1.0 Welcome and Apologies

1.1 The Chair welcomed the committee to the meeting.

1.2 Apologies were received from David Cosgrave, Jo Haigh, Kani Kamara, Louise Lindsay, Richard Martin, Melanie Peter and Denis Wright.

2.0 Minutes of the Last Meeting and Matters Arising not covered by agenda items

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

3.0 Imperial College Union - Equality-Related Initiatives for Students – Update

3.1 Andrew Keenan (AK) began his presentation by explaining that students’ unions had long had a role in campaigning on equality, diversity and human rights. ICU felt that it had a responsibility to introduce students to other cultures and communities and to foster debate around society and behaviour. It had a strategic commitment to diversity and inclusivity, but was not yet as diverse as its membership; AK noted that there had been only two female presidents and one BME president in its history.

3.2 AK told the committee that ICU’s work on equality and diversity focussed on four key areas: campaigning, supporting, representing and socialising. An example of a recent
campaign was *Mentality*, led by Bethany Davison, a Physics Undergraduate. Bethany had lived experience of mental ill health and wanted to raise awareness by creating a research-driven campaign for change. Another example was the work of Emma Little, LGBT+ Officer, on LGBT students and how titles are recorded and presented by the College.

3.3 AK explained that ICU provided support through its network of Liberation Officers and student groups (e.g. LGBT, BME, Women, Disabled, and International). These groups ensured that problems were recorded, that trends were tracked and analysed, and that knowledge was shared. Liberation Officers had been trained in mental health first aid and unconscious bias.

3.4 Examples of representation included inviting student participation in the development of bullying and harassment policies and helping the Islamic Society and the Muslim Medics to respond to the government consultation on sharia-compliant loans. Socialising involved coordinating inclusive social activities (e.g. ‘dry’ events and alternative mingles) and providing safe places for networking.

3.5 Looking forward, AK told the committee that ICU was seeking to put advocacy, engagement and inclusivity at the centre of conversations; to establish the place of projects like LGBT History month in the student calendar; to establish dialogue with political representatives; to help identify and eliminate barriers to entry to College and within ICU; and to help support cultural change by creating a student body with the agency and ability to make a lasting difference.

3.6 The Chair thanked AK for making the committee aware of the important work of ICU and its comprehensive range of activities. Dean Pateman (DP) advised that, in response to Emma Little’s work, it would soon be possible for Mx to be recorded as a title in the new student system.

4.0 **Athena SWAN Silver Renewal – Update**

4.1 Rob Bell (RB) told the committee that the Equality Challenge Unit had announced three major changes to Athena SWAN. Firstly, as of 2016, awards would no longer be limited to STEM subjects but would also cover arts, humanities, social sciences, business and law (AHSSBL). RB said this was good news for Imperial College Business School, which would be applying for a bronze award in the spring. Secondly, awards would be extended to cover professional and support staff as well as academic staff. RB mentioned that some departments were inclusive already in their approach to Athena SWAN (e.g. by including support staff members on committees) and that a lot of the groundwork had already been laid. However, there would need to be more work at College level to build on this. Thirdly, the awards would focus on gender, not just on women; it would be important to address, for example, under-representation of men in certain departments.

4.2 RB explained that under the new criteria and application form, departments would need to consider areas such as the intersection of gender with ethnicity, transgender staff and the visibility of role models. As the Athena SWAN charter had changed, RB highlighted that the process was not simply a ‘renewal’, but about addressing new areas and demonstrating an ongoing commitment.

4.3 The College’s institutional award would be up for renewal in April 2016 and RB said work was underway to prepare the application. There were 18 staff on the self-assessment team and ICU would also be invited to participate. The self-assessment team would continue to meet after submission to monitor progress. Staff across job
families and across departments had been sent an email by Dot Griffiths, Provost’s Envoy for Gender Equality, inviting them to participate in a survey and focus groups on Athena SWAN. Committee members were urged to participate. The Provost would be responding to the issues raised during the Women at Imperial Week Gender Summit, to be held in March 2016.

4.4 Susan Parker (SP) made the point that involving different staff groups was vital. In Physics, technical and support staff had participated in the submission and this had been valuable and helped to engage staff. DP and DH agreed that the new criteria and upcoming renewal were a good opportunity to engage support staff and reassure them that they were being listened to.

5.0 Gender Equality for Support Staff

5.1 Following on from RB’s presentation, Kim Everitt (KE) explained that in some departments (e.g. Medicine), focus groups had been established for professional, technical and operational staff. She asked whether the committee felt that local initiatives like this were best or whether there should be a College-wide approach. DP said that cross-College initiatives worked best as they encouraged people to collaborate across departments. Sarah Shemilt (SS) said it was vital for central staff to be included, as they were often excluded. She also suggested that consideration should be given to the issue of ‘jobs vs careers’. Some staff, who were content to stay in their current job, were overlooked in terms of support. DH agreed that people did sometimes get missed despite doing very solid work over many years.

5.2 It was agreed by all that a central group to take ideas on gender equality for support staff forward would be a good initiative.

Action: KE

6.0 Gender Equality and Organisational Culture – Update

6.1 Further to incidents at Varsity and the investigations that followed, DH told the committee that Imperial had commissioned Dr Alison Phipps (Director of the Gender Studies Research Centre, University of Sussex) to carry out a piece of research on institutional culture at the College.

6.2 DH said that the first meeting with Dr Phipps was held on 2 September at the Gender and Institutional Culture Steering Group, chaired by Martin Lupton, and had been positive. The project was expected to last until the end of the academic year, with an interim report planned for March 2016 to align with the Athena SWAN submission. DH suggested that Jennie Watson (JW) could keep the committee updated and that Alison could be invited to attend in March to discuss her research so far.

Action: JW, AMK

7.0 Discussion: the practical reality of implementing Imperial Expectations and our other Equality and Diversity initiatives for all staff

7.1 SP opened the discussion by expressing her concerns about an apparent disconnect between Imperial’s aspirations and what actually happened on the ground. In the Estates Division, for example, changes to Maintenance staff shift patterns threatened to undermine work-life balance and the health of the employees affected, which seemed incongruous with Imperial Expectations. SP suggested that a group could be established to develop practical guidance around each of Imperial’s Expectations and what they mean in practice.
7.2 SS mentioned that Muir Sanderson had been looking at *Imperial Expectations* within his areas and that each senior manager had been given an expectation to champion. SP said that although very positive, Muir’s initiative was limited to one part of the College. Leyla Okhai added that metrics might be helpful (e.g. what does ‘work-life balance’ mean? How does it work?) DH suggested that *Imperial Expectations* would be addressed by the work surrounding the College Strategy and Kim Everitt (KE) agreed that the ‘push’ to embed *Imperial Expectations* would continue to be a significant priority in HR’s workplan.

8.0 Mental Health Steering Group – Update

8.1 LO told the committee that following the Time to Change report on staff mental wellbeing at Imperial, a time-limited mental health steering group had been established to raise awareness and embed best practice related to mental health across the organisation. The group would be chaired by the Provost and membership would include Faculty Operating Officers, the HR Director, a College Consul and external members from the NHS. Its first meeting would be held on 26 October, with a further three meetings scheduled.

8.2 DH added that recruitment was underway for a student (clinical) mental health advisor to join the Counselling Service and that interviews were scheduled for 30 October. The Student Wellbeing report had identified a need for this provision. DH also advised the committee that the Wellbeing report had been presented to the College Risk Committee.

9.0 E&DC’s 11th Annual Report: Update

9.1 KE shared the staff and student data for 2015. The data continued to highlight representation issues and KE noted that there had not been much change compared to the year before. She confirmed that the next report would be presented to the Provost’s Board and Council in 2016.

**Action:** KE

9.2 DH asked whether Comms would be involved in the presentation of the next report. KE said that this was the plan.

10.0 Discussion: Review of Equality Objectives 2014-16

10.1 KE invited the committee to make suggestions around priority areas to focus on in the current academic year. Joe Cooper (JC) suggested responding to the outcomes of the gender equality research. SS suggested the inclusion of Support Services in the Athena SWAN initiative. Mary Bown (MB) suggested that disability should remain a focus, particularly in response to the DSA consultation.

10.2 It was agreed by all that we should continue with the ‘business as usual’ priorities, as well as three key ‘action areas’: mental health and wellbeing, Athena SWAN gender equality, Respect.

**Action:** KE

11.0 Advisory Groups – Oral Updates

11.1 SS (Able@Imperial) advised the committee that a Diversity Working Group had been established by the Equality and Diversity Unit with a view to improving communication between the staff networks and the Unit. She said that Bernadette
Gahan had been confirmed as Deputy President of Able and that the network’s open general meeting would be held on 23 October. The focus of the meeting would be ‘reasonable adjustments’. SS advised the committee that she and LO were discussing ideas for this year’s Disability History Month and that more information would be available soon. SS also said she had attended a steering committee meeting of the National Association of Staff Disability Networks at the University of Manchester. One of the issues under discussion had been the use of staff surveys. SS suggested that it might be useful to include specific questions about disability in Imperial’s next all-staff survey.

11.2 LO advised the committee that Imperial as One was developing a diversity calendar to be distributed to staff and was also in the process of finding a co-Chair to support the work of the network.

11.3 DP advised that I600 was working on its Stonewall Index submission. He said that Tom Welton was in conversation with the Royal Society to follow up on his article last year around LGBT issues and the sector.

12.0 Respect for Others

12.1 KE told the committee that ‘Respect for Others’ booklets had been distributed to all staff via HR and that managers had been encouraged to take the opportunity to discuss the issue with their staff. She confirmed that the Harassment, Bullying and Victimisation policies were being reviewed for staff and students following wide consultation. The drafts would be discussed with managers, ICU, advisory groups and the trades unions. A series of showcases were underway to raise awareness of the Respect for Others campaign. KE also confirmed that there were now 19 Harassment Support Contacts and that there would be five new Contacts from April 2016. They were a well-trained and adept group, who were receiving ongoing support and training throughout the year.

13.0 Any Other Business

13.1 LO reminded the committee that the equality and diversity e-learning course was now available, but that uptake had been low. She encouraged committee members to promote the course in their teams. SP suggested that consideration should be given to making the course mandatory.

13.2 The Chair thanked Dean Pateman for his contribution to the committee and I600 and wished him every success in his new role.

13.3 On behalf of the committee, KE thanked Debra Humphris profusely for her work as chair and for her commitment to Equality and Diversity at Imperial. The committee wished her all the very best in her new role at the University of Brighton.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING
17 March 2016, 10:00 – 12:00
Faculty Boardroom Level 4, Faculty Building