



**Trinity College Dublin**

Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath

The University of Dublin

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## **EQUALITY COMMITTEE Minutes**

**Meeting 14<sup>th</sup> October 2015, 2pm, Sports Centre Boardroom**

**Present:** Chair (Dr C McCabe), Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer (Prof L Hogan), Dr M Cuypers, Ms G Hegarty (GSU), Mr J Cumiskey, Ms K O'Toole-Brennan, Mr M McKeown, Mr C Clancy (SU)

**Apologies:** Dr E Curtis, Ms S MacBride, Prof M McCarron, Mr D Treanor, Dr J Walsh.

**In attendance:** Mr K O'Doherty (Eqal/15-16/006 only), Secretary / Equality Officer (Ms A Crawford)

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**Eqal/15-16/001      Minutes of the previous meeting      Chair**

The minutes of the Equality Committee meeting on 14 May 2015 were approved.

**Eqal/15-16/002      Matters arising      Chair**

Arising from Eqal/14-15/40 Recommendations of the Equality Policy Review Working Party, specifically the minute that "the main focus [in the responses to an online survey on the existing Equality Policy] was on implementation issues", it was noted that the Committee should focus on implementation issues during the Equality Policy review.

Arising from Eqal/14-15/41 Accessible Information Policy Implementation Report, specifically the minute that "The Procurement Office is to advise on how this new [government procurement] system will ensure compliance with the Accessible Information Policy", it was noted that this item should be followed up on.

Arising from Eqal/14-15/39 Action Call-Over, specifically the minute regarding the "Equality Fund Project Extension Request", the Equality Officer provided an update on the status of the project which was granted an extension (the project has been completed), and another



The possible gender implications of the tenure track proposals currently being developed by the University were discussed. The issue was brought to the Committee's attention in advance of this meeting by Prof E Drew, Director of WiSER.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer informed the Committee about the current proposals. The following is a summary of the information provided:

These proposals are still in development and extensive research is ongoing, with various models being considered. The draft proposal for Trinity is more similar to UK models than to US models. It is based on the existing Ussher lectureship model, which has had good feedback and very high application rates.

Trinity's draft proposal for a tenure track system would be a structured path to a permanent contract, which would involve extensive mentoring and engagement between the academic, their mentor and their school. Two options would be offered to any academic on the tenure track who has to take leave during their 5-year probation period: the revision of what achievements are expected of the academic within the timeframe that they were present, or the extension of the timeframe in which they are expected to achieve them.

A decision would be made in the academic's fourth year in the programme as to whether they have met the criteria to progress to a permanent contract. The academic would have the right to appeal during their fifth year. Faculty Deans would be ultimately responsible for ensuring the full implementation of the engagement and review process between Schools and academics in the tenure track.

The Committee noted that the proposed system could provide good opportunities and supports for entry-level academics but the need for high quality mentors was emphasised. The fact that the accommodations for academics taking leave would apply to both men and women, and to leave of various kinds including sickness leave due to disability, was welcomed.

Concerns were raised that if all new academic contracts become 5-year contracts, this could make a gender-based pre-selection regarding hiring, as women may be less likely to apply for a long insecure contract. Trinity may therefore lose good candidates to other universities with shorter tenure tracks. It was felt that this could possibly be mitigated by having a very strong mentoring programme in any tenure track scheme, and ensuring the mentoring is highlighted as a selling-point when attracting candidates.

The Committee highlighted the importance of the full implementation of supports in any tenure track scheme, particularly the active engagement of the School with the academic. It

was also noted that data from the Ussher lectureship programme would be very useful in analysing the gender implications of the proposals.

The Committee agreed that equality concerns including gender and disability should be addressed explicitly in the development of any tenure track proposals. It was decided that the Committee would meet again this term to discuss the issue further, at a time at which the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer can attend, and that Prof E Drew and the Director of Diversity and Inclusion would be invited to that meeting.

**Action (a):** Chair and Equality Officer to respond to Prof E Drew on behalf of the Committee, outlining the Committee's position on the current plans for tenure track in Trinity.

**Action (b):** Equality Officer to schedule a Committee meeting in Michaelmas term 2015, and to invite Prof E Drew and the Director of Diversity and Inclusion to that meeting.

