



Trinity College Dublin

Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath

The University of Dublin

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EQUALITY COMMITTEE

Approved Minutes

Meeting 18 May 2016, 2pm,

Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Boardroom

Present: Chair (Dr C McCabe), Mr C Clancy (SU), Ms G Hegarty (GSU), Dr S Brennan, Dr M Cuypers, Mr M McKeown, Ms S MacBride, Mr D Treanor, Secretary / Equality Officer (Ms A Crawford)

In attendance: Ms Aoibhinn Ní Lochlainn, incoming SU Welfare and Equality Officer

Apologies: Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer (Prof L Hogan), Dean of Health Sciences (Prof M McCarron), Dr Inmaculada Arnedillo-Sánchez, Mr J Cumiskey, Ms K O'Toole-Brennan, Dr John Walsh

Eqal/15-16/047

Opening

Chair

The Chair opened the meeting and apologies were taken.

Eqal/15-16/048

Minutes of the previous meeting

Chair

It was recommended that the wording of the Action associated with Eqal/15-16/053 be amended to reflect that responsibility for provision of signage for gender-neutral bathrooms in the Arts Block lies with Estates and Facilities, rather than the Director of the Disability Service. The minutes of the previous Equality Committee meeting on 16 March 2016 were approved subject to this amendment being made.

Action: Equality Officer to amend minutes of 16 March 2016 meeting as advised, before publication.

Eqal/15-16/049

Matters arising

Chair

(a) Boardpad

The Equality Officer informed the committee that the Secretary's Office are hopeful of securing funding for the Equality Committee to adopt the Boardpad system, and will confirm the funding position soon. Committee members stated their full commitment to using the Boardpad system if and when it is in place, to maximise the cost-saving, time-saving and environmental benefits of the system. It is hoped that the system can be in place for the start of the 2016/17 academic year.

(b) Board discussion of *Gender and Trinity Staff Report*

The Chair updated the committee regarding the Board's discussion of the *Gender and Trinity Staff: Trends in Populations, Recruitment and Progression* report. It was noted that the discussion was positive with many members welcoming the report; and that a further report on the gender representation among various contract types has been requested by the Provost. No further actions were specified by Board but it was noted that the new Trinity Centre for Gender Equality and Leadership (formerly WiSER) will be involved in gender actions arising from the findings of the report.

(c) Supports for new academic staff

A committee member raised a question about new USSHER academic staff, specifically whether the training and mentoring procedures recommended by the Equality Committee in its previous discussion of tenure track proposals have been implemented, to provide appropriate support for academic staff entering Trinity in September 2016. It was agreed that HR would be contacted for clarification in this regard.

There were no other matters arising.

Action (a): Equality Officer to arrange introduction of the Boardpad system for committee meetings in the 2016/17 academic year, with support from the Secretary's Office, subject to availability of funds

Action (b): Equality Officer to enquire with HR, on behalf of the committee, as to what supports will be in place for new academic staff in September 2016

Eqal/15-16/050

Action call-over

Equality Officer

The Action Call-over was taken as read - all actions are completed or ongoing.

The following ongoing actions were discussed by the committee:

1. Regarding **Action Eqal/15-16/039**, committee members were informed that the Dignity and Respect Policy has been approved by HR Committee and Equality Committee (the latter by email), and circulated to the Board meeting of 25 May 2016.
2. Regarding **Action Eqal/15-16/040(b)**, the Equality Officer informed the Committee that the Registrar has been consulted regarding the proposed age-friendly strategy for Trinity. The available options are that an age-friendly strategy could be proposed directly by the Equality Committee to Board (with or without the input of the Registrar); or that age could form an explicit part of the Diversity and Inclusion

Strategy. The preference of the Equality Committee is that the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy would incorporate the age-friendly strategy. It was proposed that a working group, including Equality Committee members, the Director of Diversity and Inclusion and other relevant parties, would investigate any existing age issues in the university, and report back to the Committee. Members are keen to keep ageing on the Committee's agenda.

