Equality, Diversity & Inclusivity Termly Report to Council, December 2019

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1. Introduction

This report summarises progress on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in Term 1 for the 2019/20 academic year, including developments, challenges and achievements, together with proposed next steps.

In the past year, we have been on a journey of reflection on our culture and how we begin to embed Equality, Diversity and Inclusion into all aspects of the University of Exeter. This has been informed by our key initiatives like the Provost Commission, our Speak out Guardians, Employee Engagement Survey and our Access and Participation plans.

At the July Council, we presented a new EDI Vision 2025 that seeks to strengthen EDI support to our Sovereign Strategies and guide our development over the next five years to 2025. This report will outline the actions supporting the delivery of the Vision and new ways of working adopted within the context of shared challenges across the sector.

2. Progress on Priorities

2.1 EDI Action Plan 2019-20

Following the approval of the EDI Vision, and the new governance structure, the EDI Team have been working with colleagues across the institution to embed the following changes:

- As per council's direction, we have taken a strong project approach to the delivery of the new Vision and governance structure. All Equality Groups (for Gender, Race, Disability and Sexual Orientation) have developed or are beginning to develop a consistent, SMART action plan that guides UoE towards national best practice through external accreditations and charters.
- The new governance structures are being established with representatives from the Vice-Chancellor's Executive Group (VCEG) chairing each of the Equality Groups. This has led to a series of improvements:
    a) Strong academic and student representation on all groups
    b) Positive engagement with staff and student networks as critical advisors
    c) Effective reporting from Equality Groups to the overarching University Inclusion Group.

Recruitment will commence this term for the new Taskforces (sub-groups of the Equality Groups) which will support the Equality Groups in responding to live issues and in making operational changes. The group will engage students and staff from all levels across the university, further instilling the message that EDI is everyone's responsibility. A provision for £4k across the 4 Equality Groups has been allocated from the Provost Fund to allow these groups to drive change within our community.

2.2 High level training plan

To help us achieve our EDI Vision 2025, the Provost Commission Forum for EDI Innovation has been working with the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Team to roll out a two year high-level EDI training and development plan which will focus on 3 main activities:

    a) Development of a 'Train the Trainer' programme with AdvanceHE: The programme will train 15 individuals from colleges and services across the university in essential concepts of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. AdvanceHE will also provide training resources and ad-hoc support to these colleagues to enable them to run 3-hour training sessions across the university to further upskill our community in managing diversity and supporting inclusion.

b) Development of Bystander Intervention training programme: An offering of train the trainer sessions on establishing Social Norms and Intervention Initiative for tackling sexual harassment and inappropriate behaviours will be rolled out for staff and students. The end aim is to train our student leaders in using the intervention toolkit.

c) Cultural Awareness at Exeter through the delivery of training and consultancy from NCCC, Georgetown University: We are working with the National Centre of Cultural Competence (NCCC) at Georgetown University (USA) on a pioneering new programme to apply cultural competence to advance equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) at the University of Exeter. Exeter and NCCC will be working together to advance EDI at Exeter by piloting a programme to establish a Community of Practice of leaders in cultural competence. The programme will work with the Community of Practice to:

    i. Define cultural competence within a range of contexts and define the rationales for cultural competence at Exeter

    ii. Identify and examine the implications/benefits of culturally competent systems, behaviours and processes on outcomes and experiences for staff and students

    iii. Identify how the benefits of cultural competence could be applied

    iv. Develop actions, projects and next steps

    v. Share the experience and knowledge gained with the wider community.

The community will be composed of approximately 24 staff from across the institution with the ability to develop, deliver and lead change in their respective areas; this could be at a local or a strategic level. This opportunity was released to all staff on w/c 18th November 2019. More information is available on the EDI webpages here.

2.3 EDI Communications Strategy

A new communication strategy has been developed with a new Identity, Video Concept and increased features and was piloted with the Black History Month 2019 campaign.

This strategy will span the next 2-3 years and look to bring together all communications relating to EDI to achieve greater impact and recognition. This will be achieved in two phases:

1. *'One community, many voices, everyone welcome'* campaign - the launch of a general campaign to raise awareness of the work being undertaken across the University relating to EDI

2. Targeted campaigns to focus on priority areas – NSS, EES, Student Dropouts/ Arrivals surveys and increase informal reporting.

