

WESTERN SYDNEY
UNIVERSITY



EQUITY AND DIVERSITY WORKING PARTIES
Annual Progress & Impact Report
2021

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School Acronyms

SoM	School of Medicine
SoNM	School of Nursing the Midwifery
SoB	School of Business
SoEDBE	School of Engineering, Design and the Built Environment
SoCDMS	School of Computing, Data, Mathematics and Statistics
SoL	School of Law
SoHS	School of Health Sciences
SoP	School of Psychology
SoSS	School of Social Sciences
SoHCA	School of Humanities and Communication Arts
SoS	School of Science
SoE	School of Education

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

With respect for Aboriginal cultural protocol and out of recognition that our campuses occupy their traditional lands, Western Sydney University acknowledges the Darug, Eora, Dharawal and Wiradjuri peoples. We thank them for their support of our work in their lands.

Introduction

The Equity and Diversity Working Party (EDWP) initiative is a collaborative project originally developed by Equity and Diversity and SAGE Project Team. The initiative was first implemented in 2019, with EDWPs now operating in all Schools, and across Institutes and Divisions. The EDWPs serve to bridge the gap between equity and diversity strategy, policy and practice at the University ensuring that local implementation reflects the overall vision and objectives of the University. The initiative also seeks to identify local emerging areas of issue to inform organisation wide decision making and develop local initiatives and/or strategies which seek to address these issues.

Year in Review

14 EDWPs were operational across the University in 2021. Given a significant shift in staffing and divisional structures, the Divisional EDWP was placed on hold whilst ongoing change management processes were finalised. In 2021 EDWPs also moved to a revised self-managed meeting structure which saw meeting scheduling, agenda and meeting notes undertaken by EDWP members or local School support staff. Responses to the effectiveness of this approach has been mixed, with several EDWP Chairs reflecting this new structure had increased workload of Chairs and EDWP members and reduced opportunity for collegiality between EDWPs. Equity and Diversity has taken active steps to lighten the administrative burden on EDWP Chairs in 2022 and actively facilitate sharing and collaboration opportunities between EDWPs. For example, booking EDWP meetings where a School is unable to do so, and facilitating collaboration opportunities between EDWPs via online meeting hub sessions around emerging themes.

Due to further COVID impacts and region lockdowns, 2021 again saw a disruptive year for the University and subsequently for EDWP members. Staff capacity for EDWP business was again affected by these factors, including online teaching transitions, conflicting work from home/home-schooling, and higher student pastoral needs. That said, the majority of EDWPs were able to continue to operate to some degree across the period.

Three EDWP Chair meetings were held in 2021. These meetings focused on bringing all EDWP Chairs together to update on current priorities within each School/Institute and highlight emerging issues or relevant equity and diversity initiatives happening across the University. A training opportunity was also offered to all EDWP members in November, facilitated by guest presenters from OurWatch, with a focus on the drivers of gender-based violence and taking a whole of University approach to primary prevention.

EDWP Chair Reporting

EDWP Chairs are asked to reflect on the various activities of their EDWP via two annual Chair Reporting Survey's (July and November). Chairs are prompted through several targeted and open text questions to provide oversight of EDWP activities, focus areas, function and awareness within their local area. This report is informed by responses to these surveys, and deliberations within EDWP Chair meetings.

For 2021 EDWP Chairs noted there was mixed awareness across Schools of EDWP initiatives and activities. Greater promotion of EDWP achievements and focus areas will be a priority for 2022.

With regards to the EDWPs capacity to respond to equity and diversity issues/challenges in local areas, most EDWP Chairs reflected they felt the initiative was a crucial in-School mechanism for providing advice to staff and highlighting key local equity and diversity challenges to the School Executive. It was also noted that active support and engagement from the Dean and School Executive was essential to the success of any

work being proposed for implementation. However, some EDWPs reflected that greater authority was required to allow EDWPs to initiate relevant systemic change, activities and programs to address identified issues and gaps.

EDWPs suggested it would be important moving forward to support the EDWP program with more resources, including for example recognition of workload for members, more assistance with meeting management, and a School based budget allocation to support the progression of EDWP programs and initiatives.

EDWP Emerging Themes

Summary details of all EDWP activities is provided at **Appendix 1**. Some of the main themes which emerged across EDWP discussions, reporting and activities across the 2021 period, included:

Career and Professional Development

There was a continued focus across many of the EDWPs on academic and professional staff career development and progression. EDWPs from SoHCA, SoHS, SoM, SoNM, SoS and the Institutes all progressed initiatives and research around understanding staff experiences of available development opportunities and promotions processes, considering ways to better skill, mentor and support staff transitioning through the various stages of career progression, and the unique challenges to career progression for casual research staff.

Of note, the SoNM EDWP hosted a School-specific promotions workshop, “Spring Forward”, in September 2021. The workshop was developed in response to prior EDWP research into the barrier to promotion for SoNM staff and included a presentation on those research findings. Invited presentations from Kim Nemetz, Leone Cripps and Lyn Francis spoke to promotions processes, mentoring opportunities and recent promotions success, along with a detailed Q&A portion. The event was attended by 30+ SoNM staff and was extremely well received. The EDWP are now looking to install this workshop as an annual event.

The SoHCA EDWP is also currently progressing findings from an issues paper presented to the Vice-Chancellor’s Gender Equity Committee in November 2021 around Higher Duties Allowance (HDA) roles, and their potential impact on the career trajectory of Academic staff. SoHCA EDWP is now collaborating with several other EDWPs to collect and review HDA data within their local area, to identify possible recommendations to improve career progression outcomes for staff in higher duty roles.

Organisational recommendations from EDWPs for further focus*:

- Further awareness raising about available mentoring opportunities, including promotions mentoring. It was felt that these resources were under-promoted with individuals often expressed a lack of knowledge of these development options.
- Increased delivery of promotions workshops during the year and/or the development of recorded sessions for interested staff to improve accessibility around specific promotions topics, for example understanding evidence requirements and expectations in planning for promotions.

Embedding Equity and Diversity

Discussion and development of tools and initiatives focused on embedding the principles of equity and diversity within core School and University processes also featured in work undertaken by EDWPs in 2021.

Of note the SoSS EDWP has made significant progress on several projects which look at ensuring a consistent and systemic approach to embedding equity and diversity considerations and inclusive practice across the University. The School has been continuing to work on the development of an Academic Workload and ROPE statement to address key equity considerations and auditing student facing policies and procedures, with a focus on HDR students, to ensure inclusive language and consideration of care responsibilities. Two SoSS EDWP members also participated in the SAGE National Workload Allocation Special Interest Group, which is working to produce a ‘Workload Allocation Principles Matrix’ for use across the sector.

The SoL finalised its Inclusive Curriculum Review, developing a framework which can be adapted for use across other Schools. This documented framework is currently being finalised and will be promoted to all EDWPs for consideration in 2022.

Organisational recommendations from EDWPs for further focus*:

- Inclusive Curriculum Review processes to be developed/implemented across all Schools to and ensure schools reflect equity and diversity across their learning and teaching curriculum.
- Embedding wellbeing in School Planning processes.

Parent and Carer considerations

The SoNM, SoP, SoE and SoSS EDWPs all initiated or supported activities targeting staff and student parents and carers in 2021. Initiatives looked at reviewing parental leave provisions within University policies, supporting staff during COVID lockdowns and supporting parents and carers navigating home-schooling.

Of note the SoE delivered a series of resources and Learning@Home workshops for staff and students during the lockdown period which aimed to support and educate parents to manage home-schooling and maintain personal wellbeing. Parent and carer considerations were also integrated across several other initiatives developed and implemented by EDWPs across the period including continued development of an Academic Workload and ROPE statement. Several EDWP members are also participating in an Inclusive Policy Review funded by SAGE and the Office of the Vice-Chancellor project.

EDWP members from SoB, SoHCA, SoNM, SoSS and SoHS are also actively participating engaged in the Parent and Carer Working Party – an initiative what formed from discussions at the Vice-Chancellor's Gender Equity Committee which is focused on improving outcomes for student and staff parents and carers.

Organisational recommendations from EDWPs for further focus*:

- Higher visibility of students and staff as parents/carers in promotional materials and messaging.
- A review of Western policies to recognise gender bias and accommodate care responsibilities.
- Increased availability and accessibility of on-campus occasional child-care services for students and staff.

Indigenous Inclusion

The SoL, SoEDBE, SoP and SoCDMS EDWPs prioritised Indigenous inclusion across the period, particularly focused on improving knowledge and understandings of what mechanisms might best support and encourage Indigenous students to better engage with the disciplines. The SoL EDWP supported the finalisation of its School's Indigenous strategy, which will facilitate increased Indigenous student support through academic, financial, engagement and employment opportunities.

Of note, the SoEDBE has secured funding to support collaborative research which seeks to understand and improve Indigenous participation in STEM disciplines. Funding has also been secured to expand the School's Aspire Program (an internships and placement program which supports Indigenous students in Engineering) across all STEM Schools at the University, including the SoS, MARC institute and SoCDMS.

Organisational recommendations from EDWPs for further focus*:

- Systematic support for Indigenous pathways for staff and students into under-represented disciplines such as STEM.

** These recommendations are as provided directly by EDWP Chairs as part of the Annual Chair Reflections Survey November 2021.*

Appendix 1: Table of Individual EDWP Focus Areas and Outcomes 2021

EDWP	Main focus areas for 2021	Outcomes of EDWP work
School of Health Sciences	- Focus on awareness of equity and diversity resources, and resources for career progression for female colleagues. - Increasing awareness of EDWP initiatives and members within the School	- Updated new staff and casual staff introductory handbook with EDWP resources and contact. - Casual academic staff induction to equity and diversity. - Generated new opportunity within the School for professional and academic staff to take on higher duty thus generating opportunities and evidence for career progression.
School of Computing, Data, Mathematics and Statistics	- Understanding the barriers in career progression. - Improving the knowledge and understanding around what motivates students from indigenous backgrounds to take courses in STEM (in particular, computing and mathematics).	- Survey on career progression was developed, approved by the executive, and given to supervisors to share with their staff - Uptake has been minimal (only 3 staff completed it) and more promotion required. - Invited an ICT professional from Indigenous background to present at a school-wide seminar to discuss what motivates Indigenous students, and to join the EAC of computing courses in CDMS to provide ongoing insight and guide process improvements to encourage and support more Indigenous students to engage in the discipline.
School of Education	- Focus on increasing staff awareness and responsiveness to: - LGBTIQ considerations - Flexible work options - Reasonable Adjustment Plans - Personal wellbeing - Setting clear parameters for School meetings and events with a focus on gender equity and staff wellbeing considerations (i.e. parent/carer). - Leading a Learning@Home initiative via the Education Knowledge Network to support University staff home-schooling during lockdown.	- Offering and encouraging ALLY training to colleagues. - Ensuring that all colleagues are aware of Flexible Work Options and Reasonable Adjustment Plans where these are needed. - Developing calendars for School meeting events that where possible use the following parameters: - No meetings start before 9.30am on Monday; 9.00 am on other days and no meetings after 4.30pm - No School-based meetings in School Holidays - Avoid consecutive school meetings - some time gap between meetings. - Instituting a Well-being Day in lieu of end of year Planning Day - Supporting colleagues as part of the Learning@Home Initiative led by the School of Education during the lockdown.
School of Humanities and Communication Arts	- Looking at the 2021 COVID lockdown impact via a survey inviting staff to share in numerous creative ways their experiences of the second lockdown. - Researching and thinking about a focus area on casual staff – i.e. casual staff inclusion on Committee's.	- Recruitment and funding for sessional staff to join the School EDWP as endorsed by the Dean. - Development of a small online archive of staff experiences of the second COVID lockdown. - A discussion paper on HDA within the School was presented to the Vice-Chancellor's Gender Equity Committee November meeting,

