

University Of Dublin
Trinity College
Equality Committee

Minutes of a meeting held on Thursday 18th November at 2 p.m. in the Board Room, House 1.

Present: Dr N Marples (Chair), Ms A FitzGerald, Mr D Treanor, Ms L Power, Dr M Ó Siochrú*, Ms S Fleming (SU), Ms S Cameron-Coen (GSU), Prof C O'Morain**, Ms Immaculada Arnedillo Sánchez, Ms K Campos McCormack (secretary).

Apologies: Vice-Provost, Ms C Byrne, Dr O Doyle, Ms T Moloney, Mr D Quinn, Ms A Taylor, Prof E Drew.

In attendance: Ms Lisa Keane in lieu of Ms C Hannon.

*Present for: Eqal/10-11/01- Eqal/10-11/04 (these included)

**Present for: Eqal/10-11/03- Eqal/10-11/06 (these included)

The Committee welcomed the new Chair Dr Nicola Marples

Items for Board attention are denoted XXX

Eqal/10-11/01 Minutes The minutes of the previous meeting, 28 May 2010, were approved and signed.

Eqal/10-11/02 Matters arising

Eqal/09-10/27 Accessible information Mr Treanor advised that the recommendation to provide further resource materials to assist in the implementation of the accessible information policy had been carried out and resources were now available on the CAPSL/TIC website.

Section A – Policy issues

Eqal/10-11/03 Equality Policy Ms Campos outlined the key provisions of the draft Equality Policy circulated which will replace the following policies: Access and Equality Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy and Equal Employment Opportunity: Principles in employment practice, streamlining equality provisions for staff and students. Ms Campos advised that this composite policy contains provisions regarding equality in employment and provides strengthened commitments regarding equality in service provision, in compliance with Equal Status legislation and good practice guidelines. In particular Ms Campos drew attention to the commitments regarding accommodating diversity across the 9 grounds and to taking active steps to identify and remove any barriers to access and

participation of services. Ms Campos also highlighted the commitments regarding staff recruitment, progression and wellbeing.

The Committee welcomed the policy and discussed measures to ensure its implementation. Ms Campos suggested that reporting on the implementation of the equality policy could be included as part of main annual reporting duties already undertaken by many areas. The Committee suggested that the wording in the implementation section (section 5.7) be amended to reflect greater clarity on the responsibility of areas to provide information to provide for the Equality Committee to report annually on the policy's implementation. The Committee also suggested that the Equality Officer develop an implementation plan for the policy for discussion at the next Committee.

Ms Campos discussed some of the issues that had been raised during the consultation process regarding the policy (circulated). The Committee noted that some of the issues lay outside the policy's scope and that some of these issues would need to be brought to the attention of the relevant parties for further action. Ms Campos advised that it was hoped the new Code of Governance would address the complexity of current complaint procedures in College and provide a better process for service issues once it was developed. The Committee noted that the current climate of cutbacks could affect the commitment to providing flexibility in service delivery, and that care should be taken to minimise the impact any restrictions in this respect might have on particular groups.

- The Committee discussed the need to have a maternity policy in place for undergraduate students in similar terms to the policy currently in place for postgraduate students; Ms Fleming noted that UG students on placement were a particular priority in this regard. The Committee suggested that this issue be brought to the attention of the Undergraduate Studies Committee together with the recommendation that any policy development would be inclusive and take account of paternity and parental leave.
- Mr Treanor advised the Committee that the Disability Service was seeking legal advice on the provision of reasonable accommodation to students and would report at the next Committee meeting.
- The Committee discussed the absence of specific supports for international postgraduate students, an issue of particular concern given the strategic focus on recruiting more international students. The Committee noted that the GSU had provided an orientation programme for international PG students for the first time this year, however, the Committee felt this responsibility should lie more centrally with the Graduate Studies Office and the International Office, possibly in partnership, and suggested this matter was brought to their attention.
- The Committee suggested that the concern regarding a lack of clarity and transparency in the allocation of rooms, an issue that was regularly brought to the SU's attention, be brought to the attention of the Registrar of Chambers for consideration.
- The Committee discussed the need to create greater awareness within College of the provision of sign language interpreting as a commitment in the accessible information policy, and noted the difficulties in securing interpreters due to limited availability of service providers.
- Regarding the accommodation of religious diversity the Committee noted that there were guidelines published by the UK Equality Challenge Unit available from the Equality Office and that Ms Campos was available to provide guidance on this issue upon request.

