

University Of Dublin
Trinity College
Equality Committee

Minutes of a meeting held on Monday 28th May 2012 at 3pm in the Board Room, House 1.

Present: Dr N Marples (Chair), Dr M Ó Siochrú, Ms A FitzGerald*, Mr D Treanor, Mr M McAndrew (GSU), Dr O Doyle, Ms L Power, Ms K Campos McCormack (secretary).

Apologies: Vice-Provost, Ms A Taylor, Ms C Hannon, Ms L Miller (SU), Prof M McCarron, Ms C Byrne.

In attendance: Mr Andrew Costello**

Present for: *Eqal/11-12/20-24; **Eqal/11-12/24-25;

Items for Board attention are denoted XXX

Eqal/11-12/20 Minutes The minutes of the previous meeting, 13 March 2012, were approved and signed. Mr Doyle noted that he would be standing down from the Committee by the end of the academic year.

Matters arising Minuted below

Eqal/11-12/21 Action call-over

Student parent policy Ms Campos advised that recommendation by the Equality Committee to develop a student parent policy had not been progressed by the Student Services Committee and the Dean of Students due to work load pressures, although there was a commitment to develop this policy. The Committee suggested that in order to avoid further delay in this matter the Equality Committee could establish a working group with membership comprising the Senior Tutor, Equality Officer, Dean of Students, student representatives, and a representative from the Senior Lecturer's Area.

ACTION:

Ms Campos to contact the Secretary to the Student Services Committee and propose that the Equality Committee establish a working group to develop an inclusive student parent policy.

Student accommodation allocation Ms Campos advised that the Junior Dean was working on the accommodation criteria and had no further update (the Committee had recommended that the accommodation allocation criteria and information were reviewed to ensure greater transparency for candidates). Mr Treanor advised that a working group had been set up to look at accommodation allocation on foot of College's global relations strategy. Mr Treanor suggested that the Equality Officer might be included in that working group.

ACTION:

Mr Treanor to request that the Equality Officer is included in the student accommodation working group.

Merit Bar Ms Campos advised that the Merit Bar working group was due to report to the HR Committee in June. Dr Ó Siochrú brought the Committee's attention to the composition of the Merit Bar working group, which did not include any member of the Junior Academic Progression (JAP) Committee. Dr 'O Siochrú advised that he had met with the working group at the Vice Provost's request, ensuring there was some input from the JAPC. The Committee agreed that it would be appropriate for the Committee to view the working group's report before it was submitted to Board; it was noted this might incur a delay in the report being submitted to Board but the Committee did not think this was a concern given that promotion processes would not start until November.

ACTION

Ms Campos to liaise with the HR Committee and request that the Merit Bar working group report is circulated to the Equality Committee in advance of its submission to Board.

Civil Partnership

Ms Campos advised that HR had implemented the compliance recommendations and that further inclusive changes to family and other policies would not be developed due to resources. Ms Campos also advised that she was liaising with the UCD LGB (Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual) network and hoping to hold a Dublin based event. Ms Campos noted that a sufficient level of interest amongst College staff would be required for a network to function successfully.

Centre for Deaf Studies – provision of ISL

The Committee discussed the provision of Irish Sign Language interpreting for College events. Concerns were expressed at the lack of clarity in the responsibilities for providing sign language interpreting for different types of events and the difficulties this might cause to Deaf staff and students who wished to attend events in College. The Chair expressed the view that if College is committed to inclusivity it should ensure that Deaf staff and students can attend meetings and events at short notice and suggested that internal interpreting services could be the best way to ensure this. The Centre for Deaf Studies was cited as a particular case where it was essential to have in-house interpreting. Ms Power advised that in some cases, such as dignity and respect or disciplinary cases, it would still be necessary to engage external interpreters. Mr Treanor advised there is a policy in place for Deaf students to do exams in ISL and have this translated back in to English. The Committee suggested that the College

needed to develop a policy on the provision of ISL supports and that the Committee should establish a working group with HR, Disability, Communications and Deaf Studies.

ACTION:

The Committee to establish a working group to develop a policy on the provision of ISL interpreting in College, including HR, Disability, Communications, Equality and Deaf Studies.

Central Societies Committee inclusivity workshop Ms Campos advised that a date had not been agreed yet for the workshop on inclusivity for the CSC executive. The Committee expressed concerns about the inclusivity of student society events. Mr Treanor noted he was aware of complaints by students with disabilities on the accessibility of events and suggested that societies who did not comply should be financially sanctioned. The Committee noted that although student societies were not strictly speaking funded by College (they are funded by the student registration fee) student societies were still required to abide by the College's policies. Ms Campos advised that there had been steps taken to ensure compliance with the Dignity and Respect policy and supported creating further awareness about inclusivity amongst student societies; Ms Campos also drew attention to the limited availability of accessible venues. The Committee welcomed Ms FitzGerald's proposal that the Capitation Committee could be requested to develop a Code of Conduct for Student Societies.

ACTION:

The Equality Committee Chair to request the Capitation Committee to develop a Code of Conduct for Student Societies.

Equality Committee self-evaluation Ms Campos advised of progress in implementing the self-evaluation actions including:

- Committee membership (included in the Terms of Reference circulated)
- Committee quorum (included in the ToR)
- Action call-over
- Committee meeting and reporting schedule (circulated)

Ms Campos advised that the actions regarding training of Committee members and a new members' handbook would be developed over the Summer.

Section A – Policy issues

Equal/11-12/22 Terms of Reference Ms Campos outlined the changes in the Terms of Reference:

- Membership is reduced to 14 members, with only one representative from each area (HR and Academic Secretary) and two staff representatives (instead of 4).
- The quorum requirement has been amended.
- A minimum attendance requirement has been introduced (section 2.4).

The Committee approved the revised Terms of Reference with one amendment to the wording in section 2.4., to include 'may' instead of 'shall'. The Committee

Chair expressed regret that Ms Power would no longer be a member of the Committee as Personnel Officer. The Committee thanked Ms Power for her great contribution and active membership of the Committee over the years.

ACTION:

Ms Campos to submit the revised Terms of Reference, with the agreed amendment to section 2.4, to Board for approval.

Equal/11-12/23 Equality Committee Annual Report The Committee welcomed the Equality

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Committee Annual Report 2010-2011 circulated. Ms Campos advised that future reports would follow a new format as agreed by the Equality Committee following its self-evaluation review. Ms Campos advised this report provided an outline of the Equality Committee's function and the main issues addressed by the Committee during 2010-2011. Ms Campos noted that the Committee had addressed the following key areas:

- Equality policy issues with the development of the new streamlined Equality Policy with a focus on employment and services launched in 2011.
- Identifying equality barriers: with research completed in relation to the Merit Bar progression and gender.
- Implementation of dignity and respect, focussing on supports for postgraduate students.
- Provision of reasonable accommodation to students.
- Guidance on the implementation of the Civil Partnership Act and LGB inclusivity.
- Family status: amendments to the Calendar and recommendation to develop a student parent policy.
- ISL supports for Deaf staff.
- Accessible information implementation.

The Chair enquired about the status of the Committee recommendation for an educative process about the Merit Bar and suggested Ms Campos liaise with the relevant parties to ascertain its outcome. The Chair also enquired into the implementation of the new Dignity and Respect procedure for cases with a potential academic impact – Ms Power advised she was aware the process had been used successfully in one instance at least. The Committee discussed the related action regarding PG co-supervision: the Chair and Mr McAndrew noted that a recommendation for co-supervision had been presented and agreed by the Graduate Studies Committee but implementation was uncertain. Mr McAndrew advised that a new Code of Practice for Supervision was being developed and that this would also include a recommendation relating to co-supervision. Mr Treanor advised that the action relating to the provision of reasonable accommodation to students was being progressed. The Chair welcomed the report and was pleased with the progress the Committee had achieved in 2010-2011.

Equality Officer Report 2010-2011 Ms Campos advised that this detailed report would be presented separately to the Equality Committee in the future, as would reports from other equality areas, as agreed at the self-evaluation. The Report details the Equality Officer's activities in relation to: policy development and compliance; equality programmes; dissemination and communication. Ms Campos highlighted the achievements in relation to equality and diversity training with the participation in a sectoral IUA Equality Network project to develop an innovative eLearning resource (piloted in 2011). Ms Campos advised that despite this advance there remained a need for greater progress in mainstreaming equality in all College training. Ms Campos also highlighted the policy development undertaken in 2010-2011 with the development and launch of the new Equality Policy. Ms Campos advised that the service plan for 2011-2012 was progressing as agreed.

The Committee approved the Equality Committee report.

ACTION:

- Ms Campos to submit the Equality Committee Annual Report 2010-2011 to Board together with the minutes.
- Ms Campos to ascertain the status of the recommendation for an 'educative process' regarding the Merit Bar.

Equal/11-12/24 Disability Act 2005 Report Mr Treanor advised this was the first comprehensive
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report on how College was meeting its commitments under the Disability Act 2005 in relation to: 1 Access to Public Buildings; 2 Access to Services; 3 Accessibility of services provided to a Public Body (procurement); 4 Access to Information; 5 Public service employment and 6 Disability Act complaints. For the purpose of the report Mr Treanor had drawn on a range of sources including equality reports.

Access to buildings: In relation to Access to Public Buildings Mr Treanor drew the Committee's attention to the progress made in relation to physical access improvements and the implementation of the accessibility audit recommendations. Mr Treanor noted the recent report by the Estates Committee which states that 23% of College buildings are compliant with accessibility legislation and advised that this figure required further clarification to ascertain whether it refers to strategic College buildings (used for teaching and learning or main office facilities) or if it applied to all College buildings. Mr Treanor estimated that 80% of College's strategic buildings comply with accessibility legislation. Mr Treanor also outlined the cost of the accessibility improvements which to date had been largely funded by the Disability Service non-pay funding; the Committee noted this was not a sustainable funding model. The Committee noted the need to clarify the extent of work remaining in order to gauge the expected cost to College. Mr Treanor advised of significant progress in relation to egress as well as access and of prioritized areas for future work.

Access to services: In relation to the inclusivity of services Mr Treanor drew the Committee's attention to the extensive events guidance, including accessibility considerations, which is available on the Communications website. Mr Treanor also recommended that an accessible training room facility is prioritized in College's space allocation.

Accessible information: Mr Treanor advised of varying rates of engagement and implementation across administrative and support areas, with pockets of awareness and good practice. Mr Costello advised of the challenge in achieving implementation, particularly in large areas, despite annual individual meetings with each area. Mr Costello noted frustration at the speed of implementation of agreed actions despite the goodwill of individuals – partly due to limited resources in each department. The Committee discussed this issue and suggested the need for policy implementation to be prioritized at senior levels.

Employment: Mr Treanor advised of the latest report data to the HEA on the number of staff with disabilities comprising 2.3% of all staff (75), noting this was the number of staff who had disclosed a disability as opposed to the number of staff with a disability. Ms Campos advised that this figure was in line with other Irish and UK Universities. The Committee discussed the response rate to the disability census in 2009 and possible measures to improve this response. Ms Campos advised of the current reporting process whereby all new staff were contacted and a general information e-mail about the census and supports for staff went out to all staff annually; Ms Campos also advised that this year a specific campaign to reach support service areas had been completed. Dr Ó Siochrú suggested that it was time to complete another full staff census to reach existing staff who had not disclosed. Mr Treanor suggested that a means to support staff who developed a disability or were on disability leave would be for College to develop a redeployment policy. The Committee suggested that Ms Campos would liaise with Ms Taylor in HR to recommend that consideration is given to staff with disabilities in the development of the new redeployment policy as part of the START project.

Disability Act complaints: Mr Treanor advised that training had been provided to Inquiry Officers and other relevant staff on dealing with informal complaints and that one outcome of the session was that an informal resolution process was being developed. Ms Campos advised a concern emerged at that session regarding the absence of a clear complaints process in College for service complaints, which was also a concern for the Equality Policy. Ms FitzGerald advised that this centralised complaints process was being developed by the Vice-Provost's Office. Mr Treanor highlighted the importance of monitoring complaints under the Disability Act, an outline of which had been included in the report, and advised there was currently no national data on the number of DA complaints or those received by other Universities.

Training: Ms Campos welcomed the report and enquired whether the provision of disability awareness training was currently sufficient. The Committee expressed the view that equality and disability training should be a requirement for new Heads of School in particular and this should be recommended to Board.

ACTIONS:

- Committee suggests that College consider doing a full census for the next disability 3% report as well as other measures to encourage disclosure.

- Ms Campos to write to Alison Taylor recommending that staff with disabilities are considered in the new redeployment policy being developed as part of the START implementation (specifically staff on disability leave).
- Committee to recommend to Board that all new Heads of School are required to complete training on equality, disability and other governance issues.
- Mr Treanor to clarify the percentage and type of buildings complying with accessibility legislation.

Equal/11-12/25 Accessible Information Policy Mr Costello advised of the amendments to the Accessible Information Policy which were suggested on the basis of user feedback with the aim of ensuring clarity and legibility of the policy in plain English. The Committee welcomed and approved the amended policy.

The Committee discussed implementation issues in relation to College branding, procurement, the development of accessible information resources and mainstreaming accessibility. Mr Costello advised of progress on developing further accessible information resources and that he was liaising with Genesis to ensure compliance. The Committee noted issues with the communication of procurement and accessibility requirements to the College community. The Committee suggested that the Chair might liaise with the Procurement Officer to explore means of simplifying implementation, perhaps by means of an easy to use checklist and greater enforcement on compliance.

ACTIONS:

- Chair to liaise with Procurement Officer regarding accessibility and dignity and respect requirements in procurement, suggesting an easy to use checklist tool is available for anyone involved in procurement.
- Disability Service to update Accessible Information policy on the web.

Section B – Implementation issues

LEAD implementation report – deferred until next meeting.

Section C – Matters for noting

Equality Committee schedule, deferred until next meeting

Any Other Business

Signed

Date