EDI Forum – Chair's Report

08 Feb 2022

Race Equality Charter

In the Autumn of 2021 the College succeeded in its first ever application for a bronze Race Equality Charter (REC) Mark. The application and action plan (and a summary) can be found here.

In November, the new REC Coordinator, Alex Dawes, took up her post. One of her principal responsibilities will be to support implementation of the action plan, which will be monitored by the REC SAT. Responsibility for implementation of the Action Plan rests with the EDI Strategy Group, which is chaired by the Provost.

New artworks from the College's EDI Inclusion Portrait Prize. This is related to a REC commitment to diversify our portraiture but came out of work from the Imperial Artworks Group.

The Provost's Visiting Professors programme has been launched. The deadline for applications was 31st January. Short-listing will take place in Feb.

Religious Tolerance

Following discussion with the student Islamic Society and approval by EDI SG, the College has updated its guidance on Islamophobia, clarifying the definition and offering examples of what Islamophobic behaviour looks like.

This was done as part of an update of our webpages on Religious Tolerance.

Women at Imperial Week

Plans for Women at Imperial week (7-11 March 2022) are at an advanced stage and the full diary of events will be advertised soon on the College website. If you know of any local events in your department, please make sure to inform Sheena Cardoso in EDIC.

EDI Seed Fund

The scheme received 30 applications this year – a record. Additional funds were made available at a late stage via the Policy Support Fund which has allowed us to fund nearly half the applicants. Final decisions were made in early January. All applicants have been notified and a news report on the awards is imminent.

Report & Support – comms update from Murray Mackay

Activities delivered:

- Entries in two fortnightly editions of 'Inside Imperial Newsletter' – evaluation TBC
- Entries in two weekly editions of 'Staff Briefing Newsletter' – approximately 75% open rate, with 55 click-throughs

- College website homepage spotlight for 24hrs – 235 click-throughs
- Entry in one daily 'Imperial Today Newsletter' – 66% open rate, with 413 click-throughs Entry in four monthly editions of 'Faculty Newsletter' – approximately 71% open rate, with 241 click-throughs
- Entry in one monthly edition of 'Graduate School Newsletter' – 67% open rate, with 43 click-throughs
- Entry in one monthly edition of 'Learning and Teaching Newsletter' – 88% open rate, with 25 click-throughs
- Entry in one monthly edition of 'Research Newsletter' – 67% open rate, with 20 click-throughs
- Entry in one monthly edition of 'Imperial College Union Newsletter' – 74% open rate, with 10 click-throughs
- Reference in welcome emails distributed in the name of the Vice-Provost (Education and Student Experience) to Undergraduate, Postgraduate Taught, and Postgraduate Research students – 91% open rate, with 105 click-throughs
- Reference in slide deck in the name of the Vice-Provost (Education and Student Experience) at 'Staff Forum'
- Agenda item in two 'Heads of Department Lunch' within six months
- Posts by College Twitter and Instagram accounts – 251 engagements, with 9,611 impressions
- Featured on 27 Library Services and Departmental digital screens across three campuses
- Communications Toolkit circulated to 500 members of the Internal Communications, Cross-College Social Media, and Communications Network Groups.

These metrics are broadly in line with our expectations. Social media engagement could be improved and driven higher by the creation of additional visual content with a shorter runtime than the introductory videos it was necessary for us to produce during the launch. Options are detailed later in this email.

Please also be aware channels that have had lower click-through rates, such as Staff Briefing, feature lots of additional content and are sent to very large audiences. The amount of people in our community who will have read about Report + Support in SB will be far higher than for those channels that have had higher click-through rates but smaller audiences overall.

Pending:

- Entries in approximately one edition of 'Inside Imperial Newsletter' per month for remainder of the academic year
- Entries in approximately one edition of 'Staff Briefing Newsletter' per month for remainder of the academic year
- Entry in four monthly editions of 'Faculty Newsletter' per term for the remainder of the academic year
- Entry in one monthly edition of 'Graduate School Newsletter' per term for the remainder of the academic year
- Entry in one monthly edition of 'Learning and Teaching Newsletter' per term for the remainder of the academic year
- Entry in one monthly edition of 'Research Newsletter' per term for the remainder of the academic year
- Entry in one monthly edition of 'Imperial College Union Newsletter' per month for the remainder of the academic year
- Entry in one monthly edition of 'Postdoctoral Newsletter' per month for the remainder of the academic year
- Communications Toolkit recirculated to 500 members of the Internal Communications, Cross-College Social Media, and Communications Network Groups at the beginning of February 2022.

