



Trinity College Dublin

Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath

The University of Dublin

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EQUALITY COMMITTEE

Minutes

Meeting 6th February 2017, 11am – 1pm,

Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Boardroom

Present: Chair (Ms S Dunphy), Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer (Prof C Morash), Prof M Cuypers, Ms K O'Toole-Brennan, Prof E Drew, Ms S O'Brien-Green (GSU), Prof S Brennan, Prof Inmaculada Arnedillo-Sánchez, Ms S MacBride, Prof Daniel Faas, Secretary / Equality Officer (Ms A Crawford)

In attendance: Mr T McMahon, Director of Diversity and Inclusion (Eqal/16-17/035)

Apologies: Dean of Health Sciences (Prof M McCarron), Mr D Treanor, Mr K O'Doherty

Eqal/16-17/029

Opening

Chair

The Chair opened the meeting and apologies were noted.

Eqal/16-17/030

Report from Board

Chair

The Chair notified the Committee of items in recent Board meetings that relate to Equality Committee business. The Committee noted that academic promotions are to go ahead in 2017 with a financial quota set out as recommended by the Sanders Review, and that there will be not be a promotions or accelerated advancement process for professional staff as the HEA has directed that Employment Control Framework ratios for these staff are to be maintained. The Committee also noted the development of a new Strategic Hires policy and recommended that these types of appointments be monitored for gender balance on an ongoing basis. Finally, the Committee welcomed the Board's approval of its recommendation to use a gender-neutral term to refer to first- and second-year students, currently called Freshmen. In addition to the term "Fresh" as proposed by the Equality Committee, the Board have recommended that "Fresher" be used.

Action: Equality Officer to liaise with Director of HR on monitoring of gender balance in "Strategic Hires"

Eqal/16-17/031

Minutes of the previous meeting

Chair

A change was requested to Eqal/16-17/020 (WiSER Report), to clarify that the survey related to postdoctoral staff but as a staff survey, does not relate to postgraduate students.

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved with this amendment.

Action: Equality Officer to amend the minutes as advised before publication.

Eqal/16-17/032

Action call-over

Equality Officer

The Action Call-over was taken as read - all actions are completed or ongoing. It was noted that the pre-employment medical questionnaire is being considered by HR to ensure its wording and the processes around it make applicants confident in its confidentiality.

There were no matters arising.

Matters for Discussion

[The Vice-Provost entered the meeting at the beginning of this item]

The Secretary presented to the Committee on the development of the HEA Review Implementation Plan (“the Plan”) and its main recommendations. The Vice-Provost, who Chaired the Plan Working Group, further noted that the proposed actions have been integrated into existing processes and that lead stakeholders and action owners have been identified and consulted. He thanked the Working Group and Equality Officer for their work.

In response to a question from a Committee member, it was agreed that the Plan will specify that the principles of the Sanders Review of Senior Academic Promotions are also to be applied to Junior Progression (the Merit Bar) in respect of gender equality.

The following were also noted during the discussion:

- The HEA’s recommendation to maintain Employment Control Framework ratios in Professional grades is a challenge to the achievement of gender balance in Professional grades (re: HEA Review Recommendations 1.19 – 1.20)
- The Equality Committee will have a particular role in ensuring cohesion between this plan and other university policies and plans, including those relating to students
- The plan has some significant resource implications; it does not have a specific budget assigned to it and is to be resourced from mainstream budgets
- The review of recruitment practices will include consideration of “promotions by appointment” and appointments on fixed-term contracts

- The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) and the Helsinki Group should be engaged on matters relating to the Plan
- The implementation of the Plan may have significant positive consequences for the university in general (in addition to gender equality)

The Plan was approved subject to the amendment noted above regarding Junior Academic Progression.

The Chair thanked the Vice-Provost and the Secretary and members of the Working Group.

Action: Equality Officer to revise the Plan in the light of the Committee’s comments and submit to EOG (14th February) and Board (22nd February)

[The Vice-Provost left the meeting at the end of this item]

Equal/16-17/035 Equality Impact Assessment Tool

Director of Diversity and Inclusion (attending)

[Prof Inmaculada Arnedillo-Sánchez entered the meeting during this item]

The Director of Diversity and Inclusion (“the Director”) presented a proposed Equality Impact Assessment process to the Committee, in furtherance of Action A1 of the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, to “[d]evelop a Board paper for inclusion of Diversity proofing as a formal step in the development of policy through Principal Committees”. This action aligns with the requirement to assess policy and procedure under the Public Sector Duty (ref: IHREC Act 2014) to promote human rights and equality, and the recommendations of the HEA National Review of Gender Equality in Irish Higher Education Institutions.

The Committee welcomed the commitment to introduce Equality Impact Assessment screening of all university policies, which will promote “equality by design”. Members praised the simplicity and practical approach of the suggested screening form and its space for noting positive opportunities as well as negative impacts. Members also recommended:

- The screening process to be applied to policies undergoing review as well as new policies; and all policies to have been screened within five years of the introduction of the process
- The form to define the equality grounds in more detail, and to include a space in which intersectionality of more than one equality ground can be considered
- Development of an online form and process to be considered
- Information on the screening process to explain who the completed form will be provided to, in accordance with best data protection practice
- Support to be provided to Committee secretaries both in completing the form and in dealing with any equality issues arising
- The form to explicitly ask Committees to consider possible equality impacts of the implementation (not just the written content) of their policy
- The role of Board in the policy screening process to be developed in consultation with the Secretary to the College. Equality Impact Assessments could be attached to all policy documents circulated to Board, for example

The Director thanked the Committee and noted that he would return to speak on this item at the next meeting, following further consultation and consideration of the Committee’s comments.

Eqal/16-17/036 Implementation Planning for the Introduction of the gender-neutral terms “Fresher” and “Fresh” Chair

The Chair reminded the Committee that, as stated in Eqal/16-17/030, the Board has approved the proposal to replace “Freshman” with a gender-neutral term. The Chair further elaborated that the Board hope to achieve this on a cost-neutral basis. The change is to be introduced on a phased basis, as documents are reviewed. A possible challenge could be integrating the new term into the Student Information System (SITS), however they may have funding for improvements that could be utilised.

As outlined in the draft implementation plan, circulated to the Committee in advance of the meeting, a working group is to be established which will include undergraduate representation. The Committee also recommended that the gender balance of the group be considered, that the Communications Office and alumni be represented in the group, and that key timelines be considered, such as publication of the undergraduate Prospectus. It was noted that communication of the change will be key, and the student press will be engaged in this regard.

Action: Equality Officer to liaise with Vice-Provost to convene the “Fresh” implementation working group

[Equal/16-17/037](#)

[Age-Friendly Trinity Update](#)

[Prof S Brennan](#)

Prof S Brennan, Chair of the Age-Friendly Trinity subcommittee, informed the Committee of the subcommittee’s recent activities and other relevant developments. These included:

- The Provost has endorsed Trinity’s adoption of the ten principles of an age-friendly university
- The subcommittee will research ongoing actions relating to the ten principles, and will develop a plan of action, before making any public announcement of “Age-Friendly Trinity”
- An asset map of existing facilities / policies / activities in Trinity is being developed
- Trinity is particularly strong in ageing research but further action may be required to be age-friendly in other ways
- Resources may be required for further asset-mapping and actions

The Committee welcomed the update. Intersectionality of age, gender and family status were discussed and it was noted that family-friendly initiatives such as part-time courses – provided part-time students are provided with equal access to catering, IT support, library and other services - can assist with all three equality groups. The Committee recommended that areas for improvement also be identified in a “deficit-mapping” exercise.

Action: Equality Officer to circulate minutes of Age-Friendly Trinity subcommittee meeting of 30th November 2016, and statistics relating to the gender representation among mature students

Action: Chair of Age-Friendly Trinity subcommittee to formally approach DCU to inform them of Trinity's endorsement of the principles and to learn from their good practice

Eqal/16-17/038

Equality Fund Update

Secretary

The Equality Officer notified the Committee that the 2016/17 Equality Fund projects were selected by the Equality Fund subcommittee on 6th December 2016, and that €11,020 of a possible €11,490 (including €1,490 carried over from the 2015/16 Fund) was allocated across 13 projects. The Equality Officer thanked the subcommittee for their significant work in assessing the applications.

Members commented that the successful projects are well spread across different equality groups; but expressed disappointment that no applications relating to the traveller community were received. The Committee recommended that this community be more actively encouraged to apply to the Equality Fund in future, for example by publishing a relevant "priority theme" for applications. The Committee also recommended that previous project organisers be asked to mentor prospective applicants as they complete their application, through the Equality Fund Showcase event.

Eqal/16-17/039

College Awareness Week Update

Ms K O'Toole-Brennan

Ms K O'Toole-Brennan, Co-ordinator of College Awareness Week ("CAW") presented to the Committee on the objectives and achievements of CAW 2016. Key points included:

- CAW links with Trinity and national plans for access and widening participation
- CAW supports schools and individuals to be "college-ready"
- CAW 2016 events had approximately 125,000 participants across 27 counties

- The media reach of CAW 2016 was approximately 1.8 million people
- Several Trinity offices engaged with CAW in various ways

The Chair congratulated Ms O’Toole-Brennan on behalf of the Committee for an excellent College Awareness Week. In response to a question from a member, Ms O’Toole-Brennan noted that the University of the Third Age (U3A) and various Adult Education Centres have been involved in College Awareness Week, and it was agreed that the Trinity Access Programmes would liaise with the Age-Friendly Trinity subcommittee in the context of the latter’s ongoing asset-mapping and development of age-friendly actions. Members also recommended that event holders, participants and champions / role models should be monitored in terms of gender and other equality grounds where possible.

Action: Ms K O’Toole-Brennan and Prof S Brennan to liaise and align College Awareness and Age-Friendly activities as appropriate

Action: Equality Officer to circulate link to video which won the 2016 College Awareness Week Multimedia competition

Eqal/16-17/040 Equality (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2015 Secretary

This item was postponed to the next meeting.

Eqal/16-17/041 Process for New Self-Nominated Member Secretary

The Equality Officer presented the proposed advertisement and selection process for the new self-nominated committee member to the Committee, noting the following changes to previous processes:

- Given the current gender balance on the Committee, a male (or otherwise not female) member will be explicitly sought

- The new member will be confirmed within a meeting of the Equality Committee (rather than by the Chair and Secretary on the basis of votes counted only)

The revised process was approved.

Any Other Business

Eqal/16-17/042

Travel Bans to the U.S.

Ms K O'Toole-Brennan

The Committee noted the email circulated in advance of the meeting which was sent by a U.S. university to their staff, students and alumni following President Trump's executive order barring all Syrian refugees and imposing a 90-day ban on immigrant and non-immigrant entry to the United States from seven predominantly Muslim nations. The university expressed their concern for the wellbeing of those affected in their community, and re-affirmed their commitment to human rights and non-discrimination.

Various ways in which Trinity could respond to the ban were considered, such as to make a statement from the Committee to Board, and/or to suggest a sectoral response to the IUA. It was welcomed that lab space has been offered to researchers stranded by the order by Prof Aoife McLysaght (Head of Discipline - Genetics). The Committee agreed that any communication on this issue should have input from Global Relations.

Action: Equality Officer to discuss possible responses to recent U.S. travel bans with the Global Relations Office

Eqal/16-17/043

NWCI Project on Ending Sexual Harassment in Third-level Education (ESHTE)

Secretary

The Equality Officer briefly outlined the proposal from the National Women's Council of Ireland (NWCI) for Trinity to participate in the EU-funded ESHTE (Ending Sexual Harassment

and Violence in Third-level Education) project. Trinity may join the National Advisory Committee and/or become an “associate partner” in the project. The latter role would involve running training programmes and focus groups, disseminating communications, sharing research and other actions. It would also provide an opportunity for Trinity to lead in this area and to be centrally involved in developing tailored supports for the third-level education sector to deal with this issue, which is a problem throughout the sector.

Members noted the importance of the following considerations:

- Ensuring focus groups are managed carefully so that they don’t re-victimise participants
- Providing clear routes of referral to the Gardaí when a crime occurs / is disclosed
- Abiding by Trinity’s research ethics principles
- Engaging with key stakeholders in Trinity, including the Student Counselling Service, Junior Dean and Tutors

The Committee supported the proposal for Trinity to be involved in the ESHTe project as far as is reasonably practicable, and requested further information on the precise parameters of the “associate partner” role.

Signed:

Date: