

University Of Dublin
Trinity College
Equality Committee

Minutes of a meeting held on Monday 24th May 2011 at 3 p.m. in the Henry Jones room, Old Library building.

Present: Dr N Marples (Chair), Ms C Hannon*, Mr D Treanor, Ms R Torode, Ms L Power, Ms S Cameron-Coen (GSU), Ms A Taylor, Ms K Campos McCormack (secretary).

Apologies: Vice-Provost, Ms C Byrne, Ms A FitzGerald, Dr O Doyle, Ms S Fleming (SU), Prof C O'Morain, Mr D Quinn, Prof E Drew, Dr M Ó Siochrú.

*Present for: Eqa/10-11/32-39

Items for Board attention are denoted XXX

Eqa/10-11/32 Minutes The minutes of the previous meeting, 14 March 2011 were circulated. The Chair advised the Committee that a meeting with the Senior Lecturer, Sorcha de Brunner and the Equality Officer had taken place to discuss minute Eqa/10-11/21 following the Board meeting on 4th May 2011, and that a minor amendment to this draft minute had been agreed. The Committee approved and signed the minutes.

Matters arising were discussed and minuted below:

Eqa/10-11/33 Committee quorum The Committee noted that the quorum of Committee members had not been reached at the present or previous meeting. The Chair suggested that the membership of the Committee in the Terms of Reference might be reviewed in the light of this issue.

Action: The Chair to discuss the Committee Terms of Reference and membership with the College Secretary, in particular regarding the quorum requirements.

Eqa/10-11/34 [Eqa/10-11/21] Legal advice on the provision of reasonable accommodation to students with disabilities The Chair advised the Committee that at the meeting with the Senior Lecturer regarding minute Eqa/10-11/21 the recommendation to facilitate a repeat exam opportunity to students with disabilities who sat their first exam in the supplemental period had been discussed at length. Mr Treanor noted that students with disabilities would require this type of accommodation only in very particular circumstances and that these accommodations were supported by specific legal protections as outlined in the legal advice circulated to the Committee. The Committee noted that at present an appeals process is required for requesting permission to sit a special examination following supplemental exams. The Committee discussed its role as an advisory Committee to Board seeking to ensure compliance with equality

legislation and to promote inclusive practices. The Committee discussed the need for fairness in facilitating access to a repeat examination for students with and without disabilities who for particular circumstances may be sitting their first exam in the supplemental period. Ms Campos noted that this may also be relevant to other students protected under the nine equality grounds, such as students who were unable to sit an exam due to pregnancy. Ms Torode noted that in the past the College had always taken a flexible approach to facilitating students in examinations where necessary, and suggested that the Committee should support an inclusive approach that would ensure fairness for the diversity of the student population. The Chair expressed the view that the Committee should support fairness in ensuring all students had access to the same number of exam opportunities, including students with disabilities, and suggested that a further meeting between Mr Treanor, Ms Mac Bride and the College Secretary might help develop a strategy for implementing these recommendations.

Action: Mr Treanor to convene a meeting with the College Secretary and Ms Mac Bride to discuss a strategy for implementing the legal advice received regarding the provision of reasonable accommodation.

Eqal/10-11/35 [Eqal/10-11/22] **Civil Partnership** Ms Power advised that the Staff Office policies are in the process of being updated to reflect the changes in legislation due to the Civil Partnership Act 2010. Ms Power advised that further changes to the pension system were pending the approval of the second Finance Bill. Ms Power noted that no changes and extensions of family friendly policies had been made beyond the legislation (aside from the paternity leave scheme which is not a legislative scheme) as these were dependant on resources. Ms Campos advised that changes had been made to the Equality information materials and website to reflect the changes in the legislation.

Eqal/10-11/36 [Eqal/10-11/24] **Equality Policy** Ms Campos advised the Committee that the Equality Policy had been launched in College: a news item had been hosted on the homepage (circulated to the Committee under section C) and communications sent to all staff and students, with targeted communications sent to the Senior administration management group and to Heads of School. Ms Torode drew the Committee's attention to the inconsistency between the accessible information policy and the official College stationery templates; Mr Treanor suggested he would liaise with Communications regarding this matter.

Action: Mr Treanor to liaise with Communications to ensure consistency with the Accessible Information policy in College stationery.

Section A – Policy issues

Eqal/10-11/37 Undergraduate maternity policy Ms Campos advised the Committee that following meetings with the Senior Lecturer, with the Senior Tutor, SU Welfare Officer and other staff in the Senior Lecturer's Area in attendance, the Senior Lecturer had drafted a paragraph for inclusion in the College Calendar, General regulations, section 63 (circulated). Ms Campos noted that this section now provided a commitment to providing reasonable flexible arrangements to pregnant students and a process for seeking this support. Ms Campos outlined some of the principles that had been discussed at the meetings following the recommendations of the Committee: seeking to prevent indirect discrimination on the gender and family ground, being flexible in facilitating pregnant students and

student parents of young children in completing their studies where possible, allowing the taking of leave without academic or economic penalty and ensuring the policy was inclusive of both parents. The Committee expressed the view that while the new section provided some reassurance to pregnant students, it did not fully address these issues, in particular regarding the inclusion of fathers and of parents of young children or adoptive parents. Ms Campos also noted that the issue of repeat fees for students who were off books due to pregnancy remained unclear in the absence of HEA guidance. Ms Campos advised that the Senior Lecturer had stated that it was not within the scope of the Calendar regulations to include a full policy document, and that if a more detailed pregnancy and parenting policy were required this would need to be developed by the Committee. The Committee discussed the variations in the UG and PG regulations regarding pregnancy and maternity leave in Calendar Part I and II and expressed the view that a consolidated student pregnancy and parenting policy should be developed. It was suggested this matter be brought to the attention of the Dean of Students and Student Services Committee.

Action: Ms Campos to write to the Dean of Students with the recommendation that the pregnancy and maternity provisions in Calendar Part I and II are considered by Student Services with a view to developing an inclusive student pregnancy and parenting policy; Ms Campos to notify the Senior Lecturer of this referral.

Section B – Implementation issues

Equal/10-11/38 Annual Equality Monitoring Report 2010-2011 The Chair welcomed the Annual Equality Monitoring Report and commended it as an excellent resource. The Chair noted that it would be beneficial to have further information to contextualize some of the gender balance statistics, such as the available pool of candidates for a position. Ms Campos thanked the Monitoring Advisory Group, Staff Office and Senior Lecturer's Area for their contributions to the report and highlighted some of the key findings discussed by the group:

- Persistent gender imbalance in senior and decision-making positions. Ms Campos noted that the Employment Control Framework greatly affected the College's capacity to recruit and promote, with no promotions since 2009, hence contributing to the lack of evolution in the staff grade statistics. However, Ms Campos did also note that there were areas such as election to Fellowship and Head of School that were not affected by the moratorium where no change was apparent in the proportion of women.
- A marked improvement towards gender balance was apparent in Board and Council membership, which Ms Campos noted was subject to annual variation.
- Staff in research grades appeared to be the most gender balanced overall across Faculties.
- Ms Campos drew the Committee's attention to the very different Faculty staff profiles outlined in the new graphs analysing academic staff by grade and Faculty. The Committee discussed the benefits of making this information available at local level to Faculties and Schools.
- Ms Campos noted the application rate for review at the Merit Bar continued to be lower for female Lecturers, and that this matter had been considered by Board.

The Committee discussed the gender imbalance in administrative grades, noting this matter did not usually receive as much attention as academic progression. Ms Hannon pointed out the difficulties in navigating administrative career

progression and promotion in College and the absence of career guidance for administrative staff. Ms Taylor noted the fundamental differences in the academic and administrative career ladders. Whilst an academic within College could realistically aspire to becoming a Professor, not every administrative staff member was in a job that could adapt and meet an individual's long term career ambitions. Ms Taylor suggested that PMDS was the correct environment in which career discussions should take place. The Committee expressed the view that while there were currently no promotions it would be beneficial to bring this matter to the attention of senior administration management in addition to academic areas.

Ms Campos drew the Committee's attention to the report's findings regarding the increasingly diverse student profile, noting continued progress in reaching targets for under-represented groups. The Committee discussed the possible differences in the diversity profiles of UG and PG students, as highlighted by Ms Torode, and noted that most of the available data on non-traditional students was specific to UG students (TAP and Mature students for e.g.). Ms Campos advised that the Monitoring Advisory Group had suggested further comparative analysis of HEA TCD data might provide useful information on student background.

The Committee discussed different strategies for publicizing the availability of this data within College and achieving greater impact, in particular in encouraging Schools, administrative areas and departments in reviewing regularly their local performance with regard to gender balance and other indicators. The Committee suggested the benefits of mainstreaming this process as part of the implementation of the Equality Policy.

Actions:

- Ms Campos to circulate the Report to Board and Council.
- Ms Campos to circulate relevant extracts from the report to Faculty Deans, Heads of School, Fellows, COO and senior administration.
- Ms Campos to publicize the availability of the report within College.
- Ms Campos to explore including this monitoring activity in the implementation strategy of the Equality Policy.

Equal/10-11/39 Supporting Deaf staff in College The Chair advised the Committee that she had been approached by the Director of the Centre for Deaf Studies with concerns over the lack of in-house interpreter supports. The Chair and Declan Reilly from the Disability Service had met with the staff of the Centre to discuss their interpreting needs for the functioning of the Centre. The Chair brought the Committee's attention to the key concerns outlined in the document circulated, noting that the Centre had been brought to campus in order to facilitate participation in College life. The document outlined several factors that were detrimental to Deaf staff participating fully in College academic and social activities or accessing services. In particular there were difficulties noted in ensuring interpretation for events due to the absence of in-house interpreters and the two week notice required for booking external interpreters. Other difficulties included the absence of support in the Centre for routine activities such as phone calls and unsatisfactory safety equipment in the current Centre location. The Chair advised the Committee that the Centre for Deaf Studies was asking the Committee to support their request for two full-time equivalent ISL interpreter positions.

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The Committee expressed surprise that in-house interpreting positions had not been created when the Centre was established and noted that the Centre had previously sought SIF funding for this position unsuccessfully. Ms Torode suggested that interpreting could be considered as a necessary infrastructure to facilitate the Centre's research activities. Mr Treanor noted that individual supports for Deaf staff members were available following the procedures in the Code of Practice, which were availed of by other College Deaf staff outside the Centre, but acknowledged this might not be the best process to respond to the Centre's needs as a whole. Mr Treanor also advised that the health and safety issues had been referred to the Director of Buildings.

Ms Power noted that Deaf staff were facilitated in having an interpreter present for all meetings with the Staff Office and when attending any Staff Development course, and highlighted that interpreting services had been secured with the Employee Assistance Programme provider ensuring access for all Deaf staff. Ms Power also noted that in some cases external interpreters would continue to be required in the interest of confidentiality.

The Committee discussed the particular requirements of this Centre and expressed the view that as an essential service to the functioning of the Centre responsibility for in-house interpreting should lie with the relevant School.

Action:

The Committee to refer its concerns about the integration of Deaf Staff in the Centre for Deaf Studies to the Head of the School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences with the recommendation that the proposal for the creation of further in-house interpreting supports be explored in consultation with the Faculty Executive Committee.

Eqal/10-11/40 Equality Fund update Ms Campos advised the Committee of progress in the implementation of 2010-11 Equality Fund projects: to date seven projects had been successfully completed, six were in process or had sought an extension until September, one had been cancelled and the status of two other projects was unknown at this time. Ms Campos noted that the six month period was provided as a guideline and that projects were granted extensions within the academic year where reasonable.

Action:

Ms Campos to provide a more detailed report upon completion of the Equality Fund 2010-2011 projects.

Eqal/10-11/41 IUA LEAD programme update Ms Campos advised the Committee that the IUA Equality Network LEAD (Living Equality and Diversity) programme had been tested successfully in all six universities; the initial feedback had been positive and the final corrections to the design and functionality of the programme had been made. Ms Campos advised the Committee that the programme was now ready for pilot but that some final issues with the tracking tool, necessary for providing the evaluation to the Equality Authority, needed to be corrected before the pilot could be launched. Ms Campos advised the Committee of the content and duration of the programme and noted the Committee members would be receiving an e-mail communication to invite them to participate in the pilot – with a deadline for completing the pilot by 31 July 2011.

Section C – Matters for noting

Eqal/10-11/42 Accessible Information Implementation report The Committee noted the amendments to the report (circulated), which had been updated to reflect the greater levels of engagement with different areas.

Eqal/10-11/43 Equality Policy launch The Committee noted the communications item (circulated) that had been published on the College homepage to launch the new Equality Policy.

Any Other Business

Eqal/10-11/44 Ms Torode raised the issue of complex dignity and respect cases where academic and bullying issues interacted. Ms Power advised that a new procedure had been developed to address these issues and had been approved by the Committee (Eqal/10-11/05).

Eqal/10-11/45 The Chair advised the Committee that she was liaising with the Dean of Graduate Studies to progress action Eqal/10-11/18.

Eqal/09-10/46 Committee membership Ms Campos advised of the nomination of Victoria **XXX** Butler, from the Faculty of Engineering, Mathematics and Science to become a staff member of the Committee. The Committee welcomed and approved this nomination.

The Committee thanked Ms Torode for her work and contribution to the Committee over the years.

Action:

Ms Campos to notify Ms Butler that her nomination to the Committee had been approved.

Signed

Date