Some of the above activity is of course predicated on colleagues outside of the Central Communications team continuing to collaborate with us.

A Life Sciences comms colleague, Emily Govan, will be working alongside me on education comms in 2022 for one day per week. This project is part of her workplan and she will likely be able to spend one or two days per month on it.

As agreed at previous comms and project catch-ups, in addition to the above activities we will also brief our Design team to produce some bitesized social media content (GIFs, image tiles) related to thematic student/staff experiences. This will keep the campaign fresh without diluting the impact of our branding and key messages. Emily will be supporting this.

She will now work alongside Sheena and others to establish a running order of awareness weeks/months across the Spring and Summer terms. From this list they will map out which areas will be highlighted and when. We know that February aligns with LGBT History Month, for example. Therefore, we can leverage this as an opportunity to highlight the tool's functionality for disclosing unwelcome behaviour or hate crime toward the LGBT community.

The above approach, combined with repeatedly referencing the tool on key College comms channels, should continue to raise the profile of Report + Support and embed it as a 'business-as-usual' campaign.

Gender Neutral Toilets

Nick Roalfe, Director of Estate Operations, has provided an update on the level of provision of gender neutral toilets on our campuses (which include accessible and unisex facilities). Dated summer 2021.

Toilet designation summary comparison 19 & 21										
Campus	**WC Disabled**		**WC Gents**		**WC Ladies**		**WC Unisex**		**Grand Total**	
	2021	2019	2021	2019	2021	2019	2021	2019	2021	2019
Medical Campus	67	66	197	200	239	250	106	92	609	608
Silwood	3	7	31	57	31	52	28	28	93	144
South Kensington	113	103	394	379	423	400	125	95	1055	977
White City	41	27	66	65	118	117	98	11	323	220
Grand Total	**224**	**203**	**688**	**701**	**811**	**819**	**357**	**226**	**2080**	**2134**

UKRI EDI Strategy

United Kingdom Research and Innovation (UKRI), the body that oversees all 9 of the UKs research funders (MRC, EPSRC, BBSRC, NERC, Research England, Innovation UK etc), has published its draft EDI strategy. The document is open to consultation and the College may prepare a submission. My own immediate observations are as follows:

- It is good to see UKRI articulate a strategy that has the clear backing of the CEO, Prof Dame Ottoline Leyser.

- The document is not so very long but even so it comes across as rather wordy and repetitive; the 4 cornerstones aren't described until page 8.

- A timeline (with key milestones e.g. publication of diversity data) would help readers to understand how long UKRI has been thinking about its EDI strategy.

- The measures of success for the stated objectives are not clear enough. It would be more encouraging to see SMART actions; this would give a clearer articulation of the level of ambition.

- There are frequent mentions of 'piloting' initiatives. While it is obviously valuable to try out new ideas at a small scale before going all in, the impression given is that UKRI is at the very start of its EDI journey and has not learned lessons from existing research and practice in the sector. It also comes across as playing it safe, rather than living up to the stated ambition of being bold. Articulate of a vision of what UKRI should look like in 2027 could be helpful.

- It looks like the Strategy will create a framework to be used by each of the constituent research councils of UKRI to come up with their own action plans. This could be a recipe for duplication and loss of focus on the central priorities. Notwithstanding some important operational differences between the nine constituents, there is a strong case for UKRI to enforce some integration of EDI action plans. It should be possible to identify a core set of priority actions that are shared by all nine councils and overseen by a clearly identified UKRI committee. Council specific actions could be developed in addition as needed. This approach would have the benefit of enabling transparency. Council-led action planning will make it difficult for individuals or organisations to keep track of progress.

- An operational question: how will UKRI work with Advance HE or other organisations that are important actors in the HE EDI space?

- In addressing Bullying and Harassment, could UKRI follow Wellcome's practice of asking for reports of funded individuals who are being investigated for poor behaviour? Harassment of a sexual, racist and ableist nature remains an important issue in the sector.

Period Products

The College is now providing [free period products across all its campuses](). In the initial phase, products are available from free vending machines in one female toilet and one accessible toilet per building, across all our campuses. This phase will run until summer 2022, when the scheme will be reviewed to look for any improvements.