

**University Of Dublin**  
**Trinity College**  
**Equality Committee**

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**Minutes of a meeting held on Friday 28th May at 930a.m. in the Board Room, House 1.**

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Present: Dr S Ryan (Chair), Ms A FitzGerald\*, Mr D Treanor, Ms L Power, Ms A Taylor, Prof E Drew, Dr M Ó Siochrú, Ms C Hannon, Mr D Quinn, Ms R Torode, Ms K Campos McCormack (secretary).

Apologies: Vice-Provost, Prof C O'Morain, Ms C Byrne, Dr O Doyle Ms T Moloney, Mr C Cashman (SU), Ms A Murphy (GSU).

In attendance: Ms C Roughneen.

\*Present for: Eqa/09-10/25-33

The Chair thanked the Committee for its work over the last two years.

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**Items for Board attention are denoted XXX**

**Eqa/09-10/25 Minutes** The minutes of the previous meeting, 25 February 2010, were approved subject to the following amendments:

- (a) Mention of Prof E Drew be deleted from the apologies section
- (b) Mention of Ms R Torode be noted as present

**Eqa/09-10/26 Matters arising**

**XXX Mandatory interview panel training (Eqa/09-10/04&14)** Ms Taylor advised the Committee that a project group had been established to examine the implementation of mandatory training to staff participating in interview panels. Initial consultation with the Faculties indicated a preference for online e-learning modules; and the Staff Office was exploring a combination method (online and classroom based). Ms Taylor advised that the Staff Office had consulted with the Equality Officer and other universities and noted there was good interest in an online diversity programme customised with a recruitment module. Ms Campos advised the Committee she was liaising with the IUA Equality Group on this matter and that the Group were currently compiling costings from three providers and the matter would be discussed at the IUA HR Directors meeting in due course. Ms Taylor reminded the Committee that not all recruitment was handled by the Recruitment Office and it was suggested by the Chair that the Committee consider this matter in greater detail at the next meeting.

**Flexible working arrangements (Eqa/09-10/02&14)** The Committee welcomed the figures circulated by Ms Power providing a breakdown of part-time staff by grade and detailing the uptake of different leave arrangements. The Committee noted an increase in the uptake of force majeure leave and Ms Campos drew

attention to the low uptake of parental leave amongst fathers. The Committee welcomed Prof Drew's suggestion that she could provide the Committee with further research into attitudes to paternity leave and other family leave.

**Dignity and Respect (Equal/09-10/16)** Ms FitzGerald advised the Committee that the action regarding the interaction of different complaint procedures had been pursued with a meeting with the Vice-Provost, in addition to the meetings taking place between the Senior Lecturer, Dean of Graduate Studies, Personnel Officer and Equality Officer. Ms FitzGerald advised that a method involving some changes to the Dignity and Respect Policy informal procedures had been discussed and a proposed amendment would be submitted to the Committee for consideration in due course.

**Actions:**

- Ms FitzGerald to submit proposed amendment to the Dignity and Respect Policy.
- Prof Drew to circulate findings from further research undertaken examining attitudes to family leave in Ireland.
- The Staff Office and Ms Campos to liaise on the implementation of mandatory interview panel training and the possible IUA online diversity module purchase.
- The Committee to consider the implementation of mandatory training for recruitment processes not managed by the Staff Office.

## **Section A – Policy issues**

**Equal/09-10/27 Accessible Information Policy** Mr Treanor outlined the actions undertaken in the last year to implement the Accessible Information Policy (document XXX circulated), including:

- A full information audit of all administrative areas, comprising websites, staff awareness of accessible information and printed information.
- Implementation in academic areas was reviewed and supported by the Trinity Inclusive Curriculum project.
- The 'Everyday Accessibility' training programme ran weekly workshops for administrative and academic staff in March.
- Liaison with ISS regarding the embedding of accessible information training in the current ISS training programmes.
- Meetings with the Procurement Office in order to devise guidelines for the purchase of IT products and ensure compliance with the policy.
- Liaison with the Web Office to further enhance the accessibility features of the College web, particularly at local level.

The Committee welcomed the progress made in implementing this policy. The Committee suggested the usefulness of having online tips available for academic staff, and Mr Treanor advised that a specific training programme tailored to academic staff was being devised with CAPSL. The Committee noted that the switch to Microsoft Office 2007 would facilitate the implementation process given the improved accessibility features of this package, but noted that College does not currently require staff to transfer to this package and Office 2003 is still widely in place.

**Equal/09-10/28 Equality Policy** a discussion paper was circulated by Ms Campos outlining the key objectives, content and structure for the new Equality Policy. The Committee noted this policy would replace the current Access and Equality Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy and Equal Employment Opportunity: Principles in employment practice, streamlining equality provisions for staff and students. Ms Campos advised that the proposed policy would have a greater focus on service delivery and will be updated in line with Equal Status legislation and good practice guidelines.

The Committee discussed the implementation and resource implications of the policy, and suggested that definitions of key concepts in the policy be included. Ms Campos advised that complaint procedures would be addressed in part by the Service Charter currently in preparation, and Ms Torode suggested proofing the symmetry of different complaint procedures. The Committee also suggested the policy provide a map of equality related activities and responsibilities in College. The Committee noted that further consultation would be completed over the summer period with the Senior Administrative group, Service areas and Staff Office, and that a final draft would be submitted at the next Committee.

**Action:** Ms Campos to submit a draft for approval to the Committee following further consultation.

**Equal/09-10/29 Dignity and Respect policy update** Ms Power reported on the two issues raised regarding time-frames for dignity and respect investigations and dealing with complex cases (Equal/09-10/05&16). Ms Power advised that following consultation with the GSU Vice-President and the Equality Officer a series of recommendations were proposed regarding time-frames:

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- Recommendation 1: a paragraph be included in the Dignity and Respect Policy regarding time-lines (circulated). A sample schedule (circulated) will be available to Contact Persons to discuss with complainants in detail where appropriate, and regular updates will be provided at all stages.
- Recommendation 2: the Contact Person should discuss expectations around outcomes from the process with the complainant.
- Recommendation 3: following the issuing of the final report a meeting is held between the complainant and the relevant reviewer, noting the complainant may not be informed of the status of any disciplinary measures.

The Committee welcomed these recommendations and discussed the difficulties in providing a guideline time-frame and balancing the need for proper procedure and prompt resolution. The Committee noted that every effort was made by the Staff Office to ensure a prompt resolution of cases, and was advised that where a delay arose it was mainly due to delays in responses from participants. The Committee discussed further steps that could be taken, such as a provision to appoint a second investigator should the designated investigator be unavailable. The Committee was advised that the implementation of recommendation 3 would require consultation with the Faculty Deans.

The draft guidelines for the Contact Persons in dealing with complex cases (circulated) was welcomed by the Committee. The guidelines outline a route of discussion for Contact Persons to raise the issue with the Staff Office or College Secretary should they become aware of a complex or high risk case (where there are several complainants or a repeat alleged harasser for example). Ms Power advised that this guideline might be relevant for the additional duty of care to

under 18s - Ms FitzGerald advised the Committee in this regard that a child protection policy was currently in draft stage.

**Actions:**

- Ms Power to include the proposed time-frame paragraph in the Dignity and Respect Policy.
- The Staff Office and Panel of Contact Persons to implement the recommendations discussed regarding time-lines and outcome expectations. Ms Power to consult with Deans regarding the recommendation to hold a final meeting with reviewer.
- The guidelines on dealing with complex cases to be outlined in the Contact Person Code of Practice.
- The Staff Office to consider making a provision for replacing the designated investigator where necessary in the interest of timeliness.

### **Section B – Implementation issues**

**Eqal/09-10/30 Equality Committee action implementation summary** The table circulated was welcomed by the Equality Committee for providing a useful summary of the actions implemented over the last two years. The Chair noted that most actions had been completed or were due to be completed shortly and that this document might be of use to the incoming Chair.

**Eqal/09-10/31 Equality Monitoring Report 2009-2010** The Committee welcomed the draft report circulated by the Equality Committee and noted that this monitoring exercise fulfilled the recommendations made by the HEA High Level Advisory Group Report on University Equality Policies (2004) and was unique in the Republic of Ireland university sector. Ms Campos advised that the action regarding the E-strategy group and data consistency (Eqal/09-10/24) had been followed-up, and the Monitoring Advisory Group would be submitting a paper outlining data requirements to the E-Strategy group; it was also hoped that the new student data system would address many of the consistency issues raised in previous Committee discussions.

