ESE Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Culture (EDIC) Committee

Minutes

21 June 2023

12:10 – 1:40 pm

In attendance: Becky Bell (RB), Pablo Brito Parada (PBP), Tina van de Flierdt (TvdF), Carl Jacquemyn (CJ), Katharina Kreissig (KK), Sam Krevor (SK), Valentin Laurent (VL), Rob Lowther (RL), Michele Paulatto (MP), Sophia Quazi (SQ), Dylan Rood (DR), Sneha Saunders (SS)

1. Welcome, minutes and matters arising from the last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed to be an accurate reflection of the conversations held.

DR raised the colour scheme of the Staff EDI Survey infographic being red and green which is not accessible to colourblind people. It was agreed future reports, infographics and materials will be updated accordingly.

SK raised the issue of the lack of female applicants for the Royal Academy of Engineering (RAEng) fellowship scheme. SK raised this with RAEng and it was revealed there was only one female applicant for the scheme who was also awarded the fellowship. They also provided information on actions to encourage more female applicants. This was also escalated to Matt Jackson who also provided useful insight and will be escalating at Faculty level. TvdF and Matt regularly discuss this. SK also raised he received great support from the department when applying for the fellowship and questions if this is well known. Further dissemination of this information can encourage other applicants for this fellowship scheme.

SK also raised the issue of field trips, GTAs and their pay. He was recently at a meeting with GradSoc and wanted to learn if they were further developments to make them aware of. GTAs would like clearer expectations of the work expected during field trips and want consistency in pay and work conditions. Tina stated there will be an ESE specific policy and Saskia Goes is writing the first draft. The aim is to have a unified message from ESE.

DR raised the bullying and harassment report by Melanie Lee and if she will be invited to the next meeting to present the results.

ACTION: Future survey reports, infographics, etc will not include a red and green colour scheme.

ACTION: Invite Melanie Lee to present the Bullying and Harassment Report at the next meeting.

1. Call for volunteer – EDI Rep on Safety Committee – Simon Davis

Simon Davis contacted RB and SQ for an EDI Rep on the Safety Committee. RL and TvdF are on the Safety Committee as well as the EDIC Committee. RL and Tina have agreed to act as EDI Reps on the Safety Committee. SQ raised she is available for advice if they ever need it.

1. ESE Student EDI Survey

SQ explained the context of the survey. The survey was opened this term and will be closing on 30 June. There are currently 97 responses. SQ offered £5 Imperial Catering vouchers to the first 50 students who completed the survey. It was a useful tactic which achieved all vouchers being claimed by the second week the survey was advertised.

SQ briefly went through the survey report. There was nothing glaringly negative in the results. There were mainly neutral responses to some of the bullying and harassment questions. DR also flagged the career advice question and a lot of students reported they do not know where to go for career advice.

ACTION: SQ will analyse the qualitative survey results in the summer to provide a report and action plan.

ACTION: DR, VL and CJ volunteered to examine quantitative results further and the main areas of concern.

1. ESE Staff EDI Survey

SQ stated the staff EDI survey will be circulated after the term ends. It will be open over the summer to give staff plenty of opportunity to complete it. The committee has another 2 weeks to provide any feedback on the survey before edits are made and it is circulated. SQ and RB encourage the committee to think of ways we can reduce the survey length.

SQ raised one of DR’s items for AOB that might be related to the survey. DR requested to speak on investigating why female staff are not as involved in field trips. SQ raised that this could be a potential question for the survey as a starting point. VL raised many women within the department who have written about this topic and the main reason for low participation is low. The committee discussed some interventions like reducing field trip length or making staff aware they do not have to attend the full length of the trip.

ACTION: All committee members are to provide final comments on the staff EDI survey draft by 7 July.

1. Funding to bring your child to conferences – Valentin Laurent

At the last meeting, VL presented his experience bringing his son to the EGU conference and how he enjoyed the experience. He wanted to encourage others within the department to do the same. VL met with the DOM and found there is a College policy that exists that states £250 can be reimbursed for caring-related expenses for conference attendance. The policy is broad and left to departmental discretion as to what it can cover. It is a form that needs to be completed and then approved by the DOM. Items that can be covered by this are nursery fees, flights for parents etc. It will be at the DOM’s discretion as to what can be approved.

It was agreed guidance on this policy for the department will be useful.

ACTION: VL to send over the EGU conference presentation to circulate in the departmental newsletter.

ACTION: VL is to be interviewed in a future EDI podcast series to disseminate this info departmentally.

1. Women in Engineering Network (WiN) event update

SQ hosted a pre-event to accompany the WiN event. The purpose of this pre-event was to encourage those in the department who might be shy about attending College level events. KK expressed her enjoyment of the event and noted Mary Ryan still experiences patronisation despite being a senior member of staff. SQ noted how this event highlighted how approachable the female HoDs and senior staff members in engineering are. Despite low attendance, there was a high quality of engagement. SQ will try another pre-event in the new academic year as planning events in the summer term can be challenging amongst exams and deadlines.

1. AOB

DR raised several AOB items. He raised keeping the Anti-Harassment Champion item for the attention of the EDIC committee.

DR raised issues around UROP funding. There was some miscommunication around deadlines for funding and bursaries. Two contradictory emails were sent out to students and not staff. DR stated it will be useful for staff to receive the same emails as students, so staff are informed. VL acknowledged the mishap and stated it will be improved for the following year.

The item of women on field trips was also raised. VL stated there is a commitment of at least one female staff member to be present on trips. KK discussed her experience on a field trip and the fact there is a steep learning curve for staff new to field areas. She stated GTAs were really useful. The committee discussed how to get staff who are not subject experts involved in fieldtrips.