

UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN

Trinity College

EQUALITY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting held on 11 June 2008 at 2 pm in the Secretary's Office Board Room, College Green.

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, Ms T Moloney, Prof E Drew**, Prof C O'Morain**, Ms K Campos McCormack.

Present for: *Eqal/07-08/32 -42; ** Eqal/07-08/33-42

Apologies: Dr S Ryan, Mr D Quinn, Dr H Gibbons, Ms U Faulkner (SU), Ms C Hannon.

In attendance: Dr Eoin O'Dell***, Dr Daithi Mac Sithigh***.
Present for ***Eqal/07-08/34

The Committee welcomed new members Ms Therese Moloney, School of Pharmacy, and Professor Colm O'Morain, Dean of Health Sciences.

Items for Board attention are denoted XXX

Eqal/07-08/28 Minutes The minutes of the previous meeting, 25 February 2008, were approved and signed.

Eqal/07-08/29 Matters arising were discussed and minuted below.

Eqal/07-08/30 Ms K Campos advised the Committee of the establishment of the Monitoring Advisory Group to provide guidance in relation to the Annual Equality Monitoring Report (see minute Eqal/07-08/19).

Eqal/07-08/31 Ms L Power advised the Committee that the recommendations included in the Contact Person's Annual Report were being implemented and some had been incorporated in the revision of the Bullying and Harassment Policy, now Dignity and Respect Policy, (see minute Eqal/07-08/22).

Section A – Policy issues

Eqal/07-08/32 Dignity and Respect Policy The Committee welcomed the new Dignity and Respect Policy, presented by Ms Power, which incorporates the existing **XXX** Bullying and Harassment Policy with additional provisions to promote a respectful and diverse collegiate environment. Ms Power outlined the four tasks undertaken by the Dignity and Respect Working Group, which was created to implement the commitments outlined in Towards 2016 and the College Strategic Development Plan: (1) to investigate the possibility of

creating a Dignity and Respect Policy; (2) to review the current Bullying and Harassment Policy; (3) to provide a structure for people to handle interpersonal disputes themselves; (4) to proof-read all policies with a dignity and respect approach.

Ms Power advised the Committee on the main provisions of the Dignity and Respect Policy, which was developed to encompass all members of College, staff and students, in their different roles:

- A commitment to promoting good communication and a respectful work and study environment.
- An outline of particular roles and responsibilities in relation to the implementation of this policy.
- Information on who to talk to in confidence in cases of interpersonal conflict, bullying or harassment.
- Provisions for resolving interpersonal conflicts in the workplace, encouraging prevention and resolution at an earlier stage.
- Provisions regarding confidentiality, withdrawal of claims and counter-allegations.
- A provision for mediation services.

Ms Power advised the Committee that the mediation service and choice of mediator (external or internal) were decided on a case by case basis, with the complainant's agreement, with consideration to the type of incident and roles of those involved. The Committee noted that mediation was not currently available for students. Mr Treanor suggested some examples of mediation could be included in the document for clarification.

Ms Power drew the Committee's attention to the next task of the Working Group, to design the launch and communication strategy for the Policy. The Committee noted that the Staff Office would be implementing awareness sessions on roles and responsibilities and targeted training for managers, as well as publishing a hard copy of the Policy. The Committee discussed several awareness strategies including communication by e-mail, which could encourage staff to set-up discussion groups; including a section on dignity and respect in the training provided to new Heads of School; student awareness materials; and seeking nominees to be dignity and respect champions in Schools. Ms Torode drew the Committee's attention to the need to secure sufficient funding for these initiatives.

ACTIONS:

- Ms Campos to submit the Dignity and Respect Policy for Board's consideration, attached with the minutes.
- Ms Power to submit the Dignity and Respect Policy to the Personnel and Appointments Committee for noting.
- The Dignity and Respect Working Group to devise the launch and communication strategy for the policy.
- Ms Power and Ms Campos to investigate sources of funding for the launch, publication of policy and awareness materials.

**Eqal/07-08/33 Code of Practice Applying to the Employment of People with
XXX Disabilities**

The Committee welcomed the revised Code of Practice presented by Ms Campos, which has been updated to include the Disability Act 2005 and Employment Equality Acts 1998-2004 provisions and to provide clear guidelines to support staff with disabilities. The Code has been revised as part of the Disability Review undertaken as a collaborative project

between the Staff Office, the Disability Services Co-ordinator and the Equality Officer.

