
Equality and Diversity Committee Meeting

10 a.m., Thursday, 24 September 2020
Meeting held remotely via Teams Chat

Minutes

Present:

Dr Richard Mortier (Chair) (RMM)
Ms Celia Burns (Secretary) (CB)
Prof Ann Copestake (AAC)
Dr Heidi Howard (HH)
Dr Anil Madhavapeddy (AVSM)
Ms Joy Rook (JLR)
Ms Agnieszka Slowik (AS)
Mrs Caroline Stewart (CS)

1. Apologies for Absence

None.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 May 2020 were approved.

3. Update on Pending Actions

i. Unconscious/Implicit Bias online training for PhD students and Post-Docs

CS reported that Miriam Lyn has advised her where to obtain the data on completion rates for the training course for PhD students and Post-Docs. CS will obtain the data for the next meeting.

Action: CS

ii. Shared parental leave policy (SPL)

CB has asked Lise Gough to raise the issue of the SPL policy at the next Postgraduate Education Committee meeting (on 25 September) for possible further discussion at the Degree Committee.

iii. Academic titles—US equivalences

This item had been superseded by the University consultation on academic titles. Voting for the proposals on the titles and structure of academic offices will take place in the Michaelmas term.

iv. Childcare resources

AAC reported that she had raised the issue of a childcare facility on the West/North West Cambridge site at an informal meeting of the West Cambridge Heads of

Departments but discussions about COVID had not left much room to cover this issue. There had been a lot of support for a childcare facility to cover half-terms, but it was not clear how to make it happen, although the Shared Facilities Hub had been identified as a possible resource. AAC agreed to continue to raise the issue whenever she had the opportunity at any relevant committee meetings.

Action: AAC

v. *Silver Award Outcome and Feedback*

- a. ***Widening participation data:*** CS reported that the request to the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs for data relating to research staff members' country of origin and the country in which they lived prior to taking the Computer Lab role had not been successful.

AAC reminded the Committee why the data would be useful, explaining that potential funders are often interested in this data, especially around ethnicity. It was felt we should keep pushing for this data.

The Committee briefly discussed the possibility of gathering student data directly and obtaining it from the Colleges. AAC noted that it was not possible for the department to collect the data due to the University procedure for collecting and processing data. AAC is hoping to obtain the data from the University in February 2021, which would be data on the 2019 student entrants, (applications and acceptances).

vi. *Wider Diversity in the Department*

The Committee had discussed Unconscious Bias training for all PhD students and Postdocs, and Miriam Lyn (ML) had agreed to liaise with RMM about provision of the planned online version of the current face-to-face Unconscious Bias training. RMM agreed to follow up this issue with ML.

Action: RMM

ML had agreed to consider what diversity actions other departments are taking, and to get back to the Committee about this. ML was not at this meeting, so this item will be carried forward to the next meeting.

Action: ML

vii. *Committee Membership*

RMM had agreed to ask Tim Jones, Chair of the TMC, to join the Committee to replace Dinah Pounds, who wishes to step down. RMM reported that Tim had been happy to join the Committee but had noted that he would be stepping down from the TMC at the end of the year. AAC reported that some management changes were in progress, so the relevant person would be identified soon and this action could be picked up then.

Action: AAC/CS

viii. *Actions from the Silver Award application for the Committee to take forward*

Committee members had considered which actions from the Silver Award Application Action Plan (<https://www.cl.cam.ac.uk/local/committees/athena->

[swan/ActionPlan.pdf](#)) the Committee could take forward. RMM had subsequently categorised the actions proposed.

RMM reported that the following two items had been proposed by three Committee members:

- a) Develop women@CL (1.2) and
- b) Improve the visibility of women in the department (2.2).

Other actions which had support from fewer Committee members were:

- c) External profile of the Department includes recognition of its initiatives to support women (2.3)
- d) Improved monitoring of student admissions and performance in terms of gender balance (3.3)
- e) Extension and maintenance of Unconscious Bias training (4.3)
- f) Effective workload distribution for established academic staff (5.8)
- g) Restructuring of the undergraduate course (6.3)
- h) Improve awareness of career development and job opportunities (4.7).

The committee discussed the actions and where the responsibility would lie for taking each action forward.

(a) Develop women@CL: It was agreed that AVSM, as Academic Chair of women@CL, would take this action forward including contacting DoSs and asking the organisers to disseminate more details to people about the group's events. AM noted that the group was getting more independent funding now and was less dependent on the Supporters Fund. AAC requested that Ben Karniely, the new Research Strategy Administrator, be informed of any funding arrangements. Ben could also refer to CUDAR where necessary.

Action: AVSM

(b) Improve the visibility of women in the department: AAC noted that Rachel Gardner, Digital Communications Manager, would be happy to publish articles celebrating senior women in the department and their achievement. AVSM agreed to contact Rachel about this. AVSM noted that he was also keen to get more recognition for members of women@CL.

Action: AVSM

It was also noted that it is important to have women speakers for the Wednesday Seminars, and that the current remote seminar format should make it easier to get high-profile women to speak. It was agreed that the Committee should also ask women@CL to produce a list of potential female speakers for Wednesday seminars and send to Rafał Mantiuk, coordinator of the Seminar series.

Action: CB

Regarding the action to monitor the impact of greater exposure to female lecturers following the UG course restructuring, RMM agreed to monitor the involvement of women in Part II.

