

Equality Office

Celebrating Diversity, Advancing Equality, Promoting Inclusion

Issue 2, October 2015

News

Who We Are

Welcome to the Equality Office update! We have had a very productive few months working on a range of projects and continuing to support staff and students at the University through training events and one-to-one consultations. Our ongoing work includes advising on legal requirements and good practice; developing policies and implementing action plans; monitoring and reporting progress against equality goals; celebrating diversity and raising awareness through events. You can find our contact details at the end of this newsletter. Enjoy!

Race Equality



The University has been announced as one of the first recipients of the Race Equality Charter, an initiative that recognises excellence in advancing racial equality in higher education.

The charter was launched by the Equality Challenge Unit at the start of this academic year.

By becoming a member of the Race Equality Charter, institutions are committing to following the guiding principles of recognising that racial inequality is a significant issue within higher education and showing a commitment to tackling these inequalities by making sure individuals from all ethnic backgrounds can benefit from equal opportunities.

Min Rodriguez, Head of Equality at the University said:

"I am delighted the University has been recognised for taking steps towards achieving race equality. We have undertaken a considerable amount of work, even before we applied for the charter mark, including our work to reduce the gap in attainment between White and Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) students achieving a good degree. We are striving to create an inclusive culture and an environment where all individuals are able to thrive, irrespective of race or ethnicity. Taking part in the charter mark has been incredibly valuable to us as it has allowed us to identify good practice and also highlighted where we need to do more. We would not have received this award without the support, commitment and dedication of the people involved in making a difference across the University."

Hertfordshire is one of only eight universities out of the 21 institutions that participated in the scheme to be successful in receiving the award at Bronze level.

Did you Know?

Did you know that it is University Policy that no committee meetings should start before 09:30.

([Institutional Athena Swan Action Plan: Action 28](#)).

Athena SWAN Update

Following the University's success in applying for Athena SWAN Bronze Awards, our STEM Schools have been busy implementing the Athena SWAN action plans they submitted in November 2014. Actions have included [interviewing academic staff](#) to obtain feedback on the uptake, purpose and value of Keeping In Touch Days (KIT) to include a list of ideas for what to do on those days; running focus groups with staff to identify how managers can be supported to hold better career discussions during appraisals; and revising existing mentoring programmes for staff so that they more explicitly support women in advancing their careers in STEM.



We have also contributed towards improving the profile of female careers in STEM. This has been achieved through providing the Guardian with a sponsored article entitled "[We need to get rid of the notion that science is not for girls](#)". In this article, Dr Kristen Coppin (PAM) and Dr Louise Mackenzie (LMS) talk about their research, what they love about their field, obstacles and challenges for female scientists, the support they receive from the University, and their view on what they think needs to change across the sector in order for more women to be represented in STEM subjects. Also, we have submitted career stories showcasing the talent of our female scientists to the [Academic Case Studies](#) section of jobs.ac.uk. Further plans include setting up Promotion Workshops and creating a web space for working fathers.

The Athena SWAN Charter is currently expanding to cover all aspects of gender equality (including transgender). As a result, we are currently setting up workshops for all staff to introduce them to the new Athena SWAN process award scheme. [For more information on Athena Swan](#)

What We've Been Doing



Fresher's Fair October 2015

We had a very enjoyable day meeting and welcoming all the new students at Fresher's Fair. It was a great opportunity to

engage the students in the services we can offer them, the type of work we carry out and the great programme of our upcoming events. Everyone grabbed a goodie pack of Equality Office merchandise. Apparently we had the best freebies at Fresher's!



Carers Week June 2015

As part of Carers Week (8-14 June 2015) the Equality Office invited all staff, especially those with caring responsibilities to an Afternoon Cream Tea. It offered staff the opportunity to relax, meet other staff who are carers, share experiences and to speak with local charities and organisations such as Age UK, Carers in Hertfordshire, Crossroads and Mind.

Launch of *Women in STEM Network* series: External Roles

In September the Women in STEM Network hosted the first of a series of events to establish a forum between female staff who hold important external roles (for example non-executive Chair of health organisation) and colleagues who may want to explore and pursue similar roles.

Guest speakers from the Schools of Health and Social Work and Life and Medical Sciences talked about what they do, how their external role enhances their academic career, how they juggle their external/internal activities and how they secured their roles. The talks were followed by a question and answer session, lunch and individual table discussions.

For further information on speakers, their talks and the discussion sessions please contact Susan Grey s.grey@herts.ac.uk



Herts Pride The Equality Office held a stall at Herts Pride, an annual event that takes place every

August. We showcased our commitment to equality and the LGBT community. People were able to collect a goodie pack of Equality Office merchandise and had access to a wealth of information on the services we provide to our staff and students.

Future Events



October is Black History Month

Join us to celebrate Black History Month with an exciting programme of theatre, films, inspirational speakers and lively historians.

8 October 2015, 18:00, N001, de Havilland
Screening of the 'stirring and thrilling' film 'Selma'.

13 October 2015, 18:00, N003, de Havilland
A revealing portrayal of 'The Black Image' in popular media.

19 October 2015, 18:00, E351, College Lane
Entertaining and informative talk with author and historian Stephen Bourne

27 October 2015, 18:00, Weston Auditorium, de Havilland
Performance of the sold out national play Holy and Horny

29 October 2015, 13:00, N110, de Havilland
Lunch with the highly acclaimed and inspirational speaker Chris Lubbe

All events are being held at the university and are open to staff, students and Hertfordshire residents.

