Equality and Diversity Committee  
Tuesday 21st May 2013  
Boardroom, Faculty Building

Present:

Mr Edward Astle Chair  
Mr Paul Beaumont President, Imperial College Union  
Mr Dave Cosgrave Unison Representative  
Ms Kim Everitt Deputy Director HR  
Professor Nigel Gooderham Senior Dean  
Professor Jo Haigh Head of the Department of Physics  
Ms Louise Lindsay Director of HR  
Mr Richard Martin Faculty Operating Officer, Faculty of Engineering  
Mr Rob Millwood Chair of Imperial 600  
Mr John Neilson College Secretary and Registrar  
Ms Susan Parker Unite, Branch Secretary and Equalities Officer  
Dr Mark Richards IAO Member & Senior Teaching Fellow  
Ms Hailey Smith Secretary to the EDC

In Attendance: Professor Lesley Cohen, Ms Elspeth Farrer

Apologies

Apologies were received from Professor Denis Wright, Professor Debra Humpris, Professor Washington Ocheing, Ms Mel Peter, Ms Becky Lane, Ms Kani Kamara (represented by Ms Leyla Okhai)

1.0 Minutes of the Last Meeting (7 February 2013)

1.1 Following Ms Khurshid’s report on Equality and Diversity matters encountered in the work of Campus Services, a further update had been provided. Ms Khurshid had reported that the cost of food provided at the College had increased by 1% in the last year and therefore, it was not thought that the provision of an increasingly diverse range of food impacted adversely on the cost.

1.2 It was confirmed that the annual review of training would be presented at the next meeting of the Equality and Diversity Committee.

1.3 Professor Wright would be asked to provide an update on the Good Practice Webpage.  

Action: Professor Wright

1.4 Mr Neilson said that a resource to undertake data analysis had been bid for in the current planning round, the outcome of the bid was awaited.

2.0 Presentation by the Careers Advisory Service
2.1 Ms Farrer was welcomed to the meeting and invited to speak to the committee about equality and diversity matters identified by the Careers Advisory Service (CAS) and what their response to these matters were.

2.2 Ms Farrer explained that the CAS worked with UG and PG students as well as Postdocs, delivering one-to-one support, group sessions and larger events for the students and potential employers. The Service is mostly heavily used by final year and post graduate students but was also increasingly used by first and second year students. Ms Farrer said that the gender split of CAS users was not dissimilar from the College figures. She said that female students were a significant demographic for both the CAS and future employers.

2.3 International students are significant users of the CAS and therefore, the CAS makes sure it is aware of matters relevant to them, such as visa status issues, international labour market knowledge and English language assistance.

2.4 The CAS is keen to work with students from low economic backgrounds. It was thought that this group might benefit from role models and, to this end, the CAS wanted to establish an alumni mentoring group. However, CAS would need a method of identifying these students first of all. Ms Farrer added that OFA may also start to ask for information on the leaving destination of these students, so it would be of increased importance to have access to this information.

2.5 The CAS was also unable to identify students who had declared a disability. She said that employers ran events specifically for disabled students but currently the CAS’s only method of communicating these events was to email all students. If a method of identifying disabled students could be established, the CAS could send more targeted communication. A mailing list specifically for this type of event had been created but as it was run on an opt-in basis its reach was not as wide as it could be. It was not certain as to why the CAS could not have access to the disability data from the student database. Professor Wright is asked to look into this and see if a method of sharing this data can be identified.

**Action: Professor Wright**

2.6 Ms Farrer said that destination data of students showed some differences by ethnicity with students of black and Bangladeshi decent more likely to be unemployed than other students. Ms Farrer noted that geography may also play a role in employment rates after graduation, as 76% of graduate jobs are in London and the South East, which might explain a disproportionately high rate of unemployment for Scottish students who returned home after graduation. Ms Farrer said that the CAS collaborated with the International Office in running international fairs.

2.7 The Chair thanked Ms Farrer for her report. It was agreed by the committee that they would like to see how her findings relating to Equality and Diversity developed over time, it was suggested that Ms Farrer be invited to update the committee in a year’s time.

