Appendix 1

Imperial College
London

Equality and Diversity Committee
Tuesday 12 May 2015
Boardroom, Faculty Building, South Kensington Campus

Present:
Professor Debra Humphris  Vice Provost (Education) – Chair (DH)
Ms Mary Bown  Head of the Disability Advisory Service (MB)
Mr David Cosgrave  Unison Equality Representative (DS)
Ms Kim Everitt  Deputy Director HR (KE)
Professor Joanna Haigh  Co-Director, Grantham Institute (JH)
Ms Kani Kamara  Equality and Diversity Manager (KK)
Mr Christopher Kaye  ICU, Deputy President (Welfare) (CK)
Ms Aliish Kerrigan  Secretary to the EDC (AK)
Ms Zarine Khurshid  Chair of Imperial as One Committee (ZK)
Ms Louise Lindsay  Director of Human Resources (LL)
Mr Richard Martin  FOO – Faculty of Engineering (RM)
Mr John Neilson  College Secretary and Registrar (JN)
Ms Leyla Okhai  Equality and Diversity Manager (LO)
Ms Susan Parker  Unite, Branch Secretary and Equalities Officer (SP)
Ms Sarah Shemilt  Chair of Able@Imperial (SS)
Mr Richard Thompson  Senior Consul (RT)

Attending for this meeting:
Mr Rafat Malik  Vice President, Corporate Partnerships, Financial Times / IE Business School Corporate Learning Alliance (RM)

1.0 Welcome and Apologies

1.1 The Chair welcomed the Committee to the meeting.

1.2 Apologies were received from Washington Ochieng, Denis Wright, Tom Wheeler and Dean Pateman.

2.0 Minutes of the Last Meeting (4th March 2015)

2.1 The minutes were deemed to be an accurate record of events.

2.2 Regarding minute 5.2, LO reported that 'non-academic women' had been changed to 'professional services women' in the paper outlining the Equality and Diversity Unit’s work.

2.3 Regarding minute 8, LL reported that the Provost’s Board had endorsed recommendations regarding what support should be provided to staff during the performance management process and that the Board had also asked for a review of the use of performance metrics.

2.4 Action Tracker
The Action Tracker was considered. The following updates were noted:

Academic Careers and the Leaky Pipeline (March 2015, 3.7)
Several items had been added to the tracker following Hailey Smith’s presentation at the last meeting.
The students’ sexism initiative would be considered at today’s meeting.

E&D Annual Report (March 2015, 7.0)
The first draft would be discussed at today’s meeting.
3.0 Enhancing Diversity - Discussion led by Rafat Malik

3.1 Rafat Malik (RM) began the discussion by saying that, in his current role, he worked with very varied leadership teams and could see how strategy, innovation and E&D could have an impact on the bottom line. He reflected on his own experience of working at Imperial College. As a senior member of Imperial’s Enterprise Division and member of the E&DC until February 2012, RM felt that Imperial had given him the opportunity to work on a diverse, exciting range of projects, but while it had been a privilege to work here, he had had a poor line of sight of his own career path and could not imagine himself in a leadership position at Imperial – partly because he could not see anyone like him who was from an ethnic minority in a very senior post, and also because there did not seem to be a propensity for change in terms of the representation at a senior level.

3.2 RM then expanded on his current work with a variety of corporate organisations and he spoke about approaches to diversity that he had come across in industry. Successful companies like Syngenta, BP and Google were systematically building diverse teams to encourage innovation, not just to meet targets. Diversity was no longer operating in a silo, but was at the heart of organisational culture and change. Investing in diversity and entrepreneurship brought communities together and fostered innovation; there were clear deliverables linked to the wider business strategy. At Imperial, collaborative, cross-disciplinary working was already an established approach; the university was moving in the right direction.

3.3 RM said that attraction and retention of talent were key to driving new research. Imperial’s image externally was one of tradition and excellence, but with globalisation and greater mobility, opportunities for executive and research talent were endless; organisations needed to make it compelling for people to join. Although Imperial’s public image was strong, it could be viewed as staid - the brand needed to be nurtured internally and externally.

3.4 Imperial, like many other organisations, was fighting for talent across international boundaries. What would Imperial need to be like for people like him to join? RM asked members what they wanted the Committee to achieve in the next ten years and how might it drive cultural change? LL said that she would like for the College not to need the Committee. JH said that she would not like for things to be ‘top down’ and would like the Committee’s role to be supporting initiatives. SP suggested that longer term aspirations should also be given consideration; the College should distance itself from commercial ‘short-termism’ in its objective-setting. RM agreed that the tradition and missions of institutions were enduring, but explained that, in industry, the strategy cycle was getting shorter in response to a business environment that could change every 3-6 months; objectives needed to be fit for change. JN said that he would like Imperial to be known for its diversity, for being at the forefront of promoting equality of opportunity and for people wanting to join us. LL added that she would like for Imperial to be able to attribute its successes (e.g. quality of outputs, retention, etc.) to its diversity as an organisation.

3.5 RM said that effective communication and collaboration across a wide and broad range of academic and research environments was vital but hard. Collaborating externally (beyond initiatives like Athena SWAN) to lead on diversity and to set the bar, possibly in collaboration with other Russell Group institutions, would be valuable. Using the stories of a diverse set of individuals who were leading innovation at the College would also help to build the external view of the College. RT asked how Imperial’s reputation compared to other universities. RM said that in many ways Imperial was ‘ahead of the game’, but that the Russell Group was perhaps not the best organisational diversity benchmark. Imperial had the opportunity to set itself apart from other HEIs. Cross-collaboration was already embedded here, but needed to be nurtured and for the message to be spread externally.

3.6 DH thanked Rafat for attending and for his valuable reflections and for leading a very interesting discussion. She said she echoed JN’s vision and also said that, with the imminent publication of the new College Strategy, it was a perfect time to push things forward.

4.0 Mental Health Awareness Week and Time to Change Health Check Report (Paper 1)

4.1 LO reminded members that the College was participating in Mental Health Awareness Week (11th – 15th May) and that a number of events and initiatives had been organised.
4.2 A year ago, Imperial took the ‘Time to Change’ pledge to mark its commitment to end discrimination against mental ill health. LO explained that Imperial’s pledge was seen as exemplary as it brought together both staff and student activity. Between November 2014 and January 2015, a Time to Change ‘Health Check’ had been carried out at the College, including a staff survey, interviews with self-selecting employees and an audit of HR policies and procedures. An executive summary and full report were shared with the Committee (Paper 1); the appendices to the main report (containing free text comments by participants) were particularly worrying. The main concern raised by the report was inconsistency; Imperial’s policies were strong, but there were differences in how they were applied and interpreted by line managers. The Health Check suggested that Imperial may have a higher rate of stress as benchmarked with comparable organisations surveyed by the CIPD. Worryingly, 46% of survey respondents did not know where to find information and many participants said they were not comfortable discussing mental health issues with their line manager. Work is now being done by Occupational Health to develop a stress awareness tool. Other recommendations included support for Post Docs, Athena SWAN activity and ‘buddying up’ with another organisation to share best practice (Barclays was recommended by Time to Change).

4.3 There was some discussion around the culture of stress at the College. JN suggested that a high-level debate within the senior team should take place to address the issue. Given the response rate to the Time to Change survey, the question was asked as to whether Imperial is actually any worse than other HEIs and whether a misleading picture might be being given? LL reported, however, that data from CIC, Imperial’s Employee Assistance Programme provider, did suggest that calls to the helpline about stress and workload were higher than in comparator organisations. Expectations were very high - the environment could be pressurised and the issue did affect all staff groups.

4.4 DH stressed that an overwhelming theme was the importance of line management in promoting positive mental health and asked the Committee how Imperial’s leadership values might be better embedded across the College. SS mentioned that, while a comprehensive range of management development courses were available to managers through the LDC (including a leadership qualification), some were a big commitment in terms of time; more ‘bite-sized sessions’ might be helpful. SP agreed that managers were busy and reluctant to take time out for anything non-essential. She suggested that incentivising the uptake of courses might motivate managers to participate. RM suggested that recognition of outstanding leaders to set the bar might also be a positive initiative. The Committee agreed that Imperial Expectations should be at the foundation of what all employees did and that effort needed to continue to ensure that they were understood and embedded.

4.5 The Committee discussed the accessibility of relevant information, policies and support for employees and line managers. It was agreed that these need to be ‘connected’ effectively to ensure that we had an enabling framework. ZK reported that Imperial as One was looking to create a monthly guidance bulletin for managers around current issues in relation to BME staff (e.g. how to support employees who may be observing Ramadan). She said that she would be talking to the Chairs of the other advisory groups to identify if a ‘go to guide’ of information would be a useful addition.

4.6 There was some discussion around how the PRDP process could be used to facilitate discussions around mental health and well-being. DC raised his concern that since PRDP forms no longer need to be returned to HR, monitoring whether discussions were taking place might be challenging. LL confirmed that the staff survey and focus groups would be used to monitor the process. She confirmed that this year’s revised PRDP documentation would soon be launched.

4.7 The Committee agreed that the Health Check had been a useful and insightful exercise. The following actions were agreed:

i. To discuss the Health Check Report at the next Disability Action Committee (JN);
ii. To redevelop the well-being pages for staff and students (LO, LDC, OH);
iii. To meet with the Post Doc Centre to discuss the issues raised (LO);
iv. To look at using Athena Swan activities to raise awareness of mental health issues (LO);
v. To approach Barclays in relation to ‘buddying up’ and to identify if there were relevant benchmarking tools available in order to share best practice (LO);
vi. To consider re-establishing a mental health task group (LO);
vii. To hear about any progress in relation to the ‘go to guide’ (ZK, DP, SS).
5.0 E&DC’s 11th Annual Report (Papers 2, 2a) - Update

5.1 KE updated the Committee on her meeting with Communications and Public Affairs on 13th April about ‘Illustrating Equality and Diversity at Imperial’ (Paper 2). There was a dearth of images available to illustrate diversity at the College and the meeting had explored ways to address this, with the aim of building an image library that could be drawn on for future annual reports and general communication purposes. Authenticity was felt to be key in any images created. Developing case studies around successes (e.g. personal stories about employees who have used mediation) was also discussed. Next steps in relation to the project included an away day on 18th May for the Equity and Diversity Unit on communication. KE was waiting on an update from colleagues in Communications and Public Affairs.

Action: KE

5.2 KE shared the initial draft of the annual report (Paper 2a). Since most of the highlights in the report related to staff, KE invited the Committee to give examples of activity relating to students. RM suggested the recording of lectures, which had been helpful for students with dyslexia. MB noted that for some subjects this was still not completely effective by itself; further discussion suggested that Imperial’s educational support technology was still lagging behind. The Committee was asked to consider examples of other student-focused activity that could be included in the report.

Action: All members

5.3 KE explained that to date, annual reports had looked to highlight successes while also disclosing where further improvement was needed. She asked the Committee if it was content to continue in this vein. It was agreed that the report should continue as a celebration of the past year, but also give markers for events in the year ahead (e.g. Black History Month, International Women’s Day). SS suggested that we could also benchmark with other HEIs in the report. DH emphasised that as well as fulfilling reporting obligations, the report should communicate as effectively as possible with the College community on equality and diversity initiatives. The ICU report was given as a good example of an engaging document.

5.4 KE asked the committee if there were any examples of activities from the past year that could be added to the list. RM suggested the ‘Have Your Say’ campaign within the Faculty of Engineering, which was launching a phone line for staff to report bad behaviour in response to the staff survey.

5.5 The following future initiatives/work where members thought that we should put effort were suggested: RS raised the issue of undergraduates withdrawing from study due to disability. In many cases, the Disability Advisory Service became aware, too late, to offer support that might have prevented interruption to study. He suggested that a fuller introduction to the Disability Advisory Service for all new students at induction might be of value. JH said that personal tutors should also be made aware of the support available, as they were usually the first person to whom students talked if they were unhappy. SP noted that English was not the first language for many of Imperial’s students and that it could be difficult to locate the relevant information and support. MB noted that cultural differences around the idea of declaring a disability needed to be given consideration.

6.0 REF and Equality (Paper 3) - Overview

6.1 KE gave an overview of the College’s approach to equality and diversity within the REF. Each HEI was required to have a Code of Practice that needed to be approved by HEFCE and the College’s had been developed following wide consultation. Imperial had established its own REF Equality and Diversity Committee, which had been chaired by the Provost’s Envoy for Gender Equality. Its purpose was to look at cases where an individual’s circumstances might affect research productivity and warrant special consideration so that he or she could submit fewer publications. She explained that people were given access to comprehensive and confidential advice and support prior to making their case. In the case of the College, no applications were rejected. There were also no appeals from staff relating to the decisions taken in respect of submissions. The REF Equality and Diversity Committee also monitored eligibility and submission rates in terms of protected characteristics.

6.2 KE explained that the report, Equality and diversity in the 2014 Research Excellence Framework (paper 3), considered HEIs more widely and made a number of recommendations for HEIs for the next exercise.

7 Advisory Groups, ICU and DAC – Oral Updates
7.1 Imperial As One

- ZK reported that the group had been considering its core purpose and where it should focus – the consensus had been that this should be in relation to policy, procedures and raising awareness.
- The group would like to work with Able and I600 on a project around line manager guidance – see 4.5 above.
- The recent ‘Walk around the World’ exhibition in the Blyth Gallery had been successful and well-received.
- The group was aiming to move away from divisive events that created a sense of ‘them and us’.

7.2 Able@Imperial

- SS reported that a new Deputy Chair had been appointed.
- Discussions would begin shortly for plans for the second half of the year.
- The group planned to hold meetings at other sites moving forward, as most meetings to date had been held at South Kensington.
- The group had been invited by LO to give feedback on the Disability Sick Leave Policy.
- Members of the group would be participating in the communication away day on 18th May and exploring how staff networks could be promoted more effectively.
- Links with the National Association of Disabled Staff Networks had been made.

7.3 Disability Action Committee

- JN reported that the Action Plan had been modernised.
- The issue of disclosure of disability was a major theme as well as mental health issues.
- Greater awareness of making reasonable adjustments was required.
- Discussions were continuing regarding fire evacuation plans for disabled staff and students.
- MB and DW were investigating new government changes around support for disabled students.

7.4 Imperial 600

- DC reported that a key issue had been people not turning up for events. An online survey had been launched to find out how people heard about the group and what they thought of it. 48 responses had been received so far. SP wondered if the name of the group was unclear for staff and put them off joining. DC agreed that this might be worth re-visiting.
- Members of the group had participated in a very useful Stonewall session on role models and were keen to take forward some actions on visibility around the College.
- The group would be attending Pride on 27th June with IQ, the student LGBT network.

7.5 ICU

CK reported that the student survey on mental health issues had received 1,000+ responses and would be analysed at the end of May.

8. Sexism in Sport – Update

8.1 Following incidents at Varsity 2015, DH reported that an investigation had taken place and that a series of recommendations had been made to the College. Apologies had been made to the students affected. To build a better understanding of the issue of sexism in sport, Imperial had agreed to commission some research into its sports culture and which would, in turn, be considered alongside consideration of HE cultural norms more generally. Dr Alison Phipps of the Centre for Gender Studies at the University of Sussex had been approached and would lead the research. Other Russell Group universities had expressed an interest in collaborating. Imperial needed to address the ‘lad’ culture and refresh its institutional values. ‘Our Principles’ for students (what Imperial promises students and what it expects from them in return as members of the academic community) would need to be refreshed.

8.2 KK, who had been involved in the investigation, reported that the female athletes had been reluctant to talk about what they had been subjected to and, when they did, the treatment and behaviour that was described had been shocking. SP noted that sexism could also be an issue in male-dominated
laboratories. CK highlighted that there were also issues of homophobia within female sports teams at Imperial. DC suggested that Imperial could explore positive sports campaigns such as Rainbow Laces.

8.3 It was agreed that a steering group should be set up to lead on this project.  

Action: DH

9. AOB  
DH thanked members for attending the meeting.

Date of Next Meeting

Dates for the next year academic year’s meetings are as follows:

October 15th 2015 14.30 - 16.30
March 17th 2016 10.00 -12.00
May 26th 2016 10.00 – 12.00

Venue - Boardroom, Level 4 Faculty Building