Trinity College Dublin

The University of Dublin

Equality Committee

Minutes

Meeting of 3rd March 2021, 10.00am – 12.00pm

Online, via Zoom

Present: Prof F Sheerin (Chair), Associate Vice Provost for Equality Diversity and Inclusion (Prof C Brook), Prof S Draper, Prof B Ghosh, Prof A Kahane, Ms K O'Toole-Brennan, Mr D Treanor, Ms E Schaa (GSU), and Secretary / Equality Officer (Ms C Marshall).

Apologies: Ms L Keogh (SU), Ms S Mac Bride, Mr C O'Donnell, Prof M Ruffini.

In Attendance: Ms S Cantwell (notetaker)

Equal/20-21/040   Opening

The Chair opened the meeting, and welcomed new member Professor Bidisha Ghosh to the Committee, thanking her for putting herself forward. Prof Ghosh introduced herself to members, and noted her particular interest in advancing maternity supports and practices within the University.

Equal/20-21/041   Minutes of the Previous Meeting

A correction to the minutes of the meeting of 13th January 2021 should be made under minute Equal/20-21/029 (Any Other Business) to reflect the fact that the ASAP Committee has not yet met to consider extension of the scholarships to postgraduate students. The relevant sentence should read, "It was noted that consideration will be given to awarding the scholarships for postgraduate study as well as undergraduate."

Equal/20-21/042   Matters arising

There were no matters arising not otherwise covered on the agenda.

Equal/20-21/043   Action Callover

The Chair drew the Committee's attention to the Action Callover, which had been circulated. The following further points were noted in relation to actions from previous meetings:

- Eqal/20-21/031 (i) – Prof Na Fu, Trinity Business School, has been approached and has agreed to chair the Staff Disability Working Group.
- Eqal/20-21/031 (ii) – The Chair has written to the Director of HR to request an interim representative to attend Equality Committee while Mr O'Doherty remains on leave.
- Eqal/20-21/032 (i) – The Chair has written to Heads of School regarding support for staff with caring responsibilities during the Covid-19 pandemic. It was proposed that a similar letter be circulated to Heads of Admin areas also.

ACTION: The Chair will write to Heads of Admin Areas regarding support for staff with caring responsibilities.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION/DECISION

Equal/20-21/044   Inclusive Clubs and Societies

Ms R Murphy attended to for this item, and presented the Inclusive Clubs and Societies project for which Trinity Ability Co-op has recently been awarded funding. The aim is to

make Trinity an inclusive environment for students with disabilities. It was noted that society membership is a key enabler for integration into college life and that there are growing numbers of students with disabilities. A checklist will be developed to make student organisations welcoming and accessible; inclusivity guidelines will be developed for clubs and societies, students' unions and publications; and disability awareness training will be provided. Meetings are due to take place with representative of the CSC, DUCAC, the SU and GSU, and Publications, to further implementation of these initiatives. Ms Murphy requested the support of the Equality Committee for this project.

The Chair thanked Ms Murphy, noting the importance of the project, and invited comments. The following points were raised in the ensuing discussion:

- Trinity Sport are developing a new Sport strategy currently, to there is a focus on sport and inclusion to which this project would be highly relevant
- It was proposed that the addition of a logo or quality mark identifying clubs and societies which have incorporated inclusive practices could be considered as part of the project
- It was further noted that the inclusive principles and checklist developed could be used during the review process for applications to the Equality Fund, to ensure funded projects meet inclusivity standards
- It was agreed that there is strong support from the committee, and that a further report on progress as the project develops would be welcomed.

Equal/20-21/045   Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

The AVPEDI presented this item, which will be the subject of ongoing consideration by the Committee in the coming months. Broad consultation with the Trinity community will be essential to ensuring a robust strategy is developed, and the task will be to produce a mission statement, strategy and action plan. A writing group will be established to draft these documents, and will report to Equality Committee. It is proposed that this become a standing item at meetings of the Committee.

The AVPEDI invited members to consider proposed timelines and membership of the writing group. The Chair thanked Prof Brook and invited comments from all present.

The following points were noted:
- The consultation and strategy development must include representation of minority and marginalised groups, particularly in relation to the protected grounds
- A consultative forum may provide a useful way to engage a larger cohort while keeping the writing group to a practical size
- Key headings for the strategy will be considered, with recourse to strong examples of EDI strategies from other universities
- It was generally agreed that it would be efficient for the drafting of the strategy to be led by a small working group with broad consultation, and supported with the addition of a consultative forum to ensure all key stakeholder groups, structures and areas of business are represented
- The action plan is critical to delivering EDI goals for the University.

ACTION: The AVPEDI, Chair and Equality Officer will consult to further develop the plans for development of the strategy, and will return with an update to a subsequent meeting.

Equal/20-21/046   EDI Unit and Athena SWAN Update
The AVPEDI provided the following update on activity in relation to the work of the EDI Unit overall, and Athena SWAN specifically:

- **Inclusive Curriculum** – The first meeting of advisory board has taken place, and School Champions have been appointed in many Schools. A micro-credential for School Champions is being developed in collaboration with Academic Practice.
- **Consent Framework** – A new Implementation Oversight Group for the Consent Framework has been established, and is working hard to draft an action plan for submission to the HEA before the end of this month.
- **Athena SWAN** – A further five Schools intend to submit in the coming April – June application round. Covid-19 and its impacts continue to pose challenges to this work, particularly in delivering the impact needed for Silver applications

- **Race and Ethnic Equality Group** – The new group will be established by the EDI Unit, and is expected to convene in April. It will be jointly chaired by the AVPEDI and Dr Phil Mullen.

The Chair thanked Prof Brook for these updates.

[Prof Brook left the meeting at the end of this item]

Equal/20-21/047   Socioeconomic Profile of Trinity Students

Ms O'Toole-Brennan gave a general presentation on the Deprivation Index Score (DIS), recently published by the HEA, and the headline information for Trinity. It was noted that this data is fresh, and extensive and will require a much deeper institutional analysis. DIS is a measurement tool used by the HEA to measure the relative affluence or disadvantage of geographic areas based on the 2016 census and electoral division area profiles. Students can fall in to one of four categories: Affluent, Marginally above average, Marginally below average, and Disadvantaged. The DIS will be used to influence the setting of targets for the new National Access Plan, and influence budget allocations for access services. The national mean DIS in Ireland is 2.1 and Trinity is 5.7.   HEAR students in Trinity have the highest DIS at -3.9, while DARE students have a low DIS of 4.7. This data, which is publicly available on the HEA website, presents an opportunity for the university to drill down and carry out an extensive review and analysis of internal data compared with the DIS data. There is a further opportunity to work alongside the Communications Office, HEA and the IUA to carefully consider the messaging around these stats which have been acknowledged by the HEA to be nuanced and highly contextual.

The Chair thanked Ms O'Toole-Brennan for her presentation, and emphasised the importance for Trinity of attracting students from under-represented socioeconomic groups.

Equal/20-21/048   **Age-Friendly Trinity**

The Chair introduced this item, asking members to consider the appropriate means of continuing the work formerly overseen by the Age-Friendly Trinity Working Group. In the ensuing discussion, it was agreed that this work will be incorporated into the forthcoming EDI strategy and action plan.

KEY UPDATES

Equal/20-21/049   **Sub-Group Updates**

The Chair invited updates from the Sub Groups. Mr Treanor reported that the Accessibility Working Group has met twice, with a further meeting due to take place. Work continues on the development of guidelines for accessible information and events in Trinity.

Equal/20-21/050   **Updates from Other Trinity Bodies**

There were no updates received.

ITEMS FOR NOTING

Equal/20-21/051   **Equality Fund Terms of Reference**

The Chair invited comments on the amended Equality Fund Terms of Reference, which had been circulated. The changes were noted and the Terms of Reference were approved.

Equal/20-21/052   **Any Other Business**

No items

The Chair thanked all present and concluded the meeting.

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