



THE LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

**PROPOSALS FOR ACTIONS IN RESPONSE TO
INCIDENTS ON CAMPUS
AT THE START OF THE 2014-2015 ACADEMIC YEAR**

FINAL REPORT

JANUARY 2015

FOREWORD

This report supersedes the interim report 'Proposals for Actions in Response to Sexism and Homophobia on Campus' which was circulated within the School at the start of November 2014.

The most significant changes are in the form of the following additions:

paragraphs 6 and 7 on broadening the remit of the review in response to reactions to the interim report;

paragraphs 24 to 27 addressing concerns that the proposals in the interim report extended so widely as to limit freedom of speech and academic freedom;

paragraphs 29 and 30 on actions the School has taken and is currently taking to address systemic inequalities; and

paragraphs 31 to 37 setting out proposals for a Task Force to conduct a root and branch review of equality and diversity issues at the School.

But there are various others changes in the report: and I hope that members of the School community will be able to find time to read it and to think about it as a whole, rather than focusing only on the sections which are of most immediate interest to them.

I should like to express my warm thanks to the many students and staff across the School who have written and/or spoken to me about the issues covered in this report. Virtually all the correspondence and conversations have been conducted in a constructive and positive spirit. In many places in this report I have simply included ideas in the words in which they are given to me. As a result this report is in part my prose, in part the voices of the LSE.

Simeon Underwood
January 2015

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PROPOSALS FOR ACTIONS IN RESPONSE TO INCIDENTS ON CAMPUS AT THE START OF THE 2014-15 ACADEMIC YEAR

FINAL REPORT

1. The starting point for this paper was an incident at Freshers' Fair on Friday 3 October when members of the Men's Rugby Club handed out a leaflet about the Club which contained a great deal of offensive material. The leaflet was sexist and homophobic, and in the eyes of many racist and elitist; it has also been described as de-humanising. Then, in a separate incident on Wednesday 8 October members of the Men's Football Club conducted an unsavoury "initiation rite" on Houghton Street, to the disgust of other members of the School and the public. Although not overtly sexist or homophobic, this event unfortunately conformed to some of the most negative stereotypes of what constitutes "masculinity"; and some of those who complained about it were women or members of the School's LGBT community.
2. I am conscious that this report might create a negative impression of the School's student body. So, to make an important point at the outset, this needs to be set in context against the many positive achievements and attitudes of a remarkable group of students. In particular reprehensible "laddism" (see the next paragraph for a definition) involves a small proportion of the student population and only a few of the sports clubs within the Athletics Union.
3. The behaviours on display at the Men's Rugby and Football Club incidents are sometimes labelled "laddism". It is a troubling term, as it can be seen as a jolly euphemism for what is actually highly offensive and oppressive behaviour. "Laddism" of this kind on the part of some of the School's sports clubs is not new. It has often been on display in the back pages of The Beaver. The Deans have had to deal with various incidents over the years, some of which have entered into School disciplinary procedures. This culture also pervades social arrangements in at least some of the Halls of Residence.
4. However, "laddism" of this kind is not the only way in which sexism and homophobia manifest themselves within the School community. There are other ways which are less visible and more insidious. This is from a recent report by the Adviser to Women Students, commenting on the kinds of student cases which come to her notice:

The cases involving harassment related to LSE students, teachers and people outside of LSE. Almost all of cases involved inappropriate, and often persistent, behaviour by men to single female students. Most involved, in addition, the use of sms texts, email and/or social media. It was common to hear that women had often waited a long period of time before coming to see me, and in some cases, had made significant adjustments to their movement and use of LSE facilities to avoid coming into contact with the person.

The first sentence of this quotation makes clear that this is not just about students. The School has already taken a number of actions to address this problem, through an informal working group convened by the Dean of Undergraduate Studies earlier

this year and a working group on inclusivity in Halls set up by the Residences User Group. But even so it remains a pressing problem.

5. Although the first part of the report focuses on incidents located in the student community, it moves on to make recommendations about the culture of the School as a whole. The discriminatory behaviours it addresses are not limited to students; others contribute to sustaining them and to making the School a less welcoming environment than it should be. The aim must be to provide an infrastructure for developing a greater sense of respect and inclusivity across the whole School.

6. In response to representations from across the School on the interim report, including at a “Town Hall meeting” on 4 November, the remit of the report has broadened still further. The section on the LSE community at large now addresses a wider range of potential discriminatory behaviours and activities, such as on the basis of race and against disabled students and staff. As one respondent put it, “I appreciate LSE wants to concentrate on sexism and homophobia to keep things manageable, but I don’t see how you can reasonably change one attitude without changing the rest. We don’t need an adjustment, we need a gestalt shift.” Several respondents have also drawn attention to an underlying issue within the culture of the School which might be termed “classism”.

