template that goes back to the panel which says what was good and what was not, so the panel had feedback.

NB queried whether there was any intention of having unconscious bias observers at interviews. It was felt that this would be very resource intensive, although it was noted that Chemistry does this and tells candidates that the unconscious bias observer will be sitting in the back of the room when they are interviewed to ensure the process is fair, but that they are not part of the interview panel. HC advised that Chemistry have had feedback from a few candidates who had actually said that it was nice to know that someone is checking the process; that it is refreshing and leads to a fair process. There was no observer at the last round of lectureship interviews in Biology but it was agreed that a discussion on whether Biology also adopts this should be taken to DMT as it will have resource implications. EP will pull some recruitment statistics to back this up.

EP*(xi) 16/023 Contact details on adverts*

EP reported that having an alternative female contact on adverts is usually well monitored, and works quite well generally.

Following a query that PB had raised at the last meeting about this, it was generally accepted that the more names that are given for queries in the advert, then the more the knowledge would be diluted and a good service might not be provided. As some candidates may feel more comfortable approaching someone of the same gender before they apply, it was suggested that the best approach might be for the text to reflect who the right person to approach for the right query would be, particularly when an individual's gender is not easily discernible from their name. It was therefore suggested that just one contact should be given and then standard text. Thus on adverts wording along the lines of "For details of the project please contact ... For an alternative contact and/or further information about the department please contact biol-personnel@york.ac.uk". EP will circulate some draft wording for approval accordingly.

EP**16/026 Athena submission update**

EP advised that a small 'Going for Gold' group has been set up (comprising of NB, EP, JKH, CD Natalie Armstrong and Ian Graham) which will provide updates to the Head of Department on a regular basis. EP reported that she was in the process of doing the first draft of the Gold submission, and a timetable has been set up. She will highlight areas to members of the group where help may be required and this will be really useful as the submission date in April is now less than 7 months away. Progress made on the submission will be included as an Agenda item from now on.

EP**16/027 Feedback from University Athena Group**

JKH, in her capacity of member of the University Athena Swan Steering Group (Chair of Faculty of Sciences Working Group) updated BioEDG on changes and additions centrally. Deborah Smith (Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research) now chairs the Athena Swan Group, and there are now 3 Faculty Athena Swan representatives and a University Athena Forum (open to all Athena Swan champions, and anyone else who wants to attend) run by Paul Walton.

There will be a 'kick off' meeting on the 24th October and people will be invited to this from all Departments.

JKH reported that there were ongoing discussions about that the Faculty champions will be doing, and how this will be badged. However, there are no plans to have Faculty Athena meetings at present.

16/028 Labelling of Departmental Toilets

PB queried whether the new teaching building had disabled toilets and whether the toilets in the new building were gender neutral (i.e. not labelled specifically for one gender). Whilst it was noted that the new building does conform with gender neutral facilities and that signage was ongoing, it was noted that there is some employment law around the labelling of toilets, and that other buildings may need to be considered and re-labelled accordingly.

LH

16/029 Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 24th November 2016, 2.00 pm. Venue to be confirmed.