

Introduction

The University of Greenwich is a London based University with 3 campuses in south-east London and north Kent. The University ranks highly in terms of student satisfaction across all 20 listed universities in London - with it topping lists in 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013 consecutively. The University offers a wide range of subjects, has a strong research focus and well-established links to the scientific community.

The University aims to create an inclusive work environment for its diverse student body and workforce, *'where everyone is given the opportunity to realise their full potential'*. Equality and diversity is central to their teaching, research and enterprise activities. Their vision is to become a leading London University by 2017.

Diversity and Inclusion and Employee Engagement

The University strongly believes that a diverse and inclusive workforce is crucial in order to provide an excellent University experience, both for students and staff. As Cinthya Quijano, Organisation Development & Employee Engagement Adviser at the University explained: *"Diversity and inclusion is important partly because of our service users. We have students from various backgrounds and our workforce should reflect that. I also think it [diversity] brings out different ideas, perspectives, which makes working better."*

The University also believes that employee engagement is crucial to its success. As Cinthya Quijano described: *"Employee engagement has a strong link with customer experience. Employee engagement is key to my heart because I have worked in a few engaging places with some engaging people, and I know it [employee engagement] can make a massive difference."* The University sees employee engagement and diversity and inclusion as being *'two sides of the same coin'*. As Claire W. Clark, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager described: *"Equality, diversity and inclusion should not be seen as separate things. People should move from that mind-set. It (equality, diversity and inclusion) should be a part of everything you do and the way you think."*

The University measures employee engagement based on the four enablers of engagement from The Macleod Report –strategic narrative, engaging managers, employee voice and integrity. Their 2012 survey results showed that internal communications, leadership and culture were the three key areas staff perceived to be extremely important to them. This led to the creation of 'local action planning' teams for each faculty and directorate (formerly known as schools and offices), which were responsible for the action planning and implementation of projects to improve various aspects of employee engagement in their local area. As Cinthya explained: *"...we [the HR team] also highlighted where equality and diversity was an issue and gave each action planning team results from the survey, and the teams had a chance to look at how their local areas scored on some of the questions and benchmark those to the rest of the University."* The teams were made up of academic and support staff from various levels of the hierarchy.

Cinthya believes that the action planning teams have been very effective in driving forward the message of employee engagement and that once the latest (2015) survey results are published, they will play a crucial role in moving the University from transactional engagement to transformational engagement. As she described: *"Employee engagement is a culture issue and the only way we are going to culturally embed it is if you [HR] are not owning it. So you have to let the local action*

planning teams to have the power in the decision making to make the changes to enhance employee engagement across various areas of the University.”

Promoting Diversity and Inclusion at the University

University of Greenwich has an equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) Strategy and Action Plan in place, which is linked to the University’s overall strategy. The University believes that having a policy on EDI for staff and students reinforces their expectations of the values and behaviours that all members of the University community should exhibit.

The University actively and consistently promotes equality and diversity through various channels. As Claire W. Clark, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager described: *“the message in terms of equality and diversity itself is important in that it just isn’t words. It needs to be real and live, delivered at the heart of the University and should be engrained and embedded in everybody’s work.”*

The University has two staff forums in place to support LGBT and disabled employees respectively. Cinthya, who is also the Co-Chair of the LGBT staff network believes that the main aim of the network is to provide support and information to staff in the workplace and act as an advisory group on LGBT issues within the University by contributing to policy development and implementation. As she explained: *“We wanted to be a bit of a social space for LGBT staff to come and meet other LGBT staff members, but we also wanted to be seen as a serious group contributing to the University, so we have voice in decision making when a new policy and changes are going to happen.”* The University is also a member of the Stonewall Diversity Champions Programme and is featured in Stonewall’s Gay by Degree, a guide for Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual students on higher education institutions.

The LGBT network extensively uses social media to share messages, promote events and raise awareness. The network has gained a good number of followers in a short space of time and use the medium to effectively convey their messages and reach out to staff, students and the wider public. As Cinthya explained: *“it [LGBT twitter account] is not only to engage with our current staff but also with the wider community to create awareness around LGBT issues. That is why I think social media is a great tool. It reaches so far and beyond our four walls.”* Cinthya also believes that it is essential for organisations to communicate through various channels with staff, and that social media provides that essential second line of communication to share messages and raise awareness. However, she recognises that there may be trust issues amongst staff when using social media to communicate with colleagues, and that organisations need to do more to address the ‘big brother effect’ to make it more effective. The network also has LGBT staff role models, a senior LGBT champion, and a senior straight sponsor who actively support the network and raise awareness and visibility amongst staff and students.

The University also has a staff disability forum Chaired by Claire W. Clark, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager that brings together staff from across the University to discuss and agree best practice in relation to disability. There is commitment from the senior leadership team to ‘move the forum to the next level’ by encouraging further involvement from staff and increase their presence in social media. The University along with the staff disability forum also aims to increase the number of staff that disclose they have a disability and provide a positive work environment where staff with disabilities feel safe and supported.

The University holds an event each year led by the Equality and Diversity Champion called 'Celebrate' which showcases and celebrates the diversity of staff and student population. As Cinthya explained: *"we have stalls during the Celebrate event, the LGBT network and disability forum have a stall, with a general Equality, Diversity and Inclusion stall. There are various other stalls that staff can get involved in. There are so many things that take whole inclusion piece to the next level. It is a good way to promote the fact that we are diverse and different."* The event has also received positive feedback from attendees. Although the University uses various channels to promote equality, diversity and inclusion, Claire W. Clark believes that diversity needs to be promoted by everyone, by partnership at every level. As she explained: *"It is the responsibility of all to promote equality, diversity and inclusion to embed it within the culture."*

The Future

The University is currently working to embed employee engagement and diversity and inclusion into the culture of the institution. However, Cinthya thinks that this could be a challenge for the University as culture change can be a difficult process. As she explained: *"When you are talking about culture change, it can take a really long time and we need to have the persistence and resilience from everyone in the organisation to wait it out and not expect results immediately. Keeping the momentum will be our biggest challenge especially as the University undergoes change."* Claire W. Clark also thinks that the University will have to take steps to coordinate all the equality, diversity and inclusion work happening at the University. As she described: *"We need to make sure that we are not working within our own pockets and that the good work we are doing is being shared across the three campuses. By working through the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, we will be able to work effectively to deliver what is required under our Public Sector Equality Duty"* For this, the University aims to streamline the local action teams that are involved in enhancing employee engagement across the University to also address issues around equality, diversity and inclusion to form a more holistic team.