[For more information and to book:](#)



Young Adult Carers

Interactive Workshop

February 2015

Weston Auditorium, de Havilland

The Equality Office will be collaborating with UH Arts to offer an interactive workshop to raise awareness of Young adult carers. It will be based on the play [Freefall](#), which is centred around the theme of young carers and is based on the story of breaking free from assumptions and stereotypes.

We are committed to providing support to our students who are unpaid carers for a family member, friend or neighbour and are currently working together with Carers in Hertfordshire to decide how best we can meet their needs.

Further information will be available on our [Staffnet](#) pages

Alzheimer's Awareness

We are working together with Age UK to provide staff and students with information on Alzheimer's, Dementia and the support that is available in Hertfordshire.

Further information will be available on our [Staffnet](#) pages shortly.

World AIDS Day 1 December 2015

We will be collaborating with Clive Duffey from Herts Aid to provide information to our staff and students on HIV/AIDS and the support that is available in Hertfordshire.

Further information will be available on our [Staffnet](#) pages shortly.

International Day of People with a Disability December 3 2015

To mark this date, the Equality Office will be screening the BBC documentary 'The Ugly Face of Hate Crime', followed by Q&A's with the presenter Adam Pearson.

We will also be working together with Student Wellbeing and HR to offer a workshop to staff and students which raises awareness of the most frequent type of issues disabled staff and students face at the University.

Dates to be confirmed. Further information will be available on our [Staffnet](#) pages shortly.



Dignity and Respect: Dealing with Harassment and/or Bullying



The University will be relaunching its UPR on Dignity and Respect: Dealing with bullying and/or harassment in January 2016.

Shortly, we will be recruiting volunteers to become Dignity and Respect Advisers. All advisers will be appointed and fully trained by the Equality Office to deal with staff/student issues of bullying and harassment in a confidential interview. Your role will be to support staff or students but not to act as an advocate or a representative; to provide an impartial ear; to discuss and advise on the options, routes and support for dealing with the situation and, if required, to advise on how to formally progress a complaint.

If you would like more information or want to register your interest, please contact Jo Prescott: j.prescott@herts.ac.uk

HR Core Portal

Did you know you can now access a new equality data record screen on your [Core HR Portal](#). You can use this functionality to enter key equality information which will allow us to improve our knowledge of our employee profile thus helping us to make better decisions as well as to meet staff needs and reduce barriers where they exist.

The information provided will help us to monitor the recruitment and retention of staff according to different [protected characteristics](#); better understand employee demographics across the institution; inform workforce development and planning; assess the impact of policies and practices on different staff groups in the University; improve our understanding of equality and fair treatment, different experiences and identify areas for further action.

Please visit the [Core HR Portal](#) to enter your information in the strictest confidence.



Unconscious Bias Workshops

These workshops support our work towards embedding an inclusive culture at the University of Hertfordshire by equipping participants with the tools to recognize and address bias in their interactions with prospective and existing staff and students.

The 90 min workshop is open to all staff and will be offered in January 2016. To date, 620 members of staff, including the Chief Executive Group (CEG) have attended with excellent feedback.

New dates to be confirmed and will be available through your HR Core Portal or on our [StaffNet](#) pages.

Online module: Diversity in the Workplace

Provides information and guidance on equality and diversity issues, legislation, rights and responsibilities and the negative effects of discrimination. Available to all staff.

Equality & Diversity Essentials Workshop

Covers the fundamental aspects of equality and diversity, current legislation, individual rights and responsibilities within a higher education context, understanding discrimination and identifying barriers affecting different groups of people. Sessions take place in Evolution Room 2, MacLaurin Building:

26 October 2015
14 December 2015
21 January 2016
16 February 2016
18 March 2016
14 April 2016
10 May 2016
8 June 2016
14 July 2016
17 November 2016

Booking is via your HR Core Portal.

Did you Know?

Staff and students can access facilities for breastfeeding and for expressing and storing milk on all campuses. These are located in the First Aid Rooms at College Lane Campus, de Havilland Campus, MacLaurin Building, Hertfordshire Sports Village and the Fielder Centre. The Day Nursery facilities can also be used regardless of whether your child uses the nursery. For more information, contact the Occupational Health Advisor, m.rainey@herts.ac.uk.

Staff Networks

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT)

We support our members in a range of ways: we are available just to chat through a difficult situation or we may be able to raise issues with management. Perhaps you are a manager with a member of staff who has just come out, or a member of staff who wants to come out but does not know the best way to do it? We also aim to make sure that University policies and procedures are fully supportive of LGBT staff, and can comment on the wording of official policies when requested. We arrange social events at lunchtimes and evenings where members can meet informally and catch up with friends in an LGBT-exclusive environment.

The group is open to all members of staff who are LGBT, but we also have straight allies who want to support colleagues or family members, or who just want to get to know us a bit better.

For more information visit our [StaffNet](#) pages

The Equality Office has the following staff networks:

- LGBT
- Carers

Staff Networks are open to all staff and are led by interested members of staff. They seek to provide an informal peer-run environment for staff to network and discuss issues of specific interest that have an effect on them. They can provide information, support and act as a voice for staff.

We plan to set up the following networks in the near future: Dignity and Respect Advisor, British Minority Ethnic (BME) and Disability.

Carers

The carers' network meets on a monthly basis and is an informal opportunity for staff who are unpaid carers to network and support one another. Jo Willis, Carers Development and Learning Manager, from Carers in Hertfordshire facilitates some of the meetings and is able to provide a wealth of information on support available in Hertfordshire.

For more information visit our [StaffNet](#) pages

Who We Are

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Legal and policy advice; training opportunities; the Race Equality Charter Mark.

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Network activities and memberships; equality and diversity events;
(maternity cover for Sarah Bowes-Phipps)

Katerina Finnis;
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