

UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN

Trinity College

EQUALITY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting held on 25 February 2008 at 2 pm in the Board Room, Provost's House.

Present: Vice-Provost, Ms A FitzGerald*, Mr D Treanor, Ms L Power, Mr O Doyle, Mr R Hodson (GSU), Mr T McMahon, Ms C Byrne, Ms R Torode, Mr D Quinn, Ms I Boydell, Dr H Gibbons**, Ms K Campos McCormack.

*Eqal/07-08/14 -22

** Eqal/07-08/14 -21

Apologies: Dr S Ryan, Prof E Drew, Ms T Moloney, Ms U Faulkner (SU).

The Committee welcomed new members Dr Hugh Gibbons and Ms Irena Boydell.

Items for Board attention are denoted XXX

Eqal/07-08/14 Minutes The minutes of the previous meeting, 5 Nov 2008, were approved and signed.

Eqal/07-08/15 Matters arising were discussed and minuted below.

Eqal/07-08/16 Ms Campos updated the Committee on the situation of the College's application to the **Equality Review and Action Plan (ERAP)** programme, co-ordinated and funded by the Equality Authority. The Committee noted that the ERAP scheme was currently under review and pending approval for funding from the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, as per the most recent communication from the Equality Authority (18-02-08). The Committee expressed disappointment at the delay in implementing the ERAP given the opportunity this programme offered for a full review of College practices and policies in relation to equality (Eqal/07-08/09).

Eqal/07-08/17 Ms Power tabled the figures of staff taking parental leave by grade, as requested by the Committee (EQAL/06-07/27 and EQAL/07-08/02).

Eqal/07-08/18 Mr Treanor informed the Committee that the Accessible Information Guidelines had been circulated and approved by the Information Policy Committee (Eqal/07-08/05). It was suggested that these guidelines be circulated to staff annually to ensure their implementation. Mr Treanor advised the Committee that there were currently staff training programmes in place to advise on the implementation of these guidelines. Dr Gibbons drew the Committee's attention to the possible usage of alternative software products in lieu of PDF files.

Section A – Policy issues

Eqal/07-08/19 Equality Annual Monitoring Report The Committee welcomed the Annual **XXX** Monitoring Report presented by Ms Campos, noting the usefulness of having this data collected for the first time in a clear format which, in time, will facilitate annual comparisons. The Report comprises three sections relating to (i) staff statistics, (ii) student data, and (iii) bullying and harassment incidence; and brings together data from several different sources in relation to equality (Staff Office and Senior Lecturer's Office, amongst others). The main body of work has lied in the development of staff statistical reports by the Equality Officer and the Staff Office

Business Analyst). Ms Campos highlighted the range of equality data-related initiatives currently taking place in College, including the development WiSER gender indicators database, the staff disability survey undertaken in 2007 in compliance with the Disability Act 2005, and the recruitment monitoring system currently being piloted.

The report provides base-line statistics which serve as a benchmark and model for future analysis; and examines gender distribution in relation to staff area and function of employment, grade and seniority, and decision-making in College. Some key findings:

- There exists a marked gender segregation in different functions of employment, in line with traditional labour divisions. Particularly in Support Staff areas and Executive Officers.
- Women are considerably under-represented in senior positions and decision-making in College. The proportion of women in senior positions is of 2 in 10; and we find a similar proportion of women Fellows, Heads of School and members of Council.
- Overall women make up 37 % of academic staff, although the proportion decreases steadily from 45 % of Lecturers to 13 % of Professors. It was noted that although low, the proportion of Professors had improved significantly since 2000.
- The detailed breakdown of academic staff gender proportions by School and Faculty provided presents significant variations across the three Faculties and between Schools.

Ms Campos advised the Committee of the necessity to monitor closely areas where one gender was in a significant minority, so as to ensure the employment conditions and career prospects of staff are satisfactory. The report also suggests the need examine organizational culture as a contributing factor to gender imbalance. The proportion of women in senior and decision-making positions was highlighted as a key aspect that would need to be addressed by the Equality Committee. It was suggested that gender targets should be set as a means of addressing imbalances proactively, and the Committee noted that this measure would require further consideration. The Committee enquired into the possibility of greater collaboration with the WiSER database project, and also into linking the staff monitoring to HEA key performance indicators systems. It was noted that careful consideration should be given by the Committee to this report and future annual reports when proposing action recommendations and positive measures to address gender equality in College.

Given the scope of equality monitoring activities and data reflected in the Report, the Committee recommended that an advisory group be set up to assist with the development of the report annually and the review of methodologies to achieve the best results from available data.

