



**Trinity College Dublin
The University of Dublin**

Minutes of a meeting of the Equality Committee

Wednesday 18 March 2015, 2pm, School of Nursing and Midwifery Seminar Room 1.26

Present: Dr C McCabe (Chair), Ms K O'Toole-Brennan, Mr I Mooney (SU), Mr M McKeown, Prof John Walsh, Prof Eithne McCabe, Prof Martine Cuypers, Ms S MacBride, Mr Jim Cumiskey, Mr L Field (secretary).

Apologies: The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer (Prof L Hogan), Mr A Hanna (GSU), Dr E Curtis, Mr D Treanor.

Absent: Prof M McCarron (Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences).

Equal/14-15/22 Minutes

The Minutes of the Equality Committee meetings on 15 January 2015 were approved. It was noted that the Minute from the special meeting of the Equality Committee on 18 February 2015 had already been approved by the Committee via email.

Equal/14-15/23 Matters Arising

No Matters Arising from the Minutes were noted.

Equal/14-15/24 Action Call-over

- **First draft of Equality Policy Review Working Party's proposals:** Due to lack of availability, the Working Party was unable to meet to formulate this draft. A general update on the progress of the Working Party, and in particular the consultation process being undertaken as part of the review of the Equality Policy, was provided as a Section A item.
- **Equality Committee Statement on Marriage Equality:** A statement outlining the Equality Committee's position on Marriage Equality was drafted by the Equality Officer. It was circulated to the Equality Committee and approved via email, and was then submitted to the

Board meeting on 25 February 2015 as a Section B item, along with the Minute of the Equality Committee meeting on 18 February 2015. Amendments to the statement were requested at the Board meeting in order to make it compatible with the position of the Board of College, and it was approved by Board pending those amendments. The amended version of the statement was approved by Equality Committee members via email.

Section A – Policy issues

Eqal/14-15/25 Report from the Equality Policy Review Working Party

The Chair informed the meeting that the Equality Policy Review Working Party had not met on 10 March 2015 as planned, and had been unable to meet between then and the date of this meeting of the Equality Committee, both due to lack of availability.

The Chair and the Equality Officer met prior the Equality Committee meeting to discuss the interim results of the Consultation Survey on the Equality Policy. A number of key themes had begun to emerge at this stage of the survey. In line with the initial findings of the Working Party, the criticism received by the survey did not focus on the Policy “as-is” but was more concerned with the implementation of the Policy, particularly at the local level. It was also stated by a number of respondents that they believed ageism was not currently addressed to the same degree as other equality grounds. Although not relevant to the Policy, it was noted that a number of respondents used the opportunity to express concerns about workload-balancing in their areas, and feelings of being overworked.

A general discussion about addressing the criticism of implementation followed these comments. Suggestions included: designing a model that could be applied to each School or Area; providing training on the Equality Policy for Heads of School or Area; creating an “equality checklist” that could be filled out by Heads of School or Area as part of annual reviews; refresher LEAD training; and creating an independent and anonymous feedback tool. Of these suggestions, the “equality checklist” was identified as a particular option to follow up on as a matter of priority.

Mr Field told the meeting that a reminder email would be sent to all staff and students to solicit further survey completions. The closing date for the consultation is 3 April 2015, after which the Equality Policy Review Working Party is to meet to

discuss the outcome of the survey and continue work on drafting recommendations for the revised Equality Policy. These recommendations are to be prepared in time for the circulation of papers for the Equality Committee meeting on 14 May 2015.

Actions:

- The Equality Officer to draft the suggested “equality checklist” and submit to the Equality Committee for consideration.
- The Equality Officer to issue a reminder email to all staff and students regarding the completion of the survey and the closing date.
- The Equality Policy Review Working Party to submit recommendations for the revision of the College Equality Policy to the next meeting of the Equality Committee on 14 May 2015.

Section B – Implementation Issues

Equal/14-15/26 Communication of Equality Committee Statement on Marriage Equality

Mr Field informed the meeting that the revised Equality Committee Statement on Marriage Equality would be shortly uploaded onto the Equality Office website, and from there would be communicated by a College-wide email and through the Equality Office’s social media accounts. Mr Mooney advised the Committee that it appeared the Students’ Union would be unsuccessful in its efforts to make Trinity College a polling station for the Referendum.

Actions:

- The Equality Officer to complete the communication of the Equality Committee Statement on Marriage Equality.

Equal/14-15/27 Implementation of College Policy on Supports for Student Parents, Student Carers and Students Experiencing Pregnancy

Mr Field informed the meeting that the College Policy on Supports for Student Parents, Student Carers and Students Experiencing Pregnancy was to be implemented shortly, and that he would be contacting Schools to begin this. Upon suggestion, Mr Field agreed that student support services should also be

contacted as a matter of urgency. Mr Field suggested that he would circulate the full Implementation Plan to the Equality Committee for noting.

Actions:

- The Equality Officer to circulate the Implementation Plan for the College Policy on Supports for Student Parents, Student Carers and Students Experiencing Pregnancy to the Equality Committee.

Equal/14-15/28 Request to amend Equality Fund project plans

Mr Field invited the attention of the meeting to a request made by the organisers of an Equality Fund project to amend their project plans. The organisers of the project “Human Rights for All? Campaign to Document the Lived-Experiences of Trans* and Gender Non-Conforming Youth in Ireland”, Peter Dunne and Cearbhall Turraoin, submitted a request on Wednesday 11 March 2015 to alter the timeline of their project. While normally an adjustment to the logistics of an Equality Fund project plan would not necessarily require permission from the Equality Committee, it was noted that the new timeline would extend the project more than six months beyond the date of funding allocation, potentially causing a conflict with the Equality Fund Terms of Reference.

The project organisers had submitted a four-page document outlining their reasons for seeking the amendment to their plans and what this would entail. This document was circulated to the Equality Committee with the rest of the meeting’s documents. For ease of reference, Mr Field summarised the rationale for the extension: the original plan submitted by the organisers had been drafted under the assumption that the Gender Recognition Bill would pass through the Oireachtas in late 2015. However, in the event, the Gender Recognition Bill formed part of the spring legislative schedule. This resulted in the attention of both the project organisers and their partners being drawn towards lobbying efforts surrounding the Bill, thus divesting them of the expected time and resources for the project. Extending the project as requested would allow it to proceed after the Gender Recognition Bill had passed through the Oireachtas.

Mr Field asked the Equality Committee members if they would approve the extension. The Committee requested that one amendment be made to the project plan: the panel discussion listed on page 4 of the extension application should be run in Michaelmas Term 2015, rather than late April/early May as listed. This would mean extending the project beyond the proposed extension date of 31 August 2015. Pending the acceptance of this proposed amendment by the project organisers, the extension was approved.

Actions:

- The Equality Officer to advise Peter Dunne and Cearbhall Turraoin of the provisional approval of their project extension, subject to accepting the proposed amendment by the Equality Committee.

Section C – Matters for Noting

Equal/14-15/29 Report from College International Women’s Week

Mr Field made a few brief comments about College’s International Women’s Week. The Week had run from 2 March to 7 March, and had featured 23 official events, an increase on the previous year. Mr Field noted that events run in the evening appeared to attract bigger crowds than those run in the morning or during the daytime. Mr Field took the opportunity to thank a number of people who had helped in the running of the Week, including: Claire Marshall from WiSER; the Civic Engagement Officer, Simone Cameron-Coen; Ian Mooney, Samuel Riggs, and Aoife O’Neill from Trinity College Students’ Union; Megan Lee, Adam Hanna, and Katie Crowther of the Graduate Students’ Union; Ciara O’Rourke from the Dublin University Gender Equality Society; Tara Gallagher from the Dublin University Amnesty International Society; and the student volunteers organised by the Students’ Union, Graduate Students’ Union, and the College Societies.

Equal/14-15/30 Formal launch of the College Gender Identity and Gender Expression Policy 19 March 2015

Mr Field reminded the Committee that the formal launch of the College Gender Identity and Gender Expression Policy would take place the next day, 19 March 2015, in the TCD Global Room at 1pm. All Equality Committee members were

strongly encouraged to attend. It was also noted that a member of the Equality Committee, Prof Martine Cuypers, would be part of the panel of speakers at this event.

Equal/14-15/31 Update on Equality Fund 2014-2015 Projects

Mr Field gave an update on some of the Equality Fund 2014-2015 projects. In particular, Mr Field brought attention to two projects which had reported in as not being able to go ahead, one of which had already been discussed and dealt with in this meeting (Equal/14-15/28). The other project was the Dublin University Computer Science Society event “eXXcluded?”, which was cancelled due to logistical problems and difficulties working with an outside partner. Mr Field regretfully informed the Committee that the project lead saw no way to rescue the project, and the project lead had offered to meet with the Committee or the Equality Fund Sub-Committee to provide an explanation in person, but this was declined by the Committee.

Mr Field said that he would provide updates on all Equality Fund projects to the Committee in the coming weeks.

Actions:

- The Equality Officer to circulate updates on Equality Fund 2014-2015 projects to the Equality Committee.

Equal/14-15/32 Establishment of Diversity Strategy Steering Group

Mr Field advised the meeting that the College Director of Diversity & Inclusion, Tony McMahon, had established a Diversity Strategy Steering Group, and that he would be joining the Steering Group in his capacity as College Equality Officer. Mr Field will provide updates on the Steering Group’s activities to the Equality Committee.

Any Other Business

Equal/14-15/33 Absences at Equality Committee Meetings

It was noted that there have been some repeated absences at this year’s meetings of the Equality Committee. It was agreed that the Chair of the Equality Committee

should communicate with the members of the Equality Committee to remind them of their attendance obligations.

Actions:

- The Chair to remind all Equality Committee members of their attendance obligations.

Eqal/14-15/34 Election of TAP Student to Trinity College Students' Union

Ms O'Toole-Brennan, on behalf of the Trinity Access Programme, commented that TAP is delighted that a student associated with the Programme, Ms Lynn Ruane, has been elected as the incoming President of Trinity College Students' Union for the academic year 2015-16.

Eqal/14-15/35 New Equality Committee Member

The Committee formally welcomed the newest member of the Equality Committee, Prof Martine Cuypers, to her first Committee meeting.

Eqal/14-15/36 Input requested by IUA HR Directors Group

Mr Field informed the meeting that the IUA HR Directors Group had requested details of any gender equality actions being undertaken by College, and requested that Equality Committee members contact him with details of any local actions being undertaken in their areas.

Signed:

Date: