

Minutes of EDI FORUM | 16 September 2024, 14.00 – 16.00 | Zoom

Present

Wayne A Mitchell	WM	Chair, Associate Provost EDI
Lesley Cohen	LC	Associate Provost EDI
Alex Dawes	AD	REC Co-ordinator
Rob Bell	RB	Athena SWAN Co-ordinator
Susan Littleson	SL	Deputy Director, Organisation Dev & Inclusion
Sarah Essilfie-Quaye	SEQ	EDI Fellow, Faculty of Medicine
Avi Kaura	AK	ICU LGBTQ Officer
Sophia Quazi	SQ	EDI Co-ordinator
Sevinc Kisasic	SK	Public Engagement Prog Manager (Inclusion)
Francesca Toni	FT	Equity, Diversity and Culture Committee Chair
Dawn Burby	DB	PA and Administrators' Network Committee
Claudia Clopath	CC	Equity, Diversity and Culture Committee Chair
Chetna Vaghela	CV	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee Co-chair
Karen Pontifex	KP	Departmental Staffing & Business Support Manager
Laila A Read	LR	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee Chair (Deputy)

Apologies

MINUTES

	AGENDA ITEM	ACTION
1	Welcome and Introductions	
	The chair welcomed participants to the meeting. Apologies were noted. Clarified agenda and purpose of the meeting: pushing the EDI (Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion) agenda, reviewing updates, and fostering cross-departmental collaboration.	
2	Approval of Previous Minutes	
	Minutes from the last meeting were shared in advance. No amendments or objections were raised; minutes were approved as submitted.	
3.	Updates and Follow-ups	
	The Chair provided the following updates.	
3.1	Freedom of Speech Policy	
	An update was given regarding the planned involvement of the Freedom of Speech department. The Chair aims to contact the department to provide a presentation. However, the department's engagement was postponed due to recent government policy changes. Nonetheless, WM is committed to further exploring the implications for Imperial and identifying areas requiring attention, even as the legislative agenda shifts.	AP-EDI
3.2	EDI Fund Update	
	For the EDI seed fund this year, there were 16 applicants and 10 projects were funded, spanning diverse areas which included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability awareness. • Supporting LGBTQ+ initiatives. • Improving visual representation across the college. • Exploring the dynamics of power and privilege within Imperial. 	
3.3	Student Video Project	

	AGENDA ITEM	ACTION
	<p>The completion of a student video project addressing LGBTQ+ trust issues at Imperial. The videos, now accessible on YouTube, were commended for their impactful storytelling, produced collaboratively by the digital media team and students.</p> <p>(1310) Pride Month: LGBTQ+ Students of Imperial - YouTube</p>	
3.4	Medical School Publications	
	<p>The Chair shared updates on two studies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celia Brown's project examined the awarding gap at UK medical schools and the influence of ethnicity on medical school attendance. • Paul Kemp's project evaluates the validity of engagement and feedback assessments, identifying the risks of failing students. <p>These publications offer valuable insights into equity and assessment within the academic framework.</p> <p>Both articles are available in the Recent Publications folder.</p>	
3.5	Stonewall Submission	
	<p>Cynthia and the team submitted the Stonewall Workplace Index. The achievement was that Imperial moved up to 33 on the overall ranking. Feedback from Stonewall indicated that although the submission was strong, better documentation and evidence could further improve future rankings. Further work is to be done to ensure we are effectively monitoring the measurement and reporting back on various activities.</p> <p>Emphasis is placed on monitoring and measuring all characteristics of interest and collating and collecting the best data to evidence our work internally and externally.</p> <p>Discussion related to Melanie Lee value masterclasses were discussed.</p>	
3.6	EDI Strategy Progress	
	<p>The chair reported that the EDI strategy had been presented to the People and Culture Committee (PCC) and University Management Board (UMB) and will be presented to the council in a few weeks. The strategy's formal launch is expected, and attendees were encouraged to prepare for its implementation and subsequent promotion within their departments.</p>	AP-EDI
4	Technical and meeting logistics	
	<p>The meeting has been recorded.</p> <p>Close caption challenges within the meeting are aimed at being resolved, including queries on using Zoom for this meeting. The primary purpose is to use Zoom's breakout room's function. Different alternatives for hosting the meeting in the future are reviewed.</p> <p>The team is currently without an administrator and is working to address this.</p>	AP-EDI
4.1	Meeting Intervals	
	<p>The chair reviewed comments from the EDI strategy document. A highlighted comment raised by WM was the duration and intervals of the meetings. The suggestion was more regular forum meeting intervals that lasted an hour and focused on key specific topic areas of focus. Currently, there are 3 meetings a year for 2 hours, and the suggestion is to have 6 meetings a year that last 1 hour. Changing from 3-month to 6-week intervals.</p> <p>LC commented on the forum's purpose, the committee's size, and whether changing the format is feasible. WM will send out a poll to reach a consensus on the topic.</p>	AP-EDI EDI Forum
5	EDI Priorities	
	<p>The chair invited RB to share updates on the EDI priorities. The initiative was launched in the previous academic year, where departments and areas across the university were asked to define their EDI priorities for 2023-2024. It aligned with the Race Equality Charter and Athena Swan Charter action plans, emphasising the importance of more transparent communication of what different departments were doing with local targets and progress tracking beyond the university's broader gender equality commitments.</p> <p>Departments shared their set priorities with LC, WM and RB. This was published on the EDI Forum website to promote transparency and cross-departmental learning. With the academic year concluded, RB highlighted the need to review progress against these priorities and to reflect on their effectiveness in driving meaningful change.</p>	

