**EDI (Equality Diversity and Inclusivity) Forum Updates 03.02.2022**

**Background to changes to EDI structures, governance, and staffing**

EDI structures and governance at Kent underwent a significant review and restructure throughout 2020 and 2021. Key changes to be aware of are:

* The creation of a new governance structure, headed by a member of the Executive Group (Deputy Vice-Chancellor – Academic Strategy, Planning and Performance, Georgina Randsley de Moura). This new [Governance Structure can be viewed here](https://www.kent.ac.uk/equality-diversity-inclusivity/edi-governance).
* The creation of a new EDI team, led by a Head of EDI and including an EDI Advisor, Race Equality Charter Coordinator, and an EDI Data Specialist.
* The development of a new EDI Strategy, which is ongoing.

**Divisional and Departmental EDI representatives**

As part of the EDI review and restructure, it was recognised that there was a need for local level EDI responsibility within the Divisions. The Deputy Directors of Division (People) within each Division also have responsibility for EDI issues and awareness within their Divisions and ensure that EDI issues of importance are funnelled through the University decision making channels. Many Divisions are also developing student EDI representatives, and talks are ongoing with Kent Union to ensure that the interface with the Kent Union representation structures is effective.

**EDI Network**

With the creation of Divisional level EDI representatives, there is now a need to review the role and function of Departmental and Divisional EDI representatives who previously sat on the EDI Network. This is the next stage of the review process and members of the EDI Forum will be invited to consult.

**Race Equality Charter**

The University registered for the Race Equality Charter in summer 2021 and work has started on preparing for our application. Two staff members have been recruited to support the REC and an academic lead has been recruited. The first REC SAT (Self-Assessment Team) meeting was held on 12.01.22. As part of that meeting an extended conversation was had on definitions in relation to early and mid-career researchers.

**Athena SWAN**

The University achieved Athena SWAN Silver in July 2021. Due to the fixed term nature of the Athena SWAN Project there has been less resource to carry out the institutional Athena SWAN work, however the Silver Athena SWAN Action Plan will feed into the EDI Strategy that is currently being created, hence it will be taken forward appropriately.

Athena SWAN Charter itself has gone through a major refresh. The application process and the requirements have changed significantly. In addition to these changes the Schools/Departments at Kent are planning to either apply for individual (School level) or Divisional awards.

**Mental Health Charter**

The University of Kent and approximately 40 other Universities have signed up to be a participant in the Mental Health Charter Scheme, which means the University has pledged to be audited by Student Minds, a charity that focuses on mental health in the HE sector. This will take place in the 2022-23 academic year with an external audit committee. The Charter does not just look at Student Support but looks at the University holistically across staff and students.

Student Services commissioned an audit by an experienced external prior to Christmas to ascertain our current position. Early indicators according to that audit mean we would pass in all areas, but there have been several areas for improvement also identified, including how mental health is incorporated into the curriculum and in terms of staff development. The University will develop a Mental Health Strategy which will dovetail into several other strategies such as the Thriving at Work Group. Institutional Athena SWAN

**Work on Antisemitism**

The University has adopted the IHRA definition of antisemitism, to be interpreted through the lens of the Jerusalem Declaration of Antisemitism. The University is currently working to develop scenarios and training proposals for staff member to help contextualise the definitions and feedback on this work has been sought from the EDI Operations Group

The EDI Team is working closely with the local Rabbi, the Union of Jewish Students, and the Jewish Student Society to ensure that discussions around this work are led and informed by the lived experiences of Jewish staff and students. Kent Union has also formed close links with the Union of Jewish Students

**Report and Support**

[Report and Support](https://reportandsupport.kent.ac.uk/) is a tool which empowers students to record details of incidents such as sexual assault, harassment, relationship abuse or hate crime. Incidents can be reported on either an anonymous or named basis and can be made on behalf of a student or by a witness.

**Wellbeing Survey**

**\*The survey closed on the 21st of January\***

**From HR/Nikki Hyde: [edited slightly]**

“The survey follows the work of the JSNCC Working Group and aims to helps the University better understand what the main drivers for wellbeing and workload pressures are across the different parts of the university. We fully appreciate that we are not immune to the wellbeing and workload pressures that are being felt by staff right now. And, whilst we may have our own thoughts on what is driving those pressures right now, this survey provides an opportunity for you all to share your own views (anonymously) as to what you feel are the issues – as well as how they could be resolved.

We don’t want to assume we know what the problems are – and we don’t pretend we have all the answers – but we do want us all to be able to have an opportunity to share your own experiences of what is working and what isn’t so that together we can come up with some solutions that help all of us get back onto more of an even keel if we’re not right now”.

Read more here: <https://staff.kent.ac.uk/news/29893/wellbeing-at-work-tell-us-your-thoughts>

We (EDI Team) will be keeping an eye out for any developments in this space.

**LGBT+ History Month activity and programme**

LGBT+ History Month is running throughout the entirety of February. There are a large variety of events and activities taking place across the University in Canterbury and Medway that are open to staff and students. The full programme is [available here](https://kentunion.co.uk/2021-2022/lgbtqhm)

This document has been checked for accessibility and is accessible to all