

**University Of Dublin
Trinity College
Equality Committee**

Minutes of a meeting held on Tuesday 22nd January 2013 at 2pm in the Secretary's Conference Room, 3-4 College Green.

Present: Prof M Bouroche (Chair), Ms S MacBride, Mr D Treanor, Ms A Taylor, Prof I Arnedillo Sánchez, Mr A McEwan (GSU), Ms A Ní Chonaire (SU), Prof J Walsh, Prof M McCarron, Mr T Woods, Ms M Garvey (Secretary).

Apologies: Vice-Provost, Ms C Hannon, Ms V Butler.

In attendance: Mr J O'Gorman*, Mr C McCarthy*, Ms S Cameron-Coen**, Ms C Byrne***.

Present for: *Eqal/12-13/14 **Eqal/12-13/15 ***Eqal/12-13/16

Items for Board attention are denoted XXX

The Committee welcomed new members, Professor J Walsh and Mr T Woods.

Eqal/12-13/11 Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting, 17th October 2012, were approved and signed.

Matters arising were discussed and minuted below:

Eqal/12-13/12 [Eqal/12-13/10] Equality Fund Showcase: Ms Garvey reported that the Showcase of previous Equality Fund projects took place on 15th November 2012 in the Printing House. There were thirty-nine attendees, ten students and twenty-nine staff members. The Showcase involved nine presentations along with visual displays, audio-visual material, and physical resources developed by former projects. Both the event and the projects received positive feedback.

Ms Garvey drew the Committee's attention to a number of suggestions for future Showcase events including:

- Seek to book a universally accessible venue. While the Printing house is wheelchair accessible, its ramps are difficult for wheelchair users to navigate.
- Reduce the number of presentations and encourage the use of posters, displays and audio-visual materials to allow for increased informal interaction between attendees and project organisers.
- The Chair added a further suggestion that targeted invitations should be issued for future showcase events.

Equality Fund Allocation 2012-13: Ms Garvey reported that twenty-four applications were received for the Equality Fund 2012-13. There were fourteen student-led applications, seven staff led applications, and three staff/student collaborations. The Equality Fund Sub-Committee met in December and allocated funding for eight projects while offering nine applicants the opportunity to revise and resubmit. The Equality Fund Sub-Committee is to meet on 29th January to consider allocation of funds to the resubmitted project applications. Prof Arnedillo Sánchez requested confirmation of the remaining allocation amount and Ms Garvey confirmed that the Equality Fund Sub-Committee has €4198 to allocate to the resubmitted project applications.

Ms Garvey thanked the Equality Fund Sub-Committee for its work to date.

Equal/12-13/13 Action call-over

HR Committee Liaison: The Chair confirmed that she had been approached by two Committee members who volunteered to sit on the HR Committee. Ms MacBride questioned whether both expect to remain on the Equality Committee in 2013-14. Prof Arnedillo Sanchez, one of the volunteers, noted that the Dignity and Respect Contact Persons representative works on rotation and so she could not confirm that she will remain on the Committee

next year. Prof Walsh, the second volunteer, confirmed that he would expect to remain on the Committee next year. The Chair proposed Prof Walsh as Equality Committee nominee. The Committee approved this proposal.

Ms MacBride highlighted the importance of ensuring that the perspective of the Equality Committee is represented clearly at the HR Committee. Prof Walsh confirmed his commitment to equality and suggested that he notify the Chair of the Equality Committee of upcoming HR Committee agenda items. The Committee noted that it would not always be possible to discuss agenda items prior to HR Committee meetings and instead approved the establishment of a standing item on the Equality Committee agenda where Prof Walsh could report on relevant HR Committee agenda items.

Action:

- Ms Garvey to advise the Secretary of the HR Committee of Prof Walsh's appointment as Equality Committee nominee.
- Ms Garvey to add 'HR Committee' as a standing item on the Equality Committee agenda.

Committee Appointment: Ms Garvey confirmed that all vacancies on the Equality Committee have now been filled.

TCD Global Strategy Briefing: Ms Garvey confirmed that she is to meet Dr E Doyle on 29th January to discuss intercultural awareness training in College.

Student Parent Policy: On Agenda

Student Accommodation Allocation: Ms Garvey advised that a working group has been established to investigate the Accommodation Allocation processes and will be chaired by the Dean of Students. She confirmed that she has written to the Dean of Students requesting that the views of the Equality Committee be considered by this working group and that the Committee be consulted as required as part of this review.

The Committee discussed how to proceed and agreed that in addition to liaising with the working group it would seek to discuss its concerns regarding accommodation allocation directly with the Registrar of Chambers, as the officer with responsibility for allocation.

Mr Treanor confirmed that he requested that the Equality Officer be included on the Student Accommodation Working Group. However, Ms Garvey advised that she has not been approached to join the working group.

Actions:

- Ms Garvey to invite the Registrar of Chambers to the next Committee meeting to discuss transparency in the accommodation allocation process.
- Ms Garvey to follow up on Mr Treanor's request that she be included in the Student Accommodation working group.

Supporting Deaf Staff in College: Mr Treanor reported progress regarding an agreed procedure for the provision of ISL interpreting to Deaf staff in College. He advised that he has met with staff from the Centre for Deaf Studies and agreed a procedure, which has been sent to Ms P Daly in Human Resources. Mr Treanor confirmed that he would detail these new procedures to the Disability Service Annual Report.

Actions: Mr Treanor to contact Ms Daly to progress ISL Interpreting procedures.

CSC and Student Society Dignity and Respect / Accessibility

Awareness: On Agenda

Committee Training: Ms Garvey confirmed that the Committee handbook has been recirculated as requested.

Disability Act 2005 Report: Mr Treanor is awaiting clarification on percentage and type of buildings complying with accessibility legislation.

Equality Committee Annual Report: Ms Garvey confirmed that the Equality Committee Annual Report went to Board in November 2012. The Chair advised that she drew attention to the recommendation to establish training for new Heads of Schools. However she advised that this item arose towards the end of the meeting and so received little discussion. She suggested that future items that require discussion be moved to Part A of the agenda.

XXX Part-Time Student Service Provision: Ms Garvey reported that the Dean of Students has been tasked with investigating the lack of services for part-time students and that she contacted the Dean to offer her support. Prof Arnedillo Sánchez noted that as a lecturer on part-time programmes she has observed the real difficulties faced by students. She stated that there are few services available after 5pm or on Saturday mornings, when many part-time teaching occurs. Prof Walsh and Prof McCarron confirmed that similar difficulties can be observed for part-time Education and Nursing and Midwifery students. Mr McEwan confirmed that he and other student representatives, including the SU Education Officer, have presented their concerns to the Dean of Students.

Mr McEwan stressed that both students' unions are willing to operate outside of regular working hours when necessary to facilitate students.

The Committee discussed part-time student service provision at length including the following points:

- Decisions regarding how to cater for part-time students should involve key services such as Catering.
- College has a responsibility to provide all students with accessible services and to ensure a positive student experience. Economic considerations cannot solely decide service provision.
- Course Directors are often aware of difficulties faced by their part-time students when accessing services and so could be encouraged to share details of difficulties and suggestions for improving the situation.

- There are a number of options for enhancing service provision to part-time students. For example, late opening one evening per week would benefit evening students.

Action:

- Ms Garvey to contact the Dean of Students to express the concerns of the Equality Committee regarding provision of services for part-time students.
- The Chair to flag the concerns of the Equality Committee at Board.
- Ms Garvey to raise concerns with the Chief Operating Officer.
- Ms Garvey to confirm the numbers of part-time students currently studying in College as per the Senior Lecturer's Annual Report.

Equality Fund: Discussed under Matters Arising above.

Equal/12-13/14 Central Societies Committee (CSC) and Student Societies Dignity and Respect / Accessibility Awareness

The Committee welcomed Mr J O'Gorman, CSC Strategic Development Officer, and Mr C McCarthy, CSC Chair, to the meeting to discuss student society dignity and respect / accessibility awareness.

Ms Garvey advised those present that student society dignity and respect / accessibility awareness had been discussed previously in November 2011 (Equal/11-12/10) and May 2012 (Equal/11-12/21) by the Equality Committee. In November 2011 the Committee had discussed inclusivity awareness at society events and suggested that the Equality Office could provide an information session for the CSC jointly with the SU, WiSER and the Disability Service. In May 2012 Mr Treanor had highlighted complaints by students with disabilities and the Committee agreed to request the Capitation Committee develop a Code of Conduct for Student Societies.

