



Trinity College Dublin

Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath

The University of Dublin

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EQUALITY COMMITTEE

Minutes

Meeting 30 November 2017, 2pm – 3.20pm

Secretary's Conference Room, College Green

Present: Acting Chair (Vice-Provost / Chief Academic Officer, Prof C Morash), Dean of Health Sciences (Prof M McCarron), Dr Subhash Chandra, Prof M Cuyppers, Mr D McClean (SU), Mr K O'Doherty, Ms K O'Toole-Brennan, Mr D Treanor, Ms H York (GSU), Secretary / Equality Officer (Ms A Crawford)

In attendance: Mr T McMahon, Prof R Gilligan (Eqal/17-18/015)

Apologies: Chair (Ms S Dunphy), Prof Inmaculada Arnedillo-Sánchez, Dr S Brennan, Prof E Drew, Ms S MacBride, Mr C Rashleigh

Eqal/17-18/011

Opening

Chair

The Chair opened the meeting and the Committee noted the abridged agenda.

Eqal/17-18/012

Minutes

Chair

The minutes of the meeting of 4 October 2017 were approved without amendment.

Action Call-over

The action call-over was taken as read. The Secretary highlighted that the report on Dignity and Respect Contact Persons will be brought to the next Committee meeting, i.e. 29 January 2018, and that Estates and Facilities have brought provisional plans for new breastfeeding spaces to herself and the Director of Diversity and Inclusion.

Matters Arising

The Secretary reported in relation to Eqal/17-18/003 that the Senior Tutor's Office are planning to introduce a waiver for the Students' Union (SU) student spaces charge, as is already provided for the sports centre charge.

The Chair noted the decision in Eqal/17-18/002 not to introduce a written dress code and informed the Committee of recent developments in relation to religious diversity, including a query arising at the IUA Registrars' group and conversations on the subject with the Director of Diversity and Inclusion.

Eqal/17-18/013

Progress Report on Implementation of Trinity Gender Action Plan

Secretary

The Secretary presented a draft *Trinity Gender Action Plan: Progress Report 1* to the Committee. She noted that the Trinity Gender Action Plan draws together actions for gender equality from the university's various plans into one document, to facilitate high-

level oversight and biannual reporting to Board. She informed the Committee that for this first progress report, action owners were asked to provide updates and a RAG (red, amber, green) analysis of progress with their action(s), and that at this stage, the actions were:

- 6 red (not progressing well)
- 40 amber (progressing well)
- 16 green (completed)
- 13 awaiting report from action owner
- 2 difficult to report on, 6 not yet relevant

The Secretary concluded by highlighting the importance of making progress on gender equality actions in the coming calendar year, as a new government taskforce on gender equality is assessing higher education institutions' (HEIs') progress with the Higher Education Authority's (HEA's) 2016 recommendations, and Trinity is also applying for renewal of its bronze institutional Athena SWAN award in November 2018.

The Chair noted that the emerging (intra-university) network of senior leads on equality will discuss feedback to the government taskforce at its meeting on 1 December 2017, and that Trinity has provided all required information to the taskforce ahead of schedule.

Members suggested that the number of actions for which progress is unknown should be reduced before the report is submitted to Board; noted both the importance and the difficulty of sourcing Athena SWAN champions of appropriate seniority for School applications; and discussed possible options for progressing the review of the Living Equality and Diversity (LEAD) online training programme through the IUA HR Directors' Network and/or the emerging network of senior leads on equality.

Further comments on specific actions were also provided which will be integrated into the final report to Board as appropriate. The report was approved for submission to Board pending final returns from action owners.

Action: Secretary to complete *Trinity Gender Action Plan: Progress Report 1* and submit it to Board, subject to the Vice-Provost's approval of the final draft.

The Secretary presented a draft report to the Committee on *Part-time Work, Flexibility and Family Leave: Findings of an online survey of Trinity staff in April-May 2017*. She noted the following:

- 448 staff completed the anonymous survey
- Responses were analysed first for general findings and second for any differences in men's and women's responses
- Respondents have a range of caring responsibilities and female respondents are more likely than male respondents to be the primary or only carer in their household (26% of women, 2% of men)
- The primary drawback of part-time work, according to 50% of part-time respondents is the expectation to work beyond one's contractual hours; 44% also state that their career has been negatively impacted, although no concrete examples are cited
- 57% of respondents work from home regularly or on occasion, and 67% have some flexibility in their working hours
- 25% of male respondents took no leave on the birth / adoption of their child
- Key themes in comments suggest that:
 - there is a variety of practice across different departments, and a staff member's work-life balance can depend heavily on their manager
 - staff generally support more flexibility, particularly in working hours
 - excessive workload has a negative impact on both the uptake and the benefits of flexible arrangements / part-time work / family leave
- The key action recommended in the report is that the remit of the HR working group on family leave (which has been recommended by the HEA) be expanded to also cover matters of part-time work, Shorter Working Year, flexible hours and working from home, and that the survey findings inform the work of that group

Members suggested that quantitative data on the career progression of those who have taken periods of leave would be useful to ascertain if there is a negative impact to be

addressed; it was noted that the new Senior Academic Promotions policy allows for special circumstances such as family-related leave to be taken into account, and that the same principle should apply to other promotions, progression and/or job evaluation processes. The Committee agreed that changes to such processes must be equality-proofed and brought to the Equality Committee for review.

