



Trinity College Dublin

Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath

The University of Dublin

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Equality Committee

5th December 2016, 2.00-4.00pm, Arts Block Conference Room

Present: Ms Sheila Dunphy (Chair), Prof Chris Morash (Vice-Provost), Prof Inmaculada Arnedillo-Sánchez, Prof Sabina Brennan, Prof Martine Cuyppers, Prof Eileen Drew, Prof Daniel Faas, Ms Sinead MacBride, Ms Aoibhinn Ní Lochlainn (SU), Ms Siobán O’Brien Green (GSU), Mr Ken O’Doherty, Ms Kathleen O’Toole-Brennan, Mr Declan Treanor, Ms Aoife Crawford (Secretary)

Apologies: Prof Mary McCarron

Eqal/16-17/016: Welcome to new members

The Chair welcomed the Committee’s new members: Prof Eileen Drew, Director of WiSER; Prof Daniel Faas, nominee of Council; and Ms Siobán O’Brien Green, Equality and Diversity Officer of the Graduate Students’ Union. The Chair also thanked outgoing member Mr Jim Cumiskey.

Eqal/16-17/017: Proposal on gender-neutral term for “freshmen”

Prof Siobhan Garrigan attended for this item, presenting a discussion document on her proposal to change the term “Freshman” for first- and second-year undergraduate students in Trinity to a gender-neutral term. The Provost had asked the Equality Committee to consider this proposal and make a recommendation thereupon.

The Committee supported the proposal to change “Freshman” to a gender-neutral term, for a number of reasons relating to gender equality, and recommended by majority vote that the term should be changed to “Fresh”, i.e. “a Junior Fresh student”, “the Senior Fresh year”.

Members noted the following matters for consideration in the change process, should Board approve the Committee’s recommendation:

- The new term should reflect Trinity’s traditions

- Communication of the change must be well-managed, to ensure buy-in
- Resources (staff / financial) will be required to enact the change

It was noted that Prof Garrigan will add further detail on implementation to the discussion document before circulation to Board.

Eqal/16-17/018: HEA Review – update and draft implementation plan

The Chair introduced this item, summarising the terms of reference, timelines and actions to date of the HEA Review Implementation Planning Group [“the Group”]. The Chair also thanked the members of the group for their contributions to the draft implementation plan [“the Plan”]. Committee members were then invited to comment on the Plan.

Members’ comments may be summarised as follows:

- It is positive that the actions in the Plan are concrete with specified timelines
- Gender equality structures are complicated and under-resourced in Trinity; a Vice-President for Equality [one of the HEA Review’s recommendations] would provide needed leadership and co-ordination in this area; the role of the Director of Diversity and Inclusion could be expanded to fulfil this role; the role of the Vice-President for Equality would have most weight if fulfilled by an academic
- Many of the HEA Review recommendations are complex and require creative action
- Monitoring should be considered in more detail throughout the Plan; for example, the gender representation of Committee Chairs would be more usefully monitored over 3-year rolling periods than on an annual basis
- The Plan should make our gender equality targets explicit

It was agreed that a briefing on the Plan would be brought to the Executive Officers’ Group [EOG] on 13 December, after which the Plan would be further developed based on EOG’s feedback.

[the Vice-Provost left the meeting after this item]

Eqal/16-17/019: LGBT Staff Network

Item 5 was moved forward during the meeting.

Mr Joel McKeever, Chair of the Trinity LGBT Staff Network [“the Network”] presented to the Committee on the background, activities and future plans of the Network.

The Committee commended the Network on its excellent work and its many benefits for Trinity, noting that is a good example of network formation for other groups; that a key

factor in its success is its 'grassroots' nature, as it was established by LGBT staff; and that it may assist Trinity in achieving recognition under the expanded Athena SWAN charter, which includes transgender identities. The Committee recommended that the Network address the low participation of academic staff in the Network relative to staff in other roles.

The Committee approved the Network's terms of reference and agreed that the Network Chair or Co-Chairs would attend Equality Committee on an annual basis to update the Committee on the Network's activities. This does not affect the independence of the Network.

Eqal/16-17/020: WiSER Report

Prof Eileen Drew, Director of WiSER presented an overview of the report, 'Mind the Gap: Gender (In)Equality in Trinity College Dublin' ('the WiSER report'), to the Committee.

The Committee were then invited to discuss the report's findings. The following points were raised during the discussion:

- Staff are implicitly expected to work long hours as the amount of work needed to reach the necessary standard to be promoted is continuously rising
- There is a high turnover of postdoctoral research staff ("postdocs") and high rate of informal reporting of bullying and harassment among postdocs who are particularly vulnerable due to their dependence on their Principal Investigator (PI)
- A recommended campaign for zero tolerance of bullying and harassment should be aimed at students as well as staff, working with the Students' Union
- Promotions committees should be made aware of this report
- The links between the WiSER report, the HEA Review, Athena SWAN and the new SAGE (Strategic Action for Gender Equality) research project should be maximised

The report was approved for forwarding to Board (and other Committees as necessary).

[Ms Aoibhinn Ní Lochlainn left the meeting after this item]

Eqal/16-17/021: Communications update

The Chair brought feedback to the Committee from a meeting with between the Chair, the Equality Officer and a representative of the Communications Office which was held on 16th November 2016. The Chair noted that the meeting was productive and that Communications are supportive of increasing accessibility of events and communications, and promoting Trinity's equality message.

Eqal/16-17/022: Equality Fund update

The written update circulated to the Committee in advance of the meeting was taken as read. The Equality Officer highlighted the high number of applications received for gender-related projects in the 2016/17 competition – 10 of the total 22 applications. The Chair noted the success of the 2016 Equality Fund Showcase, at which the 2015/16 projects displayed significant achievements made with small amounts of funding.

Eqal/16-17/023: Update re College Awareness Week and funding submission to PATH

It was agreed to postpone this item to the next meeting.

Eqal/16-17/024: Report from Board

The Chair reported to the Committee on items recently discussed by Board that are of relevance to the Committee's work, including Prof Sanders' review of academic promotions and the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy.

Eqal/16-17/025: Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 21st September 2016 were approved.

Eqal/16-17/026: Action Call-over

The action call-over was taken as read. It was agreed that the Equality Officer will circulate the pre-employment medical questionnaire to the Committee via email, following consultation with the Directors of the Health Service and the Disability Service on the matter.

Eqal/16-17/027: Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

Eqal/16-17/028: Any Other Business

No other items of business were raised.