	AGENDA ITEM	ACTION
	<p>RB asked the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Did departments find this exercise useful in maintaining focus and driving EDI-related actions within their teams? 2. Should the same template be used for the current academic year, or are there opportunities for refinement to better capture departmental efforts and outcomes? <p>LC highlighted the document, data and templates for people to review. (Paper 5 and Paper 6) Attendees supported continuing the practice, emphasising its importance in maintaining accountability and providing a structured mechanism to align department-level work with institutional goals. RB and WM also underscored the benefits of such tracking when responding to external assessments, such as Stonewall or other charter frameworks, and in showcasing the university’s progress internally and externally.</p> <p>The Chair concluded the discussion by reaffirming the need for consistency in tracking EDI efforts, referring to paper 4, which contained insights from the chair report.</p>	
6	Staff Survey Results and Data Accessibility	
	<p>The Chair discussed the staff survey results, mainly focusing on key areas such as questions about dignity and respect, confidence in expressing views, experiences of bullying or harassment, and the openness of communication with line managers.</p> <p>Some participants noted knowing what their department data showed, while others shared challenges in accessing specific survey data for their departments. This raised broader concerns about the flow of information, particularly for the EDI representatives of the departments/faculties who need access to this information to inform the future direction. Due to its sensitivity, RB and SL have been assigned to handle this data.</p> <p>Breakout rooms were organised to facilitate focused discussions on these themes.</p> <p>The Chair recognised the need to improve the accessibility to EDI data for EDI reps in their departments.</p> <p>Additionally, WM reflected on the survey's response rate of 57%, which was acknowledged as an area for improvement. They would like the survey participation to increase by 2 years times.</p>	<p>AP-EDI</p> <p>RB, SL</p> <p>EDI Forum</p>
7	AOB	
	The chair opened the floor for further updates and discussions.	
7.1	History Report	
	<p>SK has been working with a local community member and professional tour guide for the GERF. They discussed how they can reach a more diverse audience, particularly people from the global majority. They developed a tour for the Great Exhibition Road Festival (GERF) called ‘Monarchy and Empire.’ They discussed progress on contextualising historical artefacts and names within the college, such as statues and building dedications. SK highlighted the importance of addressing these items with greater urgency to make the tour informative and contextualised. SQ echoed the need for this information and shared her experience. SK suggested an update meeting scheduled for the History Report.</p> <p>The Chair agreed to follow up on the history of the working group’s actions and assess how contextualisation efforts could be expedited. SEQ shared updates from the History Group and the particular interest in recognising historically marginalised scientists and the art initiative. WM proposed cost-effective methods to provide historical context, such as using QR codes linked to online resources.</p>	AP-EDI
7.2	Terminology in EDI Conversations	
	<p>SK raised the topic of evolving terminology, particularly the use of “global majority” versus “ethnic minority.” AD shared that the University shared existing guidance on terminology, which was shared around 18 months ago on their comms page. It was agreed that a review may be needed to reflect current trends and practices in the broader academic and professional landscape. This issue was earmarked for deeper discussion in a future forum.</p> <p>https://brand.imperial.ac.uk/document/25#/verbal-identity/writing-about-ethnicity/use-ethnicity-where-possible-not-race</p>	AP-EDI
7.3	Closing remarks	

	AGENDA ITEM	ACTION
	The meeting ended with thanks to all participants for their engagement. A poll will confirm the date and time of the next meeting.	WM

	ACTION ITEM	RESPONSIBILITY
1	Follow up on implications of freedom of speech.	AP-EDI
2	Investigate ways to improve the accessibility of EDI data for representatives. RB and SL have been assigned to handle this sensitive data.	AP-EDI, RB, SL
3	Conduct a poll on meeting frequency and preferred platform (Zoom vs. Teams).	WM
4	Request and review departmental EDI-specific survey data.	EDI Representatives
5	Engage members to get feedback on staff survey results.	EDI Representatives
6	Document examples of good practice in Padlet for wider dissemination.	EDI Forum
7	Explore updates on the History Report and contextualisation of historical artefacts.	AP-EDI
8	Follow-up discussion on EDI terminology, including “global majority” versus “ethnic minority.” Share "writing about ethnicity" guidance and discuss the review for updates.	AP-EDI, Comms Team.
9	A poll will confirm the date and time of the next meeting.	WM

Written 02 December 2024.