Action: RMM

(c) External profile of the Department includes recognition of its initiatives to support women: AAC noted that Quentin Stafford-Fraser is organising an online Supporters Club Fair and some alumni events, and so could provide participants with any relevant material.

Action: Committee Members

HH noted that there had been very few female engineers at the Recruitment Fairs and tech talks and it would be great if companies could send more female representatives. AAC agreed to draw this to the attention of Quentin Stafford-Fraser and Helen Francis, Research Strategy Manager.

Action: AAC

(d) Improved monitoring of student admissions and performance in terms of gender balance: AAC noted that, in addition to exam results, performance data could include ticks, drop-outs and intermissions. This data could be collected by Dinah Pounds, Teaching Administration Manager, and reported regularly to this Committee. It was agreed that the Committee should ask Dinah to collect and provide this data.

Action: CB

(e) Extension and maintenance of Unconscious Bias training: RMM noted that we are dealing with this already (see item 3.1).

(f) Effective workload distribution for established academic staff: AAC noted that the actions from the Action Plan are underway, with some being addressed by the Workload Committee, chaired by Andy Rice. In addition, roles are currently being rationalised so that workload can be better tracked and people have mutual support.

(g) Restructuring of undergraduate course. It was noted that this was a matter of communication and should involve the Outreach Committee and the Teaching Management Committee (TMC). It was agreed that the Committee should send the minute of this item to the Outreach Committee and TMC Chairs.

Action: CB

In addition, Rachel Gardner, Digital Communications Manager, could do a story on the structure of the course, which would be useful at the time when people are thinking about applying (around January/February), and that it would be useful for DoSs to be informed when the story is available. AAC agreed to contact Rachel about this issue.

Action: AAC

(h) Improve awareness of career development and job opportunities. HH noted that there is no mechanism for sharing job opportunities, fellowships, and internships. Instead, people rely on supervisors and PIs to share relevant information, so information sharing is inconsistent and leads to people feeling let down.

In response to a question about whether people who get fellowships then stay in the department, AAC noted that some Junior Researcher Fellows do stay in the

department but generally they don't get quite enough experience in the Junior Fellowship roles for a position in the Faculty. AAC also reported the Department Early Career Academic Fellows (DECAFs) programme and AVSM asked whether it would be possible to allocate one position for female candidates only. AAC noted that it is not as easy to do this, not in the way it is with studentships. AAC suggested that she and AVSM should follow up on this discussion.

Action: AVSM

Another action was around disseminating information about job opportunities for PhD students and postdocs. It was noted that we need to avoid circulating too many emails and that creating and maintaining a webpage is time-consuming. HH agreed to talk to the research students about this as well as raise it at the Research Staff Forum. It was noted that Helen Francis might also circulate relevant information.

Action: HH and CB

ix. *Lack of confidence in programming as a potential factor for underperformance*

- a. ***Collaboration with Directors of Studies:*** RMM reported that he had sent the email to DoSs, relating to data from the Athena Swan submission suggesting that women undergraduates might underperform in CST and what factors might influence this. The comments RMM had received had been generally quite mixed, with the majority saying there was no evidence of underperformance or lack of programming experience being a problem, and several people saying that the numbers involved were too small to be meaningful.

Actions that had been suggested included:

- being clearer that programming is hard and frustrating
- providing support in practical labs
- finding a way to encourage Part IAs undertaking large programming exercises
- running an 'Adapting to University Computer Science' course
- running an induction course before the start of term
- the 'Flying Start' pre-arrival course offered by some Colleges to boost confidence

AAC noted that the pre-arrival and induction course ideas were under discussion as part of the idea that there may be funding for people to come for a year before their University course, and noted that she would bear these ideas in mind if that discussion comes up again.

- b. ***Diversity of undergraduate intake:*** RMM reported that a sub-group had discussed the various issues raised at the last meeting following a discussion about matters that might be affecting gender and ethnic diversity of undergraduate intake.

x. *Best practice for circulation of information emails*

Miriam Lynn (ML) had agreed to look into guidance on best practice for future dissemination of information (in terms of frequency, length and format). ML was not at this meeting, so this item will be carried forward to the next meeting.

Action: ML

xi. *University communications*

AAC had noted that it would be very helpful if departments received communications which could be forwarded on in the state in which they were received, and ML had agreed to feed this back to the University. ML was not at this meeting, so this item will be carried forward to the next meeting.

Action: ML

4. *Undergraduate Admissions Diversity Report for Faculty Board*

At the Faculty Board meeting held on 30 June 2020, it had been agreed that Faculty Board should receive a short annual report on undergraduate admissions from the E&D Committee, which should give a breakdown of applications/offers/acceptances by ethnicity and Polar 4 as well as gender. It was felt that having such a report would ensure the Equality and Diversity Committee obtained and discussed the data, before presenting it to Faculty Board. AAC reported that she is in conversation with the person who can provide this information and expects to receive it in February 2021.

5. *Any Other Business*

(i) *Sabbatical leave for the Committee Chair:* RMM reported that he would be going on sabbatical leave in January 2021. AAC offered the Committee's thanks to RMM for chairing the Committee. CS noted that the Committee would need to find a new Chairperson but the HoD team would be discussing that as part of their consideration of roles.

6. *Date of next meeting*

CS noted that it would be useful to have a couple of meetings each term in order to keep up with the actions. It was also noted that this would give the Chair the opportunity to attend one more meeting. CB agreed to circulate a Doodle poll for a date at the end of term, avoiding Admissions week.

Action: CB