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LIVERPOOL HOPE UNIVERSITY

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY STEERING COMMITTEE: 12th December 2018

PRESENT: Dr C. Walsh (in the Chair), Mr J. Ellison, Ms N. Fearon Dr T. Gallagher-Mitchell, Ms T. Lewin, Ms G. Mair, Ms H. McGarry, Mr J. Ryan, Ms S. Stamp, Dr A. Yeates

Secretariat: Mr M. Jones

APOLOGIES: Dr A. Alifuoco, Mr A. Atherton, Mr A. Catterall, Dr B. Dagger

1. Minutes of the previous meeting

Ms Mair requested that the title of actum eight ('Postgraduate Employment Rates Among Disabled Students') be amended to read 'Post-Graduation Employment Rates Among Disabled Students.

The Chair requested that the action point under actum six be amended to read 'Mr Kerry to check progress on Objective 6 with colleagues in Estates'.

Pending these changes, the minutes of the meeting held on 7th March 2018 were **APPROVED** by those who had attended as an accurate record.

2. Matters arising from the minutes

(i) Terms of Reference

Members had received the revised Terms of Reference. The Chair suggested that a reference to the Access & Participation Plan be inserted in point two, suggesting the wording 'Monitoring the evaluation of the Access and Participation Plan'.

ACTION: Mr Jones to clarify the Steering Committee's relationship to Rectorate Team/SMT with Mr Dykins.

Turning to point eight ('To receive Annual reports from faculties and departments in order to assure the University of the delivery of its equality and diversity agenda'), The Chair queried the specific nature of the Annual reports received by the Steering Committee. For example does this include Department/School ARE reports/

ACTION: Mr Jones to ask Mr Dykins whether the Steering Committee should receive ARE reports.

Dr Gallagher-Mitchell noted the use of the word 'achievement' in point five and suggested changing it to 'evaluation'. The Chair concurred with this suggestion.

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(ii) Return to work after maternity leave (actum 3b)

Ms Lewin confirmed that the Guidance for Managers document has been reviewed and uploaded to the University website. Dr Gallagher-Mitchell raised the issue of students' return to study after maternity leave. The Chair undertook to alert Dr Haughan to the potential need for policy guidelines in relation to pregnancy and new parent leave for students.

ACTION: Chair to contact Dr Haughan to discuss policy guidelines for pregnancy and new parent leave for students.

(iii) Student Charter (actum 4)

The student Charter is being revised under the guidance of the PVC Student Life and Learning and Learning and Teaching Committee.

(iv) Equality & Diversity Objectives (actum 6)

Mr Ellison confirmed that he would be updating the meeting in relation to Objective 6 ('To further improve the accessibility for staff, students and visitors to all campuses and buildings').

Ms Fearon commented that the Student Union BME Officer would be valuable in future discussions in relation to Monitoring the Experiences of BME students (Objective 3). The Chair thanked Ms Fearon.

ACTION: Comments to be gathered from the BME Officer before preparation of the next Objective Update.

ACTION: Chair to enquire from Ms Gittins about funding for the ECU project in to the experiences of BME students.

(v) EDEN Building accessibility (actum 7(i))

Mr Ellison reported that the Estates team were continuing to look at this issue.

Action: The Chair asked Mr Jones to contact Ms McManniman in order to determine whether the risk assessment relating to this has been carried out.

(vi) Accessibility Audits (actum 7(ii))

Mr Ellison informed members that the most recent accessibility audits took place in 2013. Mr Ellison proposed that Estates focus on improving known 'problem' areas. Dr Gallagher-Mitchell proposed that an internal accessibility audit group be

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established. Mr Ellison undertook to look into ways to increase staff and student awareness of the most effective ways of reporting accessibility issues.

ACTION: Mr Ellison to propose mechanisms through which to increase staff and student awareness of the most effective ways of reporting accessibility issues.

(vii) Post-Graduation Employment Rates (actum 8)

Ms Mair reported that members of her team are meeting with Ms Stamp later this week.

ACTION: Ms Mair to prepare a summary report for the next meeting of the Group.

(viii) Enhancement & Advancement (actum 9)

The Chair informed members that Learning & Teaching Committee will have an agenda item available for issues related to Equality & Diversity and that Academic Committee has agreed that Equality & Diversity related matters be included as an item in ARE reports. Dr Yeates commented that that Equality & Diversity required a clearer focus on meetings of the School of Creative & Performing Arts.

ACTION: Mr Jones to contact Ms McDermott with a reminder that Equality & Diversity should have a distinct agenda item on all School meetings.

(ix) Fitness to Study Policy and Procedure (actum 10)

The Chair reported that after discussion at Senate, the Vice Chancellor has requested that the Fitness to Study policy should be revised. PVC Dr Haughan is leading on this area within the remit of Learning and Teaching Committee.

3. Equality & Diversity Objectives

Members had received the Equality & Diversity Annual Report.

Re Objective 2 ('Address the differential in satisfaction levels of disabled students by further increasing our understanding and instigating targeted programmes of support') Mr Ryan informed members that in a recent report generated from NSS data, the University exceeded the national benchmark in this regard. The Chair undertook to note this in the next update.

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ACTION: Chair to add this information to Objective 2 at the next update.

4. Equality & Diversity Annual Student Data Report

Members had received the Equality & Diversity Annual Student Data Report. Ms McGarry informed members that the majority of the data in the report is from 2017/18, with the employment data drawn from 2016/17. Mr Ryan noted that while the proportion of disabled students earning upper second class degrees has declined, the proportion receiving first class degrees has increased. The Chair noted that 288 disabled students sat exams at the end of the 2017/18 academic year, as against 200 the year before.

The Chair asked that the Steering Group is provided with information relating to the number of interruptions recorded for disabled students'. Mr Ryan requested that this report include information on the number of alternative assessments offered to disabled students.

Ms McGarry suggested that the structure of the report should be suitable for subsequent inclusion in the Access and Participation Plan.

ACTION: Ms McGarry to liaise with the student data group to provide the additional information in relation to disabled students;

ACTION: Ms McGarry to liaise with the student data group to ensure the most efficient data analysis to fulfil the monitoring requirements of the University governance processes and external reporting to the Office for Students.

ACTION: Ms McGarry to consider whether the data report might be helpful for Heads in the processes of Subject level TEF.

5. Staff Issues

Dr Yeates noted the imminent introduction of optional Teaching and Scholarship contracts and asked whether the University would be tracking the gender of those applying, suggesting that the non-availability of sabbaticals to academic staff would mean that female staff members would be disproportionately likely to self-nominate for these contracts. Ms Lewin agreed that this should be tracked. The Chair undertook to contact Mr Catterall.

ACTION: Chair to contract Mr Catterall re tracking gender of applicants for Teaching and Scholarship contracts any ask for reporting of any equality issues once the process is complete.

(i) Athena SWAN

Ms Lewin informed members that the University is awaiting the completion of the Athena SWAN review before deciding on a course of action.

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(ii) Update on Guidance for Managers

See 2 (i) (above).

(iii) Analysis of BME Staff Data

The Chair informed members that Personnel are working with relevant colleagues to produce case studies of BME staff members which will appear in the next Equality and Diversity Annual Report to University Council. Student case studies will be sought in liaison with the SU BME officer as 2 (iv) (above).

6. Student Update from LHSU

Ms Fearon raised the issue of gender neutral toilets, saying that following the decommissioning of the existing gender neutral toilets the University has converted a number of disabled toilets into gender neutral toilets. Ms Fearon noted that a number of disabled students have expressed concern at the loss of facilities. Mr Ellison informed members that he has a meeting scheduled with PVC Professor Vandewalle in January 2019 to discuss this issue.

ACTION: Mr Ellison to report back on the outcome of the meeting at the next meeting.

7. Agreed Access & Participation Plan

Members had received the Access & Participation Plan submitted and accepted as part of our Registration with the Office for Students. The Chair reminded members that the Steering Committee is responsible for evaluating and monitoring the plan and for assurance to both Senate/University Council and the Office for Students. The Chair drew members' attention towards the Action and Evaluation Plan for 2019-24.

Turning to Action and Evaluation Plan Point 2 ('The participation of BME students will be significantly improved') Dr Gallagher-Mitchell asked for details of the University's BME recruitment policy. The Chair informed him that Ms Weir from Student Recruitment will be joining the Access & Participation Plan Implementation Group in order to address this point. The Chair added that each faculty had been asked to provide a representative to sit on the implementation group.

Turning to the first Point 4 of the Plan ('Unemployment rates for disabled students will decrease'), Dr Gallagher-Mitchell noted that full-time employment is not invariably the goal of study for disabled students. Ms Stamp concurred, noting that disabled graduates may choose to work part time, or not to pursue paid work. Ms McGarry noted that the DLHE survey acknowledges this distinction through its use of the term 'unemployed and looking for work'.

8. Estates Update

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(i) Creative Campus

Mr Ellison informed members that the extensive programme of summer works at the Creative Campus has substantially increased accessibility in the Cornerstone Building, with an accessible food court area, increased ground floor teaching and office space. Mr Ellison added that the Textiles and Print studios will be fully accessible by January, following the installation of a platform lift. Mr Ellison added that all studio space in the new Arts Centre building is accessible. Dr Yeates raised the issue of access to the dance studios. Mr Ellison noted that the Cornerstone Building's listed status presented significant challenges in this regard and advised that, in the event of accessible dance studio space being needed, one of the drama studios could be converted. Dr Yeates suggested that students requiring adjustments be identified as early as possible and asked whether it would be possible for student ambassadors to be aware when meeting prospective students that dance students are accessible. The Chair undertook to contact Ms Kelly re this.

ACTION: Chair to contact Ms Kelly re information on accessibility of facilities when student ambassadors meet prospective students at Open days.

(ii) Update on accessibility of EDEN Building

See actum 2 (iv) (above).

(iii) Signage on gender neutral toilet facilities

See actum 6 (above).

9. Enhancement & Advancement

Faculty representatives were not present at the meeting.

ACTION: The Chair requested that Mr Jones contact Faculties for updates on good practice/ issues in relation to Equality and Diversity identified at Faculty Quality and Teaching Committee or Department/School meetings. Summary to be added as an Appendix to the report.

ACTION: Mr Jones to ask Faculty identify an alternative representative to attend Steering Group meetings should the designated representative be unable to attend.

10. Any Other Business

(x) Equality & Diversity Policy

Members had received the current interim Equality & Diversity policy. The Chair undertook to find out where lead authorship of the policy sits.

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Members **APPROVED** the amendments to the policy but requested a substantially revised version for 2019.

ACTION: Chair to find out where lead authorship of the Equality & Diversity Policy rests.