Actions:

- Ms Campos to circulate the policy to Board with the agreed amendment, together with the Committee minutes.
- Ms Campos to communicate the Committee's recommendation to develop an inclusive UG maternity policy to the Undergraduate Studies Committee.
- Ms Campos to communicate the Committee's recommendation regarding the provision of additional orientation and support to international PG students to the Graduate Studies Office and the International Office.
- Ms Campos to communicate the Committee's concern regarding a possible lack of transparency in the accommodation allocation process to the Registrar of Chambers.
- Mr Treanor to report on legal advice regarding the provision of reasonable accommodation to students.

Eqal/10-11/04 Merit Bar Report The Committee welcomed this report and discussed its principal findings and recommendations regarding the low application rate of women for review at the Merit Bar. The Committee noted that a quantitative analysis of the Merit Bar in 2009 and a further qualitative report examining the views of staff who had deferred review had been completed as part of this report at the Vice-Provost's request.

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Ms Campos advised that investigation of the numbers eligible for review at the Bar, applications and progression, indicated a low rate of applications from female staff in the Faculty of Health Sciences, and the School of Nursing and Midwifery in particular, thus contributing the gender imbalance. Ms Campos drew attention to some of the key findings in the report such as the widespread perception amongst respondents that research publications were the only criteria for advancement beyond the Merit Bar; and that teaching and clinical work were insufficiently recognized, an issue of particular relevance to newer academic disciplines. The report noted difficulties in establishing a research career amongst respondents, despite supports in place for research in their School, particularly when returning from maternity leave. Respondents identified the need for guidance and mentoring in developing an academic research career, and reported overall low levels of guidance on the Merit Bar of career development from the Head of School or Discipline.

Dr Ó Siochrú, currently a member of the Junior Academic Progression Committee, drew the Committee's attention to the fact that the Merit Bar is not a promotion, but a step for progression along the Lecturer scale, suggesting this fact should be communicated and used to encourage applications. Dr Ó Siochrú concurred with the conclusion of the report that there were specific issues in relation to a particular School in the Faculty of Health Sciences where a significant number of staff deferred review repeatedly, rather than being a widespread College issue. He also noted the current success rate of 94% for applicants to review. Dr Ó Siochrú drew the Committee's attention to the changes in the manner in which the Merit Bar review was conducted in recent years, including an individual interview of all candidates, and noted that the Review Committee took a holistic view of candidates. Dr Ó Siochrú further noted that Council had recently re-defined Research criteria to include 21 outputs, not exclusively research publications. Dr Ó Siochrú suggested to the Committee that efforts to address the issue should focus on communicating how the Merit Bar process works in order to encourage applications.

Ms Campos advised that all eligible candidates to review, whether first time eligible, previously deferred or previously held at the Bar, were written to and advised of their eligibility for review at the Merit Bar. Ms Arnedillo noted that having recently gone through the Merit Bar procedures successfully she felt that there was a need for greater lead-in support to the process. The Committee discussed several options for providing further lead-in guidance and support for staff who are due to become eligible for review at the Merit Bar, including greater information being provided by the Head of Discipline, centrally by the Staff Office or by the establishment of a liaison mentor at School level in relation to the Merit Bar.

The Committee adopted the report subject to certain amendments and agreed that the Chair, Ms FitzGerald and Ms Campos liaise to address these amendments and the Committee's recommendations regarding the report.

Actions: The Chair, Ms FitzGerald and Ms Campos to convene to discuss the appropriate means to progress the Committee's recommendations regarding the Merit Bar report.

[This item was moved forward in the agenda to allow all Committee members to discuss and belongs in the Section B – Implementation Issues]

Eqal/10-11/05 Dignity and Respect policy Ms Power outlined the draft procedures for combined academic and dignity and respect issues circulated. Ms Power clarified that all previous amendments approved by the Equality Committee had been included in the policy and booklet now, and that Ms Power would advise all the staff representative groups of these changes together with the proposed changes regarding the new procedure. The Committee noted the proposed procedure would be a means of addressing a complex situation that could arise from time to time where there was an issue of dignity and respect with a potential academic impact. Ms Power noted this was an informal route devised in the interest of providing a fast and timely resolution to particular cases; and that it was a voluntary process without prejudice to the Lecturer in question and respecting confidentiality and natural justice at all times.

