

University Of Dublin
Trinity College
Equality Committee

Minutes of a meeting held on Tuesday 12th June 2012 at 3pm in the Board Room, House 1.

Present: Dr N Marples (Chair), Ms A FitzGerald*, Mr M McAndrew (GSU), Ms L Power, Ms C Hannon, Prof M McCarron**, Dr M Ó Siochrú***, Ms L Miller (SU), Ms K Campos McCormack (secretary).

Apologies: Vice-Provost, Ms A Taylor, Ms C Byrne. Mr D Treanor, Dr O Doyle.

In attendance: Ms Nicole Jagusch ****

Present for: *Eqal/11-12/26-27; ** Eqal/11-12/26-29; ***Eqal/11-12/26-31, ****Eqal/11-12/28

Items for Board attention are denoted XXX

Eqal/11-12/26 Minutes Mr Ó Siochrú clarified that the Vice-Provost had arranged for the Merit Bar meeting referred to in minute Eqal/11-12/21. The minutes of the previous meeting, 28th May 2012, were approved and signed.

Matters arising Minuted below

Section A – Policy issues

Eqal/11-12/27 Working Group on the Merit Bar Report The Chair introduced the report
XXX produced by the Working Group on the Merit Bar for circulation to Council. Ms Campos advised the report was being circulated to the Committee to view before its submission to Board. This report had arisen from a joint submission made by the Chair of the HR Committee and the Chair of the Equality Committee. Ms FitzGerald noted that the issue of gender imbalance at the Merit Bar had arisen initially in the context of a report on promotions developed by the Equality Officer for the Provost at that time; the report noted that proportionately fewer eligible women academics were applying for review at the merit bar. The Chair advised that this issue had been identified as a problem specifically in the Faculty of Health Sciences and School of Nursing and Midwifery. The working group considered four points regarding: 1) the necessity of teaching as well as research being part of the portfolio all lecturers; 2) the appropriateness of the weightings currently employed in assessing Lecturers at the Merit Bar; 3) the development of a communication and education process regarding the Merit Bar; 4) the

appropriateness or otherwise of mandatory review of eligible staff at the Merit Bar.

Prof McCarron, who had been a member of the working group, responded to some of the findings in the original Merit Bar report by the Equality Officer, noting that it was not the case that there was an uneven distribution of teaching and administrative load in the School of Nursing and Midwifery and there was a work load allocation system in place. Prof McCarron also brought the Committee's attention to the fact that a dedicated career development officer had been appointed in the School of Nursing and Midwifery and that there existed a visiting Professor programme in order to promote research development in the School. Dr Ó Siochrú, a member of the Junior Academic Progression Committee, noted that steps had been taken to address most of the issues raised in the initial Merit Bar report regarding the valuing of research and teaching. He advised that the Committee took great care in assessing cases individually and providing detailed feedback. Dr Ó Siochrú agreed with the report that communication of how the Merit Bar functioned was a key issue: a two-way process where Heads of School need to be informed. Dr Ó Siochrú expressed some concerns about the recommendation on page 4 that candidates who were held at the Bar would be referred to the Faculty Dean, since this issue really was within the remit of the Head of School or Discipline.

The Chair brought the Committee's attention to the recommendation on page 6 that the Merit Bar be placed at the 11th to 12th point of the pay scale instead of the 12th to 13th point, and expressed her concern at this proposal. The Committee discussed this issue at length. The Chair noted that given that most lecturers come in at the 8th point of the scale there would only be 3 years for them to attain the Merit Bar, and that this might not be sufficient time for a new lecturer to establish teaching and a strong research activity. The Chair drew particular attention to the situation encountered by some Lecturers who could not currently complete research in their fields because of the absence of available funding. The Chair also drew the Committee's attention to a possible gender impact of the measure given that the majority of Lecturer's below the bar were female. Prof McCarron advised that this proposal was to ensure that there was also an economic incentive to apply for review. Dr Ó Siochrú discussed the new research metrics document which comprised 25 research metrics, noting that there were many other types of activities that would be shown to indicate research activity aside from publications. In Dr Ó Siochrú's view there was a high degree of success in passing the Merit Bar (90-95%) and the requirements were aligned with the expected activities of a Lecturer below the bar, including teaching, research and administration.

The Committee generally did not share the Chair's concerns regarding this proposal. Other views expressed by members of the Committee were:

- The change in pay scale would not have an excessively negative impact, noting the majority of people employed in College were on lower salaries, and that it would be an opportunity for academics who sought earlier opportunity for advancement.
- If an academic could not do research because of an absence of funding it would be reasonable for the academic to consider other areas of research and College should be made aware of this issue.
- The principal issue in relation to the Merit Bar was whether it was a fair process for all eligible staff; and whether Lecturers were provided with

appropriate career guidance and development to enable them to progress.

Clarification was sought on the recommendation regarding mentors on page 6, given that not all academic staff were part of the mentoring scheme. Prof McCarron advised that this recommendation was in relation to whichever person (head of discipline, mentor etc.) was supporting the Lecturer. Ms Campos welcomed the recommendation but noted that one of the issues that had emerged in the interviews with staff deferring review was precisely the absence of mentorship or career discussion or guidance with the head of discipline.

Dr Ó Siochrú noted the concerns expressed by the Chair in relation to the pay scale change and advised he would raise this matter for discussion when the working group report was considered at Council. The Committee supported the main content of the report.

Eqal/11-12/28 Student parent project The Committee welcomed the interim report on student parents presented by Ms Nicole Jagusch. This project was funded by the College Equality Fund and developed by Ms Jagusch (UG student) and Ms Paulina Abzieher (PG student) with the collaboration Dr Andrew Loxley in the School of Education and Connor O'Donoghue (PhD student). Ms Jagusch outlined the rationale for the project, explaining that both Ms Abzieher and Ms Jagusch were student single parents who felt the need for acknowledging and improving the experience of student parents in College and had sought to carry out initial research amongst student parents, since there was little information on this group of students. A survey was distributed to all students and in a one week period they had an extraordinary response of 385 student parents. Following the initial survey there had been interviews with student parents and a focus group discussion to discuss findings and decide next steps for the project. Ms Jagusch advised that there was great support and interest in continuing to participate in the project amongst student parents; however one of the main challenges facing student parents is time for extra-curricular activities.

Ms Jagusch outlined some of the key findings and recommendations:

- Student parent policy: there is currently no comprehensive policy dealing with student parents – encompassing academic matters, maternity leave, supports etc.
- Need for a College resource for student parents on the TCD website, for e.g. 'studying with children', where parents could find all the relevant information in one place – this would also be a resource for prospective students.
- Need for a contact person for student parents to liaise with for different queries, rather than having to deal with issues on an individual basis.
- Financial support – information on available financial supports was very important given the cutbacks to welfare allowances.
- Childcare and time were two key concerns for student parents. Participants had suggested a drop-in childcare service or shared baby-sitting.
- Placements were of particular concern to parents on certain courses, since there were no provisions for flexibility to take account of childcare responsibilities.

Ms Jagusch outlined some of the areas participants had prioritized for next steps for the project:

- Welcome event for student parents during student orientation – this would also help to involve more parents in the student network.
- Facebook page for student parents – this has been set up but had not been promoted yet.
- Project findings would be circulated to participants and a final report would be drawn up.
- Establish a student parent society for student parents and supporters of student parents.

The Committee noted that some of the actions could be developed by student parents while other issues would need to be addressed by College. Committee members noted the surprising response to the survey, suggesting that the number of student parents in College would give the working group greater authority for developing a student parent policy or guidelines. Ms Campos advised that working group would include student parents and would be established shortly.

Ms Miller expressed the support of the SU to this initiative and suggested that the student parent resource could link in with other student societies. The Committee discussed the scarcity of family friendly events, aside from the Family Sports day. Ms Hannon was supportive of the creation of a central resource noting that in many cases it would consist of the re-packaging of existing resources. Ms Hannon also noted that a more flexible study environment acknowledging student parents might be an incentive for more mature students and parents to enrol in College. The Committee expressed its support of the establishment of a student parent society as an ideal way to get student parents involved in networking activities and College. Ms Miller was also supportive of the welcome event and suggested that the Alumni Fund might be able to support the initial event while the student society was not fully established. The Committee discussed the existing student support group held by the Senior Tutor's Office – Ms Jagusch noted the difficulties in participating due to time and schedule limitations and suggested that a network with a common project might encourage greater participation. The Committee suggested Ms Jagusch liaise with the Senior Tutor regarding the central online resource and with the Mature Students Officer. The Chair thanked Ms Jagusch for this report and wished success with the network; she noted that supporting student parents would help College to ensure it was inclusive in relation to the family status ground.

ACTIONS:

- Student parents to participate in the development of College policy/guidelines.
- Ms Jagusch and the Equality Officer to liaise with the Senior Tutor and other relevant offices (Mature students, SU etc.) to progress the project recommendations regarding a welcome event, the online resource and contact person.
- Ms Jagusch to seek to involve other parents in establishing a student parent society.

Eqal/11-12/29 Action Call-over

Student parent policy Ms Campos advised that she had consulted with the Chair of the Student services Committee and the Dean of Students and would be establishing a working group over the Summer.

CSC/student society dignity and respect/accessibility awareness The Chair advised that she had spoken to the Chair of the Capitation Committee, the Senior Dean, and he had been supportive of the idea of developing a Code of Conduct for Student Societies. The Committee suggested that this Code of Conduct could be developed by the capitated bodies with the assistance of the Equality Officer in order to ensure the capitated bodies had ownership of the Code.

ACTION Ms Campos to liaise with the Capitation Committee to assist in developing the Code of Conduct.

Panel of Contact Persons membership Ms Power advised that Brian Foley would be stepping down from the Panel for a few years due to other responsibilities. Ms Power also advised that the Panel would rotate their member of the Equality Committee annually and had proposed Ms Inmaculada Arnedillo to be their representative in 2012-2013. The Committee welcomed this proposal.

ACTIONS:

- Ms Power to update the Contact Person contacts on the online policy accordingly.
- Ms Arnedillo Sánchez to be the Contact Person representative for 2012-2013.

Accessible Information Policy the Chair advised the Committee that she had contacted the Procurement Officer regarding a procurement accessibility checklist. The Procurement Officer had been positive about this suggestion and would be liaising with Mr Treanor to align the accessibility requirements with quality control requirements.

Equal/11-12/30 Annual Equality Monitoring Report 2011-2012 The Chair welcomed the **XXX** Annual Equality Monitoring Report and thanked the Equality Officer and Monitoring Advisory Group for this useful document. In response to a query by Ms Miller Ms Campos advised that the classification of student background based on father's occupation was due to the HEA survey data classification, the Committee suggested that classification based on the occupation of the principal income or of both parents would be more appropriate and suggested this practice be queried with the HEA.

Ms Campos drew the Committee's attention to some of the key findings in the report and asked the Committee to consider which of the recommendations made by the Monitoring Advisory Group should be raised at Board and which actions should be prioritized. Ms Campos discussed the staff data section and the continuing gender imbalance in senior positions: the graph of academic grades showed no variation since 2006 when the College had started monitoring, with the proportion of women Professors being 12-14% throughout this period. Ms Campos noted that great attention had been paid to the Faculty of Engineering, Mathematics and Science, where women were a minority in all grades, but that greater attention could be paid to gender and progression in the Faculty of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences, since here there was gender balance at Lecturer level but this soon decreased until reaching only a small number of female Professors. Dr Ó Siochrú noted the impact of the employment control framework on the lack of change and suggested that there was a lack of awareness on a ground level as to what actions could address gender imbalance. The Chair and Ms Campos noted that a range of actions could be applied to promote gender equality – to ensure any gender bias might be removed by the identification of a candidate's gender, to head hunt and attract female candidates, measures that Heads of School could take to create a more

inclusive environment, increase flexibility etc. Ms Campos noted there was advice available from the Equality Office and WiSER in addressing this issue at a local level.

In analysing the student diversity data Ms Campos drew attention to the finding that College had a very low proportion of students on part time courses (4% by comparison to 11% average across Irish Universities). Ms Hannon advised that the HEA had circulated a consultation paper on flexible learning and that a mapping exercise by discipline would be necessary to determine the scope and gaps in College's and the sector's current provision. The Committee discussed the benefits of part time and flexible learning to attract mature students and promote inclusiveness and life-long learning. The Committee suggested that this matter be brought to Board attention. Ms Campos also noted that there was continuing progress in increasing the number of students from under-represented groups, but further actions would be required to meet the College's 22% target by 2013. Ms Miller suggested that there was scope for increasing pre-orientation programmes.

Ms Campos also drew the Committee's attention to the possible gender impact of the introduction of the HPAT test as an admission requirement for Medicine. Initial data between 2008 and 2011 suggested a gender impact in the decrease of female students and Ms Campos advised that she would be investigating this matter further.

The Committee expressed concern at the gender imbalance apparent in administrative grades by seniority, and in support services grades such as secretarial and grounds staff. Ms Campos suggested she would liaise with Ms Taylor in HR on this matter and revert to the Committee. The Committee suggested progressing the recommendations and discussing further at the next meeting. The Committee approved the report for circulation to the next Board and Council and suggested that relevant report excerpts be circulated to Schools and Administrative Areas as had been done last year.

ACTIONS:

- The Chair to raise concerns regarding continued gender imbalance in academic and administrative areas at Board
- The Chair to recommend that flexible and part time learning is increased to promote inclusion and life-long learning
- Ms Campos to liaise with Ms Taylor to examine the Committee's concerns regarding gender imbalance in administrative and support grades.

Section B – Implementation issues

Equal/11-12/31 LEAD implementation report Ms Campos advised on the progress in the launch and implementation of the Living Equality and Diversity (LEAD) eLearning programme, which had been launched by Minister Fergus O'Dowd in March. Ms Campos advised the LEAD programme was being rolled out in College with the joint support of the Equality Committee and the HR Committee and outlined the agreed actions in relation to: launch and communications; monitoring of completion rates; and embedding LEAD and integrating equality and diversity in staff programmes. It had been agreed with the HR Committee that all staff participating in interview panels would have completed the programme by September 2013, which allowed a sufficient lead-in period to ensure full

compliance. Ms Campos advised that presentations had been carried out for the Faculty of AHSS Executive, Senior Administration Group and Services Area managers amongst others with very positive responses. Ms Campos noted that the LEAD programme provided an in-built tracking system which produced reports on staff who had started and staff who had completed the full programme and assessment. Ms Campos also advised that facilitated drop-in sessions were to be organized for staff who did not have access to computers and that the option of producing a hard copy of the programme was being explored.

The Committee welcomed this resource and noted it was a positive step in creating awareness about equality and diversity and supporting the College's Equality Policy. The Chair noted that there could be resistance to a two hour online equality programme and suggested a shorter version could be considered. She also noted that there was great value in workshop discussion and suggested that it would be worthwhile to explore this format of equality training in addition to eLearning. Ms Campos noted that the LEAD programme was an introductory programme which could serve as the basis for further workshop format training.

Equal/11-12/32 Student accommodation allocation criteria The Committee discussed the correspondence with the Audit Committee submitted by the Junior Dean regarding the accommodation allocation criteria and appeals process, which the Equality Committee had recommended to be reviewed to ensure clarity and transparency for applicants. Ms Miller noted her disagreement with the statement that there had been no appeals to the accommodation allocation process in recent years, noting that she dealt with a number of complaints each year but that currently there was no appeals system in place. She also corrected a point of information in the documentation, noting that the Welfare Officer had not been consulted in drawing up the criteria for the allocation of rooms. The Committee expressed concern at the vagueness of the criteria for allocating rooms; in particular the Committee was concerned that 'creating a vibrant academic community' was unclear and might favour applicants from particular backgrounds or with better writing skills. Ms Campos was concerned at the criteria outlined for Halls 'rooms are allocated on the basis of creating a vibrant academic community which reflects the wider composition of the student body' – given the lack of clarity on what data was being used to determine the composition of the student body and in relation to what characteristics; and suggested this could be interpreted as favouring certain candidates and be potentially discriminatory. The Committee was of the view that this rejection to review the criteria and introduce an objective scoring system was unacceptable given the great financial value of student accommodation to the College.

The Committee recommended that objective criteria and weightings should be drawn up as would be the case for any other qualitative selection process to ensure fairness and transparency. The Chair suggested that if it was not possible to draw up selection criteria and scoring then a random allocation process should be implemented. Ms Power suggested that Ms Miller could draft proposed criteria for the allocation of rooms to be discussed with the Junior Dean. The Committee discussed the best means to progress this issue and suggested that the Chair would liaise with the Chair of the Audit Committee and the Secretary to determine the next step in progressing this matter.

Section C – Matters for noting

Equal/11-12/33 Schedule of meetings for 2012-2013 the circulated schedule of meetings and

reports was agreed by the Committee, dates and venues to be confirmed.

Any Other Business

Signed

Date