**Action: Ms Smit**
3.0 Feedback from the Academic Diversity Task Force

3.1 The Chair said that he had taken heart in the work undertaken following the Committee’s Away Afternoon in October 2012. One of the actions to have come out of the meeting was the establishment of the Academic Diversity Task Force, which was set up to recommend ways to address diversity at academic levels. He welcomed Professor Cohen to the meeting who, as a member of the Task Force, would present the recommendations to the committee.

3.2 Ms Cohen said that the College was evidently engaged with matters of equality and diversity, as evidenced by the recent award of an Athena SWAN Silver, but that there were still disappointments. She noted that the number of women at lecturer level had fallen in the last year. She said however that, once in the College, women were promoted well and therefore, the recommendations of the Task Force sought to increase diversity at early academic levels. She added that the recommendations were intended to benefit all, not just female academics.

3.3 The Task Force made recommendations in 5 key areas:

1. Seeking Out a More Diverse Range of Candidates
2. Advertising and Recruitment Material
3. Shortlisting and Interviews
4. The Role of the College Consuls
5. Data Collection and Quality

3.4 The Task Force’s report also drew on exemplary work from the Boston University, Stanford University and John Hopkins.

3.5 The Chair noted that widening the pool of applicants was the most important step in increasing the diversity of the College’s academic staff. Professor Cohen agreed and said, to assist in this matter, the Task Force recommended that departments establish active search committees to seek out a diverse pool of potential staff. These committees would be active at all times, not just when a vacancy is available. The Chair noted that appointments should always be based on excellence from the most diverse pool of candidates possible.

3.6 The Task Force recommended that job adverts be as open as possible, to attract the most diverse pool of candidates.

3.7 The wording of adverts would also be updated to make the College’s commitment to equality and diversity more prominent. Ms Everitt said that draft wording existed for this purpose. Ms Everitt and the Chair will discuss this wording.

Action: Chair, Ms Everitt

3.8 The Task Force recommended that adverts be reopened if applicant numbers are low. The committee discussed this recommendation. Ms Lindsay reminded of the importance of weighing up the bureaucracy of recruitment and selection, should this recommendation be put into place. Professor Cohen said in cases where only a few applicants were to be be considered for a post, justification needed to be made and
approved by a College Consul. Professor Haigh noted that Heads of Departments may also want to follow up as to why a post has attracted only a small number of applicants.

3.9 The College Consuls play a role in the Task Force’s recommendations, in ensuring that recruitment processes are followed. The Chair asked if the Consuls were in agreement with the duties attributed to them. Professor Cohen said that the Consuls were happily on board.

3.10 The Task Force felt that eliminating unconscious bias from the recruitment process was crucial. Ms Lindsay noted that the College’s Recruitment and Selection training had been updated to cover unconscious bias. The Task Force also made recommendations regarding the planning of recruitment processes in order to avoid bias arising as a result of hastily prepared interviews.

3.11 The report recommended that a voluntary panel pool be set up, consisting of staff trained in recruitment and selection who could be called upon to sit on an interview panel. Professor Haigh said that she was concerned that overreliance of such a pool would cause overwork for those called upon. Mr Millwood agreed and added that a panel pool may lead to tokenism. He suggested that training of anyone involved in recruitment would be a better option. Mr Martin said that taking recruitment and selection training directly to departments has proven to be quite a successful approach in FoE.

3.12 The Academic Diversity Task Force recommended that the approval of the College Consuls be obtained for any posts that are not to be advertised openly (for example, if they are linked to a fellowship). Further to this, it is recommended that Consuls provide an annual audit to the Equality and Diversity committee with statistics on adherence to guidelines as well as recommendations and examples of good and bad practice. Ms Lindsay suggested that this audit could tie into the reports of the Deans of Faculties to Management Board.

3.13 The Chair asked about the ownership of recommendations, noting that some had clear lines of ownership but others did not. Professor Cohen said that not all recommendations were currently ascribed owners but some would be owned by Heads of Departments (search committees and reviewing the openness of adverts), HR (training and recruitment and selection procedures) and College Consuls (auditing and approvals). The Chair asked for recommendations to be given clear ownership and support mechanisms for those owners made clear.

