

**University Of Dublin  
Trinity College  
Equality Committee**

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**Minutes of a special meeting held on Wednesday at 9:30am in Seminar Room 1.10 of the School of Nursing and Midwifery, D'Olier Street.**

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Present: Dr C McCabe (Chair), Ms S MacBride, Mr A Hanna (GSU), Mr D Treanor, Mr M McKeown, Prof J Walsh, Prof E McCabe, Mr J Cumiskey, Mr L Field (secretary).

Apologies: Prof M Cuypers, Ms K O'Toole-Brennan, Dr E Curtis.

Absent: The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer (Prof L Hogan), Prof M McCarron (Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences), Mr I Mooney (SU).

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**Section A – Policy issues**

**Equal/14-15/21 Marriage Equality Referendum**

The Chair called the meeting's attention to the single item for discussion, the upcoming referendum on Marriage Equality. It was stressed that the discussion was to relate to the institutional stance of the Equality Committee on the referendum, and that members were not feel obligated to state their personal views on the matter if they did not wish to do so.

The Committee decided to adopt a stance in favour of a Yes vote in the referendum. While acknowledging that all people are entitled to hold and express whatever views they may have on the issue, the Committee felt that the only stance consistent with the Committee's duty to uphold the principles of equality and human rights is a strong, affirmative stance in support of equal marriage rights for all, regardless of their sexuality or the gender of their partner.

The Committee has noted that Board, for reasons of academic freedom and the promotion of debate, has decided not to adopt an official stance in the referendum. However, the Committee agreed to seek the approval of Board for the Equality Committee, as a Principal Committee of College, to communicate its stance publicly. This may take the form of: a public statement; allowing pro-Yes vote groups to acknowledge the Equality Committee's endorsement of this

stance; encouraging eligible members of the College Community to ensure they are registered to vote and to exercise their right to do so; and organising an event to publicise the referendum and call for a Yes vote.

It was acknowledged that there is a diverse range of views within the College Community on the issue of Marriage Equality, and this must be respected. Further, it was noted that College will act as a space in which debate on the referendum will take place and be encouraged. The Committee agreed that while such debate is important, it is also important that the debate is conducted in a respectful manner as this is a highly emotive issue for many people. It was also agreed that the Committee should encourage all debates on the issue to focus on the substantive matter of Marriage Equality, with all the rights that entails, and not to become confused with other matters that are being dealt with through legislation, such as the Children and Family Relationships Bill.

The Equality Committee noted the ongoing efforts of the College Secretary, along with the Students' Union and Graduate Students' Union, to secure a polling station for College during the referendum. The Committee expressed support for this initiative.

**Actions:**

- Mr Field to draft a statement on behalf of the Equality Committee regarding its stance on the Marriage Equality Referendum and to circulate it for approval.
- Mr Field to send the statement and this minute to Board as a Section B item for the Board meeting on 25 February 2015.

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Signed .....

Date .....