UNIVERSITY OF EXETER
EDI TERMLY REPORT TO COUNCIL, APRIL 2021

1. Introduction

This report summarises progress on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) over the spring term of the 2020/21 academic year, including new developments and challenges along with proposed next steps.

Our 2030 strategy development work provides an opportunity to take the long view on the type of culture we want to create at Exeter. Over the last few weeks, we have engaged a number of internal and external experts to seek views on the 'Inclusive and Compassionate University' piece and next steps will involve broader consultation with our staff, student and partners.

Work is also continuing to identify Key Performance Indicators to measure the impact of our EDI activities in a robust and meaningful way.

2. Progress on Priorities

2.1 EDI Action Plan 2020-21

Following the approval of the EDI Vision 2025, and the new governance structure, the EDI Team have been working with colleagues across the institution to drive forward actions outlined within this report.

2.2 EDI Training Plan

Training and Development is a vital part of the University EDI Vision to 2025. Key updates for this term are as follows:

a. *A refresh of current mandatory staff EDI induction training*
   A comprehensive review of our online training programme has been carried out in consultation with Equality Group members and networks and a refreshed version was launched in February 2021.

b. *'Diversifying Leadership'*
   Advance HE's Diversifying Leadership programme is designed to support early-career academics and professional services staff from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds who are about to take their first steps into a leadership role. The programme enables exploration of various elements of leadership and has been designed to provide a safe place in which to discuss issues relating to their experiences of working in HE. As a result, participants build confidence, feel empowered and expand their professional strengths. We are pleased to be funding two places for this programme.

c. *'Elevate' (an innovative leadership and development programme For Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Women)*
   The first pilot of its kind, Elevate offers a unique opportunity for Professional Services and Academic staff (who identify as female) to meet, share, support and learn together from across the four GW4 universities in the South West (Bristol, Bath, Cardiff and Exeter). This programme has proven popular and we have funded 7 x places.

d. *Student EDI induction training*
New EDI Induction training for students was successfully implemented in September 2020. This was promoted to all students (although the focus has been on new incoming students). Just over 2300 students have engaged with the course and some initial evaluation has taken place that is broadly positive: 60% responding it was 'very beneficial' and 31% 'quite beneficial'. Next steps include improving completion reports to allow a breakdown of engagement by year group and College; further evaluation to inform a review of content; and embedding it within the registration process from 21/22.

3. External Accreditations

3.1 Gender: *Athena SWAN* (next institutional application due April 2023)

We are continuing to review our Gender Equality Action Plan through a CV-19 lens to identify and address the detrimental impacts of CV-19 on gender equality.

Two policies have been developed on Adjusting for the Differential Impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic – one for academic colleagues and a parallel policy for Professional Services. The principles underpinning both policies are broadly the same, emphasising a flexible approach and recognition that colleagues' activity and priorities may have significantly changed during the past year and acknowledging that the impact of these changes are likely to endure beyond the pandemic so these policies will take effect throughout this year and at least the next two academic years following.

In terms of specific actions taken to date, please note the following:

- delivery of a 'HoD Engage' session and a broader programme of written guidance and training to mitigate the impact of CV-19 on progression
- the amendment of probation forms to include an opportunity for colleagues to note how this period has been affected by the pandemic
- additional analysis of promotions data to provide further detail and opportunities to flag any concerns or disparities arising

3.2 Sexual Orientation: *Stonewall Workplace Equality Index (WEI)* (next application due September 2021)

Work continues towards the 2022 WEI submission deadline in September 2021. Stonewall have introduced a new marking criterion which will include Bronze, Silver and Gold awards. There is a new emphasis on Bi and Trans inclusion. Work has commenced on our application for a Bronze award in the 2022 WEI (submission deadline September 2021).

3.3 Race: *Race Equality Charter Mark (REC)* (application due September 2021)

Advance HE have changed the REC submission deadline from July to September 2021 and work continues towards this revised timeframe. To ensure university-wide engagement with this work, a series of presentations have been delivered to engage colleges/ departments and discuss how they can be involved at a "local level".

Key areas of progress to note include:

- Analysis of REC survey results shared with colleges
- BAME Leadership programmes proven very popular – both Advance HE and Elevate
- UUK report gap analysis and Let's Talk Workshop feed into Race Equality Action Plan
- 5 Student-Led Anti-Racism Projects funded (see 4.6 for further details)
- Intersections between gender and race are also being considered within our REC and Athena SWAN work and associated action plans.

3.4 Disability: *Disability Confident*

Following the development of the new Disability Equality Action Plan, work has now started on progressing actions.

The 'Accessible IT Project' working group was established in September 2020 in response to the issue of limited access to specialist accessibility software and expert support. The remit of the group has since been broadened to include consideration of homeworking and accessibility.

The new Disability Network continues to grow in terms of membership and is providing support and guidance to staff including those who have anxiety about returning to campus.

We are also currently engaging with a student-led disability campaign to communicate more widely the accessibility of our CV-19 test centres and the support we have put in place for our disabled students and colleagues.

4. Cultural Change

4.1 Response to the death of Sarah Everard (TRIGGER WARNING: Violence and Sexual Violence)

We have been shocked and saddened by the recent tragic death of Sarah Everard and have responded with a joint statement from our Vice-Chancellor, Lisa Roberts, and Provost, Janice Kay, reaching out to women within our community who may be experiencing feelings of anxiety and distress, reaffirming the University's position against any form of violence or sexual violence and signposting to sources of support and advice including information on the Exeter Speaks Out platform. Similar statements have also been issued by the Students' Guild and the Students' Union.