7. The extension of the ground covered in this report has been important and fruitful in identifying concerns and unhappiness felt by many members of the School community. But it is important not to forget where this report started. With the passage of time, the impact of the incidents involving the Men’s Rugby and Football Clubs may have receded: so we shouldn’t forget the offence they caused to many members of the School community and the damage the Men’s Rugby Club incident has done to the School’s image externally. The wider agenda this report now embraces should not be a device for diverting attention from the initial agenda which focused on gender and sexuality.

8. The focus of the report is on actions the School might want to take. There has been a broad culture of tolerance and/or looking the other way, which needs to change. The items labelled “actions” are ones on which the School can lead; the items labelled “suggestions” are addressed to the Students’ Union, and I hope it will consider them carefully – if it doesn’t like them, it would be helpful if it can come up with alternative ideas of its own. I have tried to find actions which are positive as well as those which are punitive, and also to find a balance between immediate actions and actions that might help to re-shape institutional cultures over the medium term.

DISCRIMINATORY BEHAVIOURS IN THE STUDENT COMMUNITY

9. The School’s expectations of its students in terms of their behaviours as members of the LSE community are set out in several different places. These include the Ethics Code, the Codes of Good Practice for Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Students, the harassment policy, the rules on the use of IT, the Codes of Conduct in LSE Halls of Residence – a colleague who has been looking into this has found 16 documents which could come under this heading, and it is possible that there are more. In some cases the prose of these documents is opaque.

ACTION: the Dean of Undergraduate Studies and the Academic Registrar to produce a document drawing on this material, setting out rights and responsibilities in relation to inclusivity, to be couched in a positive spirit, to go to all students in the name of the Director this Term.

10. Several respondents suggested that LSE 100 should be mobilised as a medium for disseminating material to all students on (a) citizenship and social responsibility and (b) intersectional perspectives on diversity and inclusivity, provided this can be done within its academic purposes. Other respondents have suggested that LSE 100 should not be made the vehicle for these messages but that instead the School should arrange separate courses for all new students. One respondent also drew attention to practice at Imperial College, where the first lecture for all courses is apparently an introductory session that discusses everything from personal security and equality and diversity to institutional policies and institutional support arrangements. Another respondent mentioned a programme of compulsory courses of this kind at UC Berkeley

<http://ls-advise.berkeley.edu/requirement/summary.html>

ACTION: the Academic and Student Affairs Committee to be invited to consider these suggestions before the end of the current academic year.

11. Although this report started out as an immediate response to specific incidents, it also needs to address how we change institutional cultures into the medium and longer term. If there is to be change into the future, it is critical to flag the School's expectations around citizenship and behaviours to students even before they start at the School, as a clear statement of intent. This is to some extent already addressed in the following passage from an e-mail which is sent to applicants for School accommodation: "LSE has a very wide range of applicants, and the students body is just as diverse, with students coming from many countries, cultures, religions, non-religions, faith groups, financial and socio-economic backgrounds, to name a few. It is important to us that this is apparent to you before you choose to study here or choose to live with us and that you understand this. ...". But this document may not be the right vehicle, and the wording may not go far enough.

ACTION: the Head of Admissions and the Academic Registrar to review pre-arrival literature to see whether issues of citizenship are featured in them and if so whether the content needs to be revised. This should be a positive assertion of the LSE culture and values; it could also feature the support the School makes available to its students. We will also need to consider how to make this message stand out in the sizeable amount of pre-arrival literature our students already receive.

ACTION: the Head of Student Services to ensure that these issues are brought out prominently in the arrangements for orientation.

12. The quote from the report by the Adviser to Women Students in paragraph 4 suggests that at least some, possibly many female and gay students encounter regular harassment and discrimination at varying levels. The School should be committed to ensuring that its students do not have to face this. But it is difficult for the School to act, either on culture or individual cases, if it doesn't know what is going on. One possibility is that only a small proportion of incidents are taken forward to the Deans or through the School's disciplinary procedures. If this is so, it may be because the victims do not know where to take them to; or because they feel there is no point in taking them forward because nothing will be done; or because they fear that they will encounter further victimisation if they do act; or because female students do not feel comfortable about raising sexual harassment concerns with male office-holders. As the Adviser to Women Students has written in her report:

The students were often relieved to hear about (but were not well aware of) the possibility of an initial informal procedure. If more students were aware of this option, I think more students would come forward and would be less inclined to let things escalate before they decided to.

These are issues the School has already been considering through the Dean's informal working group, and the actions I am suggesting build on "work in progress".

ACTION: the Dean of Undergraduate Studies and the Academic Registrar to prepare a note reminding students how to draw significant incidents to the School's attention and of the ways of doing so, to go to all students in the name of the Director this Term.

ACTION: the Dean of Undergraduate Studies and the School Secretary to review arrangements for the School's response to harassment complaints and other expressions of concern from students (it may be necessary to tie this in to the review of the roles of the Deans and the Advisers to Male and Female Students proposed in paragraph 15 below).

13. As mentioned in paragraph 4, at least some of the cases of sexual harassment which come to the notice of the Adviser to Women Students and other office-holders involve the use of e-mails, texts and other social media.

ACTION: the Dean of Undergraduate Studies and the Adviser to Women Students to review the existing guidance to students on the use of social media as a matter of priority; if it hasn't been re-issued to students this year, the Dean to arrange for this to happen early in the Lent Term.

14. We know that some other universities use on-line forms to enable students to report incidents as or shortly after they happen. At SOAS, for example, the Union has introduced a form on the prompting of their Women's Officer; the thinking is to allow students to report incidents out of hours and also to encourage an "active bystander" reporting culture. Something similar has been put in place at Manchester, though through the University rather than the Students' Union. However, while this approach seems sensible, almost obvious, there are issues to be addressed such as who responds to the forms when they are submitted – one concern is that forms of this kind might raise expectations of swift response times that cannot necessarily be met.

ACTION: the Dean of Undergraduate Studies and the Academic Registrar to consider whether it would be appropriate for the School to introduce an on-line system for reporting incidents of harassment and discrimination.

15. Some of the students I spoke to commented that their fellow-students are unclear about the purpose of the Deans – is their role pastoral and supportive, or is it disciplinary and punitive? There is also uncertainty about the relationship between the Deans and other, related roles, notably the Advisers to Women and Men Students – what issues should they bring to whom? The General Secretary of the Students' Union has stated that "the Union's liberation officers have raised contentions about the reporting mechanisms for cases of harassment and that it is uncomfortable to raise matters with the Dean based on differences of identity". It has also been suggested that the roles of the Advisers to Women and Men Students are under-used and that the School should do more to promote them. Similarly, another suggestion is that the School should do more to promote the roles of the Deans and the Advisers to students who are living in the Halls of Residence, for example by a

planned programme of visits and/or poster campaigns. What is critical here is that there should be a “safe place” for students to bring their complaints and a clear pathway for taking them forward, as a means of assurance to students of different genders and sexual orientations.

ACTION: the Pro-Director (Teaching and Learning) to initiate a review of the roles of the Deans of Undergraduate and Graduate Studies and the Advisers to Women and Men Students, to be completed in time for any changes to take effect for the 2015-2016 academic year.

16. One respondent suggested that the School should make more use of mediation as a way ahead in cases where students are the victims of direct or insidious discrimination. The School is currently developing an internal mediation service, mainly for use in workplace mediation. The argument for applying this approach to disputes between students are two-fold: mediation focuses on resolution rather than allotting blame; and if successful it enables individuals to find a way of working together into the future. However, not all conflict is suitable for mediation; simple disagreements between parties can be resolved by other means. Also, if the situation involved, say, two students in the same Hall of Residence nearing the end of an academic year, there wouldn't be much point in it.

ACTION: the Human Resources Division to invite the LSE mediators to discuss how the service they currently provide might be extended to students.

17. Several respondents have drawn attention to workshops at Oxford and Cambridge, apparently on issues around sexism and “positive masculinity”, apparently mandatory, which attracted a lot of media coverage at the start of the academic year. The School's Equality and Diversity Unit have followed this up, and have found that these workshops are not quite as the media reports suggested, especially in relation to their mandatory status. They have also come across views that provision of this kind can be patronising and, at worse, reinforces the cultures it is seeking to counter. But the Unit and other colleagues have found other examples of interesting and innovative practice elsewhere, including at SOAS, Manchester and through the National Union of Students.

From the discussions I have had on the recommendation in the interim report, my own view is that if workshops of this kind are to be developed at the School, the best way of going about it would be through a joint initiative between the School and the Students' Union. The existing models are all based on trained students providing training to other students: which would involve the support and commitment of the Union. This will entail funding, and a mechanism will also be needed to ensure that the workshops are sustained beyond the first two or three years: which would involve the support and commitment of the School.

There is a debate to be had over whether the workshops should, or even could, be made mandatory. Who would impose what sanctions on whom ? In the interim report I proposed that funding from the School to the Students' Union for sporting activities might be tied to attendance at the workshops. The Students' Union General Secretary has made clear that she opposes this. But if they are not to be made mandatory, the next question is how they are to be effective in addressing the incidents which gave rise to this discussion in the first place. Perhaps, as one correspondent suggested, monitoring and/or incentives might be better approaches: but what would this mean in practice ?

