

**University of Aberdeen Business School**

**Athena SWAN Committee**

**Draft Minutes of the Meeting held on 30 June 2020, 10am on Microsoft Teams**

Present: Angela Black, Pam Cumming (Clerk), Cheryl Dowie, Shamima Haque, Sola Kasim, Ashley Lim, Nan Liu, and Mark Whittington (Chair)

Guest Attendees: Maria Cascio, Janine Chalmers and Jennifer Duthie

Apologies: Martin Meyer, Rhiannon Thompson

		<i>Actions</i>
<b>1.</b>	<p><b><i>Diversity Online Course</i></b></p> <p>Jennifer Duthie reported that she is at early stages of developing a short online course on diversity and supporting students from a variety of cultural and ethnic backgrounds. She is currently gathering ideas from around the University and anticipates a series of 3 mini sessions:</p> <p>Platform 1 - Allowing students a platform to speak about challenges, gaps, what helped them on their journey.</p> <p>Session 2 would look for staff who have worked in different countries, cultures and have stories which would detail their challenges, what they need, helping understand how to support students.</p> <p>Session 3 – practical solutions, sharing of good practice across the uni in terms of supporting diverse range of students.</p> <p>JD is looking for names of students and staff for this University wide initiative. She is starting to gather information now and it's hoped that this course should run sooner than later, ie having student story by end of July. Staff were encouraged to send opinions and names of people to take part in this voluntary, non credit bearing course. JC reported that there is online training in place already, so need to ensure a joined-up approach is adopted. JD explained that the focus is on supporting students with teaching and learning. JD and JC to meet and discuss.</p> <p>JC/JD were invited to send PC information of what's exists already and she will distribute to the Group.</p> <p>AB agreed that short sessions is the right way to go, it would be worthwhile using students at all levels. JD explained that the <i>power of the story</i> is key rather than level of student.</p> <p>PhD students who are easily contactable and around might be useful. CD has suitable students and will speak to them.</p> <p>Group agreed to send PC suggested contacts.</p>	<p>PC to circulate any information she receives from JC/JD to the Group.</p> <p>Everyone to provide names to PC to forward to JD.</p>
<b>2.</b>	<p><b>Janine Chalmers and Maria Cascio</b></p> <p>JC introduced herself as University Equality and Diversity Advisor – based in HR but role covers staff and students and MC is Athena SWAN Coordinator (STEM Schools) and institutional Race Equality Coordinator.</p> <p>Race is very much on the agenda with Black lives matter, the Uni has gotten behind the movement with staff and students are getting involved. There's been one main Communication gone out that we condemn racist behaviour and there's a statement on social media about being open and transparent, sharing</p>	<p>PC get report from Martin (from Bhatti)</p>

peoples' stories and keeping people updated and involved. There will be a further communication going out soon.

JC mentioned the Equality Diversity and Inclusion Committee (EDIC) – the overarching committee chaired by Karl Leydecker looking at all equality areas, and there is also a Short Life working group on racial harassment. JC to send the link of report issued by Equality and Humans Rights Commission. The report looks at harassment across all UK universities (staff and student) and highlighted that racism is prevalent in higher education. This report set out clear recommendations for universities to take forward and the Short Life working group basically was set up to look at those recommendations.

There is a Proposal going to university committee to establish a strategic group looking at race which reports in to EDIC taking on board recommendations of harassment group and taking forward the work of the race equality charter. Another proposal is to introduce a listening period, ie to invite the university community to come up with their thoughts, experiences, ideas around race. This evidence gathering will be done in different ways, but listening to the community is key. Any ideas on how to do the listening exercise can be sent to JC. Making a safe place for people to tell stories is vital - offering different routes to bring forward their stories may be a challenge, the process hasn't been agreed yet.

The University is also in the process of setting up a race network, there is a student race network in Social Sciences already. The University is also looking at training, reviewing online training and what we can do specifically round race. There is an idea of going further than university, looking at local community, what is happening in the city, shire and Scotland generally.

Medicine have signed up to British medical association charger against racial harassment which is a positive step forward. Ruth Taylor and Bhatti are supporters of inclusion issues, they are taking forward the issue at Senior Management level.

Black History month is coming up in October, not got a conclusion yet as how this will be marked. If we have any ideas or want to do anything school specific happy to help with that. Keen that anything done in October has a lasting legacy.

MC mentioned that the University signed up to the Race equality charter in September 2019. The work needing to be done mirrors Athena SWAN - Athena SWAN is gender based, the Race charter is for race. Currently this will be an institutional award, but we are advised it will be followed by departmental applications. The University is setting up a strategic group which will act as a self-assessment team for the race equality charter and racial harassment work. The group has still to be formed and will involve people at all levels etc and people on board who will feel comfortable talking about race inequalities. Need to consult with students as well, need to do surveys, focus groups, interview sessions make sure it is clear what issues are at the University of Aberdeen. The plan is to apply for bronze award within 3 years. Heads of school will need to be on board along with reps from each school. MC has put together short guidance for Heads of School so it is clear what is expected. Need engagement from each school and to ensure they are committed to contribute to action plans. Waiting on establishment of the big group before more information goes out. Getting people to openly talk may be a challenge however MC said that once people understand how serious the University is about this they will be more likely to talk.

