

UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN

Trinity College

EQUALITY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting held on 4 March 2009 at 2pm in the Secretary's Office Board Room, 1 College Green.

Present: Dr S Ryan, Ms A FitzGerald, Mr D Treanor, Ms L Power, Ms A Murphy (GSU), Mr T McMahon, Ms R Torode, Ms C Hannon, Mr D Quinn, Dr O Doyle, Prof C O'Morain*, Ms K Campos McCormack.

Apologies: Vice-Provost, Prof E Drew, Ms C Byrne, Ms T Moloney, Ms O Foley (SU).

Present for: *Eqal/08-09/16-22.

Items for Board attention are denoted XXX

Eqal/08-09/15 Minutes The minutes of the previous meeting, 20 November 2008, were approved and signed.

Eqal/08-09/16 Matters arising (Eqal/08-09/07) Ms Campos advised the Committee that the Gender and Promotions Report had been submitted to the Provost for his consideration. This report would be discussed by Executive Officers and Ms Campos will report in greater detail at the next Equality Committee. Ms Campos also advised that the Annual Monitoring Report 2008 was being considered further by the Monitoring Advisory Group.

(Eqal/08-09/14) Ms Campos advised the Committee that the Equality Authority had now confirmed that it had not received further funding for the Equality Review and Action Plan (ERAP) scheme from the Department of Justice.

ACTION: Ms Campos to report on the Gender and Promotions Report and the Annual Equality Monitoring Report at the next Equality Committee.

Section A – Policy issues

Eqal/08-09/17 XXX Ms Campos presented the **Equality Committee Annual Report to Board 2007-2008** and Equality Officer Annual Report (included as an appendix to this document). This report includes the Committee's terms of reference, key issues addressed and membership; the Equality Officer's report outlines the principal activities carried out by this office and includes a financial statement and service plan. The Committee welcomed the report, which reflected the scope of activities addressed by the Committee in relation to policy development and awareness over the past academic year 2007-2008. Ms Campos highlighted several aspects of the implementation of the Disability Act 2005 (staff disability survey; Accessible Information Guidelines; Disability Review and review of the Code of

Practice); the development of the Dignity and Respect policy (together with annual reporting from the Contact Persons and the Staff Office, and guidelines for Contact Person selection); the development of data collection and monitoring systems (including the Annual Equality Monitoring Report and recruitment monitoring); the involvement in inter-university awareness activities and the development and administration of the Equality Fund. The Committee discussed the need for ongoing awareness at departmental and administration level in relation to accessible information and other aspects of the Disability Act. Ms Campos advised the Committee that the recruitment equality monitoring programme would continue to be developed to fit with the introduction of e-recruitment systems by the Staff Office.

ACTION: Ms K Campos to submit the Equality Committee Annual Report to Board together with the minutes.

Section B – Implementation issues

Eqal/08-09/18 Report of the Contact Persons 2008 and Staff Office Report

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Ms Torode presented the Report of the Contact Persons 2008, circulated, outlining recent policy and membership developments. A report on the incidence of bullying and harassment presenting at the Student Counselling Service was tabled. The Committee welcomed the implementation of previous recommendations in relation to training, awareness, confidentiality, and the development of the Dignity and Respect Policy. Ms Torode reported on the number and profile of cases. The Committee noted the improved referral procedure from the Staff Office and increased awareness of the Dignity and Respect supports amongst staff. The Committee discussed different avenues for increasing student awareness, including the role of Tutors and increased contact with student bodies.

Ms Torode highlighted that complainants were continuing to present at a late stage, with considerable personal and employment impact, and that there was evidence of a small number of long-term recurrent cases of bullying and of repeat alleged harassers. The Committee discussed the difficulties of dealing with cases of repeat alleged harassers while maintaining confidentiality, particularly where the complainant did not wish to make a formal complaint. It was noted the College had a duty of care towards the complainant and towards the alleged harasser, and that a mechanism should be devised that would protect staff with regard to health and safety concerns and natural justice.

Ms Power presented the report of the Staff Office, circulated, on the incidence and profile of bullying and harassment cases for 2008, noting that approximately 50% of the cases that were in the Staff Office report (approx. 12) were also reflected in the Contact Persons Report. She stated that several of the cases proceeded to formal investigations (having first been through mediation/informal process). The Committee noted the negative impact on the individual, and the long term repercussions on colleagues and the work environment. Ms Power drew the Committee's attention to the improved procedures regarding confidentiality included in the new Dignity and Respect policy and to the increased use of the Employee Assistance Programme. Ms Power advised the Committee that the relation with external bodies and the implementation of the Dignity and Respect policy on off-campus locations were being examined.

ACTION: The Staff Office and the Contact Persons Panel to examine the issue of repeat alleged harassers and to develop a mechanism for dealing with such situations.

Eqal/08-09/19 Dignity and Respect communication programme Ms Power tabled copies of the Dignity and Respect booklet and advised the Committee the circulated training scheme had been initiated with modules on Supervisory and Heads of School training sessions, specific investigator training, open awareness sessions, and presentations on Faculty/School Executive meetings. Ms Campos advised the Committee that communication and awareness raising amongst student service areas would also be a part of this programme. It was suggested that Schools be involved to a greater extent in the responsibility of raising awareness, and that the communication campaign initiated this year for students should be carried out annually.

Eqal/08-09/20 College's Access Strategy Ms Hannon reported on the progress of the working group established to advise the College on its Access strategy for the College's Strategic Plan. The Committee noted a draft first report had been completed outlining the current Access situation and setting out recommendations, including the increase of the current 15% target for non-traditional students. Ms Hannon advised that the achievement of the current target varied greatly amongst Schools, with some Schools exceeding the target (mainly in Nursing courses and the School of Social Work and Social Policy) and others in the Faculty of Engineering Maths and Science having a much lower proportion of non traditional students. Mr Treanor advised the Committee that the group was recommending that targets be set at different levels, and with different strategies, depending on the Faculty/School. Suggested strategies included modification of matriculation requirements and broadening of access routes. The Committee noted that the group would be recommending greater mainstreaming of Access initiatives in College and the introduction of an Access contact at School Executive level.

ACTION: Ms Hannon to report to the Equality Committee when the working group report is finalised.

Eqal/08-09/21 TAP Alumni Strategy Ms Hannon reported on the research recently undertaken by TAP on alumni progression and employment. The Committee noted the important increase in the numbers of TAP students entering College and subsequently graduating. The Committee noted that grade achievement of non traditional students compared favourably with that of the main body of students, and that non-traditional students were particularly concentrated in the Education and Health fields. Prof O'Morain drew the Committee's attention to the greater gender imbalance amongst non traditional students (predominantly female). Ms Hannon also advised that 75% of former TAP students were in employment, with a starting salary in line with the average graduate salary reported by the HEA, and that 66% had gone on to do further study. The 25% not in employment are mainly engaged in further study. The Committee welcomed the progression of TAP and the positive feedback and outcomes of students who had participated in TAP initiatives.

Eqal/08-09/22 Parental Group update Ms Power reported on the progress of the Parental Group which had facilitated the implementation of many of the original recommendations, including the fitting of baby changing facilities in the enabled toilets in the Arts Building, Árás an Phiairsaigh and the Hamilton,

the parental Buddy system and the organization of talks which would be of interest to parents in College. The Committee noted the particularly positive response to the talk facilitated by the College Disability Service for parents with children with disabilities, and suggested there might be room for further supporting staff with children with different types of disabilities. The Committee welcomed the successful work carried out by the Parental Group, with the involvement of both fathers and mothers in its activities, and suggested different avenues for further liaising with the student parental group and to encourage the participation of weekly paid staff. Ms Power advised the Committee that the group was having difficulties in securing a venue for the breastfeeding room (funded by the Equality Fund) and that this would be progressed with the Estates Management Group. The Committee agreed that extensions to the 6 month time limit could be provided to Equality Fund applicants where necessary upon request.

ACTIONS:

- The Equality Fund to facilitate an extension of the 6 month period to Equality Fund recipients, where justified, upon request.
- The Parental Group to liaise with the Disability Service in seeking to support parents of children with disabilities.

Eqal/08-09/23 College Accessibility Audit Mr Treanor advised the Committee that a physical audit of College buildings and facilities had been completed, and that an Action Plan would be rolled out to address access issues. In this respect, the Committee noted that the cobblestone reduction programme was due to be piloted over the Summer, the Pavilion bar was to be made accessible and ramps were to be located in Front Square. Mr Treanor also advised the Committee that Trinity's Disability Act complaints procedure had been selected as a model of good practice by the National Disability Authority for presentation at an upcoming Access conference.

Eqal/08-09/24 Launch of the Supporting Staff with Disabilities Guide for Staff and Managers Ms Campos advised the Committee of the launch of the Guide in December by Minister of State Séan Haughey, and the distribution of the Guide to Heads of School and Departments via the Faculty HR Advisors, which would be extended over the coming months to administrative and other areas.

Eqal/08-09/25 3% Employment target census Ms Campos advised the Committee of the implementation programme for College to report to the HEA on the 3% employment target. The Committee was advised that members of the IUA Equality and Diversity group had met with HEA representatives to discuss concerns raised in correspondence in relation to the census methodology, response rate, confidentiality and reliability of data. The HEA requested Universities to report in the spirit of the legislation, and this was agreed by the IUA HR Managers Group, having secured a deadline extension until 31 May 2009. Ms Campos outlined the principal features of the new census proposed by the National Disability Authority, which would include the definition of disability from the Disability Act 2005 and a simple yes/no option. Ms Campos advised the Committee that the census was expected to be rolled out to all staff (including permanent, contract and temporary, with the only exclusion being staff on the casual payroll) in early April by a combination method of online survey and paper returns. Ms Campos also advised the Committee that

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once confidentiality had been assured the data would be stored in a secure part of CORE and updated at recruitment.

ACTION: Ms Campos and the Staff Office to liaise in the implementation of the full staff disability census.

Eqal/08-09/26 IUA Equality Group Legacy funding projects The Committee noted that the first tranche payment (€7,500) of funding secured from the Equality Authority by the IUA Equality Group had been received: a full day workshop focussing on the issues around establishing an inter-university LGBT network would be taking place on 14 March in UCC; and the second workshop for extending this learning to other staff groups on grounds such as disability and gender would take place on 27 April in Trinity. Ms Campos also advised the Committee that the Challenging Stereotypes creative competition for staff and students had been launched, and this year had extended the range of media accepted to include art, photography and text entries.

Section C – Matters for noting

Eqal/08-09/27 New appointments to Contact Persons Ms Power advised the Committee that there were currently 9 members on the Contact Person Panel, including two male Contact Persons, and that further Contact Persons might be recruited to a maximum of 12.

Eqal/08-09/28 Equality Fund projects 2008-2009 A list of the projects receiving funding from the Equality Fund for 2008-2009 was circulated. Ms Campos drew the Committee's attention to several projects which had already been initiated including the Student Parents talks, Rainbow Week, Women in Science film series, Sports Centre Family Day and the Gender and Islam workshops.

Any Other Business

Eqal/08-09/29 International Women's Week 2009 Ms Campos tabled a list of activities taking place to celebrate International Women's Week with the collaboration of several departments in College including WiSER, the Science Gallery, Drama, Music and Media Technologies, Mature Students Society, TAP, Mature Students Officer, Careers Advisory Service, Trinity Enterprise Centre, CAPSL, the College Art Curator and the School of Religions and Theology.

Signed

Date