In discussion, the complexity of issues involved was noted, and possible actions supported by members included clear guidelines for managers; “core hours” outside which staff may be able to work flexible hours; ensuring staff are not contacted outside working hours except in emergencies; and raising staff and managers’ awareness of new expanded paternity leave provisions.

The Committee approved the report for forwarding to Board, with a summary report to be produced for Board members’ convenience. It was also recommended that a copy of the report be sent to the Director of HR.

Action: Secretary to submit *Part-time Work, Flexibility and Family Leave: Findings of an online survey of Trinity staff in April-May 2017* to Board, with a summary report, and to forward the full report to the Director of HR

Equal/17-18/015

Cultural Diversity Working Group: update, working draft and consultation

Prof R Gilligan

Prof Robert Gilligan attended for this item, and presented a preliminary outline of the draft report to the Committee which outlines the ongoing work of the Cultural Diversity Working Group established by Board to explore issues around cultural diversity in Trinity. He described the group’s remit, membership, and approach, highlighting the consultation undertaken to date including a Cultural Diversity Town Hall event and email consultation, which has raised the key themes of respect for difference; communication; religious diversity; staff and student capacity; engaging the whole community; diversity-proofing; and ongoing process.

Prof Gilligan illustrated the themes with some practical examples that have been shared during consultation, such as the inability of the Student Information System to register students with one name. He also outlined the group's working recommendations, while emphasising that their remit is to provide a high-level report scoping the key issues for strategic focus, rather than a detailed action plan:

- That cultural diversity be a core theme in the university's next Strategic Plan
- That staff and students be provided with intercultural awareness training
- That cultural diversity be approached as a resource, and all areas to diversity-proof their functions
- That further consultation be undertaken on the key themes identified

Members welcomed the presentation and affirmed the importance of this issue for the university. The following points were raised in discussion:

- Options for providing a form of "chaplaincy" beyond the Christian community should be explored; including more accessible / visible interfaith prayer space
- The Trinity Access Programmes (TAP) have an important role as their students often come from schools with significant ethnic and cultural diversity, and the HEA has highlighted ethnic minorities as a key group for widening access
- Global Relations have a responsibility to focus on the international student experience beyond recruitment (although this issue goes beyond the Global Relations remit as domestic students are also culturally diverse)
- Student services are challenged by cultural diversity and currently have to learn directly from cultural minority students on an ad hoc basis
- All students have a better experience when cultural communities are integrated; events such as Holi could be used to raise intercultural awareness
- Students / staff of cultural minority backgrounds must have a clear voice in this process; it should be led by them
- Cultural minority communities and networks outside Trinity should be engaged

It was recommended that the report of the Cultural Diversity Working Group contain concrete actions when submitted to Board, including a proposal for the ongoing mechanism by which matters of cultural diversity will be driven. The Chair also requested that the final draft of the report be brought to the Equality Committee for further consultation before the Working Group submits its report to Board.

Equal/17-18/016 Recommendations of “Learning to Build New Lives” Equality Fund project Memo from Profs F Sheerin and G Wylie

The Committee noted a memorandum from Prof Fintan Sheerin and Prof Gillian Wylie which outlined the recommendations arising from their 2016/17 Equality Fund project, “Learning to Build New Lives”. The project worked with asylum seekers and refugees in Ireland to develop recommendations on how Trinity could respond to the ongoing crisis of refuge, and these recommendations have now been brought to the Engagement Advisory Group, chaired by the Registrar. Members noted that the recommended actions will support Trinity’s efforts to become a University of Sanctuary, which has also been furthered by the SU’s inaugural Refugee Week [held on 20-24 November 2018].

Equal/17-18/017 Proposal to pilot EIA process on Gender Identity and Gender Expression Policy Director of Diversity and Inclusion

The Director of Diversity and Inclusion, Mr T McMahon noted to the Committee that the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) process and screening form, approved by the Committee and Board, will be piloted with the Equality and HR Committees. The EIA system will therefore be applied to the next policy for review by each Committee; in the case of the Equality Committee, this will be the Gender Identity and Gender Expression policy. Mr McMahon further noted the HR Director’s agreement to this proposal.

The Committee noted and approved the proposal.

Eqal/17-18/018 Any Other Business

Members noted that the change of term “Freshman” to “Fresh” / “Fresher” had been communicated to the university community earlier in the week, and received quite a strong response (both positive and negative). Mr McClean (SU) noted that some student feedback indicated that students interpreted the move as a substitute for other, more substantive changes, and that this could be used as an opportunity to communicate the many other actions for gender equality that are ongoing in Trinity.

Mr K O’Doherty (HR) provided the Committee with a summary of activity of the Dignity and Respect Contact Persons, January – September 2017 based on information submitted to a recording log template. It shows that 41 complaints were brought to the Contact Persons and outlines the nature of the complaint, the action taken by the Contact Person, the gender and role of complainants and alleged perpetrators, and the time spend on each case by the Contact Person. The Chair noted ongoing plans to communicate the new Dignity and Respect Policy (jointly between HR, the Director of Diversity and Inclusion and the Equality Officer), to ensure all staff and students are aware of these procedures and sources of support.

Mr McClean (SU) informed the Committee that the SU would celebrate Disability Day on 4 December 2017, and that the SU are developing a short awareness video on Irish Sign Language (ISL) Interpretation to be played at the beginning of lectures in which an ISL interpreter will be present.