There is also a debate to be had on what they should cover. One view is that leading from issues around harm to others and absence of consent can be seen as punitive. On this account, the workshops should develop alternatives and celebrate diversity.

In this connection, it has been suggested that workshops of this kind could have a role to play in addressing discriminatory behaviours in the Halls of Residence. There is some interest in this on the part of the Halls. However, a working group on inclusivity in Halls has pointed out that some of the Halls of Residence lack the necessary common space to host workshops of this kind.

ACTION: The Dean of Undergraduate Studies to lead discussions within the School on the various workshops offered elsewhere in the HE system, and to devise a workshop model which can be applied to the circumstances of the LSE, with recommendations and costings; to report to DMT by the end of the Lent Term;

ACTION: the Students' Union and the Head of Student Services to work together to seek to establish the "demographic" of the main sports clubs, e.g. in terms of ethnicity, home/international, academic department etc., as this information might be useful in informing further actions, including but not only the workshops.

18. In 2012/13 the School persuaded the Students' Union to introduce a mandatory pledge that all club captains and society presidents had to sign before they could get funds. In effect it asked them to uphold the School's ethics code and to take responsibility for ensuring that their club members did so too. The Union is now reviewing the pledge, and is encouraging the Athletics Union to review it too.

SUGGESTION: the Union to ask the Dean of Undergraduate Studies to review the pledges once the work of revising them is finished, on the basis that he can offer advice on whether they are strong enough and fit for purpose.

19. In keeping with the principle outlined in paragraph 11, it could also be useful in setting institutional cultures from an early stage if the Athletics Union were to send a message to students before they start at the School inviting them to engage in sporting activity but also making clear its expectations about the manner in which they should do so.

SUGGESTION: the Students' Union General Secretary and the Athletics Union President should consider whether it would be appropriate to send an affirmative message to students pre-arrival and, if so, what the wording should be.

20. Several respondents have suggested that the School should put on an event featuring gay and lesbian role models from the sporting world. An event 'Tackling Discrimination in Rugby' is to take place on 10 March. It is being hosted jointly by the LSESU Men's Rugby Working Group, the Athletics Union and the School, and has financial support from the School.

21. Finally in this section, celebrating achievement can also be a way of signalling the School's wish to change its internal cultures and can act as an incentive to groups and societies to engage with this agenda. The Students' Union is already looking into its own reward mechanisms. It has also been suggested that funding should be made available to celebrate achievement in this area in the Halls of Residence: this is in part because the Halls are a good vehicle for promoting competition in equality and diversity initiatives and in part "because some Halls Committees and Warden teams are already struggling to provide the generally expected outcomes within their current budgets".

ACTION: the Dean of Undergraduate Studies and the Students' Union General Secretary to discuss plans for reward mechanisms, for example the possibility of a joint School and Union prize to be awarded annually to the team/society which has made the greatest contribution to inclusivity within the student community and/or the School community more widely.

22. Since the interim report was published, I have had several conversations with colleagues involved in the School's Halls of Residence, including an especially helpful meeting with some Wardens, Residents and student Hall Presidents in early December. There is a clear commitment in the Halls to try to address this agenda. Wardens, sub-Wardens and student officers in Halls are taking various actions already, notably an impressive 'Choose Respect' campaign; and the relevant colleagues have proposed further actions as follows:

ACTION: the Residences User Group at its Lent Term meeting to consider whether more emphasis should be given to equality and diversity issues (a) in its own remit and (b) in governance arrangements in the individual Halls of Residence, for example by proposing that all Hall student committees should create and sustain more liberation roles, such as Women's Officers and specific channels for representing LGBT+ and BME students in Halls.

ACTION: the Head of Residential Life to assess whether the 'Choose Respect' campaign is happening consistently across all Halls of Residence; the Head of Residential Life also to work with the Head of Student Service in assessing whether it can be rolled out on the main School campus as well; both actions to be taken by the end of the Lent Term.

ACTION: the Head of Residential Life to review the job descriptions for Wardens and sub-Wardens this Term with a view to ensuring that they explicitly give the individuals holding these roles responsibility for actively promoting the equality and diversity agenda within Halls.

ACTION: the Head of Residential Life to arrange a competition between students in Halls for video material explaining why respect and inclusivity are important in the Halls community, with the best video being used as part of the induction for new students at the start of the next academic year.

23. In connection with paragraph 53 below, it is worth mentioning that the Halls have received funding from the Haringey Action Group on Alcohol and the Association of Managers of Student Services in Higher Education to run an alcohol-focused pilot project titled 'Better Interventions for Risky Drinking Students'. The project will include training for staff in front-line roles such as security and reception roles and follow-up work with both staff and students, including by on-line means. It will run from February to May this year.

FREEDOM OF SPEECH

24. In the run-up to the Town Hall meeting and in its immediate aftermath, I received several messages from members of academic staff in the Law Department expressing concern that the actions I had proposed in the interim report appeared to extend so widely as to limit freedom of speech and that as a result legitimate academic and pedagogical speech and public debate would suffer.

25. This is a very important consideration. It is also a subtle and careful argument; and rather than seeking to summarise the submissions I received on this point, it is perhaps safer to quote from some of them. This is perhaps the most succinct summary of this position:

The Rugby Club pamphlet was offensive and did in fact cause offence to students and staff. But punishing or disciplining speech because of its offensive character is a very dangerous step to take for any institution, like the LSE, with real power over individuals' lives.

This specific case may not have involved the considered 'expression' of any 'opinions' actually held. But the implications of the School's reaction for cases where individuals do, perhaps after careful consideration, say things that are offensive or hurtful, even to large numbers of people, are undeniable. This is precisely the 'chilling effect' that a long tradition of free speech jurisprudence warns against.

The LSE should obviously be a place where all feel welcome and valued. But it should also be a place where all dare speak their mind. Neither the puerile actions of a small group of individuals, nor our collective response to those actions, should be allowed to undermine these two crucial elements of our institution's identity.

Another response criticised the interim report for not mentioning the School's commitment to freedom of expression and open debate. It went on to say that

- the report did not distinguish between sexist or homophobic expression and discrimination;
- it needed to be clearer about the forms of expression to which it proposed to attach sanctions;
- it did not clarify who might legitimately count themselves as a victim of sexist or homophobic expression; and
- it relied over-heavily on the idea that the reason for attaching sanctions to sexists or homophobic expression is its effect on the broader institutional "culture".

Another submission along these lines proposed that most or all of the actions and suggestions set out in the section on discriminatory behaviours in the student community should be removed.

26. These lines of argument attracted strong counter-arguments both at the Town Hall meeting and subsequently, especially from students and from staff networks. One respondent called them "a red herring": but personally I think they are too important to be disregarded in this way. This is from a fuller response by the Spectrum Committee:

We would caution, however, against an excessively libertarian reading of the right to free speech which is alien to UK law, EU law and current LSE policies. The right to free speech is not wholly unrestricted, there being limitations with respect to hate speech, harassment and incitements to violence. Moreover, there is a difference between restricting the right of a person to express particular ideas altogether and restricting the manner in which those ideas may be conveyed. ... there is [also] a danger that framing the review only through the lens of the right to free speech would allow the

legal issues to eclipse the rest of the debate. This review is not merely about the violation of legal rights – it is also about the encouragement of a positive and welcoming culture of mutual respect and acceptance for students and staff of all different stripes.

27. Having considered these arguments very carefully, I am of the view that the proposals in this paper do not conflict with either academic freedom or reasoned free speech. It would be possible to argue that those responses are a “thin end of the wedge” to restrictions on the academic endeavor: but I am sure that the LSE is a mature enough institution to make appropriate distinctions. While I think it important to consider and honour the arguments which the colleagues in the Law Department have made – and while they are right to criticise me for not addressing these issues in the interim report – the recommendations I have made are not intended to apply to the academic or pedagogical activity. Instead, they are concerned with the way in which members of the School as a social community should behave towards one another, i.e. with mutual respect. I also think it important to honour the last sentence of the response from the Spectrum Committee. As another respondent put it to me, “an environment of some mutual respect may be a condition of the very freedoms and the capacity to debate which the LSE rightly values.”

DISCRIMINATORY BEHAVIOURS AND ACTIVITIES AFFECTING THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE

28. I want now to look at how the School might address discrimination and, as a matching mirror image, how it might assert and promote inclusivity within its culture more widely.

29. A lot of effort has gone into this area over the years. Perhaps the most visible outcome is in the School estate. Clearly much remains to be done: but it is much more accessible to disabled students than it was ten or fifteen years ago. Also, the changes which have happened have largely been shaped by dialogue between the Estates Division, diversity and disability advisers, and disabled students. But in other areas, although there has been a lot of talk and in some instances dialogue, change is less visible.

30. The School’s current agenda includes a very wide range of actions designed to address systemic inequalities across the various “protected characteristics” covered in the Equality and Diversity legislation. The most notable are:

- An Equal Pay Review Group has recently submitted a report on pay differentials related to gender and ethnicity.
- The School has taken part in external benchmarking exercises related to gender equality and LGBT+ staff, as well as being awarded the ‘Disability Two Ticks’ charter mark indicating its commitment to employing, retaining and developing disabled staff. The next step will be to participate in the Business in The Community’s benchmarking exercise on race.
- The Academic Registrar’s Division is carrying out research into the recruitment and admissions of BME students.
- LSE is participating in mentoring programmes for female, BME and disabled staff.
- Residences have launched a ‘Choose Respect’ campaign, designed to promote respectful behaviour and raise awareness of bullying and harassment (see paragraph 22).

- The ARD and the Student Well-being Service have been reviewing the support given to disabled students in the assessment process.
- A three-part seminar series on race and the lived-experiences of BME staff in British universities is being run across the academic year.
- Training on unconscious bias is being rolled out to all staff, starting with those in management decision-making positions.
- A Black Faculty Working Group is looking at the under-representation of black staff in academic roles.
- The Dean of Undergraduate Studies has been working with colleagues, including the Students' Union, to explore strategies for tackling sexism within the student body (see paragraph 5).

31. However, this report and the current work in progress should be seen as initial or interim steps. I have produced this report in a short space of time and have taken a problem-solving approach: but more – a lot more – needs to happen. As the response from the Gender Equality Forum puts it, there is now “both the opportunity and the need to address E&D issues more broadly ... the School should be looking at concrete and sustainable ways to challenge conscious and unconscious bias in students and staff more broadly and also to challenge the culture and practices of the institution itself over the longer term.”

ACTION: the School to set up a Task Force “to conduct a root-and-branch review of E&D issues at the School and generate policy proposals around institutional architecture and appropriate actions to maximise equality and diversity across the School ... to review the School’s current strengths and weaknesses on E&D issues and also the initiatives undertaken at other universities to combat the types of problems observed at LSE.” – this wording is again taken from the response by the Gender Equality Forum; the Director has also made a separate but very similar proposal for a task force, which would address issues of inclusivity as well as equality and diversity.

32. The Gender Equality Forum has also stated that “we envisage that the time needed to conduct such a review will be substantial”. I appreciate that the problem-solving approach I have taken in this report can be seen as narrow. I would though enter a personal note of concern that the focus given to the Task Force should not be too broad. The Task Force and its terms of reference will need to be planned carefully to ensure that “the types of problems observed at LSE” are not only analysed and discussed but are also resolved.

33. An issue the Task Force will need to address is the School’s governance “architecture” for equality and diversity. Many colleagues have expressed to me concern, in some cases strong concern, that in its present form it is ineffective. Much of the work is done by two bodies, the Equality and Diversity Consultative Forum and the Equality and Diversity Executive Group. There are also specific working groups for particular purposes. Generally, colleagues from the staff networks who are involved with the Consultative Forum and the Executive Group feel that there is no clear sense that these bodies are achieving anything significant or constructive. More specifically, there is some overlap between them both in membership and in role. It has been suggested in particular that the Executive Group is insufficiently executive: it should have a clearer focus on monitoring delivery of actions.

34. Another issue the Task Force will need to address is recruitment practices, at all levels. The School is seeking to make its recruitment processes for academic staff more rounded and sophisticated than they are at present: but this raises new

sensitivities. An example is a current proposal that they should include non-workplace informal interactions: care should be taken that this does not introduce other forms of bias or exclusivity.

35. Another issue the Task Force will need to address is staff training, to cover academic, research and professional support staff. Specifically, it has been suggested that the Director's Management Team should undertake collective training on equality and diversity issues, as a starting point for cascading training to the School's senior managers in academic departments, research centres and professional service Divisions. In paragraph 17 above I outlined some of the arguments around workshops on sexual consent and positive masculinity for students, including the questions of (a) whether the workshops should be made mandatory and if so how – again the issue of sanctions versus incentives will need some thought – and (b) how they would be sustained from year to year. These issues apply equally where training is for staff. In addition, for staff thought also needs to be given to refresher training/updating.

36. The Task Force might also want to look for examples of good practice in departments, research centres and service Divisions; it might also want to invite members of the School to suggest examples, both from within the School and from other peer universities; and it might then consider the most effective ways of collating and communicating them to the School community as a whole.

37. The Gender Equality Forum has also suggested that the following measures should be implemented as soon as practicable: (a) equality and diversity should be made a standing item on the agendas of relevant major School committees; (b) equality analyses should be required for relevant policy developments and reviews; and (c) statements on equality and diversity implications should be included as part of proposals to the Academic Board, Council and the Department Heads' Forum where appropriate. On point (b), it is worth noting that the feedback from the Gender Equality Charter Mark scheme was that the absence of equality and diversity impact assessments from major policy proposals was a key failing in our processes. Again, this is something the Task Force should consider.

THE DIRECTOR'S MANAGEMENT TEAM

38. It is a commonplace of discussion about institutional culture, and especially an institution's approach to equality and diversity, that change needs to come from the top. At present the Director's Management Team is numerically male-dominated, a point which was made to me by many of the academic and support staff who contributed to this discussion. There are arguments to be made in either direction as to whether adding a senior female member of staff to its membership would be a tokenistic move. One possibility which has been suggested is that for the immediate future shortlists for DMT posts should be women-only: this sounds an attractive idea, but it would also be unlawful. In this context, University College London (where six of the seven most senior managers are male) has taken an interesting approach. It has made the following public statement, which is carried on its web site and in the further particulars for job advertisements:

"Equality objectives are a key feature of the annual performance plans of each member of the Senior Management Team and individual executives are held to account for their achievement of their equality objectives by the UCL Council through the Provost. This approach is unique in the sector."

ACTION: the Director and the Provost to consider how the UCL formulation could be adapted to LSE, and to report to DMT by the middle of the Lent Term. Also, as the gender balance is skewed towards men at other levels of the School's management as well as DMT, the Director and the Provost to consider at the same time whether similar expectations should apply to other senior managers in the School, e.g. Service Leaders and Heads of Departments

39. It has been suggested to me that it may be useful to ask staff whose research addresses relevant issues, such as Professor Anne Phillips or Professor July Wacjman, for input to the discussion on ways of rectifying the gender balance on DMT and at senior levels of the School.

40. At present the Director's Management Team is engaged in a range of activities aimed at implementing the outcomes of the Strategic Review carried out over the past two academic years. Although the theme of inclusivity underpins much of the thinking in the Review, it is not explicit in the final report.

ACTION: inclusivity and equality should wherever appropriate be foregrounded in implementing the Review; and wherever a new policy is to be developed, it should be evaluated in terms of its impact on equality and diversity within the School.

INFRASTRUCTURE

41. Some people who have contributed to the discussion leading to this report have suggested that the School needs to do more to address issues around equality and diversity and inclusivity. In fact the School has made efforts in various areas over the years. But the fact that these are not well known within the School tells its own story.

ACTION: the Equality and Diversity Unit, the Director of Human Resources and the Academic Registrar to work up a strategy whereby the Unit would be more proactive (a) in promoting the School's own activity and achievements to the School community at large, including regular circulars, invitations to colleagues to contribute etc.; and (b) in tracking and disseminating national activity, e.g. using the monthly bulletins issued by the Equality Challenge Unit as a basis for reflection and where appropriate action within the School.

42. The Equality and Diversity website is the main point of information about the School's equality and diversity activities for both internal and external users. Some respondents have suggested that it does not say enough about what the School has done and is currently doing in this area. Also, they have commented that it is shaped by regulatory requirements, in ways that prioritise compliance over shared values.

ACTION: the Equality and Diversity Unit to review the website and to update and refresh its content by the middle of the Lent Term.

43. The quality of information to shape the School's equality and diversity efforts is variable, and presentation of at least some of the data on the School web site is unimaginative. More broadly, colleagues involved in some of the staff networks suspect that data is simplified and/or sanitised. They also believe that the School is reluctant to share and release the information it has, citing concerns over confidentiality.

ACTION: the Director of Human Resources and the Academic Registrar to review the existing data and also to discuss these concerns with the staff networks, with a view to drawing up an action plan for this area by the start of the Summer Term.

44. The School has several staff networks, for

- disabled staff members, parents, carers or partners of disabled people;
- disabled staff and students, with a particular focus on the School's infrastructure and estate;
- black and minority ethnic staff;
- women across the LSE committed to addressing gender inequality in pay, access and culture;
- staff who have experienced mental health difficulties;
- staff caring for adults;
- working parents and parents-to-be;
- staff and students with neuro-diverse conditions;
- LGBT staff

Some of these networks are flourishing, but others are not. Also, some of the networks are led by their members, while others are co-ordinated by the School's central services. The ones which are flourishing seem to rely on committed input from committed individuals alongside their "day jobs": which raises questions of whether there should be incentive and reward for the individuals concerned.

ACTION: the Director of Human Resources to work with the Equality and Diversity Unit in reviewing the missions and remits of these networks and, if appropriate, in reviving those which are moribund; to review resourcing arrangements for them, including incentives/rewards to colleagues who are engaged in running them; and to report back to the Equality and Diversity Executive Group in the Lent Term.

REGULATIONS

45. In the various discussions I have had with individuals and groups across the School, I have come across a wide range of views about how the School should respond to incidents of discriminatory behaviour along a spectrum from punitive to restorative justice. As one respondent put it to me, "... we should be very mindful of the copious research evidence that disciplinary and 'criminalising' regulatory responses can serve to attach those subject to them yet more firmly to the norms and assumptions which are being sanctioned. Clearly, we need a disciplinary structure: but it should be parsimonious, and used as a last resort." This discussion of principles seems to me to be very important: and although this next section focuses in on various aspects of the School's disciplinary regulations, the proposals in it should be read with this broad principle in mind.