Access to Venues: Mr O'Gorman noted that all students are entitled to join all societies, and that society officers are reminded of the importance of accessibility during training. He drew the Committee's attention to the Society

'Officers' Guide', which includes the following: "Please bear in mind that we must cater for those students and staff members who may have mobility impairment of some kind, so when deciding about a venue's suitability, try to ensure that the rooms you book are accessible to all." He stated that while societies are encouraged to use accessible spaces, there is limited accessible space available to facilitate activities. He further noted that society events must compete for space with curricular teaching activities and extra mural classes, which are given priority over society events. This limits the accessible space available.

Mr McCarthy further illustrated the limited options for societies seeking venues, offering as an example the case of a society seeking a venue in which to sing. The society cannot do so near teaching venues where they may cause a disturbance and so are offered one option, which is an inaccessible room in the Dept. of Music.

Mr Treanor suggested that if the CSC forwarded a list of venues regularly used for society events he could, as the College Access Officer (Disability Act 2005), submit requests for accessibility work to be carried out. Mr O'Gorman replied that the CSC does not oversee the booking of venues by societies. However, venues in regular use include Arts building lecture theatres, the Atrium, Goldsmith Hall and House 6. The Atrium space has been reconfigured to allow for meeting room space on the ground floor. Cognisant of the fact that House 6 is inaccessible; societies try to limit its usage to committee meetings and storage. Mr Treanor suggested that venues in the Hamilton may be accessible options and Mr McCarthy confirmed that they are also used when available and appropriate. He stated that many societies seek external off-campus venues due to limited options.

Mr O'Gorman drew the Committee's attention towards the Officers' Guidebook and noted that it includes a guide to bookable venues and rules for their use. Ms Garvey queried whether the guide included an indication of

which rooms were accessible. Mr O’Gorman confirmed that this edition did not but that it could be added to the next.

Inclusion and Dignity and Respect: Ms MacBride suggested that the accessibility / dignity and respect discussion needed to be broader than the use of accessible venues for events and that any training or code of conduct should also consider the College Dignity and Respect policy and Equality policy. She noted that in the past complaints have been made against student societies regarding breaches of the Dignity and Respect policy. She further noted that training in Dignity and Respect and Equality is being implemented across the College community, and that training for society officers would be a natural expansion of this process.

Prof Arnedillo Sánchez drew attention to breaches to the Dignity and Respect Policy arising from photographs, comments and images posted on social networking sites. She stated that awareness training regarding the use of social networking is necessary.

Mr Treanor highlighted the need to cater for students with hidden disabilities. He stated that the Disability Service has gotten feedback from students reporting that they do not feel comfortable approaching and joining societies. He emphasised the importance of training so that societies can better cater for non-traditional members.

Training: Mr O’Gorman noted that the current society officer training is two and a half hours in length and it is felt that officers would not benefit from lengthening that session. He further noted that all society officers are democratically elected for one year and trained annually. Following initial training there is little time for follow up. However, he had discussed the option of a separate training session with Ms Campos, the former Equality Officer, prior to her departure in October 2012.

Ms Arnedillo Sánchez emphasised that the Dignity and Respect policy has to be observed by the whole College community, including staff and students. It is necessary to ensure that societies are trained in it as there could be legal consequences arising from failure to comply.

Mr O’Gorman stated that the CSC would be happy to engage in training but would like to know how their training would fit into the overall plan for Equality implementation. The Chair confirmed that stakeholders across College were being asked to participate in inclusion and equality training.

Mr McCarthy stated that the first training of incoming officers would be before term end and Equality / Dignity and Respect could be included in it.

Code of Practice: Mr Treanor noted that as the CSC receives money from College through the student Capitation fee, it must be accountable to College policies. He further noted that both students’ unions have a Code of Practice but that there is none governing the CSC. Prof Arnedillo Sánchez queried whether the CSC could draft a code of practice using the Students’ Union’s document as a basis.

Prof Walsh reminded those present that all students sign their agreement to follow College policies at registration. Therefore, all students have a responsibility to promote equality and dignity and respect, and the CSC can act as a conduit helping prepare students to meet these responsibilities.

Ms Ní Chonaire suggested that the CSC establish a feedback mechanism for comments or complaints and Mr O’Gorman confirmed that the CSC could investigate this possibility.

Actions:

- Ms Garvey to liaise with the CSC to plan Equality training for the new cohort of society officers in September 2013.
- Mr Treanor to review possible accessibility works on venues used for society events following provision of a list of regularly used venues by the CSC,

- CSC to liaise with Mr Treanor to include the accessibility status of bookable venues within the next edition of the Officers' Guide.
- Ms Garvey and Mr Treanor to meet with Mr O'Gorman regarding the implementation of equality policies, and the development of a CSC Code of Practice.

Eqal/12-13/15 Draft Student Parent Policy

The Committee welcomed Ms S Cameron-Coen from the Dean of Students' Office to the meeting to discuss the draft "Supports for Student Parents, Student Carers and Students Experiencing Pregnancy" policy.

Ms Cameron-Coen introduced the policy, explaining that currently there is no student parent policy in College, or in any other Irish Higher Education Institution, though guidelines are currently available within the Calendar part II for graduate students seeking to go on maternity leave. She noted that the scope of the policy is broad, covering undergraduate and postgraduate students both during pregnancy and as parents and carers. She stated that the purpose of the policy is to advise and respond to the needs of students so that they can balance College and family life and can identify where responsibility lies for the coordination of supports. She noted that the policy includes processes for dealing with the illness of a dependent, processes for handling deadlines and information on student parent facilities.

Ms Cameron-Coen noted that a taskforce had been established to develop this policy, and its membership included the Dean of Students, the Dean of Graduate Studies and representatives of the Students' Union and Graduate Students' Union. She confirmed that the policy is to be presented to the Undergraduate Studies Committee and the Graduate Studies Committee once finalised, and from there is to go before Council and Board.

The Chair thanked Ms Cameron-Coen for her presentation and commended her on the scope of the policy. She invited the Committee to comment.

General Feedback: The Chair noted that the policy document is currently difficult to navigate and suggested that the formatting be amended to ensure clarity.

Prof Arnedillo Sánchez queried why the policy has been laid out with separate processes for undergraduate and graduate students with regards pregnancy, leave, and supports for parents and carers. Ms MacBride suggested that this separation arose from differences in process rather than differences in entitlements and policy. Ms Cameron-Coen clarified further noting that the offices and supports accessed by undergraduate and postgraduate students differ and so the processes had been separated to enhance clarity.

Ms Ní Chonaire noted that paragraphs two and three under 'Student Parents and Carers' were similar and could be amalgamated. She advised that she had further suggestions concerning wording. Ms Garvey confirmed that she would circulate a Word version of the policy that Committee members could use to offer minor feedback.

Ms Arnedillo Sánchez queried the scenario where a student does not disclose a pregnancy or carer responsibilities but then seeks to use this information as a grounds for appeal at a later date. Mr Treanor suggested that the policy highlight the importance of disclosure as a necessary first step to accessing support and include a reference to the protection of family status under the Equal Status Act.

Roles and Responsibilities: The Chair suggested that decision making roles be clarified within the policy so that it is clear who can decide what supports are feasible within a programme when agreement is not reached between stakeholders.

Maternity Leave: Ms Cameron-Coen noted that the current system of maternity leave for research students includes a systematic inflexibility. As

registration takes place for research programmes at two points during the year, March and September, maternity leave must fit within these time frames. This may impel students to go on maternity leave and return to their studies earlier than wished, or to take an additional six months when less time is required. The Dean of Graduate Studies would welcome additional flexibility. The Chair recommended that the Equality Committee support the Dean of Graduate Studies request for increased flexibility. The Equality Committee approved.

Prof Arnedillo Sánchez queried the maternity leave process for part-time students; seeking clarification as to whether they would need to take a year or six months. Ms MacBride suggested that the policy undergo stress tests aimed to consider whether the processes can effectively cater for various scenarios including full and part time study at different levels.

Prof Arnedillo Sánchez drew attention to the following sentence within the Purpose and Statement of Intent: 'It aims where possible to facilitate students in returning to their studies at the point they left rather than having to repeat the whole year.' She suggested that this would not always be feasible. For example, a module may be restructured so that a student cannot return to the point at which they left. The Chair agreed that the process of returning to College would need to be decided on a case by case basis.

The Chair drew the Committee's attention to the second paragraph under 'Postgraduate Students seeking maternity, paternity and adoptive leave'. She queried why a student need give notice of her intention to take additional maternity leave at the same time as she gives notice of her intention to take maternity leave. This is less flexible than the process for College employees. Ms Cameron-Coen advised that this paragraph has been copied from the current College calendar.

Services and Facilities: Prof Arnedillo Sánchez queried access to services for student parents. She recounted an example where a student could not

access a particular building with her child and so had been unable to access a service. Ms Cameron-Coen noted that plans are progressing for a student parent room, and this might allow students to drop off dependents before accessing College services. She confirmed that she would be speaking to the College Safety Officer to ensure any drop off facility operates within College safety procedures.

Mr Treanor noted that it would be necessary to flag that students on maternity, paternity, parental or adoptive leave be included in regulations for access to services for students with off-books status.

The Chair drew attention to the statement that timetables should be made available between one and three months prior to the start of term. She noted that timetables are not usually available in advance. Prof Walsh agreed, stating that the provision of timetables needs to be investigated at a higher level. Ms MacBride suggested that the Equality Committee recommend that the Dean of Students raise the need for timely circulation of timetables at Council.

The Chair drew attention to the statement that official College hours are 8am to 8pm Monday to Saturday. She queried whether this meant student parents are expected to be available throughout these periods. Ms Cameron-Coen stated that the sentence aimed to draw attention to current College policy only. Ms MacBride suggested that specific times be removed and that this be changed to state that students have a responsibility to be available for teaching contact hours and to make reference to the Student Charter, which lists student rights and responsibilities within College.

The Chair noted that the sentence 'Students will not experience disadvantage for being absent from tutorials, lectures, labs, practicals, or examinations, but academic standards need to be maintained' could be problematic as it is not always possible to ensure standards are maintained without a student experiencing a disadvantage. Ms Garvey suggested that

'College will strive to ensure that' be prefixed to the beginning of the sentence. Mr Treanor confirmed that the Disability Service has a similar statement within its code of practice and that he can circulate the wording to Ms Cameron-Coen.

The Committee endorsed the Supports for Student Parents, Student Carers and Students Experiencing Pregnancy policy with the recommendation to review the draft as per the discussion.

Actions:

- Ms Garvey to circulate a Word version of the policy to Committee members.
- All Committee members to forward any minor feedback directly to Ms Cameron-Coen using the Word document.
- Mr Treanor to circulate replacement wording for 'Students will not experience disadvantage for being absent from tutorials, lectures, labs, practicals, or examinations, but academic standards need to be maintained' as per the Disability Service Code of Practice.
- The Equality Committee to recommend that the Dean of Students raise the issue of late access to timetables at Council.

Eqal/12-13/16 Mature Students' Annual Admissions Report

The Committee welcomed Ms C Byrne, Mature Students' Officer, to the meeting to discuss the Mature Students' Annual Admissions Report.

Ms Byrne introduced the report and informed the Committee that the Mature Students' Office (MSO) forms part of Trinity Access Programmes (TAP). It serves to encourage and support the access and integration of mature students into College life. She further noted that the MSO works closely with the Student Parent's group, who received funding through the Equality Fund in 2011-12.

Ms Byrne enumerated the admissions pathways open to mature applicants:

- Mature Student Dispensation Scheme (MSDS),

- Mature Nursing and Midwifery Scheme,
- The CAO,

She confirmed that most mature students enter College via the MSDS.

Ms Byrne highlighted the following key points from the Mature Students' Annual Admissions Report:

Applicants

- The MSDS application process is competitive, with applications consistently exceeding available places. Some programmes are particularly high demand (in psychology there were thirty-five applications for every available place).
- The majority of successful applicants are progressing with their education (77%) while 23% already have a degree.

New Entrants:

- In October 2012 there were 158 new MSDS students registered or eligible to register. By December there were 121 students registered and eight eligible to register. Twenty-nine had withdrawn. Many cited financial pressure as the reason for withdrawal.
- 45% of new MSDS students were registered in the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (AHSS).
- There were twenty-seven MSDS students registered with the Faculty of Health Sciences with an additional seventy-four mature students registered for programmes across the School of Nursing and Midwifery via the Mature Nursing and Midwifery scheme.
- There is a gender balance within the Junior Freshmen MSDS cohort.
- The majority of new entrants (61%) were thirty-one or younger. However, 8% were over fifty, which is higher than the 0.5% national participation rate in this age group.
- Mature new entrants made up 7% of all new entrants in 12/13.

All MSDS Students:

- Overall, there are 435 MSDS students in College.
- While the overall cohort is gender balanced, females dominate in Health Sciences while males dominate Engineering, Math's and Science (EMS).

- 50% of mature students are registered in AHSS, making it most popular faculty. The rest are almost evenly split across the other faculties and multi-faculty programmes.
- 14% of all mature students are over fifty years of age.
- Progression rates among the MSDS cohort were 83% in 11/12 with an 89% completion rate for final year students.

All registered mature students:

- There are 904 mature students in total in College, including those who entered via the CAO. This accounts for 8% of the total undergraduate population and is below the 15% national average and the 20% national target. The College Access Plan has set a target of 22% from underrepresented groups (Disability, MSO and TAP) by 2013.

Challenges:

- **Data Collection.** Ms Byrne confirmed that there is a level of cross over between non-traditional cohorts in College that makes it difficult to accurately calculate the non-traditional total. She anticipates that Genesis will allow for greater transparency in the future.
- **Grants / Funding / Progression:** Ms Byrne noted that delays to the allocation of the Student Universal Support Ireland (SUSI) grants had a significant impact on the student experience and withdrawals in 2012-13. In a recent survey conducted by the MSO, fourteen students were still awaiting the outcome of their grant applications and nine had been awarded a grant yet were awaiting payment. Of those who received payment, the majority received it in December. Furthermore, Ms Byrne highlighted that due to funding cuts for postgraduate study the possibility of progressions for mature graduates is severely curtailed.

Ms Byrne concluded by drawing attention to her collaboration with TAP and the Dean of Undergraduate Studies to develop a College-wide policy on Lifelong Learning.

Opening the discussion the Chair referred to the definition of a mature student within the report as one who is twenty-three or over on the 1st January of the year of entry to an undergraduate programme and queried whether postgraduate students could be defined as mature students. Ms Byrne confirmed that the definition used only covers undergraduates.

Ms Ní Chonaire drew attention to the withdrawal figures resulting from financial pressures and delays to the SUSI grants. She requested that the details of the survey and any further feedback be forwarded to the Students' Union Welfare Office to include in any assessment of the impact of SUSI delays across College. With reference to the SUSI delays Ms MacBride commended the Welfare Office on its food donation drive on behalf of the Committee. Ms Ní Chonaire noted that both food donations and student welfare loans have assisted students in financial difficulty this year.

Ms Byrne noted that while high demand programmes may have multiple applications for each available place, the quota in low demand courses may not be filled. For example, there were no applications for Mature Student entry into Classics in 2012-13. Ms MacBride queried whether certain courses have had trouble meeting their quota since the economic downturn. Ms Byrne replied that Mature students are a diverse group. Those in the younger age categories may be undertaking the degree programme to upskill or reskill. However, the 14% over fifty are less likely to be studying with the aim of career progression.

Prof Walsh commended TAP and the MSO on the development of a Lifelong Learning strategy noting the importance of building the integration of non-traditional learners into College policy.

The Chair thanked Ms Byrne for her presentation and commended her on the work of the MSO.

Equal/12-13/17 –Memo Regarding the Appointment of a Dignity and Respect

Contact Person

XXX Ms Garvey drew attention to a memo, dated 14th January 2013, from Ms L Power, HR, regarding the appointment of Agnella Craig, Radiation Therapy, to the Dignity and Respect panel of Contact Persons.

Due to time constraints the following agenda items are to be deferred:

- HR Dignity and Respect Contact Person Annual Report - Prof Arnedillo Sánchez.

Section B – Implementation issues

- Living Equality and Diversity Programme (LEAD) Implementation progress report.
- Recommendations for Actions towards Gender Equality in Academic and Research Careers in the Higher Education Sector.

Any Other Business

The Committee thanked Ms Taylor for her contribution to the Committee and wished her good luck as she goes on career break.

Signed

Date