4.2 International Women's Day 2021 – 8th March

To celebrate International Women's Day this year, a series of events and activities were held to align with the UN Women theme "Women in leadership: Achieving an equal future in a Covid-19 world". We also celebrated colleagues who were nominated for demonstrating exceptional and inspirational leadership qualities throughout the pandemic via a dedicated staff newsletter, social media and the weekly bulletin.

4.3 LGBT+ History Month February
The month is celebrated annually to raise awareness and educate around the issues faced by the LGBTQ+ community and ways we can work to combat prejudice against it. Throughout the month colleges, departments, networks and individuals hosted a range of events.

4.4 Support for Parents and Carers
New research from the University of Oxford has reported increased levels of stress, depression and anxiety among parents and carers during the pandemic. We have developed a range of resources for parents and carers at this time available on our employment webpages and updated Sway guidance. The Parents and Carers Networks also offers support for those with caring responsibilities.

4.5 Reciprocal Mentoring
Following an ally-ship session with Tina Verhaeghe in 2020, Council agreed that we should explore reverse/reciprocal mentoring. This would entail pairing members of Council with volunteers from our BAME community in order to build relationships that are reciprocal in nature – building allies and equal partnerships designed to create systemic transformational change. We are currently in the recruitment stage of a pilot project that will see three members of staff from the BME network paired with two Council members and one VCEG member. In addition to this pilot, we are exploring how we might offer a suite of opportunities to Council to become the most effective allies they can be, and we will bring forth further ideas soon.

4.6 Student Anti-Racism Projects
We are pleased to announce that the first round of our funding for student led Anti-Racism projects have been allocated, in conjunction with the Education Incubator. The first tranche has funded five projects, covering issues such as micro aggressions within sports societies, policy clinics and a project focussing on decolonising the politics curriculum. We are so excited about the creativity and passion that the students showed in these project applications and look forward to seeing the outcome of their activities. You can read all about the projects that have received funding here.

4.7 Universities UK (UUK) report into tackling racial harassment in higher education-University of Exeter response
Following the release of the report which outlines a set of recommendations designed to decisively tackle racial harassment as part of efforts to address racial inequality in UK higher education the University undertook a high-level gap analysis against each of the 12 recommendations, to bench mark our current practice. A joint Provost Commission/ BME Network "Let's Talk" event was held during February where we shared our gap analysis and identified concrete next steps. This was followed up with a session at the Senior Leadership Forum where each senior leader identified an action they were going to progress within their team. We will continue to track our actions, and have a follow up 'Let's Talk' session scheduled for March.

4.8 Embedding EDI as a core University Value
We are currently exploring ways of including a commitment and practice of values of EDI as a requirement / recruitment criterion for new appointments.

4.9 Faith & Worldview
The new 'Faith & Worldview Equality Group' met for the second time in February. Terms of Reference were finalised and agreed and work has now commenced on formulating an Action Plan.

5. Joined Up Working

5.1 Inclusive Teaching and Success for All – *Associate Academic Dean for Racial Equality and Inclusion*

Dr Vrinda Nayak, Senior Lecturer and Academic Lead for BAME Student Support within the College of Medicine and Health, has now commenced in post with a remit which includes playing a key role in supporting the delivery of our mission and objectives with regard to racial equality and inclusion as set out in the University's Education Strategy and Access and Participation Plan.

We commit to building a more inclusive research culture, highlighting our BAME researchers and research and ensuring the highest quality support. We are investigating how our Global Research partnerships could enable us to create more diverse linkages across the world and drive more inclusive co-working and research exchange.

5.2 REF Environment Templates

In preparation for our final submission to REF2021, members of the University Inclusion Group have reviewed the environment templates for each unit of assessment in relation to EDI activity within each and provided feedback to Directors of Research that has been warmly received.

6. Improved Processes

6.1 Support for Staff and Students

As a result of feedback from our community and themes identified via Speak Out Guardians, online reporting (via Speak Out tools) and discussion forums such as our Equality Networks, the following improvements to processes and procedures have been made:

- Revised Student Complaints procedure
- Revised Staff Grievance procedure
- NEW Online Behaviour Guidance
- NEW Training for Investigating Officers (micro-aggressions, Trans awareness etc.)
- Number and diversity of Speak Out Guardians and Dignity & Respect Advisors has increased to ensure they are more representative of our community.

  In progress:

- Further development of Training for Investigating Officers
- Comprehensive review of Staff and Student Relationships policy – extensive consultation with staff and students has taken place to ensure a whole university community approach. Due to be launched September 2021.
- Encourage and enable our community to continue to speak out, challenge and report inappropriate behaviour which does not reflect our University Values. Our aim is to create a culture where individuals feel comfortable being themselves, empowered to raise concerns / report incidents and have confidence in our processes and procedures. Therefore, we should expect to see a continued increase in reporting as a reflection of our changing culture.

7. Next Steps

We continue to ensure that all our action plans have associated KPIs and that EDI is fully embedded within our 2030 strategy so that we create a culture at Exeter that is truly inclusive and compassionate.

8. Recommendation

Council is asked to NOTE the update.