Ms FitzGerald welcomed the work done in preparing this process, which had been requested in response to a Visitor's hearing. It was agreed by the Committee that it be amended to recommend that the Tutor approach the Head of School rather than Head of Discipline in the interest of anonymity of all parties, and also that the informative flow-chart be included in the literature where possible.

Actions: Ms Power to amend the Dignity and Respect Policy as per the document circulated and including the amendment made by the Committee.

Section B – Implementation issues

Eqal/10-11/06 Equality Fund

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Equality Fund 2009-2010 review The Committee welcomed the report of the 12 projects successfully completed in 2009-2010 and noted several project outputs and reports had also been circulated under section C. Ms Campos advised of the increased scope and ambition of the projects supported by the Equality Fund (projects listed in appendix).

Mr Treanor highlighted the good value represented by the Equality Fund, providing excellent outputs for a small overall amount. The Committee noted the Equality Fund served to create great synergy about equality issues across College and also gave greater visibility to equality issues. The Committee also discussed the value of the staff student partnership present in many projects and suggested this could be an additional criterion for future selection.

Revised Terms of Reference Ms Campos tabled the Equality Fund Terms of Reference which had been amended and reviewed in order to ensure compliance with College Treasurer's Office procedures. Ms Campos advised that additional guidance for project leaders on payments and reimbursements was also developed by the Equality Officer and the Treasurer's Office and would be made available with acceptance letters to successful projects. Ms Campos noted the application form had been amended to reflect these changes. The Committee welcomed this amendment which would facilitate compliance and the provision of support to project leaders.

Proposed allocation 2010-2011 Ms Campos advised of the proposed allocation of funds for 2010-2011 (project details circulated). The Committee was advised of the membership of the Sub-committee and noted Ms Fleming's apologies. Ms Campos advised that the themes this year were:

1. Plural identities: beyond stereotyping
2. Enriching the inclusive College community
3. Treat others as they would like to be treated: Supporting Dignity and Respect
4. Building equal participation- envisaging the future
5. Silent, silenced or private?

Ms Campos advised that across the Sub-Committee had noticed a strong focus on access, participation and civic engagement in this year's applications. The Committee noted that there had been an increase in the number of student project applications; with a total of 29 applications received. Ms Campos advised that the student/staff ratio in the allocation of funds was balanced.

The Committee noted there was €16,661 funding available and welcomed the suggested allocation by the Sub-Committee, which had selected 16 projects for funding across the five themes with a total sum allocation of €15,335. The Committee approved the allocation as presented, pending the provision of requested further information from several projects.

Actions:

- Ms Campos to notify successful and unsuccessful projects of the allocation outcome.
- Ms Campos to liaise with applicants regarding further details requested by the Sub-Committee.
- Ms Campos to send agreement letters for signing, together with payment guidelines, to successful applicants.
- The Sub-Committee to consider adding student-staff collaboration as a criterion for the allocation of future funding.

Equal/10-11/07 Equality Fund project: Dignity and Respect Mini-Movies Ms Arnedillo outlined the Mini-Movies project that had been developed to involve staff and students and raise awareness about dignity and respect in College (report circulated). Three workshops had been developed, one for undergraduate students, one for postgraduate students and one for staff. The methodology of

the workshop was highly interactive and involved a group discussion and filming of a mini-movie by participants.

Ms Arnedillo advised that different issues had been highlighted in the discussion and mini-movie by each group (UG, Staff and PG) with undergraduate students focussing on peer issues such as stereotypes and reciprocity, and staff focussing on respect and courtesy in day to day interactions with colleagues. Ms Arnedillo noted a particular concern over the power and vulnerability issue raised in the PG workshop, and highlighted the dependent role of postgraduate students in relation to their supervisor. The Committee noted there had been varying participation rates in each group workshop and an overall low participation by academic staff, and discussed the possible reasons for this low participation.

The Committee discussed the different supports available for UG and PG students, in particular the service provided by the Tutorial system in College and the Postgraduate Advisory Service, which was considered to provide a valuable support. Ms Cameron-Coen advised that many PG students would be hesitant to raise a problem due to the possible impact this might have on their academic career, resulting in issues being raised at a late stage. The Committee discussed the need for support systems to be in place locally that could prevent issues escalating. The Committee discussed the models in place in different universities to ensure that a PG student was not solely reliant on one member of staff (in some universities two supervisors were appointed); and the measures already implemented in some Schools in College, where a second staff member was involved in annual reviews and appraisal of a PG student. Ms FitzGerald suggested College could consider developing this support system at School level rather than by a college-wide initiative given tight resources. The Committee felt that the issues raised by the report regarding the relative vulnerability of PG students needed to be addressed and suggested Ms Campos, Ms Power, Ms Arnedillo and Ms Cameron-Coen liaise with the Dean of Graduate Studies in exploring this issue and report back to the Committee in due course.

Actions:

- Ms Campos, Ms Power, Ms Arnedillo and Ms Cameron-Coen liaise with the Dean of Graduate studies in exploring this issue.
- Chair to send a description of the PG supervision system in place in her School to Ms Campos.

Equal/10-11/08 02 Ability Awards – report recommendations(circulated) Mr Treanor advised that the document included recommendations which arose during the review process for the 02 Ability Awards and Kanchi's experts recommendations following the review. Original documentation from Kanchi following the Awards was also circulated. Mr Treanor outlined the recommendations and actions undertaken by College to address these recommendations under each of the category headings: Leadership, Customer Service, Environmental Accessibility, Learning Development and Progression, Retention and Well Being. Ms FitzGerald noted the recommendations should be viewed in the context of an overall excellent performance in all categories, with Trinity being awarded the status of Ability Company in all six competition categories. Ms Campos suggested the IUA diversity E-learning project could also be included in the template as a development action addressing some of the recommendations. The Committee welcomed this report on the implementation of actions as indication of further progress.

Equal/10-11/09 IUA Equality Network Diversity Sectoral project – Project Definition Report

XXX Ms Campos advised the Committee of the progress in the sectoral IUA Equality Group Diversity project (PDR circulated). The Committee noted the IUA Equality Group had been successful in securing funding of €20,000 from the Equality Authority and match-funding in each institution for the one year project 'To develop and pilot a sectoral project to promote workplace equality'. Ms Campos advised that this project would involve the development and piloting of a diversity e-learning module in the period November 2010 to November 2011, and that the group was expecting to appoint a supplier by early December. Ms Campos drew the Committee's attention to how this project addressed the Committee's and Board's recommendation to provide equality training to staff on interview panels (BD/09-10093 & Eqal/09-10/04,14,26), as this would be the target group for the TCD pilot. Ms Campos also drew the Committee's attention to the challenges identified in the project report regarding achieving senior academic champions and ensuring participation, which would need to be addressed for a successful implementation of the pilot in College.

Section C – Matters for noting

Eqal/10-11/10 Equality Fund projects The following reports of Equality Fund initiatives were circulated to the Committee for noting:

- Implicit Attitudes Test project report
- Speak Up! report
- Mind your Mind web resource details

Eqal/10-11/11 Removing Pain performance details of the artistic performance by Brazilian artist Beth Moysés to take place on 25th November on campus were circulated. The Equality Office is hosting this event to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

Any Other Business

Eqal/10-11/11 Disability Act Inquiry Officer Mr Treanor advised the Committee of the appointment of Mr Dermot Nestor as the new named Inquiry Officer for student or visitor complaints under the Disability Act 2005.

Eqal/10-11/12 Civil Partnership Bill Ms Campos advised that she would be providing further guidance on the implications of the Civil Partnership Bill at the next Committee.

Actions: Ms Campos to circulate memo with further guidance on the implications of the Civil Partnership Bill at the next Committee.

Signed

Date

Appendix

Equality Fund projects 2009-2010

- Investigating implicit beliefs and attitudes towards stereotyped groups: a college-wide initiative (report circulated);
- Continuation and expansion of S2S Peer mentoring programmes;
- Express: promoting mental health awareness through performance;
- Enriching the college community with Older Lifelong Learners (seminar);
- Rediscovering the old through reminiscence theatre;
- Mind your mind! Mental health podcast (web resource circulated);
- Right! Let's speak up for ourselves: developing rights awareness amongst people with intellectual disabilities (report circulated);
- Family Fun day;
- Across Campus mini-movie series (report circulated and minuted);
- Laugh clever to laugh together workshop;
- Disability Service 10th anniversary (booklet tabled);
- Unilink Self-management handbook for students with mental health difficulties (tabled).