**Equalities Council**

**MINUTES**

**Date: 08/11/2017 Location: INTER-243**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Attendee** | **Initials** | **Title** |  |
| Willow Wong | WW | VP Equality and Diversity, Chair | P |
| Emma Underwood | EU | Secretary | P |
| Daniel Curran | DC | Student Voice Manager | P |
| Natasha Barret | NB | SU President | P |
| Steff Milne | SM | VP Sports | P |
| Clem Jones | CJ | VP Education | P |
| Alice Jessop | AJ | Course Rep | P |
| Elodie Blanchfield | EB | LGBTQ Rep | P |
| Tressa Belesi | TB | Women’s Rep | P |
| Carly Newman | CN | Vice Chair, Mental Health Board | P |
| Emma Halahan | EH | Chair, Mental Health Board | P |
| Hugh Spackman | HS | Course Rep | P |
| Sophie Bury | SB | President of Feminism Society | P |
| Raluca Danci | RD | International Students Rep | P |
| Renee Landell | RL |  | P |
| Libby Chapman | LC |  | P |
| Marcy | M |  | P |
| Sally | S |  | P |
| Chris | C |  | P |
| Ulsam | U |  | P |
| Jake Sheppard | JS | Secretary of Travel Society | P |
| Christopher Keane | CK |  | P |
| Samantha Miller | SM |  | P |

**Key:** **P** = attended / **A** = Apologies received / **D** = Deputy attended / **🗶** = no attendance

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **1.** | **Welcome** | **Action** |
|  | Chair opens the meeting by welcoming attendees and outlining the agenda. Each attendee introduces themselves with their name, pronouns, and position held if applicable |  |
| 2. | Officers Report |  |
|  | WW reports on work done so far:   * Black History Month a great success, with the “Why is my Curriculum White?” panel discussion highlighted in particular * Thanks given to Women of Colour Collective for their work on the event and on the month * Mental Health Awareness Week also highlighted, and the Cameron Grant Memorial night singled out * Special thanks given to EH and CN from the Mental Health Network * WW moves on to Health Centre Campaign, mentions petition by Phoebe Dormand which gained over 1800 signatures * WW and Phoebe have since met and have created a survey * Survey shows evidence that there is a high demand for mental health care, and sexual health care * Working group with Bob O’Keefe has been established to undertake a review of the health centre * WW remarks on the difficulty of lobbying external organizations * Printing credits update- All students now receive £10 per term, rather than international students only receiving £10 per year following WW presenting the case to college senior management team * WW has created proposal to hand to the residential steering group arguing that international students, care leavers, and postgraduate students should receive priority for surplus on campus accommodation   NB reports on Liberate Our Curriculum campaign   * Ongoing national campaign surrounding academic inclusivity and learning environments * Mention of NUS Liber8 campaign, which is a large national movement that has yet to arrive at Royal Holloway * NB remarks that there is currently a BME attainment gap of 18% * Following students approaching NB, a working group was established last year * NB has presented to academic board, but there is now a need to tackle the issue on a departmental level * Need to engage as many students as possible |  |
| 3. | College Equality and Diversity Policy |  |
|  | WW states that there has not been enough student input in the current policy  Suggestions came from the floor regarding what they would like to see implemented and included the following:  Zero tolerance towards discrimination (homophobia, racism etc.)  Training for all staff on equality issues  Diversity should be incorporated into the hiring process, especially for student facing staff, as students need individual with whom they can relate  Appeals for bias and discrimination need serious reform- students faced with discrimination often brushed to one side and are unable to address issues with academics | WW to compile responses into a report to hand to equalities steering group |
| 4. | Sexual Health Clinic |  |
|  | WW explains the situation with the sexual health clinic, with the previous service being privatised by *VirginCare* prior to being withdrawn. WW plans to write an open letter to the college petitioning for services, and the suggestions raised in the meeting will be used to form the content of said letter  Suggestions included the following:  Emotional support for students going through abortions  Need to order in STI testing resources, including HIV testing kits  More accessible information on the services available so as to make up for the lack of sexual health education prior to attending university | WW to gather responses and draft open letter to the college |
| 5. | Motion |  |
|  | Motion for Men’s Mental Health Rep raised by EH and CN  EH states that there is an urgent need to connect with male students living with mental health conditions. The rep would report to EH and CN and form part of the Mental Health Network. EH recognized that a men’s mental health rep would come from a position of privilege and welcomed any opposition or differing opinion |  |
| 6. | Discussion of Motion |  |
|  | WW opens floor for questions  TB- Asks whether this position would be permanent or only whilst EH and CN were in office  EH- It would be permanent, but may not be needed in the future, especially if a future chair is male  DC- Steering committee evaluates positions at the end of each year, and the council may need a discussion on this when the time arises  EB- Asks if EH currently feels as though she is unable to represent men  EH- States that she can, however is unable to access male spaces, and the position would be useful in allowing men to be open with the board  WW- States that people who are usually engaged with mental health are typically female  TB- States that since she does not represent all women, yet does not have a subcommittee, would it not be redundant for one rep position to have a sub rep, and worries that it would cause the system to become more bureaucratic  EH- States that there should be a full board sitting beneath her and CN, and the men’s rep would in future form part of a subcommittee  TB- Thanks EH for clarifying  EB- Asks for clarification on hierarchy  EH- Men’s rep would work under the Chair and Vice Chair of the board, and would form part of that board  DC- States that since the Equalities Council reports to WW, the rep would also report to her  TB- Raised concerns about this being a step towards having a Men’s Rep on the Equalities Council  EH- Confirms that the motion is absolutely not intended to be a step towards such a thing, however recognizes the potential for such a motion to be high jacked by certain groups and used as part of an argument for Men’s rep, but reaffirms that this motion was in no way intended to serve this purpose  EB- Asks if this position was open to all self-identifying men?  EH- Confirms this  JS- Raises concerns that if men typically do not engage with mental health campaigns, that the role would not be used properly, and that the election could be abused  EH- Argues that the elections for each of the roles has the potential for abuse  CK- States that the role could help to engage men  The motion then went to a vote, and the voting was restricted to self-identifying male students and voting members of council.  The count took place the following day, where the motion passed, with the results being:  Yes: 10  No: 4  Abstain: 6 |  |
| 7. | Elections |  |
|  | DC invites candidates for BME Rep to come to the front of the room to deliver a one minute speech  One candidate came forward, and delivered her speech, before voting was opened, with the options being:  Renee Landell  Re-Open Nominations  DC invites candidates for Disabled Students Rep to come to the front of the room and deliver a one minute speech  Three candidates came forward, and each delivered a speech, before voting was opened, with the options being:  Alice Jessop  Samantha Miller  Christopher Keane  Re-Open Nominations  Votes were then counted at 10:00AM on the 9th of November, yielding the following results  BME Rep  -After one round of voting, Renee Landell was duly elected  Disabled Students Rep  -After one round of voting, Christopher Keane was duly elected |  |
| 8. | Any Other Business |  |
|  | None Raised  WW closes meeting, group photo taken |  |