Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

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EQUALITY COMMITTEE

Minutes

Meeting 1 December 2015, 11am, Sports Centre Boardroom

Present: Chair (Dr C McCabe), Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer (Prof L Hogan), Dr Inmaculada Arnedillo-Sánchez, Mr C Clancy (SU), Mr J Cumiskey, Dr M Cuypers, Ms S McBride, Dr J Walsh, Secretary / Equality Officer (Ms A Crawford)

Apologies: Ms G Hegarty, Prof M McCarron, Mr M McKeown, Ms K O'Toole-Brennan, Mr D Treanor

In attendance: Mr T McMahon: Director of Diversity and Inclusion (Eqal/15-16/017 and Eqal/15-16/018 only), Prof E Drew: Director of WiSER (Eqal/15-16/017 only)

Eqal/15-16/013 **Opening** **Chair**

The Chair opened the meeting and apologies were taken. The Chair welcomed Dr Inmaculada Arnedillo-Sánchez to the committee as the member representing the Dignity and Respect Contact Persons.

Eqal/15-16/014 **Minutes of the previous meeting** **Chair**

It was noted that the minutes in regard to Equal/15-16/006 do not reflect the point raised that the Dignity and Respect Policy should be gender-neutral with regard to pronouns.

The minutes of the Equality Committee meeting on 14 October 2015 were approved subject to this amendment being made.

Action: Equality Officer to amend the minutes of the 14 October 2015 meeting to reflect the point raised that the Dignity and Respect Policy should be gender-neutral with regard to pronouns.

Eqal/15-16/015 **Matters arising** **Chair**

There were no matters arising.

Eqal/15-16/016 **Action call-over** **Equality Officer**

The Equality Officer updated the committee as to the status of the actions agreed in the previous meeting. 8 of the 10 actions have been completed. The following two actions will be completed at a later stage of the staff committee member self-nomination process:

> **Eqal/15-16/004** Equality Officer to issue call for self-nomination to all staff, and to co-ordinate the selection process via email in collaboration with the Chair

Eqal/15-16/007 Equality Officer to offer unsuccessful applicants for the Equality Committee self-nominated staff member vacancy the opportunity to join a volunteer database

With regards to the following completed action,

Eqal/15-16/002 Equality Officer to liaise with the Procurement Office to confirm whether the new government procurement system is compliant with Trinity's Accessible Information Policy

The Equality Officer informed the committee that the accessibility of the new government procurement system has been researched, and that the Accessible Information Officer has expressed concern about one part of that system, namely etenders.gov.ie.

With regards to the following completed action,

Eqal/15-16/011 Equality Officer to research further details of the Boardpad system and the feasibility of using Boardpad in the Equality Committee

The Equality Officer informed the committee of advice received from the Secretary's Office, that the Boardpad system is very useful, particularly for circulation and archiving, however the system can be used on iPads only (not android tablets). She suggested that introducing the system to the Equality Committee, while desirable, may not be feasible for cost reasons. Committee members commented that Boardpad is efficient and that it is helpful for making revisions to papers. It was agreed that the Equality Officer will provide a costing of the proposed introduction of Boardpad to the next committee meeting, for further consideration.

With regards to the following completed action,

> **Eqal/15-16/012** Equality Officer to call a meeting of the Equality Fund subcommittee as soon as possible

The Equality Officer informed the committee that the Equality Fund application process has been opened, and that the deadline is Friday 4 December 2015. It was suggested that an email reminder about the Equality Fund should be sent to all staff and students in advance of the deadline, and that the Communications Office should be asked to assist with distributing social media content about the Equality Fund.

Action (a): Equality Officer to further investigate concerns that the etenders.gov.ie website may not be accessible to the standard required by Trinity's Accessible Information Policy

Action (b): Equality Officer to provide a costing of the proposed introduction of Boardpad to the next Equality Committee

Action (c): Equality Officer to issue an email reminder about the Equality Fund to all staff and students, and to request the Communications Office to distribute social media content about the Equality Fund, in advance of the application deadline on 4 December 2015

Matters for Discussion

Eqal/15-16/017 **Implications for Planned / Unplanned Leave of the Tenure Track Proposals**

Chair

Prof. E. Drew and Mr T. McMahon joined the meeting at this point.

The Vice-Provost / Chief Academic Officer noted the high level of engagement to date with the tenure track proposals and provided a summary to the committee of the current tenure track proposals, as follows:

> Entry-level academics will be given a five-year contract with a view to permanency, subject to performance. There will be various stages of engagement with the relevant School during the five years, including an annual review chaired by the Head of School (or nominee in earlier years). The proposals are intended to provide a transparent and consistent approach throughout the University.
>
> Entry-level academics will not be offered a permanent contract from the point of entry, with one year probation, because one year is not considered to be a long enough probation period for entrants to academia, which has multiple and various elements.
>
> The positive experience of the Ussher I programme has been influential on these proposals. Tenure track systems are also common around the world. The Trinity proposals are more dissimilar than similar to the US tenure track model, and various European universities have been considered as more appropriate models for Trinity, (Edinburgh University in particular).

