UNIVERSITY OF WEST LONDON

Board of Governors
Meeting of 22 November 2016

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Annual Report on Equality & Diversity

1   Summary

1.1   A report on Equality and Diversity is provided to the Board of Governors each year to provide assurance that the University is undertaking its duties under the Equality Act (2010). This report provides an update on the University's action on equality and diversity for the 2015-2016 academic year. It was agreed that this should first be considered by the Workforce Advisory Committee which took place at its meeting on 10 November 2016.

2   Recommendation

2.1   The Board of Governors is invited to:

a)   **APPROVE** the report.

3   Equality and Diversity Advisory Group

3.1   The Equality and Diversity Advisory Group (EDAG) is responsible for considering equality and diversity issues within the University. The University approved revised terms of reference for the Equality and Diversity Advisory Group (EDAG) in 2015 and these are attached at Appendix 1. The intention of the changes made was to ensure that the work of the Group was evidenced based and that membership included those who were responsible for undertaking actions as appropriate. The Group met on two occasions in 2015/16 and a summary of its work is set out below.

Monitoring of the Protected Characteristics

3.2   EDAG continues to monitor staff and student diversity data. The University has been working to improve data collection and to establish data sets for year on year comparison. For staff, the University has been undertaking work to encourage staff to declare the data. For students, it was agreed that a wider group of protected characteristics should be collected to include religion and sexuality. This has been collected for students at the September 2016 enrolment and this will be considered by the November meeting of EDAG.

Staff Diversity Data

3.3 EDAG considered the diversity profile of staff both in terms of the headline data and also the data broken down by school. While the headline data is encouraging in terms of the diversity of staff, it was noted that there were differences by school. It was agreed that a comparison between staff and student data should be considered in 2016/17.

Student Diversity Data

3.4 The Group considered the student data and welcomed the overall diversity of the student body but noted that BME attainment remained low. It was noted that this was a sector wide issue and it was agreed that the University should consider approaches used in the sector to address this issue. It was agreed that this should be a priority for action in 2015/16. Action has already been taken on this and BME students are part of the pilot for the retention project in conjunction with Civitas. The University is also part of a bid for HEFCE Catalyst funding for a project to improve BME attainment.

Equality and Diversity Training for Staff

3.5 The Group agreed that the online equality and diversity training which had been rolled out in 2014/15 should be made compulsory. All staff would be asked to undertake it by the end of December 2016 and all new staff would be required to complete it within three months of commencing employment. It was also agreed that other training should be explored such as unconscious bias training to supplement the online offer.

Equality and Diversity Statement

3.6 EDAG approved an updated Equality and Diversity Statement for the University which was approved by Academic Board and subsequently the Board of Governors. The revised statement was brought up to date to replace the previous statement and policy.

Update on Equality and Diversity Objectives

3.7 It was agreed that the University should consider a wider set of objectives to ensure that it was meeting its obligations under the Equality Act (2010) in full and it's Public Sector Equality Duty. It was further agreed that these should be evidence based.

3.8 EDAG considered revised Equality and Diversity Objectives which had been developed based on the data it had considered. For staff these are also in line with the People Strategy that was also approved by the Board of Governors in February 2016. The student related objectives were also informed by research in the sector. These are being presented to the Workforce Advisory Committee for approval. The intention is to monitor the progress with the associated action plan at each meeting of EDAG.

4. Equality & Diversity Monitoring for 2015-16: Staff

4.1 Overall the University has a diverse staff body, although there are differences at school/college level which will be considered by EDAG in 2016/17 in relation to the student body. The University employs a higher number of women to men, at a ratio of 57:43 although there are variations in schools. 27% of its staff are from BME backgrounds with 21% of Academic Staff which is significantly better than the sector average of 12% (DLA Piper Workforce Performance Indicators 2015).

Diversity among the senior staff

4.2   The University's senior team (including the Vice Chancellor's Executive, Heads of School, and Heads of Central Services) has a good balance of male and female members. The age profile of the senior management team is diverse with a range between 35-65 years.