3. Regarding **Eqal/15-16/042**, the Committee was pleased with the progress of the LGBT Staff Network and noted that it could be used as a model for other staff networks in Trinity. The Committee will invite the Network Chair(s) to its first meeting of 2016/17 to discuss the relationship of the Network to the Committee.
4. Regarding **Eqal/15-16/043**, the Committee were informed that informal agreement has been made for Estates and Facilities to pay the cost of the new signage, and that a quote is currently being obtained for the specific signage requested; also that a more comprehensive map of existing gender-neutral toilet facilities has been created. Members recommended that this map be integrated with the university's online interactive map; the Committee also requested comment from Estates and Facilities as to when the signage is expected to be in place.

Action (a): Equality Officer to liaise with Director of Diversity and Inclusion to propose inclusion of age-friendly actions in the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

Action (b): Equality Officer to circulate proposed age-friendly working group members to the Committee; and to call working group together once agreed

Action (c): Equality Officer to liaise with Communications to arrange integration of the list of gender-neutral toilet facilities into the interactive university map

Action (d): Equality Officer to request estimate from Estates and Facilities of expected completion date of gender-neutral bathroom signage in the Arts Block, on behalf of the Committee

Matters for Discussion

Eqal/15-16/051

Diversity and Inclusion Strategy Update

Chair

The Chair introduced a memo from the Director of Diversity and Inclusion, regarding recent progress with the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, to the committee. The memo notes that two external consultancy firms were engaged to advise on the strategy, leading to the strategy being made more concise and more focussed on specific actions; that alignment and coherence with the Equality Policy implementation plan and Athena SWAN institutional action plan has also been ensured; and that the strategy is intended to be submitted to the Executive Officers' Group (EOG) for approval in the coming weeks.

The Committee noted the urgency of proposing the addition of age-friendly actions to the strategy given this timeline. It was agreed that the Equality Committee should review the strategy once more before it is sent to Board for final approval – this could be by email, with comments to be collated by the Equality Officer, or in an additional, single-item meeting. The Committee's preference would be to review the strategy before it is reviewed by EOG.

Action: Equality Officer to notify the Director of Diversity and Inclusion, as soon as possible, as to the Equality Committee's recommendations regarding the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and its approval process. Further steps to be taken to facilitate approval, such as email circulation or scheduling of additional meeting, as agreed with the Director.

Eqal/15-16/052

Code of Practice Applying to the Employment of People with Disabilities

Director of Disability Service

The Director of the Disability Service, Mr Declan Treanor presented a revised Code of Practice Applying to the Employment of People with Disabilities to the Committee for consideration. He noted that the previous Code of Practice dated to 2008 and required updating to reflect structural changes, Trinity identity and other legislation and funding changes. The Equality Officer, Ms Karen Dunne representing HR, and the Director of

Diversity and Inclusion had input into the review of the Code of Practice. Mr Treanor noted that most of the changes are minor, and highlighted the passage clarifying that payment for reasonable accommodations is to be made through a central cost code as the major change.

Committee members welcomed the new financial arrangements regarding the accommodation of employees with disabilities. Mr Treanor further explained, in response to questions, that the cost code relating to reasonable accommodations for staff is a separate code to that used for reasonable accommodations for students; that all staff including interns and those employed through research grants are covered by the provisions of the Code of Practice; that the Code of Practice will be communicated on the HR website and via an all-staff email; and that the Code of Practice will also be reviewed by the HR committee, through which it will be presented to Board.

Members welcomed this cross-referencing between Equality and HR committee, and noted the importance of ensuring that every policy has an agreed owner. A member recommended that page 4 of the Code of Practice should state that HR representatives will brief and instruct interview panellists; the HR department is to be consulted on this point.

The Committee also discussed methods for communicating the provisions of the Code of Practice to staff who acquire a disability during their term of employment in Trinity, and it was agreed that this is a line manager's responsibility, but that general awareness-raising of the Code of Practice would also be helpful in this regard. It was noted that some new recruits can be reluctant to disclose a disability through the pre-employment medical questionnaire, and that the wording of the questionnaire should be reviewed to ensure that its confidential nature is entirely clear.

Action (a): Director of Disability Service to review draft Code of Practice in light of the Committee's recommendations; and to forward to HR Committee and Board for approval

Action (b): Equality Officer to review wording of pre-employment medical questionnaire, and liaise with Health Centre and HR regarding amendments, if necessary

Director of Disability Service

The Director of the Disability Service (Mr Declan Treanor) presented comments from the Centre for Deaf Studies (CDS) for discussion, explaining that this document was submitted as part of the consultation process on the ongoing review of the Procedures for Irish Sign Language (ISL) Provision.

Committee members noted that while the document contains valuable commentary on the Procedures for ISL Provision, many of the issues raised go beyond the remit of the Procedures, and might be more appropriately addressed through the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy. It was agreed that a working group would be set up to address the further issues raised by the CDS that are not directly relevant to the Procedures. The working group might include representatives from the CDS, the Equality Committee, the Students' Union, HR and/or Communications, and the Director of Diversity and Inclusion; an external expert may also be involved if required.

Members welcomed the raising in the document of various issues which the Committee had not previously been aware of, and supported the idea that the CDS would continue to promote awareness of deaf inclusion matters to the University community - for example, through an Equality Fund project or the wider dissemination of a poster series that has already been created by the CDS. Members discussed the need for greater compliance with the Accessible Information Policy in general, and suggested that high-profile University videos should include ISL or captions.

The CDS' comments that the language of the Procedures should reflect the need of the whole University community (hearing as well as deaf people) for ISL/English interpretation were particularly welcomed. The CDS' proposal that Trinity should employ an in-house ISL/English interpreter was also discussed. It was noted that this would make the provision of ISL interpretation more normalised and easier to organise. However, the Disability Service

estimate current annual costs of ISL interpretation to be around €1,000. While this may be an under-representation of need, as deaf staff and students may not request interpretation due to the organisational challenges involved, the appointment of a full-time interpreter would not be cost-effective.

Mr Treanor will continue to review the ISL Procedures, taking the CDS comments into consideration. Regular organisers of events were identified as a key target audience for communications about the ISL Procedures, once the review is completed.

Action (a): Director of Disability Service to complete review of the ISL Procedures, and circulate to the Committee via email for their consideration

Action (b): Equality Officer to liaise with Director of Diversity and Inclusion to discuss the possibility of incorporating issues raised by the CDS in the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

Action (c): Equality Officer to circulate suggested subgroup membership to Committee; and to schedule a meeting once membership is agreed. This working group to draft a response to the CDS on behalf of the Committee

Equal/15-16/054 Accessible Information Policy Implementation

Director of Disability Service

The Director of the Disability Service, Mr Declan Treanor presented a memo update to the Committee on the implementation in 2015/16 of the Accessible Information Policy.

The major development in this regard has been the integration of the Accessible Information Policy, principles of inclusive design, and the Trinity Inclusive Curriculum (TIC) materials into the Trinity Education Project (TEP). This is intended to mainstream good accessibility practice into everyday curriculum design. Elements of the Accessible Information Policy were also integrated into the Equality Policy during the 2015 review of same, and further practical actions encouraging use of assistive technology have been

taken. Some progress has been made in the accessibility of print information due to the inclusion of accessibility in the new identity guidelines and templates.

The challenges of achieving university-wide compliance were discussed, particularly as regards monitoring compliance and dealing with instances of non-compliance. It was noted that a recent Quality Review showed a lack of compliance on disability issues in general. Educational materials, and communications / events, were identified as two key areas for implementation of the Accessible Information Policy.

It was noted that most event venues in Trinity are accessible – but that accessible venues can be under-used due to complex booking procedures, matters of habit, and low awareness of some spaces. Members recommended that the best way to ensure compliance regarding event accessibility would be to incorporate an event accessibility checking mechanism into a single central room-booking system. It was also proposed that accessibility training be integrated into mainstream training such as training for academic staff by CAPSL.

Action: Equality Officer to meet with Assistive Technology Officer and with Communications Office to discuss accessibility matters

Equal/15-16/055 Equality Champions Awards for Clubs and Societies

Ms S MacBride

Ms S MacBride spoke to the Committee about the success of the inaugural Equality Champions Awards for Clubs and Societies, which were held this year as an Equality Fund project. The winners were:

- 1st prize – Student2Student
- 2nd prize – LawSoc
- 3rd prize – An Cumann Gaelach

Ms MacBride reported that great enthusiasm for the equality agenda was observed among students through the Awards, and informed the Committee that the awards will be run on

an annual basis by the Equality Office in future, with a budget to be allocated for this purpose.

Equal/15-16/056

Equality Fund Update

Equality Officer

The Equality Officer presented a memo update to the Committee regarding the Equality Fund, highlighting the following:

- Project organisers were asked to complete an Interim Progress Report this year for the first time. This was beneficial in identifying projects' difficulties and providing assistance at an early stage. It is proposed to continue this process in future years.
- Two projects have been cancelled and two have been offered extensions. Funds from cancelled projects have been re-allocated where possible (to an additional project, in one case)
- Funds left over at the end of 2015/16 are intended to be ring-fenced and carried over into next year's Fund as is provided for in the Equality Fund terms of reference.
- The nature of the new iExpenses system has made claiming reimbursements more complex for staff organisers of Equality Fund projects
- A full report on the 2015/16 Equality Fund will be provided to the Committee in autumn 2016

In response to questions from Committee members, the Equality Officer noted that processing Equality Fund payments through iExpenses has added significant administrative duties to her own work programme; that payments are expected to run more smoothly in 2016/17 as many scenarios were encountered in 2015/16 for the first time; and that staff will be made aware of the reimbursement process before and during the implementation of their Equality Fund project.

Action: Equality Officer to provide full report on Equality Fund 2015/16 to the Committee in autumn 2016

Matters for Noting

Eqal/15-16/057

Equality Committee Annual Report

Equality Officer

The Equality Officer noted that the Equality Committee Annual Report will be drafted over the summer, and advised members that they should expect to receive a link to an online survey in the next few weeks. This survey will be conducted for the purpose of gathering members' feedback on the effectiveness of the Committee, and a summary of members' feedback will be included in the Annual Report.

Action (a): Equality Officer to disseminate survey on Committee effectiveness to all members, via email

Action (b): Committee members to complete the survey on Committee effectiveness

Action (c): Equality Officer to present draft Equality Committee Annual Report 2015/16 to the Committee in autumn 2016

Eqal/15-16/058

Outgoing Members and Membership Review

Chair

The Chair noted that Board have recently discussed membership of principal committees, and that in this context the membership of the Equality Committee will be monitored and evolved. The Equality Officer also noted the need to confirm all members' terms of membership. Each member will be contacted in the coming weeks to confirm the length of their membership so far.

The Chair thanked the outgoing Committee members, Mr Conor Clancy (SU) and Ms Gianna Hegarty (GSU). Mr Clancy stated his hope that the Committee will continue to drive forward the issues raised by the student representatives in the coming year. The Chair also welcomed the incoming SU Welfare and Equality Officer, Ms Aoibhinn Ní Lochlainn and the Committee thanked the Equality Officer for her work throughout this busy year.

Any Other Business

Eqal/15-16/059

Facilitation of Ongoing Business

Chair

The Chair noted that this is the last meeting of the academic year, but that some business will continue via email over the coming weeks. The Committee agreed that a further meeting would be called if necessary to discuss any urgent business, such as approval of the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy.

Eqal/15-16/060

Relationship of Equality Committee and Director of Diversity and Inclusion

No owner

Members noted that the relationship of the Equality Committee to the Director of Diversity and Inclusion has become more clear and well-developed throughout the 2015/16 academic year, and welcomed the regular meetings and collaboration between the Director and the Equality Officer. The Committee are supportive of the Director being regularly invited to Committee meetings, and also suggest that any annual report on the implementation of the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy should be presented to the Equality Committee as good practice.

Signed:

Date: