



**Trinity College Dublin**

Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath

The University of Dublin

**Trinity College Dublin**

**The University of Dublin**

**EQUALITY COMMITTEE**

**Minutes**

**Meeting 4 October 2017, 11am – 1pm**

**Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Conference Room**

**(Room 2026, Arts Building)**

**Present:** Chair (Ms S Dunphy), Dr Subhash Chandra, Ms K O’Toole-Brennan, Mr C Rashleigh, Mr D Treanor, Prof M Cuypers, Ms S MacBride (from Eqal/17-18/005), Mr Madhav Bhargav (GSU), Secretary / Equality Officer (Ms A Crawford)

**In attendance:** Mr T McMahon, Prof E Drew, Ms Haleigh York (GSU) (until Eqal/17-18/005), Mr J McKeever (Eqal/17-18/006)

**Apologies:** Vice-Provost / Chief Academic Officer (Prof C Morash), Dean of Health Sciences (Prof M McCarron), Prof Inmaculada Arnedillo-Sánchez, Dr S Brennan, Mr Damien McClean (SU), Mr K O’Doherty

Eqal/17-18/001

Opening

Chair

The Chair opened the meeting, took apologies and welcomed new members. All members introduced themselves by name and role.

Eqal/17-18/002

Minutes

Chair

The minutes of the meeting of 1 June 2017 were approved without amendment.

### **Action Call-over**

The action call-over was taken as read. The Secretary highlighted that the possible introduction of a policy on religious clothing and symbols in the workplace was discussed with the Deputy Director of Human Resources (HR). The proposed approach is to continue without a written policy in order to maintain flexibility, and as there are no specific issues arising within the university at this time which would require concrete policy direction in this area. The Committee approved this approach.

### **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

Eqal/17-18/003

Reports from Other Bodies

Chair

### **Board**

The Chair updated the Committee on key points relating to equality from the Board meeting of 20 September 2017. In presentation of the 1 June 2017 Equality Committee minutes to that meeting of the Board, the Chair had highlighted the legal updates in particular.

## **Council**

The nominee of Council, Dr Chandra noted that Council met on 27 Sep 2017 and that they did not discuss any matters of especial relevance to the Equality Committee.

## **HR Committee**

On behalf of Ms MacBride (Equality Committee representative on the HR Committee), the Secretary noted that the HR Committee have not yet met in the current academic year.

## **SU**

On behalf of Mr McClean, the Secretary informed the Committee of ongoing SU activities including the promotion of Irish Sign Language awareness; providing new signage for gender-neutral bathrooms; and upcoming events (Mental Health Week, Rainbow Week and Disability Day). Members provided further detail on the plans for gender-neutral bathroom signage, which may be completed in a matter of weeks; requested that the SU work closely with student services in preparing for Mental Health Week; queried whether the new €30 levy on students for student spaces might be waived for students meeting certain socio-economic criteria; and asked that the SU would report to the next Equality Committee meeting on opportunities to apply for funding to develop informal student spaces.

## **GSU**

Mr Bhargav reported that the GSU Executive Committee is in position as of Monday 2 October, including the new Equality and Diversity Officer Ms Haleigh York. Ms York will represent the GSU at future meetings of the Equality Committee. Mr Bhargav stated that the GSU is collaborating with the SU on the aforementioned events and (in response to a member's question) will also support College Awareness Week.

**Gender Equality Implementation Subcommittee**

The Secretary reported that the HEA has endorsed the formation of a network of senior academic leads on equality across the seven universities, and that Trinity has developed a single gender action plan drawing its various gender equality actions into one document. Prof. Drew updated the Committee on progress with Athena SWAN, noting that Trinity is now behind some other Irish universities in terms of the number of active self-assessment teams (SATs) in the university. Members discussed the importance of increasing the number of School Athena SWAN applications and of supporting Schools to apply.

**Equality Fund Subcommittee**

The Committee approved proposed changes to the Equality Fund Terms of Reference which specify that events charging a fee (more than a nominal fee), and events involving fundraising will not normally be funded, and must be considered on a case-by-case basis; members were also informed of plans to announce the Fund in Week 2 of the teaching term to facilitate awarding of grants by mid-November.

**Age-Friendly Trinity Working Group**

The Secretary informed the Committee of the success of the Age-Friendly Trinity launch on 26 September 2017, at which the Provost, the President of Dublin City University (DCU) and the Minister for Mental Health and Older People were guest speakers. The event was very well-attended, and Committee members who had attended commented on their positive experiences. The Chair congratulated the Chair of the Age-Friendly Trinity Working Group (Dr S Brennan) and all involved.

**Equality Monitoring Advisory Group**

The Secretary noted that the Advisory Group's business has been conducted by email over the summer months, and would be discussed in a later item (Equal/17-18/007).

The Committee heard that the Director of Diversity and Inclusion (Mr McMahon) is leading on a Trinity submission to the Department of Justice and Equality consultation on addressing the gender pay gap in Ireland. Mr McMahon acknowledged the contributions of Ms Crawford and Prof. Drew to the submission and outlined its key messages, i.e. that Trinity welcomes the consultation and the proposal to introduce gender pay gap reporting by large organisations, but that the proposed measurement of average earnings across all employees is too broad to give a useful indication of pay gap issues to be addressed. The submission also highlights good reporting practice in the Athena SWAN programme.

The Secretary reported on the Equality / Disability Miscellaneous Provisions Bill (2016) which will provide for ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and which also attempts to expand the binary definition of gender as currently expressed in the Employment Equality Act (1998-2015) and the Equal Status Act (2000-2015). The importance of the UNCRPD for Trinity's implementation of the Public Sector Duty was noted. Members discussed various points relating to disability including the likely raising of the 3% target for employment of people with disabilities in the public sector to 5%; the final approval stages of Trinity's revised Code of Practice Applying to the Employment of People with Disabilities; the staff mental health policy under development by the Director of Diversity and Inclusion; and issues of accessibility with some service providers around the main campus.

Further elements of the legal and policy update referred to reasonable accommodation in the UNCRPD, reasonable accommodation in employment and alcohol dependency in employment. These elements would only become relevant in specific circumstances and do not affect Trinity's general commitments to equality, diversity and inclusion.

**[Ms York left the meeting during this item]**

**[Ms MacBride entered the meeting during this item]**

The Chair welcomed Mr Joel McKeever, Chair of the Trinity LGBT Staff Network, who provided a summary of the Network's activities since December 2016 and goals for the near future. The major points were as follows:

- The Network has diversified its activities and grown its membership, now stable at approximately 65 members (about a quarter of whom are academic / research staff)
- Visibility of the Network and of Trinity's commitment to LGBT inclusion has been raised by the dissemination of Network lanyards; distribution of GCN (Gay Community News) on campus, and posters in key areas such as the HR Service Desk and Academic Registry (AR)
- The Network has engaged with other higher education institutions (HEIs) (including a visit to NUIG), with the Students' Unions, and with the Procurement office on various initiatives to promote LGBT inclusion in Trinity and across the higher education sector. They will host a workshop event on 1 Dec supporting HEIs in taking the first steps to founding an LGBT Staff Network
- Trinity has become a model of best practice, drawing other universities' interest, by allowing transgender students to update the name and gender on their student record with a simple form signed by their tutor, rather than requiring official documentation; anecdotally, this has significantly raised the number of such record-change requests to the Academic Registry
- Network members attended Dublin Pride as a group, following the Pride Breakfast hosted by BeLonG To and Youth Work Ireland in the Buttery restaurant; this event showed the young participants a positive path ahead of them in college and work
- The Network has also hosted various events for members both in the daytime and the evening, and regularly communicates with members. Network Committee members have attended external events such as an Ally Workshop hosted by IBEC
- Upcoming plans include a university-wide survey of staff experiences in relation to LGBT inclusion in Trinity; producing a video on being LGBT in Trinity; and holding their second AGM, at which some committee vacancies will be available

Members commended the impressive work of the Trinity LGBT Staff Network, its leadership in the sector and impact both on the student body and outside Trinity. The new system for updating student records was cited as a concrete example of the value of the Network to the university. Personal compliments to Mr McKeever and Ms Eimear Leonard (Secretary of the Trinity LGBT Staff Network) were also noted. Mr McKeever thanked the Committee for their ongoing support, which has been of great value to the Network.

Members further suggested that the survey on LGBT experiences should be extended to students if feasible; commented on the importance of staff completion of the Diversity Detail section of their personnel profile on CorePortal; and welcomed the introduction of a third gender category by the Higher Education Authority (HEA) for their student data reporting requirements from November 2017.

The Chair thanked Mr McKeever, who left the meeting at this point.

**Eqal/17-18/007**

**Annual Equality Monitoring Report 2016/17**

**Secretary**

The Secretary presented key findings of the Annual Equality Monitoring Report 2016/17 (which are available on pp6-11 of that document). Members commented as follows:

### **Age**

- Low numbers of staff recruitment applicants aged 61-65 may be explained by the disincentive of mandatory retirement ages
- National comparative data in this area would be useful in future reports

### **Disability**

- Trinity's Disability Service has lower representation of students with specific learning difficulties (SLD) and higher representation of students with mental health conditions than is shown in sectoral data from the AHEAD survey – high disclosure rates of mental

health conditions may be a positive while students with SLD may be self-managing their condition rather than registering for supports

### **Ethnicity & Nationality**

- Anecdotally, the Trinity Access Programmes (TAP) tend to have higher representation of ethnic minority students, including Travellers
- The race categories used in the report are problematic. As these are based on HEA reporting it is suggested the matter be raised with the HEA

### **Socio-economic Background**

- Determination of socio-economic background by father's profession is problematic on gender equality grounds and a large percentage of professions are uncategorizable; these issues have been raised with the HEA
- TAP have worked with AR to encourage completion of the HEA Equal Access Survey (Trinity's completion rate is now over 90%)

### **Gender: students**

- TAP have seen an increase in female applicants and are working to encourage male applications through, for example, the use of male role models in outreach to schools
- National and European comparative data on the percentage representation of women and men among third-level students would be useful in future reports

### **Gender: staff**

- An annual event run by TCGEL encourages women to apply for Fellowship; this is likely to be contributing to increased female representation among Fellows
- HR have advised that male application rates for entry-level administrative jobs (e.g. at Executive Officer grade) are very low; the approach for dealing with gender disparity in administration should be considered by Board



- Figures on research grant applications should be divided by funding body and information on the value of grants awarded would also be useful in future reports

### **Overall comments**

- For future Annual Equality Monitoring Reports, local data collection processes should be aligned with the university's reporting needs arising from strategy, rather than the report simply collating whatever data are already available
- Some new data needs may arise from the National Access Plan, such as statistics on lone parents
- Equality data is often of a sensitive nature and the offices involved in data collection for the Annual Equality Monitoring Report must be cognisant of the incoming EU General Data Protection Regulation which provides that consent must be opt-in and only for the particular activity specified

The report was approved for submission to Board subject to the addition of national comparative data on disability (to be provided by the Disability Service) and Trinity's targets for widening participation (to be provided by TAP).

**Action:** Secretary to make suggested additions to the Annual Equality Monitoring Report 2016/17 and submit to Board, with updated slideshow presentation

**Action:** Equality Monitoring Advisory Group to discuss Committee proposals for the 2017/18 Annual Equality Monitoring Report at its next meeting

**[K O'Toole-Brennan and M Bhargav left the meeting during this item]**

**[S MacBride and C Rashleigh left the meeting after this item]**

**Eqal/17-18/008**      **Accommodation Policy and Disadvantaged / Equality Groups**  
**K O'Toole-Brennan**

This item was postponed until the next meeting.

**Eqal/17-18/009**      **Equality Committee Annual Report 2016/17**      **Secretary**

It was agreed that the report would be reviewed and approved by the Committee via email.

**Action:** Secretary to disseminate Equality Committee Annual Report 2016/17 by email for Committee review and approval

**Eqal/17-18/010**      **Matters for Noting**      **Chair**

Approval of the revised Equality Committee Terms of Reference was postponed to the next meeting.

Proposed membership of the new Equality Committee subgroups in 2017/18 was approved by those present; it was agreed that the Secretary would invite expressions of interest for participation in the various subgroups by email.

**Action:** Secretary to invite Committee members' expressions of interest for participation in new subgroups by email