We have also developed a set of videos around the theme of Friendships and how diverse friendships add to student experience. A short compilation of these will be released in December with further individual rollouts in Term 2.
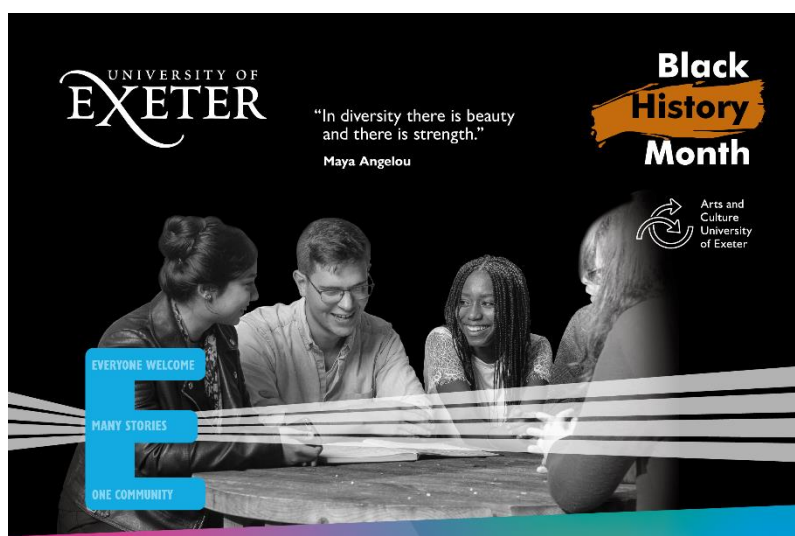
3. External Accreditations

3.1 Athena SWAN

- It was confirmed in September 2019 that the following departmental applications had been successful in the April 2019 submission round:-
  - ➢ The College for Medicine and Health (Silver renewal)
  - ➢ Engineering (Bronze)

Engineering's success means that all nine of our STEM departments now hold an award.

- The following departments are working towards applications for the November 2019 submission round:-
  - ➢ Mathematics and Computer Science (renewal of their Silver award)
  - ➢ Psychology (renewal of their Silver award)
  - ➢ History (NEW application for a Bronze award)

3.2 Stonewall Workplace Equality Index (WEI)

- Following submission in September, the results of the latest Stonewall WEI benchmarking exercise are due to be published in January 2020. The Stonewall Staff Survey is a key component of the WEI accounting for 10% of the overall score. The results of the survey will help inform key actions for the SOEG (Sexual Orientation Equality Group) action plan.

3.3 Race Equality Charter Mark

- The University has made a commitment to submit an application to Advance HE's Race Equality Charter (REC) by October 2021. The REC aims to improve the representation, progression and success of minority ethnic staff and students within higher education. Through undertaking a comprehensive self-assessment and working through the REC framework, institutions are able to develop specific, targeted actions to advance race equality. By applying for REC membership, (which the University has done) institutions are committing to adopting the REC principles, and embedding these principles within policies, practices, action plans and culture. There have been a series of sector-level reports published including the EHRC Racial Harassment Report and HEPI's 'White Elephant in the Room', recommendations from which will be taken forward through this process.

Work towards the accreditation is now underway led by our new Race Equality Charter Manager, Niema Bohrayba. Niema will be leading a series of awareness sessions across our three main campuses to ensure that our students and staff understand the importance of the REC and the impact it can have on BAME inclusion and focused positive action at Exeter.

The self-assessment will be undertaken by a Self-Assessment Team (SAT). Work is underway to recruit to the SAT, which will be chaired by Professor Janice Kay. The first SAT meetings are scheduled to take place in January & April 2020. Progress on the Race Equality Charter will be communicated to staff and students via a dedicated UoE REC blog.

3.4 Disability

- Our status as a Disability Confident (Level 2) employer has been extended to November 2020.

4. Cultural Change

4.1 Black History Month - This October, as part of Black History Month we delivered a strong, intersectional campaign. The foci of the campaign included – Black Mental health, black feminism and intersections with LGBTQ+ identities. The events of the campaign were created and executed in collaboration with students, staff networks and both students' unions and engaged over 400 students and staff. The feedback from students and staff positive and an opportunities to discuss BAME experiences and Racism was welcomed by

the community. The campaign was well supported through the funding from the Arts and Culture strategy but there will need to be consideration on the scale of the campaign moving forward if this funding does not reoccur.

