



Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee

Wednesday 22 February 2023, 2.00pm

Meeting held via Microsoft Teams

Minutes

Present Members: Dr Michael Spence, President and Provost (Chair)

Professor Nick Achilleos, Dr Simona Aimar, Dr Suzy Buckley, Noël Caliste, Professor Anna Cox, Sarah Cowls, Donna Dalrymple, Professor Rob de Bruin, Professor Vanessa Diaz, Rebecca Edwards, Dr Michele Farmer, Christine Forde, Alan Harper, Denise Long, Bella Malins, Dr Nephtali Marina-Gonzalez, Dr Lucinda Miller, Professor Sara Mole, Dr Martin Oliver, Seyi Osi, Dr Michael Sulu, Harper Taylor-Hanson, Professor Ifat Yasin.

Apologies: Georgina Cade, Ian Dancy, Sasha Green, Dr Rebecca Jennings, Angel Ma, Dr Sara Shafiei, Manon Simmons, Becky Whitham, Callie Yoo.

In Attendance: Megan Gerrie, Director, Projects & Planning; Pip Jackson, Head of Inclusive Environments (for minute 20); Nick McGhee (Secretary); Fiona Naughton, Legal Counsel; Anthony Orkin, Antisemitism Manager (for minute 16); Sarah West, Legal Counsel.

Part I: Preliminary Business

13. Terms of Reference, Constitution and Membership (Paper 2-01)

13.1. The committee reviewed its membership and welcomed the new members to their first meeting.

14. Minutes of the Last Meeting

14.1. EDIC approved the minutes of the meeting held on 15 September 2022, subject to the amendment of the phrase "Quality Information Report" to "Equality Information Report", and removal of the QIR acronym.

15. Matters Arising

15.1. Minute 3.2, 15.09.22: in respect of the means testing of partners under the proposed student carers' fund, HR colleagues had advised that this

would be for the incoming Childcare Coordinator to progress once they were in post. No arrangement had yet been agreed.

- 15.2. Minute 5.2, 15.09.22: EDIC had requested a report back on the approach to assessing Reasonable Adjustments. SRS colleagues would bring a report on this matter to the meeting on 19 April for discussion.
- 15.3. Members requested that an action list accompany future minutes.

Action – the Secretary

Part II: Matters for Discussion

16. Director of EDI Report (Paper 2-02)

- 16.1. EDI Committee received a report on progress with key EDI work since the last meeting, with a spotlight on action in respect of antisemitism, including the appointment of Anthony Orkin as Antisemitism Manager.
- 16.2. The Committee was advised that the current Academic Adjustment arrangements included provision regarding examinations for students who observe religious beliefs or cultural customs ([Academic Manual Chapter 2](#), section 4.1). There was further work to be done on increasing awareness of these arrangements.
- 16.3. It was confirmed that feedback received on the mandatory EDI training module had been addressed and the module amended for the next launch on 6 March, but any further feedback submitted at that point would also be considered.

17. Impact on UCL Community of some Events Held at and Supported by UCL (Paper 2-03)

- 17.1. EDI Committee received a paper examining the impact on the UCL community of a selection of on-campus events, and proposing for discussion a number of initial ideas for action.
- 17.2. Members welcomed the paper and its proposals. In the course of discussion the following key points were made:
 - a. It was important that clear guidance was available to event organisers, including practical advice on action to be taken in the event of potential disruption.
 - b. The paper made a number of references to UCL values. These should be made as explicit as possible, with recommendations linked to particular codes or policies.

- c. The issue of dealing with potentially contentious events was circumscribed by the legal duty to guard against discriminatory speech but also, in the case of HE institutions, to uphold academic freedom. This latter consideration made the question significantly more challenging for universities than for other organisations, as it was necessary to navigate a narrow path which appropriately balanced the rights of all parties.
- d. It was not clear how or by whom a determination should be made that a particular event was required to conform to any recommendations, eg to be subject to an Equality Impact Assessment. In the case of events addressing potentially controversial topics it was suggested that it would be insufficient to rely on the views of event organisers. External triggers, such as complaints submitted through Report & Support, could therefore play a role. It was noted that the 'Procedure for the Management of Events that Include External Speakers' included a mechanism for the review of external speaker requests.
- e. Potentially controversial subject matter would not be the only criterion justifying a requirement for an Equality Impact Assessment. UCL would presumably also wish to review situations in which an event was, for example, inaccessible to some participants.
- f. The [Procedure for the Management of Events that Include External Speakers](#), the [Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech](#) and the [Code of Conduct for Visitors](#) were currently under review by SRS Compliance and colleagues, including the Director of Access and Admissions as Lead Officer for Prevent. That process had been paused pending the outcome of the Higher Education Freedom of Speech Bill currently before Parliament. Once the fate of the Bill was confirmed and its impact considered, revised procedures would be taken through the committee structure, including discussion at EDI Committee and at Academic Board, prior to submission to UMC.
- g. EDIC commended the paper to the SRS Compliance group and agreed that, in reviewing the procedures, the group should take account of the issues raised in the paper, specifically proposals 1-6.
Action – Director of Access and Admissions
- h. EDIC discussed informal feedback from the community on the effectiveness of the Report & Support platform. It was suggested that a key cause of dissatisfaction was that the provision for anonymous reporting created unrealistic expectations about UCL's ability to take action. UCL currently lacked the mechanism that was in place at some other institutions whereby a reporting party could confirm their identity when submitting a report on the understanding that the report would not trigger formal action at that stage, but that they may be contacted to discuss formal procedures in the event that other reports were submitted on the same issue.