**NB:** The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer left the meeting after this item.

**Eqal/15-16/006**

**Dignity and Respect Policy**

**Mr K O'Doherty**

The Committee welcomed Mr K O'Doherty, head of the Dignity and Respect Contact Persons, to present the recommendations of the Dignity and Respect Policy Working Group. A revised draft of the Dignity and Respect Policy had been circulated in advance of the meeting. The following is a summary of his presentation of the policy:

There is a need to eliminate the confusion which arises from having a 2009 print version and a slightly different 2012 web version of the Dignity and Respect Policy.

A recent Visitor case tested Trinity's Dignity and Respect procedures, and they were found to be robust on the whole. Trinity will continue to conduct internal investigations using the policy. The Visitor particularly approved of the emphasis on informal resolution. The fact that most cases in Trinity remain informal shows the strength of the Dignity and Respect Contact Persons.

The policy remains long, because it is valued by staff as a detailed resource. This draft tightens up the procedures around formal cases.

Many Managers / Heads of Area desire a greater role in resolving Dignity and Respect complaints. This draft gives the University better protection in allowing such involvement, and reduces the current over-reliance on the Contact Persons.

However, Managers / Heads of Area will not be obliged to take on a greater role.

It was suggested that students currently lack awareness of where they should bring a claim of sexual assault, and may look to the Dignity and Respect policy for guidance. The Committee and Mr O'Doherty agreed that the Dignity and Respect Policy, with its emphasis

on informal procedures, should not apply to such a serious crime, which would be a matter for An Garda Síochána. It was also agreed that a statement will be added to the policy, to clarify the difference between sexual harassment and sexual assault and to direct victims of sexual assault to An Garda Síochána as well as to sources of support within Trinity.

The Equality Officer acknowledged that sexual assault is an important issue and committed to supporting the Students' Union in relevant awareness-raising activities. The desirability of increasing awareness of the Dignity and Respect Policy, through posters or summary pamphlets, for example, was also noted.

A range of minor amendments to the draft Dignity and Respect Policy were also suggested by the Committee, and it was agreed that some minor comments (e.g. on points of language) would be emailed to Mr O'Doherty after the meeting. The point was raised that policies should be gender-neutral with regards to pronouns where possible, to support inclusion of trans\* readers. Members were approving of the emphasis on mediation, and the clear distinction between formal and informal processes.

**Equal/15-16/007**

**Equality Policy Review – Plan and Draft**

**Equality Officer**

A document outlining the Equality Officer's proposed Equality Policy Review Plan, as well as a draft which implements the Equality Officer's recommended changes, was circulated in advance of the meeting. The Committee approved the Equality Policy review plan and suggested additional parties who should be specifically consulted. The Committee welcomed the basis for the review plan and the majority of changes proposed.

The Equality Office informed the Committee that the proposals are based on model equality policies from six UK universities and one Irish university who have been successful in the Athena Swan programme; on the results of an online survey of Trinity staff and students' responses to the existing Equality Policy (conducted across the whole University in Hilary Term 2015); and on the Equality Committee's feedback to the previous draft that was presented the 14<sup>th</sup> May committee meeting.

The major changes in this draft that were approved by the Committee were:

- The Policy to be made available in a range of accessible formats
- The Policy to be made more concise overall, and overlap of content with other Trinity policies reduced
- The Policy to include a guide to Trinity's other equality-related policies
- Strategic Plan commitments to Equality to be highlighted in the Policy
- An Implementation Plan for the Policy to be produced by the Equality Committee on an annual basis (these Plans to complement the University's Diversity Strategy)

- Queries / complaints about the Policy to be directed to the Equality Officer, and non-identifying details of all queries / complaints recorded for monitoring purposes

The proposal to define the Equality Committee member's role in the policy as having an "ambassadorial" or outreach element was not approved. This was felt to be unrealistic given the existing responsibilities of committee members. It was also noted that the proposal presented to the committee on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2015, to have an Equality and Diversity Officer in each Faculty, was intended to embed Equality within local areas across Trinity, and to provide the additional resources that are needed to conduct high-quality data monitoring.

It was agreed that the development of new roles could be proposed in future Equality Policy Implementation Plans. Additionally, it was decided that in the upcoming call for self-nomination to the vacant position on the Equality Committee (see Equal/15-16/004), unsuccessful applicants will be offered the opportunity to get involved in promoting equality on an informal and voluntary basis. The Equality Officer will keep a database of any such staff volunteers and invite them to assist with events and other initiatives throughout the year.