4.3   The University employs a significantly higher proportion of women 43% in the top earning group (top 5% of earners) in comparison with the sector average at 32% (based on the DLA Piper Workforce Performance Indicators 2015).

Staff disability disclosure and representation

4.4   The percentage of staff with disabilities is 4% which is comparable to the sector average of 4.6%.

4.5   The University continues to ensure a fair and equitable recruitment process and ensure that staff with disabilities are supported in their day to day working life. The University's application form provides the opportunity for monitoring protected characteristics during the recruitment process and encourages candidates to inform the University of any disabilities and specific adjustments required. The University also operates a 'guaranteed interview scheme' for applicants with disabilities. The University has guidance in place on appraisal training in respect of disability and on retention of disabled staff which is supported by various policies on equality and diversity and sickness management.

5   Equality & Diversity Monitoring for 2015-16: Students

Student Participation

5.1   The University has a successful track record of addressing participation gaps between equality groups. Since 2011 student participation has increased in the following equality groups:

- Female students from 60.4% in 2011-2012 to 63.2% in 2015-16
- Black and minority ethnic students from 54.1% in 2011-2012 to 55.3% in 2015-16
- Students with a disability from 7.1% in 2011-2012 to 9.4% in 2015-16

5.2   The University has increased its proportion young UG FT entrants from State Schools or Colleges from 96% in 2013-14 to 98% in 2014-15. Of the UG FT entrants 50% were from social classes 4 to 7 in 2014-2015 which has increased by 8% from 2012-2013. Both measures are significantly above the sector average. These are not yet available for 2015-16. In 2015-16, 54% of new UG FT entrants came from households with incomes of £25,000 or less.

5.3   The University remains committed to improving its widening participation at all levels and will continue to develop strategies to engage further with under-represented groups in Higher Education. This is undertaken through the work on Access Agreements.

Student Attainment between equality groups

5.4.   Student attainment of good degrees (1st and 2.1s) at the University was consistent across gender and age with equal proportions of males and females achieving good degrees. In 2015-16, student attainment of good degrees (1st and 2.1s) at the University demonstrated that female students were more likely to obtain 1sts and 2.1s (68.4%) than male students (66.2%). Variation was also apparent between different age groups, with 18-20 year olds achieving the highest proportions of 1sts and 2.1s (81.2%) compared to the 21-24 and 25-29 age groups achieved 67.2% and 68.9% good degrees respectively. The University needs to consider the performance those aged over 30 who achieved only 58%.

5.5   In common with the sector, there is an attainment gap for BME students at the University, which is reflected in the sector as a whole. As outlined above, work is ongoing to address this issue both through the Civitas project and also collaboration with other universities. The University is also examining the data to see whether ethnicity is the causal factor as there is a strong correlation between degree outcome and entrance qualifications.

6   Diversity among the governing body

6.1   The University commenced action to address the imbalance of female and ethnic minority on the governing body in 2011-2012. It has had some success and has increased the diversity of the Board which now has six female members and four from ethnic minorities. Ways of increasing diversity are being explored including advertising through Women on Boards and also contacting appropriate alumni. The Chair of the Board and the University Secretary will continue to work on this in future recruitment rounds.

7   Kitemarking equality and diversity

7.1   The University is a subscriber to the Equality Challenge Unit which provides advice guidance to universities on equality and diversity issues. The University has also been a member of Stonewall since 2014.

7.2   The University has been re-accredited with the 'two-ticks' positive about disability award, for employers who have made a commitment to employ, retain and develop the abilities of disabled staff.

7.3   The University is in the process of considering whether to apply for kite marks such as Athena Swan which is awarded for providing support for careers for women. It was started in 2005 to improve representation of women in STEM subjects. In May 2015 the Athena Swan kite mark has been extended to including arts, humanities, social sciences, business and law (AHSSBL). The University is also considering the Race Equality Charter. In considering whether to apply for these awards, it will ensure that the process of doing so is valuable of itself.

Marion Lowe
University Secretary and Chief Compliance Officer
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