**Action: Academic Diversity Task Force**

3.14 The Chair offered a huge endorsement to the Task Force on behalf of the committee. He said that work would be carried out to embed the recommendations for next year through the annual report.
4.0 Review of the Annual Report

4.1 The Equality and Diversity annual report would be put to the June Management Board. Detailed comments are to be sent to Ms Everitt but the committee now had the opportunity to consider the main focus of the report. The committee were happy to accept the report. The Chair said that the highlights were encouraging and lowlights, cause for future attention.

4.2 It was suggested that the objectives set by the 2012 Equality and Diversity be included in this year’s report as an annex, along with a traffic light colour system of reference to demonstrate how met these objectives were.

4.3 On the subject of disability disclosure rates, Mr Martin noted that Heads of Departments in the Faculty of Engineering had directly emailed their staff to encourage disclosure. Ms Okhai said that the Faculty of Engineering HR team would monitor the disclosure rate before and after the call was made to establish whether disclosure had increased. It was thought that there was differing opinion within the Faculties as to whether a top down or bottom up approach be used to encouraging disability disclosure. Ms Okhai said that she was currently working on a number of projects to promote disability declaration, including a poster campaign and a mental health first aid awareness programme.

4.4 The Chair asked if there were any equality and diversity objectives specific to students. Ms Everitt said that she understood that the focus was the ‘student experience’ and within this there were cultural considerations and an aim to make the College a good place to be.

4.5 It was thought that the report was too lengthy for Council in its current form. Mr Neilson suggested that the summary be submitted and appendices made available to Council on request. It was agreed that the full report including data be submitted to Management Board.

4.6 Ms Everitt thanked the committee for their assistance, input and feedback.

5.0 Report from the Faculty of Engineering on Equality and Diversity

5.1 Following the first report to Management Board by the Faculty of Engineering in April, by Professor Jeff Magee, Mr Martin spoke to the committee about the Faculty’s key areas of focus for matters relating to equality and diversity.

5.2 Mr Martin informed the committee that the Faculty had planned to survey female leavers but as the number of individuals in this category was low, it had been decided that a survey of all current female staff would take place instead. Mr Martin said that both HR and the Female Ambassador for the Faculty of Engineering, Professor Ann Muggeridge would be involved in this survey.

5.3 Raising disclosure rates was also a priority for the Faculty of Engineering, especially in terms of disability and ethnicity. The Faculty was also hoping to raise its PRDP return rate; Mr Martin said that the Faculty intended to push for a 75% return rate.
5.4 It was reported that the Faculty of Natural Sciences would be next to report to Management Board. The Chair thanked all those involved in delivering the report to Management Board for their efforts. He suggested that a recap on developments following these reports be included in future Equality and Diversity Committee agendas, although not necessarily as a separate agenda item.

6.0 Forward Agenda

6.1 Ms Lindsay suggested that training sessions could be brought to the committee at future meetings as a means of keeping committee members up to date with developments in equality and diversity and to sample the training currently available to College staff.

6.2 Mr Martin added that he had arranged to attend training courses over the summer, as this is usually a quieter period, and suggested other members of the committee might do the same.

7.0 AOB

7.1 The Chair said that he was very pleased to inform the Committee that Professor Debra Humphris would be succeeding him as Chair of the Committee. He said that the suggestions sent to him had unanimously suggested a female chair. The Chair said that he thought Professor Humphris would make an excellent Chair. The Chair said that Professor Humphris, as well as being nominated, had shown an active interest in taking up the position.

7.2 The committee took the opportunity to thank the Chair for his dedication to the committee and the progress of equality and diversity of the College. Ms Everitt complimented the Chair on his revolutionary approach and thanked him on behalf of both the College and the committee. The Chair expressed how much he had enjoyed his time at the College and with the committee, adding that progress had been made but there was still more to be done.

Date of Next Meeting

15 October 2013
14.00 – 16.00
3.19 Faculty Building