Ms Campos brought the Committee's attention to some highlights from the report discussed by the Monitoring Advisory Group:

- Continued under-representation of women in decision-making and senior positions (academic and administrative), with fluctuations indicating no clear progress.
- The employment moratorium could have a greater impact on women who were more likely to be employed on contract in academic areas than their male colleagues.
- Difficulty in collecting staff disability data and encouraging response from staff with and without disabilities.
- Continued progress in incrementing the numbers of non-traditional students in all three categories (TAP, Mature and Disability).
- The increase in the proportion of non-Irish students, which might have implications in terms of inclusive practice and service delivery, and the variations in the gender profile of students by Faculty.

Ms Taylor brought the Committee's attention to the 'new blood' posts not Government funded that would be facilitating rejuvenation across all Faculties. The Committee discussed the profile of recruitment applicants in relation to disability and the need to attract candidates from a diverse pool. Ms Taylor

advised the Committee that the Staff Office had compiled an initial workforce profile report for the Planning Group and part of the data concerned staff profiles in relation to age and retirement dates as this presented a succession planning challenge for the College to manage in the next few years. This data had also been compared with the recent HEFCE (UK) report providing further insight for the College. Ms Campos also discussed some areas for further data development highlighted by the Monitoring Group, and Prof Drew suggested that providing data individually to each Faculty might be very useful.

**Actions:**

- Ms Campos to circulate the Monitoring Report 2009-2010 with the suggested amendments to Council and to Board with the Equality Committee minutes.
- Ms Campos to facilitate a copy of the Merit Bar Report to Dr Ó Siochrú once this has been signed-off by the Vice-Provost/CAO.

**Eqal/09-10/32 02 Ability Awards** The Committee welcomed the news of Trinity being selected as an Ability Company at the recent 02 Ability Awards organized by Kanchi. Trinity achieved the status of Ability company in all six categories of the awards: Leadership, Customer Service, Environmental Accessibility, Recruitment and Selection, Learning Development and Progression and Retention and Wellbeing. In addition, College was nominated for an Award in three categories, including overall Private-Sector winner. Ms Campos highlighted the positive message this sent out to prospective students and staff and the Committee discussed next steps in communicating the Ability Company status internally and externally.

**Eqal/09-10/33 Equality Fund** Ms Campos advised the Committee of the completion of 9 of the 16 projects funded, and drew the Committee's attention to the events taking place in the next few days. The range of successful events supported by the Equality Fund was welcomed by the Committee, who looked forward to a more detailed report to be provided by Ms Campos once all projects had been completed. Ms Campos suggested the possibility of developing a logo for the Equality Fund to raise its profile internally.

**Actions:** Ms Campos to provide the Committee with a detailed report upon completion of the 2009-2010 Equality Fund projects.

### **Section C – Matters for noting**

**Eqal/09-10/34 Disability Service 10th Anniversary** Mr Treanor advised the Committee of the upcoming events to celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Disability Service, including a symposium and dinner, and the publication of the booklet 'Ten Years of Student Experiences'.

**Eqal/09-10/35 Contact Persons** The Committee confirmed Orla McCarthy and John Munnelly as members of the Contact Persons panel for a further period of three years, as requested by Ms Power.

### **Any Other Business**

**Eqal/09-10/36 Parental Group** Ms Power advised the Committee that a survey had been completed amongst parents involved in the Parental Group enquiring what activities would be of most interest to them with the following suggestions: receiving policy updates, a bring your child to work day or a Family Fun Day. Ms Power also noted that take-up on networking activities was low across

universities and that she would be calling a meeting of the Parental Group to provide an opportunity to re-activate the network and consider strategies to involve new members.

**Eqal/09-10/36 Dignity and Respect contact people intervarsity workshop** Ms Power drew the Committee's attention to the recent intervarsity workshop which took place in Trinity and served as an opportunity for contact persons to share good practice in dealing with dignity and respect cases in a confidential environment, exploring issues such as complex cases and supporting alleged harassers. The Committee also noted that College's Code of Practice for Contact persons and recruitment procedure were being used as a model by other universities.

Signed .....

Date .....