ACTIONS:

- Ms Campos to establish an advisory sub-group of the Equality Committee for the equality monitoring, to assist particularly with the annual development of the report.
- The Report to be attached to the Committee minutes for Board consideration.

Eqal/07-08/20 Procedures for transgender students The SU Welfare Officer submitted a document outlining the issues that had arisen in the registration process of two recent cases involving transgender (also referred to as gender identity disorder) students. The Committee noted that in the case detailed the registration and reception of the student had been a successful, although long process (two months). The Committee noted the distress that these delays might cause a student in this situation, and supported the recommendation to develop guidelines for the reception of transgender students that would facilitate and streamline procedures. The

Committee was advised of the existence of College guidelines for the treatment of transgender staff.

ACTION: The SU Welfare Officer and Ms Campos to bring these issues to the attention of the Senior Lecturer with a view to developing guidelines for the reception and treatment of transgender students.

Section B – Implementation issues

Eqal/07-08/21 Equality Fund the Vice Provost and Ms Campos reported on the outcome of the recent Equality Fund Panel meeting (18 February), and tabled the details of the projects funded. The Equality Fund received 9 applications in total, from both staff and students in different areas. The Panel proposed to fund or part-fund the following projects:

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- 'Please Talk' awareness campaign (SU Welfare) €700
- Israel-Palestine Comedy Tour and Workshop (Amnesty International, Trinity branch) €1,000
- Islamic Awareness Week Inter-Faith Dinner (Muslim Student Association) €350
- Developing Inclusive Practice workshop (Day Nursery) €310
- Mental Health Policy training programme (Counselling Service) €700
- College grounds signage and audiotape in accessible formats (buildings, flora and fauna information) (Facilities Management) €1,000
- International Women's Day (Dublin University Gender Equality Society) €770
- Work Life Balance information morning (Housekeeping Department) €1,170

The Panel had requested clarification from the Equality Committee on the scope and function of the Fund. The Committee discussed the eligibility and priority of staff and student projects, and addressed in particular the concern raised over funding projects which were felt to be essential to College policy and should be centrally funded. This issue was also discussed in relation to the funding of student projects which might be centrally funded by CSC. The Committee recommended that the terms of reference of the Fund and the application form be reviewed to avoid ambiguity. In addition to the stated criteria the document should highlight the role of the Fund for supporting special and innovative equality projects, and projects which might not otherwise avail of funding. The Committee partially supported the 'Mental Health Policy training' application and recommended that consideration be given to securing the remaining funding from central College sources.

ACTIONS:

- Ms Campos to review the Equality Fund application form and terms of reference in line with the Committee's recommendations.
- Ms Campos to advise the Counselling Service of the Committee's recommendation that the remaining funding be secured from central College sources.
- The provision of disability awareness training for staff to be examined by Staff Development and the Disability Service.
- Ms Campos to circulate letters detailing funding conditions to the successful applicants, and advertise these projects on the Equality website.

Eqal/07-08/22 Bullying and Harassment *Contact Persons' Report and Staff Office Bullying and Harassment Statistics* Ms Torode presented the most recent Contact Persons' Report (2006-2007), outlining recent policy and membership developments, and detailing the profile of cases reported. The Committee noted that

there had been a significant turnover in the membership of the Contact Persons' Panel over the previous year, which might require greater support and training. In terms of the profile of complainants and alleged harassers, complainants continued to be predominantly female, and alleged harassers more likely to be male. The Committee noted there had been only one case of sexual harassment and fewer complaints made by students. It was suggested that the policy might require greater publicity amongst students. Ms Torode advised that many of the 2006 recommendations were being implemented, with increased training for managers, improved contacts with research staff, and the establishment of a mediation service amongst others. Several recommendations were made within the report which should be implemented.

Staff Office Report Ms Power presented the first report regarding the cases of bullying and harassment reported to the Staff Office in 2007 (both formal and informal). The profile of complainants was similar to that reported in the Contact Persons' report, but the profile of alleged harassers was notably different involving mainly women. Most complainants were from support service areas, and most cases related to incidents of bullying. Ms Power highlighted the use of the mediation service which was now available. The Committee noted the levels of distress experienced by those who sought assistance and all those involved in bullying cases, including other colleagues. Ms Power advised that most cases came to the Staff Office's attention at a very late point, with issues not being addressed at a preventative level. There were also concerns raised around confidentiality and complainants' discussion of cases with colleagues.

The Committee discussed the levels of incidence of cases of bullying and harassment reported in one year by the Contact Persons and the Staff Office; it was acknowledged that there could be an overlap between Staff Office and Panel cases however, due to confidentiality issues, these could not always be identified. It was also noted that other support services were available to staff and students e.g. managers, tutors, EAP or the counselling service. Ms Torode highlighted that the lack of data from these essential supports made any estimate of the overall 'real' incidence of bullying and harassment in College very difficult. The Committee suggested that some consideration be brought to the reporting of bullying and harassment cases to develop more accurate evaluations of incidence. The most appropriate forum for presenting the annual bullying and harassment reports -taking into account the changing profile of cases- was also discussed and suggested for further consideration at a future meeting.

ACTIONS:

- Implement the recommendations arising from the Contact Persons' report, in particular the completion of the Dignity and Respect Policy.
- Implement the recommendations arising from the Staff Office report on Bullying and Harassment.
- The annual reporting of bullying and harassment statistics to be reviewed, and the reporting from other areas investigated with a view to having an overall report document on bullying and harassment.
- The Bullying and Harassment policy should be publicized amongst students.

Eqal/07-08/23 Disability Act Review Ms Campos updated the Committee on the progression of the Disability Review being carried out in collaboration with the Staff Office to ensure compliance with the Disability Act and to promote a disability supportive organization. The Committee welcomed an initiative that will see an integrated approach to promoting the recruitment and retention of staff with disabilities. The first focus of the project is to review the current Code of Employment for People with Disabilities in line with best practice, and the second phase will involve developing guidelines for supporting staff with disabilities, and

communicating the policy effectively. The Committee noted that a central emergency fund had been approved by PAC for funding reasonable accommodations, and suggested that these requests be monitored to assess the cost involved.

Ms Campos advised the Committee that a central part of the project was developing simple procedures and guidelines in relation to disclosure, needs assessment and the support of staff with disabilities, both at recruitment stage and for staff with acquired disabilities. The project involves a close collaboration with the Staff Office, in particular in relation to staff retention and re-training, redeployment, insurance and Partnership issues. Ms Campos advised the Committee that consultation with staff with disabilities would also be part of the review.

ACTION: Ms Campos to present a draft of the reviewed Code at the next Equality Committee.

Eqal/07-08/24 Parents' Group Ms Power informed the Committee of the recently established Parental Working Group which had been created to implement the recommendations which arose from the parenting focus groups held earlier in 2007. The group was initially looking at new parenting pages to be available in the coming months on the Staff Office website, with information on entitlements and resources for parents. They were also establishing a 'buddy system' for parents, due to be launched on National Work Life Balance Day. The group is expected to meet 5 or 6 times in the coming months to progress these recommendations, and it is hoped a self-managing parents' support group will also emerge.

ACTION: Ms Power to report on the progress of the group at the next Equality Committee.

Section C – Matters for noting

Eqal/07-08/25 Equality Events The Committee noted some key events taking place in 2008:

- **Equality Photographic Awards** **15 February**

The inter-university 'Changing Perspectives: equality and diversity in my University' photographic awards took place in the Equality Authority. This competition was held in celebration of the European Year of Equal Opportunities for All 2007, and a calendar produced and distributed to staff and students in all seven universities. There were two Trinity overall prize winners, and 5,000 copies of the calendar were distributed in Trinity alone.

- **Work Life Balance Day** **29 February**

The Staff Office is co-ordinating events for Work Life Balance Day and will circulate information on entitlements and other resources available to staff (information for parents, for retirees etc).

- **LGBT Society 25 Anniversary** **5 March**

The Wilde Ball is held to celebrate the history of the Trinity LGBT (Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender) society and the LGBT movement. Trinity's LGBT's society is the oldest in Ireland and is a central element in Trinity's pioneering role in relation to gay rights.

- **International Women's Day** **8 March**

Following on the successful 2007 IWD event, a reception is to take place on Friday 7 March highlighting the role of education and women in shaping progress. The following groups are involved in the event: WiSER, Centre for Gender and Women's Studies, DUGES, DUWGA and the Equality Officer.

Any Other Business

Eqal/07-08/26 Re-structuring The Vice-Provost advised the Committee of the importance of inviting a Dean to sit on the Committee, arising from the current re-structuring process in College.
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ACTION: The Board to approve the inclusion of a Dean as a member of the Equality Committee, and consequent amendment to the Terms of Reference.

Eqal/07-08/27 Statutes Review Ms Campos suggested that the Committee submit a memo to the Working Group reviewing the College Statutes requesting that sexist language currently in the Statutes be reviewed and modified.

ACTION: Ms Campos to circulate a memo to the Statutes Review working group on behalf of the Committee.

Signed

Date