46. In the past different SU General Secretaries have given the School mixed messages about the extent to which they want it to be involved in disciplining students for misbehaviour at AU and SU events. It seems clear that in principle there can be cases where it is legitimate for both the Union and the School to act against an individual – this isn't necessarily a matter of "double jeopardy". However, the way this works out in practice is often not clear, either to those carrying out the investigation or those whose behaviour is being investigated.

ACTION: the Secretary to lead a review of how the Students' Union and School disciplinary arrangements articulate with one another; to report to DMT by end of this Term, with recommendations to go to the Academic Board in the Summer Term if need be.

47. From the outside at least, the School's disciplinary procedures appear to be cumbersome and slow – though those who make this criticism also recognise that they need to be careful and rigorous. A specific point which has been put to me is that there seems to be no middle ground between informal resolution and a full disciplinary hearing: and one suggestion has been that the Deans should be given greater powers to apply penalties and sanctions (though see paragraph 15 above).

ACTION: the Secretary to lead review of the School disciplinary arrangements; to report to DMT by the end of this Term, with recommendations to go to the Academic Board in the Summer Term if need be. As part of this, he should seek views from the Students' Union and the Athletics Union on the levels at which sanctions and penalties should broadly be set, as a steer to see if the student view/expectation aligns with the School's current view. He should also seek to identify ways in which the disciplinary processes could be streamlined without sacrificing rigour.

ACTION: specifically, the School disciplinary regulations currently allow twenty days as the period in which the initial investigation of a disciplinary offence can be carried out: this should be reduced to ten days. (This would be on the basis that the ten day period should also be qualified by the word "normally", to cover circumstances where, for example, the behaviour of several different students is being investigated at the same time.)

48. Although most of the instances of student/student harassment involving sexist and/or homophobic language are on Facebook, Twitter and other social media, at least some take the form of e-mails on the School's e-mail networks. Under the 'Conditions of Use of IT Facilities at LSE', the School has the powers to access the e-mail or storage space of a student or member of staff, including e-mails sent and received and web pages accessed. However, hitherto it has only invoked this right in highly exceptional cases. In the interim report I suggested that consideration should be given to making more use of these powers in cases of alleged harassment (though not as a general "trawling" exercise). The Dean of Undergraduate Studies and the Director of Information Management and Technology have discussed this, and have concluded that the existing powers of the School in this area do not need extending or adjusting.

49. At present the School operates to a convention whereby when a student incurs a penalty under the School's disciplinary procedure, the outcome is not made known publicly. Some of the students I have spoken to have suggested that this non-signal sends out a wrong signal: especially where cases involve discriminatory behaviour, the student body needs to know that the School takes them seriously, which entails knowing the penalties it applies. This could be done on the basis that the student to whom the penalty was being applied would remain anonymous, so as not to "name and shame" individuals. Or possibly the way ahead might be to arrange for this point to be considered formally on a case by case basis.

ACTION: the Secretary to take legal advice on this point, to report to DMT by the end of the Lent Term.

NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION

50. It is proposed that a further report should be issued to the School community on progress towards meeting the actions proposed in this report, at the end of the Lent Term or at the beginning of the Summer Term.

51. The Director has also invited the General Secretary of the Students' Union to consider publishing a similar report on how the Union is responding to the various suggestions which are being put to it in this paper and, more generally, how it is pursuing the goals of achieving inclusivity and avoiding the kinds of problems that marred the start of this academic year.

52. Several respondents have suggested that the School should launch a campaign on behaviours, rights and responsibilities based on videos on the School web site. It would be led by the Director, and would involve the Students' Union sabbatical officers, the Deans, network leaders and others (see also the fourth action proposed in paragraph 22)

ACTION: the Director of Communications to be invited to produce a costed proposal for early in the Lent Term, with a view to having the videos in place for the new academic year.

FINALLY ...

53. In an earlier draft of this paper I included some material which sought to address the negative effects of anti-social drinking and alcohol abuse. I then took it this out, in order to focus on other issues. Personally I think that this remains a live issue. The Dean for Undergraduate Studies tells me that "the majority of cases that I deal with in terms of sexual harassment and physical assaults do involve alcohol". It is also an issue in the Halls of Residence of sufficient importance to warrant a planned response, as outlined in paragraph 23 above. However, the General Secretary of the Students' Union tells me that "this isn't a priority for us as an SU but [we are] more than happy to work on it if the School is going to use this to review their practices". I have included this paragraph here as an aide memoire, in the hope that the issue can come back onto the agenda next year by when, I hope, the School and the Union will have made significant progress on the actions outlined in this report. We need to keep in mind where this report began.

Simeon Underwood
Academic Registrar and Director of Academic Services
January 2015