

**University Of Dublin  
Trinity College  
Equality Committee**

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**Minutes of a meeting held on Thursday 15 January at 11am in the Arts Building  
Conference Room**

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Present: Dr C McCabe (Chair), Ms K O'Toole-Brennan, Mr A Hanna (GSU), Mr I Mooney (SU), Dr E Curtis, Mr D Treanor, Mr M McKeown, Prof John Walsh, Prof Eithne McCabe, Mr L Field (secretary).

Apologies: The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer (Prof L Hogan), Prof M McCarron (Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences), Prof L Stassen, Ms S MacBride, Mr Jim Cumiskey.

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**Eqal/14-15/13 Minutes**

Dr Curtis requested that an amendment be made to draft minute Eqal/14-15/11 Review of Dignity & Respect Policy and Equality Policy, in order to clarify the process by which the Dignity & Respect Policy is reviewed. The remaining minutes of the previous meeting, 17 November 2014, were approved.

**Eqal/14-15/14 Matters Arising**

- Eqal/14-15/4 Equality Committee Vacancies Self-Nomination Consideration: the process discussed in this minute was implemented and has now been completed. The Chair and Equality Officer extended their welcomes to the new Committee member, Prof Eithne McCabe. The other new appointee to the Equality Committee, Mr Jim Cumiskey, had to send apologies to this meeting but will be welcomed at the next opportunity.

**Eqal/14-15/15 Action Call-over**

- **Request to HR for gender-disaggregated data on applications for promotion:** The Chair noted that the Chair and Equality Officer are now working with the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer on a substantial report to Board on gender equality across all academic and administrative grades in the context of recruitment, retention and promotions. A scoping document for this report is to be prepared before the end of January 2015, and the report shall be made to Board by March 2015.

- **Review of the Dignity & Respect Policy:** Dr Curtis informed the meeting that the review process of the Dignity & Respect Policy has not yet commenced.
- **Statistics on Employment of Persons with Disabilities in College:** The Equality Officer confirmed that these statistics have been requested from HR and are currently awaited.

## **Section A – Policy issues**

### **Equal/14-15/16 Report from the first meeting of the Equality Policy Review Working Party**

The Chair provided a report to the Committee on the first meeting of the Equality Policy Review Working Party, which took place on Monday 12 January. The Chair noted that the following had been identified as key issues at the meeting:

- No problems were raised with the information that is currently present in the policy, but aspects of the document should be developed further. Specifically, it was felt that Section 5 of the policy (Implementation) needs to be detailed further, as it does not provide sufficient clarity with regard to who has responsibility for the implementation of the policy. It was also suggested that linking the policy to specific elements of the Strategic Plan, and the parties responsible for those elements, may help bring this greater clarity.
- Another matter under consideration is how other equality-related College policies, such as the Dignity and Respect Policy and the Disability Policy, interact with the Equality Policy. There is a consensus that the Equality Policy must act as the main overarching policy for the promotion and implementation of equality matters in College, and that this should be reflected in the relationship between the Equality Policy and the other policies. There is a concern that the policies currently act in isolation from one another.
- The review of equality policies in other institutions, provided by the Equality Officer, was noted, as was the wide variety of approaches to creating equality policies therein. In addition, the University of Essex Equality Policy and Strategy circulated by Mr Treanor was noted as a particularly dynamic and integrative approach.
- It was noted that in places, the Equality Policy is overly abstract and characteristic of a 'statement of principle' rather than providing specific

policy. It was suggested that providing supporting data and concrete examples of what is being referenced by this area of the policy, such as “real-life” accounts by staff or students, may help to make these areas less abstract and more relevant, thus promoting greater understanding.

- The absence of a Mental Health Policy for staff is noted as a serious deficiency in the College equality infrastructure. It was noted that there is a student Mental Health Policy in place.
- The Working Party has decided to invite the wider College community to participate in consultation as part of the review process. This will take the form of a College-wide email alerting the College community to the review taking place, and to invite members of the College community to submit via email any comments they may have about the current Equality Policy.
- The Working Party has identified three invitees to its next meeting, whose views may be relevant to the review:
  - The College Director of Diversity & Inclusion, Mr Tony McMahon;
  - A representative from Trinity Global Relations;
  - A representative from the College Strategic Plan Implementation Committee.

The Committee made some responses to the report. It expressed approval for the suggested consultation process, both as a means of including more viewpoints and also of raising greater awareness of the review process and the policy itself. It was noted that there is a higher rate of usage of the Employee Assistance Programme in College than in the other Irish universities, and a higher number of those using it reporting that experiences of bullying and severe stress had led to them seeking assistance. Additionally, the Committee was made aware of a quantitative survey that had been carried out amongst staff members in the School of Physics, where a high percentage of respondents reported either experiencing bullying themselves, or witnessing the bullying of another staff member.

The next meeting of the Equality Policy Review Working Party will take place on Monday 26 January. It is intended that the first draft of proposals from the Working Party will be presented for approval at the next meeting of the Equality Committee.

**Actions:**

- The Chair and Equality Officer to present the first draft of the Equality Policy Review Working Party's proposals to the next meeting of the Equality Committee.

### **Section C – Matters for Noting**

#### **Equal/14-15/17 Formal launch of the Student Parents, Student Carers and Students Experiencing Pregnancy Policy**

Mr Field reminded the meeting that the formal launch of the College Student Parents, Student Carers and Students Experiencing Pregnancy Policy is to take place next month, on Wednesday 4 February. The focal point of the launch shall be a panel discussion in the Uí Chadhain Theatre at 4pm. The panel shall consist of a student parent, a student carer, a student who experienced pregnancy while attending College, and a staff champion for the policy. The speakers shall discuss the importance of the policy from their perspective, and how they hope it will lend greater support to these students. The teenage child of a current student parent has also been invited to speak at the event, to talk about the influence that a parent in College has had on their own aspirations towards third-level education.

#### **Equal/14-15/18 Equality Fund 2014-2015 Update**

Mr Field informed the meeting that the 2014-15 Equality Fund projects have been selected. Out of approximately 20 applications, 11 projects were chosen for either full or part funding. It was noted that the standard of applications this year was very high.

The following projects were awarded the full funding requested by their applicants:

- Trinity Arts Festival, featuring three projects based around LGBTQ identities €720
- Aoibh, an audio visual project promoting mental health awareness €1250
- Leinster Schools Female Debating Competition €520
- The Promotion of Trans\* Awareness amongst Irish teenage students €350
- Human Rights for All? Campaign to Document the Lived-Experiences of Trans\* and Gender Non-Conforming Youth in Ireland €1000
- Apartheid, Activism and Ireland: a Film & Lecture Symposium €1000
- eXXcluded? An event promoting greater female participation in computer science €588
- Pink Day Training, for LGBT students and their allies €720

The following projects were awarded part of the funding requested by their applicants:

- Website for Trinity Retirement Association  
€500
- Trinity Pop-Up Family Festival €1500
- Trinity's Tongues, a multilingual publication showcasing the language talents of College staff and students €1000
- Changing Law, Changing Ireland, a symposium examining the relationship between legal change and social change in Ireland  
€850

Full details of all the projects will be posted on the Equality Office website in the near future.

### **Any Other Business**

#### **Eqal/14-15/19 Resignation of Equality Committee Member**

Mr Field informed the Committee that Prof Leo Stassen has stepped down from his role on the Committee due to other work commitments.

#### **Eqal/14-15/20 Gender Identity & Gender Expression Policy**

Responding to a query about the timeline for the formal launch of the College Gender Identity and Gender Expression Policy, Mr Field informed the Committee that the current date for the launch event is Thursday 19 March 2015, to coincide with College Rainbow Week.

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Signed .....

Date .....