



**Trinity College Dublin**

Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath

The University of Dublin

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**EQUALITY COMMITTEE**

**Approved Minutes**

**Meeting 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2017, 2pm – 4pm,**

**Secretary's Conference Room, 3 College Green**

**Present:** Chair (Ms S Dunphy), Dean of Health Sciences (Prof M McCarron), Prof S Brennan, Ms S MacBride, Prof E Drew, Prof Daniel Faas, Ms A Ní Lochlainn (SU), Ms K O'Toole-Brennan, Ms S O'Brien-Green (GSU), Mr K O'Doherty, Mr D Treanor, Secretary / Equality Officer (Ms A Crawford)

**In attendance:** Mr T McMahon, Director of Diversity and Inclusion (Equal/16-17/051)

**Apologies:** Vice-Provost (Prof C Morash), Prof Inmaculada Arnedillo-Sánchez, Prof M Cuypers, Prof E Drew

**Eqal/16-17/044**

**Opening**

**Chair**

The Chair opened the meeting and apologies were noted.

**Eqal/16-17/045**

**Report from Board**

**Chair**

Key developments from recent Board meetings that are of relevance to the Equality Committee were noted, namely:

- Passing of the HEA Gender Equality Review Implementation Plan, the Board's thanks to the working group and members' comments highlighting the ambitious scope and cost implications of the Plan
- Notification to Board by the Equality Committee Chair of the plans to introduce Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) screening for all policies, following which the draft EIA form was submitted to all Committee secretaries for review
- Discussion of the "Strategic Hires policy", which has implemented the Equality Committee Chair's previous recommendation to ensure gender balance on all selection committees for such appointments

**Eqal/16-17/046**

**Minutes of the Last Meeting**

**Chair**

The minutes of the meeting of 6<sup>th</sup> February 2017 were approved without amendment.

**Eqal/16-17/047**

**Action Call-over**

**Equality Officer**

The action call-over was taken as read and the Equality Officer elaborated on select items that are ongoing / yet to be completed.

- Age-Friendly Trinity (AFT) initiative: further contact is to be made with DCU to learn from their good practice and explore possibilities for collaboration. The Faculty of

Health Sciences will contact the Chair of the AFT working group regarding Trinity Week.

- The “Fresh” implementation working group will be called in the next week. The Chair has taken preliminary steps toward implementation within the IT services area, and confirmed that the student information system (SITS) will not require changes as it does not use the term “freshman”.

**Eqal/16-17/048**

**Matters Arising**

**Chair**

There were no matters arising.

**Eqal/16-17/049**

**Recommendation of New Self-Nominated Member**

**Equality Officer**

The Equality Officer presented the anonymously-collated votes cast by members for the new staff representative on the Equality Committee, based on self-nomination forms. The excellent standard of applications was noted, as well as the number (13) which is a significant increase on the number of applications received from men in the last self-nomination process (2).

Two self-nominees had received the same number of first preference votes and the same number of 1<sup>st</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> preference votes overall. The Committee discussed the relative merits of each application, noting that both would be a great asset to the Committee, and took a simple majority vote on which candidate to recommend. The name of the successful candidate will now be passed to the Registrar for further approval. All applicants will be thanked on behalf of the Committee and encouraged to engage with Equality in Trinity in other ways, such as through a “Champions” programme, along with applicants from previous rounds.

**[Mr D Treanor entered during this item, at 2.20pm]**

**[This item was discussed out of sequence as the meeting was ahead of schedule]**

Ms O'Toole-Brennan informed the Committee of relevant developments in the field of access and higher education financing, specifically:

- National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2014-2019 (“National Access Plan”)
- HEA Review of the Student Assistance Fund
- HEA Review of the Recurrent Grant Funding Model (RGAM)
- Strategy for Funding Higher Education (“Cassells Report”)

The Committee discussed the equality dimensions of these developments. Key points included:

- The National Access Plan forum was held by the Department of Education and Skills to accentuate the high-level goals of the Plan which focus on six priority student groups, and which underpins the work of the Trinity Access Programmes (TAP), Mature Students Office (MSO) and Disability Service (DS). A mid-term review of the Plan will happen in 2017.
- Barriers faced by lower-income students in relation to student loans / fees; probable influence on higher education attendance and course choices should be considered, especially once the Oireachtas committee issues recommendations on the Cassells Report.
- Trinity offices (DS, MSO and TAP) have been engaging with the HEA and colleagues from other HEIS on the funding model for access. There is significant discussion in the area, with a sectoral review of the current mode for funding access, based on the additional weighting which access students attract and strategic funding which is available to support both pre- and post-entry engagement with students.
- These offices are vulnerable to such funding changes as their budgets are largely reliant on the HEA funding which has been reduced in recent years.

- HEA compacts, which focus on mainstreaming, also affect the area of access, participation and progression
- Most changes recommended in the Review of the Student Assistance Fund are welcome. Trinity needs to improve the IT platform available to administer the Fund. In light of changes in the HE funding landscape, and supports available to students, a mapping of the financial support services currently available to Trinity students may be worthwhile, to identify areas for improvement.
- There is intersectionality between those who are socio-economically disadvantaged and equality grounds such as family status and ethnicity. While the National Access Plan does not specify targets for participation of ethnic minorities other than the Traveller community, Trinity can monitor this in Annual Equality Monitoring Reports
- Trinity has a relatively high retention and progression rate for “access” students
- Trinity should actively promote itself to prospective students as an inclusive university
- Two working groups led by the Senior Lecturer are working on issues related to widening participation, with a focus on progression from Further Education to Higher Education which is a stated priority of the National Access Plan, and holistic supports available to migrant and refugee students

**Action:** Chair and Equality Officer to discuss access and student finance with the Senior Lecturer

**[Prof D Faas left during this item, at 2.40pm]**

**Eqal/16-17/051      Equality Impact Assessment**

**Director of Diversity and Inclusion**

The Committee welcomed Mr T McMahon, Director of Diversity and Inclusion, who presented the updated Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Tool.

