

Career Progression Report for the Equality Committee

March 2007

Membership of Group: Eileen Drew, Jane Finucane, Louise Power, Ruth Torode.

The group met to review the two reports previously considered by the Equality Committee for progress on the reports, and for further recommendations on the career progression of women in academe.

The two reports were considered and the status of the various recommendations are outlined overleaf. Further discussions were held on career progression of women, and it was recognised that the work of the WISER project should not be duplicated, and that perhaps that the two groups could work together.

Points that were raised included:

- Early career path stage for lecturers held particular difficulties, with many working part time lecturing sessions to start off, while others started on the research path because of funding availability. Many of the research projects preclude teaching leading to a lack of experience later. The contracts are funding dependant, redundancy may be an issue, and there is no permanency. In addition, staff have family planning considerations to take into account at this stage of their lives.
- It was felt that many of the role models /supervisors for post docs were older academics and male.
- There was a lack of preparation for staff entering the world of lecturing.
- It was noted that PMDS will have an impact, and the results should be reviewed over time. Post graduates and researchers are not subject to PMDS review, and it was felt that this could be considered in the future.
- There are more family friendly policies, and more generous leave arrangements now since the original documents were written in 2002. Notwithstanding this the take up amongst female academics has been low.
- Retention and competitive pressure – there was a lack of information on attrition rates of males and females in college and on promotional advancement. It was pointed out the new promotional system was more transparent but that there were more hoops for people, it is also perceived that the number of promotions available is quite small.
- Not all of the issues above are solely relating to female academics.

Many of the other points raised were discussed in Eileen Drew's paper on Best Practice Models for the Career Advancement of Women in Academe, 2002.

REVIEW OF PAPERS

BEST PRACTICE MODELS FOR THE CAREER ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN IN ACADEME BY DR E DREW

In reviewing E Drew's paper it is felt that many of the points raised in 2002 are still highly relevant today and should be used as a basis for discussion going forward. Some points have been addressed e.g. the equality officer has been appointed in TCD, work life balance initiatives. In particular, the role of the Equality Committee is critical to the advancement of this agenda both in a monitoring and driving capacity. A smaller group may be appropriate to actively progress the action points arising from the discussions, and to facilitate raising the agenda at a higher level in the education sector. It is true to say that there is no one fix-all solution, and that a range of long and short term strategies should be addressed. Some are listed in the recommendations at the end of this paper.

WOMEN ACADEMICS AND PROMOTION BY PROFESSOR B WRIGHT

The following is a review of the recommendations from Barbara Wright's report entitled Women Academics and Promotion, 2002, previously presented to the Equality Committee. Rather than listing the whole document, I have summarised the recommendations in broad headings with a status report on each. In many of the cases the recommendations have been progressed or moved on because of legislation or other initiatives. Some are actively in hand.

Recommendation 1 – set up of database to monitor recruitment, retention and promotion. There should be annual reporting.

Status - Core HR has been up and running since January 2001, and the post management system which records recruitment activity have been operational since July 2001. Basic data on gender, age etc., is available from Core from those dates. This recommendation was otherwise not progressed. On talking to the Business Analyst, Core has the capability and capacity to record further data, and for more data reporting. If this recommendation is to be progressed detailed specification and staff resourcing would be required.

ACTION: needs specification and resourcing.

Recommendation 2 – Alleviation of the administrative burden borne by departments... releasing heads of departments.... For more effective teaching and research. In particular, the scheme of peripatetic administrative "trouble-shooters" should be better publicized and availed of more widely.

Status – Since that time there has been the restructuring programme. In addition, faculty administrative resources were augmented.

ACTION: not relevant

Recommendation 3 – crèche, increase opening hours, car parking, external crèches.

Status - A working party was convened, and a report was issued some years ago. The crèches new opening hours are 8am to 6pm during the academic year and 8-5.15 out of the academic year. There are plans for a new nursery, they are currently looking for a site. There is no information available on plans for external crèches. There were discussions about linking with other crèches, but to date no such arrangement exists. The new nursery should double the existing from 52 to over 100. There had previously been issues around parking, but not clear if that is still an issue.

ACTION: in hand, day nursery working party.

Recommendation 4 - Staff Secretary to change procedures re remittance of maternity leave benefit and to issue a statement on provision of maternity leave. SS to prepare a study whereby College might offer 2 weeks paternity leave.

Status: Maternity Procedures have been changed as follows: (1) staff now keep their state maternity benefit (which is capped at 280 euro) and their salaries are 'topped up' by the College for the remainder of their normal pay. The College continues to meet the salary of staff during Maternity Leave for the full period of the leave while other employers have capped the period of paid Maternity Leave at the pre-existing rate (2) replacements are always put in place where practicable and necessary – this is in almost all cases particularly given the extent of maternity leave now; (3) A special emergency fund was set up to which heads and administrators can make application to cover costs of replacements. A statement on maternity leave in an academic environment was put to PAC at the time of the above proposals.

Paternity Leave – nothing was progressed on this item, until it came up at the recent working party on work life balance. A report is now provided in addition to this paper.

ACTION: done and in hand – staff office.

Recommendation 5 – Deans / Heads .. be more open to flexible arrangements involving unpaid Paternal Leave, as appropriate in individual cases.

Status : More men are now taking up unpaid parental leave. While there are some recorded under the separate document on parental leave presented to this committee, there are other groups who are taking special unpaid leave for the purpose of parenting, grandparenting, and caring for children.

ACTION: done

Recommendation 6 – Day Nursery..include schools vacations and after school care.

Status: Awaiting response from the Day Nursery.

ACTION: Responsibility of Day Nursery Committee

Recommendation 7 - the terms and conditions of employment of part-time academics be the subject of a specific study.

Status: Since this time part time and fixed term legislation has been enacted. A project was completed on the part time workers in terms of entitlements and benefits, in particular their pension benefits. The fixed terms workers (both full and part time) are currently being assessed but this is a slow process due to staff resourcing issues. The Staff Office are aware that there is a need to assess the staff on the casual payroll for both of these pieces of legislation. Currently this is not being actively worked upon.

ACTION: Done in part, action required – staff office.

Recommendation 8 – Staff Secretary to oversee a gender audit and for annual reporting.

Status: Unclear whether this happened. Core is capable of doing a gender audit if the specifications for the report are clear. Some gender reports have been given to the Equality Officer.

ACTION: Needs specification and resourcing.

Recommendation 9 - that women academics be actively encouraged to apply for Fellowship.

Status: No detail found on whether this recommendation was taken up by either the Central Fellowship Committee, or Heads of Schools.

ACTION: Do we want to pursue this recommendation ?

Recommendation 10 - *that the Research Committee should finalize its policy on sabbaticals and that the Deans consider initiating a more uniform system of study leave throughout all disciplines in College.*

Status: A study leave policy was implemented throughout the College. There is no policy on sabbaticals at present in the College. In 2006, the Personnel & Appointments Committee established a sub-group to examine the existing regulations governing leave of absence and to make recommendations which would form the basis of a revised College policy. The report (submitted to PAC on 18/10/06) was referred to the Heads' Committee, and was due for review at the February meeting, and return to the following PAC meeting (14/3/07). Based on this a revised policy may be implemented.

ACTION : Done in part, and in hand – PAC.

Recommendation 11 - *It is recommended that every support be given to the implementation of a mentoring system in College, both in the context of the career plans of male and female staff and in the context of the Fellowship process.*

Status: There is no planned mentoring system in College at present. There were some informal supports given to staff over time but no formal policy exists.

ACTION: Action required if this recommendation is to be implemented – CAPSL/Staff Development.

RECOMMENDATION 12: the Dean of Research / Research Committee give consideration to the possibility of introducing a limited number of Maternity ("Constantia Maxwell") Fellowships, analogous to the Berkeley Fellowships, enabling academic women members of staff to be relieved of all teaching and administrative duties in the academic year following the birth or adoption of a child, so as not to lose momentum in their research work. If this is not financially practical at the current time, it might be possible to begin by earmarking one or two of the current Berkeley Fellowships for this purpose.

Status: Could not find information whether the Research Committee pursued the proposal. The Berkeley Fellowships have been discontinued for several years now, so there would have been no possibility of converting Berkeley Fellowships in the way proposed.

ACTION: Do we want to pursue?

RECOMMENDATIONS

Having considered the above discussions and review of the documents presented the working group has the following recommendations:

- Discuss and further action points raised in B Wright's and E Drew's report
- Monitor statistics on career progression of women
- Courses specifically relating to career progression, for example,
 - Promotion application
 - Coaching / mentoring
 - Communications skills/mediation skills and assertiveness training
 - Time management
 - Springboard for all female academic staff
 - Include careers office
- Exit Interviews for monitoring purposes
- Increased recognition of staff issues and communication of supports available to staff e.g. eap/ policies/ occupational health
- Manager training in mediation / handling grievances and disciplinary cases and staff welfare and career issues
- Monitor of admin loads, imposed, time mgt, and fall out from replacement – posts – less productive
- Further working group with liaison with WISER to progress action points, and to raise agenda at a higher level and in the education sector.

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Personnel Officer

On behalf on the Working Group on Career Advancement of Women Academics