



Equality & Diversity Committee

14th March 2018 (13:00 – 14:00) in NH209

Present:

Rachel Simpson, VP GSBS (**Chair**)
Lauren Baigrie, Student Carers' Officer
Fraser Knight, LGBT+ Officer

Apologies:

Lauren Aitken, Disabled Students' Officer
Eilidh Fulton, Equality & Diversity Society Champion
Raven Hingley, Women's Officer

Absent:

Seun Babajide, Deputy B.M.E. Officer
James Chilembwe, International Students' Officer
Pelumi Daniel, Deputy B.M.E. Officer
Victory Nwabu-ekeoma, B.M.E. Officer

In Attendance:

Chris Daisley, VP SEBE
Gary Kyle, Student Rep Assistant (**Clerk**)
Caroline Miller, Representation and Advice Manager

1. Apologies

As detailed above.

2. Actions from previous meeting (06/12/2017)

The responses to the previous meeting's actions are as follows:

ACTION: VP GSBS to get an update on Trimester B dates for the "Responding to Gender-based Violence" workshops.

(COMPLETED)

RESPONSE: VP GSBS stated that the staff member responsible for these seminars has left and therefore the only delivery has been through the Student Leaders Programme.

<p>ACTION: VP GSBS to communicate the location of gender-neutral toilet facilities to the wider student body.</p> <p>(ONGOING)</p>	<p>RESPONSE: VP GSBS has a list of gender-neutral toilet facilities across campus and will be communicating this via a Student Support Booklet that highlights all student support facilities across GCU.</p> <p>VP GSBS stated that this booklet will be released to students later in Trimester B</p> <p>(ACTION)</p>
<p>ACTION: VP GSBS to liaise with the policy lead for S.A.G.E. (VP SEBE) to explore the potential of widening the E&D committee to include Education Campaign Officers.</p> <p>(COMPLETED)</p>	<p>RESPONSE: VP GSBS liaised with VP SEBE and it was stated that the E&D committee is primarily focused on liberation, diversity, <i>etc.</i> whereas S.A.G.E. is educational and by including Education Campaign Officers on the E&D committee, it would be doubling the workload for student volunteers which would not be beneficial to their overall wellbeing.</p>

3. Committee Membership Expansion and By-law Approval

VP GSBS asked the E&D committee whether the GCU Equality & Diversity Advisor should be invited to future meetings because, currently, VP GSBS sits on university committees and provides updates regarding equality and diversity so, for the sake of consistency and partnership, it may be beneficial for the relevant university staff member to attend (similar to other GCU Students' Association committees that have university staff members attending).

The Representation and Advice Manager agreed with VP GSBS that this would be a good idea however the committee ought to be mindful of the workload of the GCU Equality & Diversity Advisor. In response to this, VP GSBS said that the GCU Equality & Diversity Advisor would be listed as "In Attendance" rather than a formally constituted committee member; thereby allowing flexibility whilst still ensuring effective communication takes place.

VP GSBS asked for a vote to approve this committee expansion and subsequent by-laws that will be presented at the next Student Voice meeting (26/03/2018). Changes approved.

4. "Fitness to Study" Policy

VP SEBE stated that he is responsible for the Full Time Officer response to the "Fitness to Study" policy that has been drafted and currently going through various university and GCU Students' Association committees for feedback. Currently, the drafted policy has been presented at School Boards where it was passed at SHLS but deferred at both SEBE and

GSBS due to concerns being raised over previous feedback provided by the Full Time Officers not being incorporated into the working policy document prior to the policy being presented to School Boards.

VP GSBS stated that no formal student consultation about this policy had been undertaken and this was the primary reason why approval at School Board level was being deferred but consultations have to be carried out quickly because the policy will be presented to the university Senate in June. VP SEBE continued to highlight concerns regarding the hostile/disciplinary language within the document, references to soon-to-be outdated legislation (Data Protection Act 1998), and gaps in procedural information such as: at what point, during this process, are students notified, *etc.* Additionally, concerns were raised over the student panel having no representation from GCU Students' Association.

The LGBT+ Officer stated that it would have been useful to have this document circulated prior to the E&D committee meeting so that it could have been read and discussed in further depth.

5. Student Mental Health Partnership Agreement

VP GSBS presented the draft version that had been previously presented at Student Voice for consultation and amendments. VP GSBS stated that the policy aspect of this agreement will remain fixed but the action plan will change annually to address current needs. VP GSBS asked for feedback and stated that the final version will be presented to Student Voice and the E&D committee.