- The updated tool has incorporated Equality Committee feedback from 6<sup>th</sup> Feb

- Further consultation was also undertaken with the Registrar, Secretary to the College, and Chairs / Secretaries of Committees of Board and Council
- The EIA tool will adapt to new management structures and existing procedures of Board and Council governance

The Committee welcomed the updated EIA Tool, with members noting the lack of general policy development guidelines or templates in Trinity, which this goes some way to redress. The accessibility check carried out by the Programme Management Office (PMO) was noted as an example of good practice in the university.

Mr McMahon further noted that a primary aim of the EIA process is to ensure Equality, Diversity and Inclusion matters become a normal part of everyday business. The EIA Tool was approved by the Committee. Consideration will be given to making it available as an online form.

**Equal/16-17/052**

**Equality Trail**

**Equality Officer / K O'Toole-Brennan**

The Equality Officer and Ms O'Toole-Brennan presented a draft proposal to the Committee for an "Equality Trail" that would showcase Trinity's achievements and history in the area of equality, by a series of artistic installations throughout public areas of the main campus.

The Committee welcomed the idea and discussed various options for managing and funding such a project, noting that it would require resourcing and the support of other offices. The following considerations were recommended:

- Obtaining private sponsorship (for the whole trail, or for each piece)
- Consultation with the Communications Office and the Curator of the College Art Collections to ensure consistency with the university look and brand
- Deciding who will own pieces, and how they will be stored long-term
- Ensuring that not all pieces are visual-only, for accessibility reasons
- Providing an audio guide / app to tell the stories behind the pieces
- Drawing attention to existing artworks / communications / places of note

- Providing guidelines that will assist students in particular to create pieces
- Looking at related examples in other universities (e.g. UCD, Cambridge)

The idea has potential tourism and community / school outreach value. It would combat the negative perception of equality in higher education that currently exists in Ireland, and a perception of Trinity as “elitist” and “privileged”.

The following next steps were agreed:

1. Informal consultation with relevant offices and individuals
2. Sub-committee formed (to include student representation)
3. Sub-committee to draft short concept paper for EOG
4. Plan to be further developed if approval in principle is granted

**Action:** Equality Officer to begin informal consultation on the Equality Trail proposal and report back to next Committee meeting

Equal/16-17/053

Equality Office Update

Equality Officer

The Equality Officer briefly updated the Committee on recent or ongoing activities of note.

1. Equality Champions Awards for Clubs and Societies
 

These are open for applications until 27<sup>th</sup> March and all clubs and societies have been contacted directly by email and Facebook, with support from the CSC and DUCAC
2. International Women’s Week 2017
 

28 official events were held plus other local events and there was a big response to the sanitation drive. The Equality Officer recorded her thanks to the steering group, event organisers and volunteers. Challenges with time management during the week were noted and it is proposed that staff and student Equality Champions be engaged to assist next year
3. LEAD Review

The course provider has produced a draft spec and quote, for which a budget has been secured (for Trinity's portion, as this is a joint IUA project). Progress is slow as Maynooth, the current IUA Chairs, do not currently have a member on the IUA Equality Network and the Trinity Equality Officer has offered to Chair the group in order to progress the LEAD Review

#### 4. Staff Mental Health Policy

Arising from the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, the Director of Diversity and Inclusion is leading on the development of a mental health policy for staff, in conjunction with the Equality Officer and with assistance from a placement student from the MSc in Disability Studies. Other ongoing initiatives in this area are noted and will be engaged in the process.

Arising from discussion of the mental health policy for staff, members noted the need for staff to be trained in dealing with mental health issues presenting in students.

**Equal/16-17/054**

**Legal Update**

**Equality Officer**

The Equality Officer introduced the Public Sector Duty, arising from the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC) Act 2014, to the Committee. The Act provides that all public bodies shall, in the performance of their normal functions, have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity, and protect human rights. In order to implement this provision they must conduct an assessment of human rights and equality issues relevant to their functions, and create a plan of action to address these. The assessment, action plan and annual reports on progress must be made available and accessible to the public.

The Duty represents an opportunity for Trinity to identify its own issues and appropriate actions. It also represents a challenge, particularly in addressing the area of human rights, which is not currently addressed to the same extent as equality in the university. The Equality Committee may be the appropriate "home" for the Duty, given its role in promoting



compliance with equality legislation. This could have a significant influence on the remit and activities of the Committee and the Equality Officer.

The Committee approved a proposal to invite IHREC's Public Sector Duty Manager to speak at the next Committee meeting, to provide further information on the Duty.

A presentation circulated to the Committee on the provisions of the Equality (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2015 was taken as read.

**Action:** Equality Officer to invite Public Sector Duty Manager of IHREC to speak at the 1<sup>st</sup> June Equality Committee meeting

**Eqal/16-17/055      Matters for Noting      Chair**

The revised Procedure and Guidelines in Relation to the Provision of Irish Sign Language / English Interpretation were noted with approval.

**Eqal/16-17/055      Any Other Business      Chair**

No further items were raised.

Signed: .....

Date: .....