	• Commencing discussion and preliminary research around postgrad student experiences i.e. student carers. • Reviewing the latest SAGE equity data in relation to the impact of the University's change proposal on the School and in particular, the impact on level D and E female academics. • Pursuing a conversation around Higher Duties Allowances (HDAs) in the School and the inequities that have emerged in that space. • Investigating possible training options for the School around unconscious bias in consultation with the School's Executive and Equity and Diversity.	flowing into an ongoing collaborative project with other EDWPs and with the DVC Research, Enterprise and Engagement in this space.
School of Social Sciences	• Continuing to develop and expand Workload and ROPE statements to address care responsibilities for Academic staff. • Undertaking research and review of HDR student care responsibilities, academic progress, institutional policies and processes. • Auditing student facing policies and procedures to accommodate care responsibilities.	• Narrative exemplars produced of ROPE statements for the purpose of claiming research allocation in workload. • A series of recommendations for accommodating/supporting HDR candidates with carer responsibilities. • An analysis to inform the revision of Schools policies and procedures, and a framework for socialising these to facilitate consistency across the School.
School of Engineering, Design and Built Environment	• Focus on how to address issues related to female staff and student safety on campus, namely using expertise in the School to address issues around safe building designs. • Increasing Indigenous participation in STEM disciplines.	• Significant funding has been secured by the School and has driven the focus of the EDWP including: ○ \$3,000 funding in collaboration with School of Education and School of Business to write a white paper related to female Indigenous participation in STEM. ○ \$10,000 funding from STEM seeding fund grants for further research into female Indigenous participation in STEM. ○ \$222,010.00 SDVC Initiatives funding which aims to expand the School of Engineering's Aspire Program (an internships and placement program to support Indigenous students) to STEM related Schools including the School of Science, MARC institute and School of Computing, Data, Mathematics and Statistics. This funding will also provide the opportunity to recruit and identified Indigenous professional staff member to assist furthering the Program.
School of Science	• Exploring and developing mentoring opportunities for staff. • Supporting Keynote series roll-out across the School showcasing females in STEMM.	• Conducted a School based survey on mentoring experiences of staff. (44 respondents participated). The data will inform first steps for focus areas in 2022. • Speakers in this Keynote series have extensive knowledge and experience in STEMM. Sessions have been received positively by staff and students.

School of Nursing and Midwifery	• Staff promotions and career progression. • School based support for staff with carer's responsibilities during COVID lockdown.	• Promotions survey analysed and completed. This instigated a very successful School based "Spring forward" mentoring and promotion workshop. This was attended by 30 staff and supported by Ms Leone Cripps (Senior Consultant, Organisational Development, Careers, Talent & Organisational Success), Dr Kiernyn McKay, SAGE Project Coordinator Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Research, Enterprise & International) and Ms Kim Nemetz, Project Officer, Careers, Talent & Organisational Success. • Reached out to School staff to promote COVID lockdown support network for staff with caring responsibilities – limited interest.
School of Psychology	• Review of parental leave and support policies including analysing the potential impacts of career interruptions for female staff and bridging the gap between parental leave policy and practice. • Supported development and implementation of the SoP's first Indigenous Strategy.	• SoP has been collaborating with the SoB on several research initiatives including qualitatively analysing the wording and language in policy and how language used in policies can be equity impeding and a sexual harassment survey for staff gathering data pertaining to participants' experience and knowledge of sexual harassment. • Staff impact due to leave, ADP and COVID impacted progress in the second half of the year.
School of Law	• Indigenous Strategy for the School of Law with a focus on student support, teaching and learning and engagement. • Curriculum Review ensuring inclusion of equity and diversity considerations within the School's curriculum. • Increasing training and awareness to School staff and students. • Wellbeing amongst the Schools staff and students. • CALD focused initiatives.	• School of Law Indigenous Strategy developed • School of Law Curriculum Review undertaken - several workshops and audits were involved in this process along with best practice manuals provided to staff to assist in creating more Equity and Diversity focus in initial planning of units. • Several School based Cultural Training and Awareness Events held. • Increased Indigenous Student Support through academic, financial, engagement and employment opportunities.
School of Business	• Supporting colleagues in articulating and presenting diverse career experiences in competitive applications (for example ADP, Promotion, Competitive Grant). • Assessing the lived experience of flexible work options for all staff with an immediate focus on professional staff. • Profiling EDWP related research being undertaken in the School and through partnerships across the University. Including for example the research from Dr Dorothea Bowyer, Dr Michelle O'Shea, Dr Sarah Duffy • identifying opportunities to support initiatives elsewhere in the School for example the deployment of the School's Indigenous	• Provided support for colleagues articulating and presenting diverse career experiences in competitive applications with a focus on Learning and Teaching and Engagement. • Investigated collaborative opportunities for assessing the lived experience of Working from Home and flexible work options for staff. • Identified opportunities for EDWP related research involving collaborative research groups including sessional colleagues and HDR students and other EDWPs such as exploring the themes in recent SoHCA work examining the impact of governance roles on career progression.

	strategy and integrating indigenous and international perspectives through the curriculum.	Stephen Zisserman presented at a EDWP meeting with a view to commencing discussions on embedding primary prevention and the principles of inclusion into curriculum.
School of Medicine	- Developing peer mentoring programs. - Mapping staff promotion outcomes.	Staff impact due to increased health services staff due to COVID resulted in minimal opportunity to meet in the current period. Increased focus and progress expected in first quarter of 2022.
Institutes EDWP	Mapping of casual staff allocations and processes and casual staff career progression.	Commenced development of an issues paper on the administrative and career progression barriers for casual research staff within Institutes.