The Representation and Advice Manager asked what the deadline for feedback on this was and it was clarified that it had to be within the next couple of days prior to papers being circulated for the next Student Voice meeting (26/03/2018). Additionally, the Representation and Advice Manager suggested showcasing this draft policy at the Wellbeing Fayre (22/03/2018) to get student feedback.

6. GCU Equality and Diversity Update

VP GSBS was on annual leave during the last GCU Equality and Diversity meeting and the meeting before that was cancelled. However, it was noted that the university signed up for the global “#PressForProgress” campaign and released a video that celebrated the diversity and achievements of both GCU staff and students.

Furthermore, the university has highlighted again its continued aim to abolishing the gender pay gap. In GCU's “Public Sector Equality Duty Report 2017”, it was highlighted that a decrease of 14.5% in the gender pay gap had been achieved. A record-high achievement of

40% of GCU's professoriate identifies as female and the university continues to celebrate its work in achieving the Athena SWAN Bronze Award.

7. Officer/Champion Update

- Full Time Officers

VP GSBS stated that VP SHLS has attended both Athena SWAN committees and SHLS Equality & Diversity committees. VP GSBS sits on the university-wide Equality & Diversity committee and has also worked with the Ethical Hacking Society in a partnership with "Schools Connect" to encourage more girls to pursue STEM professions by facilitating presentations both in the local community and at GCU.

- LGBT+ Officer

With February being the LGBT+ liberation month, the LGBT+ Officer has been very proactive recently. The liberation month started off with mature members of the local community, who identify as LGBT+, visiting GCU LGBT+ students to compare-and-contrast experiences of growing up as LGBT+. A co-led social event was run with the Disney Society and, later in the month, the LGBT+ group held a "Glitter Ball" event with approximately 60-70 attendees in the Re:Union Bar & Grill. This particular event is thought to have raised approximately £200 and half of this will be donated to LGBT+ helplines.

Furthermore, the LGBT+ Officer (supported by the GCU Equality & Diversity Advisor and the Student Rep Assistant) has been working with Barclays to establish an LGBT+ mentoring programme (similar to the mentoring scheme that GCU launched for women in finance). Discussions are still ongoing regarding this but, tentatively, there appears to have been a positive response from the LGBT+ student group regarding this.

Finally, two delegates were sent to the NUS UK LGBT+ Conference (7th and 8th March 2018) and the LGBT+ Officer will be attending the NUS Scotland Conference (14th and 15th March 2018).

- Student Carers' Officer

The Student Carers' Officer is working with the Scottish government on the Young Carer Grant and, additionally, met with MSPs in January for "Young Carer Awareness Day" to discuss relevant matters. On the 1st April 2018, the new Carers' Plan will come into action and there will be clear government definitions on what constitutes as a "young carer" (8-16 year old), a "young adult carer" (16-26 years old), and an "adult carer" (25+ years old).

8. Upcoming Campaigns

- *Sanitary Products Campaign*

As part of her Full Time Officer objectives, VP GSBS launched the sanitary product campaign on 5th March 2018 with a total of 4952 sanitary products (3360 pads; 1592 tampons) being made available throughout the campaign. VP GSBS has made sanitary products available within the Saltire Centre and, so far, over 800 products have been taken. Additionally, stalls will be made available at the Campus Life Lounge for all staff/students to access sanitary products regardless of gender identification. The GCU Students' Association Advice Centre will also make sanitary products accessible for staff/students to collect during April 2018.

"Bodyform" have also approached VP GSBS and requested that this campaign features in their national report to demonstrate the fight against period poverty.

9. AOCB

VP GSBS stated that GCU Students' Association is going to be featured in the university's Equality and Diversity annual report and VP GSBS invited the E&D committee to suggest material that can be showcased within this report. VP GSBS suggested the sanitary product campaign, mental health agreement and also work that VP SEBE has been doing for improving induction loops across the university. It was suggested that the LGBT+ and Barclays mentoring programme could also be included.

Additionally, GCU Students' Association has been shortlisted for the NUS Scotland "Diversity Award" and the winner will be announced on the 15th March 2018.

**The next meeting for the Equality & Diversity Committee is scheduled to take place on
11th April 2018 (13:00 – 14:00)**