Committee members made further recommendations for the revised Equality Policy, regarding language and formatting. The Committee also recommended that the Equality Policy's role as the parent policy of the other equality-related policies should be stated clearly (and the owners of the other policies informed accordingly).

**Action (a):** Equality Officer to update the draft Equality Policy according to the Committee's recommendations

**Action (b):** Equality Officer to invite the following areas to participate in focus groups about the draft Equality Policy – Human Resources, Students' Unions, Disability Service, WiSER, Global Relations, Trinity Access Programmes, Director of Diversity and Inclusion

**Action (c):** Equality Officer to offer unsuccessful applicants for the Equality Committee self-nominated staff member vacancy the opportunity to join a volunteer database

**Action (d):** Equality Officer to schedule an Equality Committee meeting which would facilitate the inclusion of the revised Equality Policy, for approval, on the agenda of the Board meeting of 9<sup>th</sup> December 2015

## **Section B – Implementation Issues**

**Equal/15-16/008      Implementation of Gender Identity and Gender Expression Policy**  
**Equality Officer**

The Equality Officer reported to the Committee on the plans for implementing the Gender Identity and Gender Expression Policy in 2015/16. Training for key staff will be provided by Transgender Equality Network Ireland (TENI), a list of existing gender-neutral toilet facilities will be compiled and publicized, and the Programme Management Office will be requested to include the Policy's principle that non-gender-specific facilities (such as bathrooms and accommodation) should be provided where possible, in their checklists for future developments.

The Committee noted that the upcoming developments of Oisín House and the Trinity Business School could be good opportunities to provide gender-neutral facilities. Also, the Equality Officer informed the Committee that positive feedback has already been received about the Policy and its implementation in regard to the changing of records.

**Equal/15-16/009      Implementation of Policy on Supports for Student Parents, Student Carers and Students Experiencing Pregnancy**  
**Equality Officer**

The Equality Officer reported to the Committee on the plans for implementing the Policy on Supports for Student Parents, Student Carers and Students Experiencing Pregnancy in 2015/16. Training for staff will be provided by the Equality Officer on a voluntary basis by School / Area, and the provisions of the Policy will be integrated into any Equality and Diversity training that may be developed during the year. Efforts will be made to identify and to develop possible lactation spaces throughout the main campus and on off-campus sites. The Equality Officer will also support local areas in developing local procedures under the Policy – to appropriately facilitate breastfeeding, for example.

**Section C – Matters for Noting**

**Equal/15-16/010      Athena SWAN and GLEN Workplace Equality Index Awards**  
**Secretary**

The Equality Officer informed the Committee of Trinity's recent success in two equality-related awards programmes. Trinity has achieved a bronze institutional medal in the Athena SWAN programme, which recognises higher education institutions for their promotion of gender equality in STEM subjects. Three Trinity Schools were also awarded Athena SWAN bronze medals: the School of Chemistry, the School of Natural Sciences and the School of Physics. This was the first time the Athena SWAN programme has been available to universities in Ireland and further success in the programme is a key goal for Trinity, as outlined in the 2014-2019 Strategic Plan.

Trinity has also received a Special Recognition Award in the inaugural Gay and Lesbian Equality Network (GLEN) Workplace Equality Index Awards, which have been founded to celebrate LGBT-friendly workplaces across Ireland. Trinity's award was given in recognition of the University's work for trans\* inclusion, particularly its Gender Identity and Gender Expression Policy, which is ground-breaking in Ireland. Trinity will continue to work with GLEN to improve as an LGBT-friendly workplace and campus.

### **Any Other Business**

#### **Eqal/15-16/011      A.O.B. Boardpad**

Members of the Committee expressed interest in adopting the Boardpad system now used by the University Board, which would save paper resources and make navigation through meeting papers easier.

**Action:** The Equality Officer to research further details of the Boardpad system and the feasibility of using Boardpad in the Equality Committee

#### **Eqal/15-16/012      A.O.B. Equality Fund**

In response to a Committee member's enquiry, the Equality Officer confirmed that the call for applications to the 2015/16 Equality Fund would be opened soon.

**Action:** The Equality Officer to call a meeting of the Equality Fund subcommittee as soon as possible

Signed: .....



Date: .....