<p>AB indicated that she felt the issue was being taken seriously and offered assistance from the School. She suggested that if you want people to tell stories and to preserve anonymity that perhaps another voice could tell the story.</p> <p>PC asked for Guidance as to best practice for race/gender committee structure. JC intends to visit all the Schools.</p> <p>We had thought about extending Athena SWAN to support race issues. We thought about having BME advisory board within Athena SWAN committee but were hoping for guidance. JC reported that in other schools they have widened out Athena SWAN to make it a E&amp;D committee that takes on board all the diversity areas, that might be one model to think about, but certainly having a sub group for race would be welcomed but ensuring with liaison with the centre.</p> <p>MC reported that HoS will have to provide race equality champions for their Schools. She will be setting up race equality champion network so champions can speak to each other to ascertain issues. MC thinks it is a good idea to try and find out the issues at School level but also suggested that perhaps we should wait for the instructions to make sure we have standard approach with elsewhere in the University. MC would prefer to have the same approach across the whole University rather schools doing different things. Deadline is September for strategy group and school instructions will then be given guidance. Happy for us to turn our AS group into an Equality and Diversity group and can discuss issues that go beyond gender. This is one approach that is happening in other schools.</p> <p>SH mentioned that many people don't understand when they have done something racist, didn't realise it was racist, people don't know their behaviours are racist/sexist, many people do not know what comments can and cannot be made. People come from different areas/genders have different backgrounds and don't have the experience of mixing from others from different races so they don't necessarily know what is acceptable and what is not acceptable in the country they are in now...It was agreed that having some guidance would be helpful, whilst this would not be easy to do, perhaps a link with some examples as to what acts can be considered racist. JC will take this on board centrally.</p> <p>CD mentioned that at the University of Sheffield they recruit race equality champions to walk round the uni to impact on peoples views about racism. That might be an idea. <a href="https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/news/nr/race-equality-champions-help-students-challenge-microaggressions-1.878374">https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/news/nr/race-equality-champions-help-students-challenge-microaggressions-1.878374</a></p> <p>AL suggested that to give people more knowledge that perhaps for Black History Month in October we come up with a list of books about black history which people can read and learn from. If we encourage people to read something not from your own cultural background this could inform people, help them understand other peoples lives.</p> <p>PC is happy to collate a list of books/links for the School and potentially wider via JC.</p> <p>AB suggested the listening project - link below, people are telling their stories but most importantly people are listening. <a href="https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01cq3b">https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01cq3b</a></p> <p>Plus, the BBC world service is playing "The friendship bench", this is about 700 grandmothers in Zimbabwe who sit on a wooden bench and listen to stories from people struggling in life. <a href="https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/w3ct0w55">https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/w3ct0w55</a></p>	<p>Staff to send PC suggested reading/links to help educate others perhaps as part of Black October.</p>
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	<p>JC and MC were thanked for their attendance and input</p> <p>MW informed the group that there currently isn't a separate E&amp;D committee within the Business School. He encouraged the group to think about this issue and if anyone has thoughts regarding our structure to forward their ideas/reflections to CD/MW/PC before we meet again.</p>	
<b>3.</b>	<p><b>Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising</b></p> <p>POK has indeed come off the AS Committee. Meetings have been put in diary alternating with morning/afternoons. SK document was sent to the Committee.</p>	
<b>4.</b>	<p><b>Formation of Subgroups</b></p> <p>PC had received some suggestions as below but is still awaiting volunteers. Staff to give names to PC by end of the week if they wish to take on more and then start thinking about next steps. Look at the files for the subcommittees in advance of next meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting Gender Equality <b>still awaiting volunteer(s)</b></li> <li>• Student Recruitment, Attainment and Progression</li> <li>• Staff Recruitment and Induction <b>Sola Kasim</b></li> <li>• Staff Career Progression <b>Angela Black</b></li> <li>• Research <b>Shamima and Cheryl</b></li> <li>• Flexible Working <b>Ashley Lim and Nan Liu</b></li> <li>• Communication and Governance <b>Still awaiting volunteer(s)</b></li> </ul>	<p><i>Staff to look at their files for their respective subcommittees in advance of the next meeting.</i></p>
<b>5.</b>	<p><b>E&amp;D Events</b></p> <p>Previously there was discussion about women in leadership events. AB is happy to focus on leadership however she is keen to make the topic broader than women in leadership ie personalities, about how everyone can aspire to be what they want to be and that's different for everybody. AB is happy to give it some thought.</p> <p>AB to Gather info and if any of the group want to bring forward ideas about how we can have women in senior roles, follow dreams, we could aim for an event virtually in the new academic year. AB mentioned the importance of listening to stories. AB would tell stories to students to Inspire them to fulfil their aims. CD suggested that an E&amp;D event could follow sometime next year.</p>	<p>Staff to send CD/MW/PC any suggestions for events going forward.</p>
<b>6.</b>	<p>Newsletter – September sometime. If any thoughts staff encouraged to share.</p>	<p>Newsletter remain on agenda</p>
<b>7.</b>	<p><b>Survey/Focus Groups</b></p> <p>Due to the high response rate it will be a little while before we will see/receive the open-ended responses (the comments) but any questions with a multiple choice response will be received sooner. Hopefully get further results before next meeting.</p>	
<b>8.</b>	<p><b>AOCB</b></p>	
<b>9.</b>	<p><b>Date of Next Meeting: 14 July 2020 2pm</b></p>	