4.2 University of Sanctuary Award - The University has been awarded University of Sanctuary status for our work so far and future plans to further refugee and asylum seekers' inclusion within the University. An event will be held on 20th November to celebrate and promote the University of Exeter's commitment to access to education for forced migrants and to making its campus welcoming to them by becoming a University of Sanctuary.

4.3 Safe Travels Policy – We are working to develop a Safe Travels document to support staff and students with protected characteristics travelling nationally and internationally to and from the University. The purpose of this guidance is not to deter employees or students who have one or more protected characteristic from travelling abroad in connection with their employment or study, but simply to research and consider the potential risks associated with such travel and the steps that can be taken to minimise the risks.

4.4 University and Community Trans Allies Training – The University will host an event in the spring term, to be facilitated by Stonewall. The Trans Allies Programme is a one day event which aims to develop the skills of attendees to implement institutional guidance and embed support networks for both trans and non-binary individuals. We are inviting external partners, including Devon and Cornwall Police, Exeter and Devon County Council, the Met Office and others to also attend.

4.5 VCEG Trans Awareness Training – Also in the spring term, the VCEG will be invited to attend an awareness raising session to bel delivered by local LGBTQ+ charity the Intercom Trust, who recently won the national Pink News LGBT+ Community Group Award. The aim of the session is to develop a greater shared understanding and awareness of Trans and non-binary issues affecting both staff and students and provide insights into how VCEG can make a difference both through governance and operations.

5. Joined Up Working

5.1 **Provost Commission Forum for EDI Innovation** – The Provost Commission will be refocusing its remit moving into this academic year to act as a forum to share staff and student perspectives related to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and to receive updates on progress on the implementation of the EDI Strategy and other related areas of work of the University (including the Education Strategy, Access and Participation Plan). It will also share and generate innovative ideas to further our work in EDI for consideration by the University Inclusion Group. This will enable us to gain feedback from our community and ensure a strong student voice in our EDI activity.

5.2 **Inclusive Teaching and Success for All** - There are synergies and overlaps between our new EDI and Education strategies, and the delivery of the new Access and Participation Plan. Areas of co-delivery that will have the biggest impact are:

- Bridging attainment/ progression and experiential gaps
- Communication about University's commitment to building an inclusive culture
- Inclusive curriculum development and inclusive teaching practice

Subsequent to our University-level work with the Provost Commission in 2018-19, we have developed resources, self-assessment toolkits and change frameworks to support development and embedding of inclusion in teaching. This will now be taken forward jointly between Education, EDI and Access and Participation through the Teaching Excellence monitoring process.

6. Improved Processes

6.1 **New Reporting tools** launched in May 2018 via the Exeter Speaks Out online hub encourage staff and students to report any instances of inappropriate behaviour either informally, anonymously or formally

and seek appropriate support. 194 reports have been made through the informal and anonymous reporting tools (May 2018 – Oct 2019). A working group has been established to explore options for a single reporting mechanism for staff and students on our Cornwall campuses where currently Falmouth and Exeter have their own separate systems.

6.2 **New and updated mandatory training** - New employees are now required to complete all mandatory training on day one of employment. A new version of the mandatory EDI Induction training has been introduced. In response to feedback from staff, the new course includes improved content, interactive features and a downloadable podcast and workbook which makes it fully accessible for all users.

6.3 **Support for Staff and Students** - Building on the Speak Out Guardian role which was created in 2018, recruitment is currently underway for a new Speak Out Guardian for Cornwall. A number of new Dignity & Respect Advisors are also being trained and will join the existing Network in January 2020. Speak Out Guardians and the Network of Dignity & Respect Advisors are promoted to staff and students via the Exeter Speaks Out online hub.

6.4 **Disability Policy** - The Disability Equality Group has been tasked with developing a clear policy and guidance on reasonable adjustments for University staff. Central to this will be:
- Taking effective action to prevent discrimination, bullying or harassment
- Promoting equality of access for all staff to training and development
- Promoting good practice in all activities such as recruitment, selection, promotion
- Listening to and involving disabled staff in the development of facilities and services

6.5 **Data Informed Action** – The EDI team have been working with the BI team to develop a data dashboard which includes student and staff data for Race, Gender, Disability and Sexual Orientation. This will include data on attainment, pay grade and progression which will aid and inform our accreditation work and targeted positive action. The target launch date for the dashboard is March 2020.