**Minutes - EDIC Meeting 4th December 2023**

**Attendees:** Sophia Quazi, Rebecca Bell, Aoife Robertson, Dylan Rood, Annalisa Botelho, Gareth Collins, Pablo Brito-Parada, Diego Mesa Pena, Valerie Locher, Valentin Laurent, Bethany Crenol, Adriana Paluszny Rodriguez, Cindy Valuto, Nsan Nhoyidi, Ireti Webb,

The meeting was dedicated to discussing the bullying and harassment report prepared by Melanie Lee.

Sophia prefaced the discussion with a presentation showing the feedback received in the student and staff surveys regarding bullying and harassment.

Melanie stated the following about her findings:

* Emerging issues – ‘us and them’, mixed perceptions of how valued some members of the department feel, minoritized staff feeling that their contributions valued in the context of their minoritized status rather than in the broader context of the department.
* While nobody stated that they were formally representing anyone else, there were comments indicating that they felt they weren’t the only person with who held a particular viewpoint.
* How can we incentivize more people to speak in the future? There are different perceptions of power and hierarchy, any attempt to do these exercises in the future will involve taking time to build up trust
* Low number of respondents

Dylan presented some slides and highlighted the disparity between the types of management training currently offered.

The group split into smaller groups to discuss ways to tackle bullying and harassment in ESE:

**Group 1**

* Culture overall is good, when compared to other institutions and departments. In terms of not knowing where to report bullying and harassment, Report and Support is not mentioned at induction. There is an action to advertise Report and Support at induction and regular reminders. In terms of training, both UG reps did appreciate having both Unconscious Bias and Active Bystander training, but suggested a brief refresher course might be useful.
* From a research/staff perspective – coffee morning and Fribes add to the sense of belonging at ESE but aren’t College mandated actions. Having more low-pressure social events in the dept can help to address the ‘us and them’ theme stated in the report. The 6 mandatory sessions are a big time commitment and pressure. Training should be targeted and to the point. Maybe a short course similar to the anti-plagiarism training about the culture of the department and acceptable behaviour. It can then be referred to when needed.
* From a leadership perspective – a bubble up approach is preferred, this is where good practice from local teams and be implemented by the whole department. To add to this, the HoD can lead by example. Emphasising informal routes of reporting can help to reduce the barrier and perceived burden of reporting incidents.
* The microaggressions video was discussed locally at a research group meeting to address the issue.

**Group 2**

* Our group discussed how B&H could be tackled with short, medium and long term measures. Short-term ‘easy wins’ initiatives will help to improve culture in there long-term.
* A poster or infographic illustrating how to report B&H with QR codes linking to college websites would be very valuable in places like the bathrooms. Chase up with faculty if posters like this already exist that we could use.
* Generally updating posters throughout ESE would help improve culture- and this should include posters on survey results and EDIC initiatives. We should be transparent with survey results.
* We heard about an initiative at another university where PhD focus groups were run by PhD students and key findings reported back anomalously to staff. Students were much more inclined to discuss issues with their peers rather than if staff led focus groups and were more confident that their comments would be acted on.
* To avoid feelings of ‘us and them’ transparency is needed in terms of who sits on decision making bodies. The different types of staff meetings were brought up as a particular occasion where some staff feel left out, even if the motivation is so people can save their time. The suggestion that elected representatives from staff groups not invited to the meeting could attend to relay back any information that may be relevant to groups not in attendance.
* Training on what is B&H and bad behaviour in the work place is needed, and this should go beyond current online management training offerings. Some element of role play with actors would be an entertaining and enlightening way to learn about what constitutes microaggressions and bad workplace behaviour. This training should be done regularly, in the same way first aid and mental health first aid training is. People may ‘buy-in’ to participating on this training course if the name of it reflects that it will develop critical management skills/group working skills. There should be an expectation in annual review (e.g. ARC) that all staff and students also complete this course.
* We discussed that there are pros and cons to such training being provided externally and internally. Internal course leaders can provide details on IC policy and procedures, however, hearing from external people used to working with large companies could actually shake things up and provide us with some new and exciting ideas.
* Our group liked the idea of research group leaders being asked to spend a research group seminar watching a video about microaggressions and talking about it with their groups afterwards. The EDIC could provide talking points to give PI’s confidence to do this.
* Case studies to show what happens once a complaint is made, and the different possible routes, would be extremely useful for people to see how their situation could play out and gain confidence in the system. These case studies would clearly have to be greatly anonymised, or potentially even fabricated so real people could not be identified. To be followed up with faculty to see if this already exists.

**Group 3**

* The consequences of bullying and harassment should be clearer. Often, the consequences end up being nothing. The only way to achieve a culture change is through group training sessions, at away days etc.
* Integrate real-time reporting strategies. The group suggested anonymous information collection boxes. Anonymity would alleviate the worry that speaking up could affect a person’s career. Some do not trust that report and support is truly anonymous.
* Is bullying and harassment happening on fieldwork?
* External company to conduct training to prevent it from becoming an echo chamber.
* ARC conversations offer a good checkpoint for ensuring that training is completed, and policies have been read.
* Induction week is the best time to embed training for students, especially if it is made compulsory in the timetable.
* Possible short-term actions include publishing the survey results as posters, taking a group photo of EDIC committee members, create a poster for the report and support process, make staff meetings more inclusive by including reps from all job families at every meeting.