In response to questions from committee members, the Vice-Provost / Chief Academic Officer clarified / confirmed the following:

- The existing merit bar system would be replaced by any tenure track system. The two systems would be run in parallel for a short time to accommodate staff who are already on fixed-term contracts when the system is introduced.
- The proposals contain two mechanisms for staff who take leave while on the tenure track: “Stop the Clock” (i.e. extension of the tenure track timeline) or pro-rated performance (i.e. revision of what achievements are expected within the 5-year

period). A tenure-track academic could choose their preferred of these two options, where contractually permissible.

- The tenure track proposals would address the disparity in workload allocation practices throughout the university and would give entry-level academic staff clarity, from the beginning of their contract, as to what is expected of them.
- In reviewing the tenure track process itself, Trinity will look at the differential impact on particular groups, as is done for example in the University of Edinburgh. Consultation with the University of Edinburgh suggests that women are faring equally well when there are structured, equitable processes in place. A working relationship with the University of Edinburgh could be established to assist with Trinity's review process – WiSER could also be involved. It is not expected that these proposals would cause any gender imbalance at the recruitment stage, based on the experience of the Ussher programme
- A new mentoring training scheme would be developed as a key aspect to the success of these proposals.

Committee members and guests raised the following points about the proposals:

- The proposals could have implications on disability or mental health grounds as well as on gender grounds
- The effects of any tenure track system won't be known for at least 5 years
- Gender-proofing should be in-built to any tenure track system from the beginning
- Accelerated advancement systems have disproportionately benefitted men
- Returning to work after a period of leave can be difficult, and university-wide introduction of post-leave "research leave" schemes, whereby academic staff returning from leave are given leave from administrative duties in order to concentrate on research, should be considered.
- There would be a significant power imbalance between the tenure track academic and their Head of School, which will need checks and balances. For example, to protect tenure track academics against being overburdened with administrative duties which will make it difficult for them to reach their benchmarks, it may be useful to provide a list of jobs that tenure track academics are not expected to do.

- The proposals place significant responsibility on Heads of School who have many, various priorities. A tenure track academic's success may depend on the allocation of appropriate work to them by their Head of School. Head of Schools' obligations should be communicated clearly and they should be offered appropriate training in relation to supporting the tenure track system.
- The weighting of review criteria should be communicated to tenure track academics from the beginning of their contract
- A requirement for tenure-track academics to take accredited professional development in the area of teaching, and to be supported in doing so by their school, should be considered
- The role of the mentor will prove very important as they will likely be the first point of contact in the event of any issues for the tenure track academic
- The possible impact on recruitment of prospective applicants with family responsibilities should be considered and monitored, and the supports available in any tenure track scheme should be communicated at the advertising stage.
- The proposals are largely positive provided that supports, protections, monitoring, oversight and transparency are upheld in their implementation.

The Chair thanked the Vice-Provost / Chief Academic Officer and Prof. Drew for their contributions. **Prof. Drew left the meeting at this point. Ms I. Arnedillo-Sánchez left the meeting during this item (11.50am).**

Eqal/15-16/018 Diversity Strategy Mr T McMahon

Mr T McMahon, Director of Diversity and Inclusion, presented an update on the development of the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy to the committee. The draft Strategy and accompanying Action Plan will be presented to the Equality Committee shortly. Mr McMahon described the Strategy Objectives as follows:

- Support staff and students in working cohesively to achieve a culture of inclusivity and diversity

- Promote the holistic and seamless engagement of all members of the University community, and further a sense of inclusion across diverse groups
- Continuously improve the inclusive Trinity experience through sustained policy implementation, inclusive curriculum, and services innovation
- Demonstrate institutional leadership on Diversity and Inclusion, internal and external to the University

Mr McMahon also outlined the five key themes for Action:

1. Policy Formation and Implementation
2. Governance, Oversight and Administration
3. Institutional Leadership through Accreditation, Recognition and Best Practice
4. Training and Development
5. Communication and Engagement

Mr McMahon noted that the feedback received in drafting the Strategy indicates that Trinity is considered to have good policies, while it can be challenging to implement policies, which is the role of a strategy. He also noted the importance of good data for understanding diversity and inclusion issues and the need to effectively communicate the Strategy once completed. Mr McMahon informed the committee that many actions contained within the strategy have been commenced or completed, due to the incorporation into the Strategy of actions which were decided to deliver on commitments in the Strategic Plan.

The committee noted that the Equality Policy has not been available for cross-referencing with the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy yet, as it is currently under review, however it is expected to be completed soon. It was agreed that the Strategy could be promoted through the Students' Union's channels and structures. It was noted that there are likely to be shared implementation actions between the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and the Equality Policy, and that continued collaboration between the Equality Office and the Director of Diversity and Inclusion will be beneficial in this regard. The role of the Equality Policy as "umbrella" policy to the Diversity Strategy and other policies was clarified in response to a question from a committee member.

The Chair thanked Mr McMahon for his contribution. **Mr McMahon left the meeting at this point.**

Eqal/15-16/019 Equality Policy Equality Officer

The Equality Officer presented a draft Equality Policy to the committee, informing the committee of the developments since the last meeting of 14 October 2015, as follows, and noting that if approved, the policy would be submitted to Board for consideration at its meeting of 9th December 2015.

Consultation was undertaken with staff and students through focus groups from the following areas:

1. Director of Diversity and Inclusion
2. Human Resources
3. Global Relations
4. Support & Access Services
5. Disability Service
6. WiSER and DUGES (Dublin University Gender Equality Society)
7. Students' Union & Graduate Students' Union

This draft of the Equality Policy has incorporated the feedback received from these groups as far as is possible and reasonable. Common themes in the feedback included:

- Implementation and communication of the policy is key
- Procedures for monitoring and ensuring compliance with the policy should be specified
- There should be clear consequences for non-compliance with the policy
- It should be highlighted that the policy applies to student society activities
- Meaning should be more clearly defined in some instances, particularly regarding "Mainstreaming" (section 1.9, page 9)

- More detail was needed on certain provisions, particularly the Annual Implementation Plan (section 2.2, page 12) and complaints procedures (section 5.3, page 21)
- There was a need to clarify whether certain provisions apply to students, staff, or service users
- Students should not be equated with "service users"
- The "Consultation" section was not necessary within the policy
- "Other Policies" (appendix 2, page 29) and "Equality Infrastructure and Services" (appendix 3, page 32) should both be appendices rather than forming a part of the main body of the policy
- The rationale informing which policies were included in the main list, and which were highlighted in a box (in "Other Policies", appendix 2, page 29), was unclear
- The reference to the Strategic Plan strengthens the policy and should be highlighted

In relation to implementation, the Equality Officer noted that indirect discrimination, and logistical barriers to equality, are the major area of concern for the groups consulted.

It was noted that the Central Societies Committee should be involved in communicating the Equality Policy to societies. Possible strategies may include incorporating the Equality Policy into training for heads of societies and/or into training for Students' Union officers; providing societies with a checklist for holding accessible events; establishing an Equality Champions awards scheme for societies. The committee agreed that a positive, society-led approach would be most appropriate in encouraging compliance with the policy amongst societies.

It was agreed that Ms S McBride, College Solicitor / Information Compliance Officer, would review the definitions within the policy, including references to the scope of the policy and to the role of Board, to ensure accuracy and appropriateness. It was recommended that where any term in the main body of the policy is defined in Appendix 1: Definitions (page 23), this should be communicated to the reader by use of footnotes.

The Equality Officer drew the committee's attention to Section 5.3 Queries and Complaints, page 21, and Section 2.1 Responsibility, page 10, as areas for particular consideration. It was noted that Section 5.3 Queries and Complaints should refer to the university's existing complaints procedures, as most complaints should go through the central complaints systems in the first instance. Regarding Section 2.1 Responsibility, no changes were recommended. It was noted that the details of any regular oversight procedures should be worked out when drafting the first Equality Policy Annual Implementation Plan.

The committee approved the Equality Policy subject to the minor amendments proposed being made before its submission to Board.

Dr M Cuypers and Dr J Walsh left the meeting during this item (12.45pm), after approval of the policy by the committee.

Action: Equality Officer to update the draft Equality Policy according to the committee's recommendations, and submit for circulation to Board in time for the 9th December 2015 meeting.

Action: Equality Officer to incorporate the committee's recommendations into the first Annual Implementation Plan for the Equality Policy.

Matters for Noting

Eqal/15-16/020 **Self-nominated committee member selection process**

Equality Officer

The committee were informed that 15 self-nominations for the staff member vacancy on the Equality Committee have been received to date, and that the total nominations will be circulated to the committee on Friday 4th December. The selection process will be the same as the process employed in the previous round of selecting self-nominated members (Michaelmas term 2014), and detailed instructions will be contained within the email circulation.

Any Other Business

Eqal/15-16/021 **Gender-neutral toilet facilities** **Mr C Clancy**

Mr C Clancy, Welfare Officer of the Students' Union, informed the committee that the Students' Union are running a campaign regarding gender-neutral toilet facilities, to raise awareness of their desirability for trans* inclusion and for combatting gender-based violence. It was noted that the Dean of Students may be a good contact for this campaign, and also that the Equality Officer and Director of Diversity and Inclusion have been working on the issue, and would be happy to collaborate with the Students' Union where appropriate. Further communication between Mr Clancy and the aforementioned staff, on the matter of gender-neutral toilet facilities, was advised.

Signed: …….

Date: …….