Ms Campos outlined the consultation process undertaken in preparation of the final draft, including the Staff Office, staff with disabilities, Partnership Committee and other stakeholders. The response received from staff was positive to this process and brought to light three main issues: the need to involve staff on an on-going basis; importance of attitudes, training and awareness; and the need for accessibility to be given greater consideration.

The Committee noted the central provisions in the Code of Practice to ensure that staff with disabilities can develop their full potential in College:

- Clarifies legal entitlements and duties, particularly in relation to the concept of reasonable accommodation.
- Outlines roles and responsibilities in relation to the Code, including the Disability Service's new staff remit, the Staff Office and Occupational Health.
- Supports disclosure and promotes an environment where disclosure is possible.
- Provides clear guidelines on reasonable accommodation and step by step procedures in the appendix.
- Reinforces the role of the manager as central to supporting a staff member with a disability.
- Recognizes the importance of workplace attitudes and outlines a commitment to training and awareness.
- Commits to actively promoting the recruitment and retention of staff with disabilities.
- Incorporates the provision for funding accommodations from the College's central fund.

In relation to the provisions for targeted recruitment measures, Ms Campos and Mr Treanor advised on the range of targeted initiatives which may be available, and Mr McMahon expressed the Staff Office's support and expertise in this area of recruitment.

The Committee discussed the resourcing of this policy and noted that accessibility and egressability were budgeted for as part of any new building development; difficulties around improving accessibility in existing buildings were often related to heritage restrictions rather than cost. Mr Treanor brought the Committee's attention to the full access audit currently being carried out in College. Ms Power advised that the relevance of this policy to staff on long term sick leave may have some cost implications.

The Committee noted that the next phase of the project would involve the development of guidelines to support staff with disabilities (for staff and managers) and the design of a communication and awareness strategy. Ms Campos also reported that the Code would be reviewed annually by the Disability Services Co-ordinator and relevant stakeholders and an action plan devised to ensure its implementation.

ACTIONS:

- Ms Campos to submit the Code of Practice for the Board's consideration and approval, together with the minutes.

- Ms Campos, the Staff Office and Mr Treanor to develop the staff and managers' resources, and devise an awareness and communication strategy.
- The Disability Service Co-ordinator to report on the implementation of the Code annually.

Eqal/07-08/34 Statutes Review Group Dr Eoin O'Dell made a presentation to the Committee outlining the Statutes Review process and the issues of particular relevance to the Equality Committee. Dr O'Dell highlighted five key areas:

- The Statutes Preamble, expressing values of equality and accessibility in non-legalistic language.
- Compliance –outlining the central role of the Board in legal compliance, in particular with regard to the 1997 Universities Act and equality legislation.
- Committees- for the first time general provisions were to be made for the existence of Committees.
- Language – the language had been reviewed throughout the document to address the original gender bias, and ensure its neutrality.
- College Community – the 'Chapter on Women' (Chapter XXI) is being reviewed to incorporate general provisions on student and staff rights, dignity and respect and equality.

Dr O'Dell advised the Committee of the high-level principles that would inform the Statutes, with a view to ensuring its durability. The Statutes would provide the structure to enable compliance and the detail can be worked out in the Schedule and College policy.

The Committee welcomed the opportunity to discuss these issues, enquiring whether this review had considered other equality grounds aside from gender. The possibility of detailing the nine equality discrimination grounds in the preamble was suggested, and would be considered by the Statutes Working Party. The Working Party would also examine the provisions for gender balance in decision-making in relation to the Committee section. The desirability of a positive statement about the College community reflecting all the members of the community (aside from discrimination grounds) was also suggested.

ACTIONS:

The Statutes Review Group to circulate the chapter on the College Community to the Equality Committee for comment.

Section B – Implementation issues

Eqal/07-08/35 IUA Equality Group Funding The Committee noted the funding application made to the Equality Authority by the IUA Equality Group. Ms Campos reported that the project had been supported by the Equality Authority, and incorporated into their framework submission to the EU for the European Year of Equal Opportunities Legacy Funding to the sum of € 15,000 (document circulated). The IUA Group proposal includes three projects as follows:

- Establish a Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender (LGBT) learning network to support LGBT staff working in higher education in Ireland (2 workshops): € 5,000

- Developing the LGBT initiative for use with other equality grounds: € 5,000
- Creative competition on 'Challenging Stereotypes': €5,000 (Challenging Stereotypes was also selected as the Group's overall theme for 2008-2009).

The Committee hoped that the Challenging Stereotypes competition would build on the experience and excellent work carried out by the IUA Group previously in the form of the 'Changing Perspectives' photographic competition and calendar. Mr Hodson suggested that the LGBT initiative should be timed to coincide with Rainbow Week in College and strengthen connections with the existing LGBT student society.

The Committee regretted that there had been no further development communicated by the Equality Authority in relation to College's Equality Review and Application Plan application, which had been expected for tender in December 2007.

Eqal/07-08/36 Equality Fund Terms of Reference Ms Campos advised the Committee of the revised terms of reference for the Equality Fund, as circulated. The Fund's terms of reference were reviewed to specify the scope of the Fund to include staff and students, and outline with greater clarity the criteria for the allocation of funds, as per the recommendations of the Committee (see minute Eqal/07-08/21). The terms of reference were also expanded to include provisions relating to the management of the fund, the feedback required from participants, and review mechanisms for the Committee sub-group.

Eqal/07-08/37 Parental Group Update Ms Power advised the Committee on the implementation of the recommendations regarding the Parental Group (see minute Eqal/07-08/24) and the role of the 'Buddy' as outlined in the circulated document. The Committee welcomed the establishment of the Buddy System as an innovative support for parents within the university sector. The Committee suggested that once the Buddy System was in operation for new parents, the possibility of extending it to other support groups, such as parents with children with disabilities, parents of teenagers, or people with caring responsibilities, should be investigated.

Ms Power also advised the Committee of the Parental Group's efforts to secure a breastfeeding room and baby changing facilities in College. The Committee considered that the provision of breastfeeding facilities and at least one baby-changing facility per Faculty should be addressed, and was advised of the new responsibilities in relation to space allocation attached to the role of Faculty Dean. Mr Treanor suggested that the enabled toilets may be adapted for baby-changing purposes and also drew the Committee's attention to the absence of a 'respite room' in any of the Faculties to provide a resting space to unwell staff or students.

ACTION:

- Ms Power to investigate funding possibilities for the provision of breastfeeding and baby-changing facilities, including the adaptation of enabled toilets.
- The Parental Group and Staff Office to consider the extension of the parental buddy system to other parent and carer groups.

Section C – Matters for noting

Eqal/07-08/38 Recruitment Monitoring Pilot Ms K Campos reported on the first three months of the equality monitoring implemented amongst recruitment applicants, and circulated a sample of the type of data the monitoring system could provide. The Committee noted that it would be of particular value to compare the profile of applicants and that of appointed staff. The Committee also noted the markedly international profile of applicants completing the form.

ACTION: Ms Campos to examine the extension of the recruitment monitoring to newly appointed staff.

Eqal/07-08/39 Information on Mediation The Committee noted the document on the role of the mediator circulated by Ms Power.

Eqal/07-08/40 Reporting of Disability matters to the Equality Committee Mr Treanor **XXX** Informed the Committee that due to the re-structuring process it had been proposed to dissolve the sub-committees of the Student Services Committee. The Committee noted that in future it was expected that disability policy matters would be reported directly to the Equality Committee by Mr Treanor, and student-specific matters would be reported to the Student Services Committee. The Committee considered this system would facilitate the transmission of information to Board.

Any Other Business

Eqal/07-08/41 Contact Persons’ resignations The Committee noted the resignation of Tim Jackson and Michael Slevin from the Contact Persons Panel and appreciated their contribution and work as part of the Panel. Ms Power reported that there had been several expressions of interest to join the Panel, and that the new appointment procedure, including an awareness session, would be applied next week. Ms Power also advised that an external expert from the Rape Crisis Centre would be part of the interview panel.

Eqal/07-08/42 Women’s Career Progression Group Ms Campos advised that she would, in collaboration with the Director of WiSER, be investigating the most appropriate means of progressing outstanding issues from the Women’s Career Progression Group finalised in 2007.

ACTION: Ms Campos and the Director of WiSER to report on appropriate means of consultation and progressing women’s career advancement in College.

Signed

Date