Appendix 2: Table of EDWP Record of Meetings and Members 2021

Important Note: Many EDWP Chairs reflected that a lot of their discussion occurred informally and via email and team's sites, outside formal/informal meeting structures.

EDWP	Members	No. of Formal and Informal Meetings
School of Business	Assoc. Prof. Meg Smith (Chair), Ms Renee Kovalskis, Dr Dorothea Bowyer, Dr Tendai Chikweche, Dr Neeru Sharma, Dr Michelle O'Shea, Dr Michael Lyons	5
School of Computing, Data, Mathematics and Statistics	Dr Anupama Ginige (Chair), Ms Sharon Griffith, Dr Ante Prodan, Dr Liwan Liyanage	2
School of Education	Professor Michele Simons (Chair), Dr Roberto Parada, Assoc. Prof. Tania Ferfolja, Ms Shirley Gilbert, Dr Jacqueline D'Warte, Assoc. Prof. Loshini Naidoo, Assoc. Prof. Jorge Dorfman Knijnik, Professor Kathryn Holmes, Mrs Nicolette Pearson	3
School of Engineering, Design and the Built Environment	Assoc. Prof. Olivia Mirza (Chair), Dr Helen Wu, Ms Trish Saladine, Dr Jonathan Vincent, Dr Ranjith Liyanapathirana, Dr Sasha Alexander, Dr Peng Zhang, Mr Ridwan Haq	6
School of Humanities and Communication Arts	Dr Anne Jamison (Chair), Dr Melinda Jewell, Dr Roger Dawkins, Dr Lorraine Sim, Dr Jason Tuckwell, Ms Suzanne Gapps	5
School of Health Sciences	Dr David Lim (Chair), Dr Elizabeth Thyer, Dr Freya Macmillan, Dr Justin Guagliano, Mrs Jenni Haines	6
School of Law	Ms Grace Borsellino (Chair), Dr Amira Aftab, Dr Maria Bhatti, Mr Dylan Conceicao, Mr Michael Brogan, Assoc. Prof. Azadeh Dastyari	11
School of Medicine*	Professor Aunty Kerrie Doyle (Chair), Dr Vincent Ho, Dr Brahm Marjadi, Dr Miriam Brooks, Dr Kate McBride	2
School of Nursing the Midwifery	Assoc. Prof. Laurretta Luck (Chair), Dr Paul Glew, Ms Karen Mannix, Dr Lyn Francis, Ms Maricris Algos	3

School of Psychology*	Dr Emilee Gilbert (Chair), Dr Renu Narchal, Mrs Sonya O'Shanna, Dr Evelyn Smith, Dr David Arness, Ms Shazia Nadan, Dr Travis Wearne, Dr Liquan Liu	8
School of Social Sciences	Dr Peter Bansel (Chair), Mrs Lauren Marsh, Dr Amie Matthews, Dr Rimple Mehta, Dr Scott Avery, Assoc. Prof. Kate Huppatz	3
School of Science	Professor Janice Aldrich-Wright (Chair), Dr Clarissa House, Dr Roland Gamsjaeger, Mr Garry Niedermayer, Professor Basant Maheshwari, Dr Kayte Jenkin	5
Institutes*	Professor Heather Horst (Chair) Assoc. Prof. Mark Antoniou, Professor Kate Stevens, Ms Jasmine Katakos, Dr Diana Karamacoska, Dr Elizabeth Conroy, Ms Melinda Wolfenden, Dr Alexie Papanicolaou, Dr Eleonora Egidi, Ms Tulika Dubey, Professor Jing Han, Ms Lindsay Liu	2

* COVID impact and other extenuating circumstances on staff capacity resulted in the postponement of some formal meetings in 2021.