- i. Further consideration would be given to the Report & Support data that could be provided to EDIC.

Action – Chief People Officer

- j. An ongoing review of the Report & Support system was already addressing the question of fast-tracking the response to certain reports (proposal 7). The Chief People Officer confirmed that additional resource was made available when there was reason to expect increased levels of activity on Report & Support, but further consideration would be given as to whether this arrangement could be improved.

Action – Chief People Officer

- k. In respect of the question raised in the paper about the use of the UCL name and logo in connection with controversial events, the Provost noted that there were detailed governance procedures in place regarding the use of the UCL brand. Questions associated with the use of the UCL brand in connection with visiting speakers would need to be considered in the context of that broader issue.
- l. In respect of the proposal for an externally-facilitated neutral platform, it was agreed that further consideration of the practicalities of such an arrangement was required. EDIC asked that the authors of the paper develop some ideas for further discussion with the Provost.

Action – Sara Mole & Noel Caliste

18. Update from Equality Charters Group

- 18.1. The Equality Charters Group (ECG) reviewed dashboards on the Athena Swan and Race Equality charter mark action plans. These would shortly become editable in real time by those deemed accountable and would be RAG-rated by the EDI team and co-chairs.
- 18.2. The reporting structure of the ECG was an issue under discussion. It was confirmed that in the event of the ECG encountering problems with getting an institutional response the matter would be brought back to EDI Committee, but also that individual issues could be flagged with UMC or People & Culture Committee as appropriate.

19. Equality Monitoring Report (Paper 2-04)

- 19.1. EDIC reviewed the report, which was due to be submitted shortly to Council with annual updates thereafter. Suggestions on the future scope and content of the report were invited, noting that there was an intention that KPIs be incorporated in future.
- 19.2. During the course of discussion the following key points were made:

- a. The data provided were relatively basic. A more nuanced analysis, for example in respect of intersectionality, might usefully be developed in future years. Members highlighted the need for further discussion on the quality of EDI data generally, noting that this was not available through Tableau, and that there would be significant benefits if more sophisticated and comprehensive analysis were to be feasible.
- b. Members queried the currency of the data on Athena SWAN awards and the accuracy of the age demographics. These would be reviewed before the paper was submitted to Council.

Action – Director of EDI

- c. The 2022 staff survey had revealed particular concerns about the wellbeing of disabled staff. Members were unaware however of what action had been taken in response. It was suggested that the data relating to disabled staff leaving UCL should be reviewed. EDIC noted a number of recent actions in respect of disability and discussed the arrangements in respect of agreeing reasonable adjustments. It was suggested that this was inconsistently applied across the institution as a result of the lack of mandatory requirements.
- 19.3. It was agreed that it would be useful for the next meeting of the Committee to have a focus on disability-related issues, addressing the current position and where UCL might go next, and for a future meeting to have a focus on data, encompassing both staff and students.
 - 19.4. The Committee commended to the incoming Director of EDI the Provost's wish that the issue of responses to disability, including requests for reasonable adjustments, should be addressed as a priority.
 - 19.5. The Committee endorsed the report for onwards submission to Council, pending the review of the data queried at 19.2(b) above.

20. Prioritising Key Actions for the Inclusive Environments Action Plan
(Paper 2-05)

- 20.1. EDIC was invited to comment on the proposed methodology for prioritisation of a wide-ranging action plan developed by the Inclusive Environments Working Group.
- 20.2. A consultation event would be launched shortly inviting input from the community on the scope of the plan.
- 20.3. The Committee approved the methodology set out in the paper.

Part III: Other Business for Approval or Information

21. Any other business

- 21.1. EDIC was advised of the creation of a group considering action to support women in Higher Education in Afghanistan.
- 21.2. The Race Equality Steering Group was being restructured with a view to improving the flow of communication with faculties.
- 21.3. The chair thanked Christine Forde for her effective work in supporting the EDI function at UCL since joining in November.

22. Date of Next Meeting

- 22.1. 19 April 2023 at 2pm.

Nick McGhee
February 2023