

EDI Forum – Chair’s Report

24 May 2022

Stonewall Workplace Equality Index

Imperial has continued to improve its score and ranking in the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index, which benchmarks the environment that we create for LGBTQ+ staff and students. We moved from 142nd to 96th place, entering the Top 100 for the first time in many years. Our application was also judged worthy of a Gold Award (a new feature of the WEI) in recognition of Imperial’s commitment and efforts to become an LGBTQ+ inclusive employer. My thanks in particular to Cynthia So and Kalpna Mistry of EDIC for their work on the application and to the Stonewall Action Committee for helping to keep up momentum on the action plan. [See here for news story](#).

Athena Swan

The College’s application to renew its [institutional Silver Athena Swan Charter mark](#) is nearing completion and will be submitted on or before 31 May 2022. We are applying under the transformed charter, which aims to deliver more impact for less work. The application is considerably shorter (5,500 words compared to 15,000 under the old scheme), but still requires a substantial amount of work. I am grateful to Rob Bell who has played a central role in pulling the application together and to all our colleagues who have been involved in configuring the action plan. We have endeavoured where possible to integrate with and build on commitments that are already underway. The application will be published in GDPR compliant form later this year.

Race Equality Charter

A Race Equality Charter Town Hall meeting was held on 11 May hosted by Imperial’s REC Co-chairs, Anique Varleigh, Head of Exams & Assessment, Business School; and Stephen Curry, Assistant Provost for EDI. The actions already underway on the REC Action Plan were presented along with a chance for attendees to ask questions about the award and work.

Recent external appointments to College Council in 2021 have increased the percentage of external council members from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds from 20% in 2019 to 38% in 2022. This has gone further than our target of 30% in our Action Plan.

In addition to the College’s launch of seven new [Presidential Scholarships for Black students](#) with Home fee status, the Department of Bioengineering has announced the [James West Scholarships](#) – three fully-funded scholarships for Black and Mixed Black Heritage PhD students.

Staff and students have enrolled on the free online module *Union Black: Britain’s Black Cultures and Steps to Anti-Racism*. This course provides learners with an understanding of the origins and experience of Black British history and dispel myths to inform, challenge and contribute to the anti-racism agenda. [Details on the College website](#).

The Provost’s [Visiting Professor Programme](#) is currently interviewing, with an aim of appointing one Visiting Professor in each of the three faculties and one in the business school. Appointments are expected to be announced in early summer.

The [Communicating about ethnicity working group](#) is the drafting of a style guide for students and staff at the College providing up-to-date advice on how to refer to ethnicity in all forms of communication. The group will seek feedback from key stakeholders within the Imperial community before its publication in summer 2022.

Imperial As One and EDIC will be hosting the annual early career conference for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic a day conference in November. This is in the early stages of planning so please look out for more details soon.

In late March, two recently formed networks, for postdoctoral researchers and for alumni of the College, we launched. [News story here](#).

PRDP review

Led by Nichola Stallwood (POD), the College is undertaking a major review of the Personal Review and Development Process. The College has engaged outside consultants (Develop Global) to conduct the initial review, which will involve extensive consultation with staff. The aim is to inform potential changes and improvements to the process, forms, support (infrastructure) and experience for Managers and staff. The review will be conducted from April – mid/end June 2022 with analysis completed and presented by end of June 2022.

Reverse mentoring

The College's [Reverse mentoring scheme](#), which initially targeted members of the senior leadership team as mentees and was judge to be very successful by the vast majority of people involved, has entered a second round. Please watch out for future rounds if you want to be involved (as a mentor/mentee) and share the information with colleagues.

Initiatives for PhD students

Thanks to £250k funding from Research England, Prof Sara Rankin has been spearheading several initiatives to increase the representation of UK students of Black or mixed Black heritage in PGR. These principally involve plans to:

- Increase continuation and recruitment of Black undergraduate students to our PGR programmes by running fully funded summer programmes in medicine and engineering targeted at Students studying biomedicine or engineering at non Russell group Universities
- Develop and deliver an entrepreneurial leadership programme for black and mixed black heritage UG, PGT and PGR students (6 events delivered March 30th – July 31st)
- Demystify the research career pipeline and enhance it for Black students by running a Black Graduate Careers Conference in collaboration with Reach Society tailored for Black students across the UK.

Festival of Learning and Teaching

The Imperial Festival of Learning and Teaching, formerly known as Education Day/Week, took place from 16 – 18 May 2022. The Festival of Learning and Teaching is Imperial's annual collaborative and celebratory forum of educational innovation and achievement across the College.

This year's Festival was focused on a topic around the main theme of **'Identity and Belonging in Higher Education: Navigating Culture, Challenge and Change'**. Sessions were recorded and the videos will soon be available from the [event website](#).

Mediation

Susan Littleson and Ann Kelly are establishing an internal and external pool of mediators to help resolve disputes. CourageLab have been appointed to provide support. They will help us select and develop internal mediators, who will then go on to apply for accreditation and be expected to carry out a number of mediations a year.

Behavioural Insights

Susan and Ann are also driving a project with the [Behavioural Insights Team](#) to reduce bullying & harassment at Imperial. There will be interviews and workshops, with the first workshop at the beginning of July in which we will work together to narrow down which specific behaviours the project should target and focus on in the next stages. It will be based on BIT's exploratory work to understand the range of different processes and scenarios related to bullying & harassment at Imperial (e.g. discussions with staff, policy documents, data where available).

This project is part of Imperial's wider commitments to create a positive working environment as set out by the **Working Together Task Force** and in the **Imperial Together Action Plan**. It is focused on the **'Enabling speaking up'** recommendation:

- Understand the behavioural barriers and facilitators of related behaviours
- Target a specific behaviour
- Design a solution to change that behaviour
- Evaluate whether the solution works

People Strategy

Susan will be iterating the next phase of the People Strategy in July with the wider HR team. The strategy aims to:

- Find and develop diverse talent
- Build inclusive leadership and culture
- Create a resilient workplace
- Strengthen the HR foundations to improve the user experience

With thanks for input from Alex Dawes, Susan Littleson, Sara Ranking and Tiffany Chiu.

Prof Stephen Curry

Assistant Provost (EDI)