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LIVERPOOL HOPE UNIVERSITY

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY STEERING COMMITTEE: 5th June 2019

- PRESENT:** Dr C. Walsh (in the Chair), Mr A. Catterall, Ms N. Fearon, Dr T. Gallagher-Mitchell, Mr R. Hughes, Ms T. Lewin, Ms H. McGarry, Mr J. Ryan, Dr A. Yeates
- Secretariat:** Mr M. Jones
- APOLOGIES:** Dr A. Alifuoco, Mr A. Atherton, Dr B. Dagger, Mr J. Ellison, Dr A. Pereira,

1. Minutes of the previous meeting

Members had received minutes of the meeting held on 6th March 2019. Mr Jones informed members that Dr Alifuoco had informed him that in Actum 7 ('Student Update from LHSU') she had in fact raised the issue of the provision of hearing loops at the Creative Campus. Dr Yeates noted that in Actum 6 ('Staff Issues') she had been referring to the letter sent to staff returning from maternity leave, rather than policy guidelines for students. Pending these changes, the minutes were **APPROVED** by those who had attended as an accurate record.

The Chair informed members that the Equality & Diversity Steering Committee meets three times in each academic year.

2. Matters arising from the minutes

(i) Equality & Diversity Objectives (actum 2 iv)

Ms Fearon informed members that she had so far been unable to obtain comments gathered from the BME officer but was still attempting to contact them.

(ii) Disabled Students' Interruption of Study (actum 2 x)

Ms McGarry distributed a report showing trends in relation to disabled students interrupting studies pre 2017/18. Members noted that over the past five years on average 920 students each year have declared a disability, which is approximately 22% of the student population. Students with disabilities have interrupted at a higher rate than those without disabilities. Between 2014/15 and 2017/18 the average rate of interruption was 3.2%, compared to 1.6% for students with no disabilities.

Most interruptions took place in 2016/17, when the rate peaked at 4.5%, but it has since fallen. However the information for 2018/19 is not the final position and there may be further interruptions before the end of the year.

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Ms McGarry informed members that the data shows that generally students with disabilities interrupt more than those without, but they withdraw at lower rate. When looking further into the data, those with mental health conditions have the highest rates of interruption and withdrawal.

The Chair undertook to raise these issues with the Retention and Engagement Group and to consider the ways in which Faculty Senior Academic Advisors interact with disabled students.

ACTION: Chair to raise issue of disabled students' interruptions to study with the Retention and Engagement Group and consider the ways in which Faculty Senior Academic Advisors interact with disabled students.

3. Equality & Diversity Annual Report

Members had received the Equality & Diversity Annual Report.

The Chair reminded members that the staff and student data contained in the report has already been considered at a previous meeting of the Steering Committee. The Chair drew members' attention to the University's current Equality Objectives and requested feedback on these, adding that the new objectives for 2020 onwards would be established in the near future. The Chair asked members to contact her with thoughts re potential future objectives.

ACTION: Members to consider current University Equality Objectives and those for 2020 onwards and provide feedback to Chair.

Ms Lewin noted in relation to Objective Four ('To provide equality and diversity training to 80% of staff') that 93.5% of staff have now received this training. Dr Gallagher-Mitchell asked whether it would be possible to drill down into the graduate employment data in order to see what proportion of those students were in 'graduate-level' employment. Ms McGarry replied that this would be possible.

4. Staff issues

Mr Catterall informed members that the BAME staff survey would be sent out in the coming week.

Ms Lewin confirmed that she had looked into the content of the letters sent to members of staff returning from maternity leave, adding that information on breastfeeding facilities would be added to these letters. Members discussed the possibility of establishing an adaptable template for these letters. Mr Catterall concurred with this suggestion.

ACTION: Ms Lewin to look into possibility of establishing an adaptable template for letters sent to members of staff returning from maternity leave.

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Members discussed provision of spaces to accommodate colleagues who are breastfeeding. Ms Lewin informed members that she has received assurance from Estates that a room has been made available in HCA East Wing. Ms Lewin informed members that a similar space is available on an ad hoc basis at the Creative Campus and that discussions are ongoing re providing a permanent space.

Members discussed the issue of Disability Leave. Ms Lewin informed members that leave of this nature is covered by the University's absence policy, adding that requests are considered on a case-by-case basis and in collaboration with Occupational Health.

5. REF Code of Practice

The Chair had received the draft REF Code of Practice. Ms Lewin informed members that representatives of UCU had been consulted in the drafting of the document and had endorsed it. **Members RECOMMENDED the Code of Practice for approval by Senate.**

6. Access and Participation Plan 2020-25 preparation update

The Chair informed members that the Access and Participation Plan 2020-25 is due to be submitted to the Office for Students on 1st July 2019. The Chair added that she would be distributing the draft plan in the days following the meeting for members' feedback and that an extraordinary meeting of the Steering Committee would be held in the coming weeks.

7. Student Update from LHSU

Mr Hughes informed members that the Students' Union is currently training a paralegal in issues relating to trans advocacy, adding that the SU is also working with colleagues in Student Development & Wellbeing re issues relating to LGBT+ students. Mr Hughes asked whether it would be possible for the University's online room booking system to show information on which rooms are fully accessible. The Chair undertook to ask Mr Ellison to liaise with colleagues in IT Services re this.

ACTION: Mr Ellison to liaise with IT Services re accessibility information on online room booking system.

8. Estates Update

The Chair informed members that she had been in contact with Mr Ellison and received assurance that all the previous meeting's action points relating to Estates have been addressed. Re the issues raised in relation to EDEN Lecture Theatre accessibility, The Chair informed members that Mr Ellison had informed her that, due to the nature of the space, alteration is not feasible. The Chair undertook to relay this to the Learning Spaces Group.

ACTION: Chair to contact Learning Spaces Group re EDEN Lecture Theatre.

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Members discussed the possibility of changing the signage on the gender neutral toilets to non-binary. The Chair undertook to raise this issue with Mr Ellison.

ACTION: Chair to contact Mr Ellison re non-binary signage on gender neutral toilets.

9. Enhancement and Advancement

The Chair emphasised the importance of faculties supplying information in relation to enhancement and advancement and undertook to contact them re this.

ACTION: Chair to contact faculties re enhancement and advancement information.