

**Trinity College Dublin
The University of Dublin**

Minutes of the People and Culture Committee

Thursday, 9th May 14.15pm to 16.00pm

Faculty Board Room, Arts Building

PRESENT:

Prof. Darryl Jones (Chair)
Mr. Andrew Duffin (College Staff Member)
Ms. Antoinette Quinn (Secretary - Director of HR)
Prof. Eoin O'Sullivan (Senior Dean)
Prof. Lorraine Leeson (AVPEDI)
Mr. Lucky Khambule (External Member)
Ms. Orla Cunningham (COO)
Ms. Paula Hicks (College Staff Member)
Dr Rachel Moss (College Staff Member)
Prof. Sylvia Draper (Dean of STEM)
Dr Siobán O'Brien Green (Head of EDI)
Ms. Mary Leahy (Head of Employee Relations)
Ms. Gillian Connolly, Secretarial Support

APOLOGIES:

Ms. Kathryn Whyte (External Member)

Section A1

PPC/23-24/18 Minutes

The minutes of 17th April 2024 were approved by the Committee for signing by the Chair.

Section A2

PPC/23-24/19 Matters arising from the Minutes

In response to suggestions from members of the committee, it was agreed that minutes of future meetings would include more details of discussions, as well as recording the committee's decisions.

The Chair of the committee explained that as there had not been a Board meeting since the last P&C meeting, the report on Employment Contracts and Patterns of Employment would go to the next meeting of the University Board which is scheduled for May.

The Chair of the committee mentions that Ms. Rachel Moss will be joining the meeting late.

Dr. Siobán O'Brien Green, Head of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion enters meeting

Section A3

PPC/23-24/20 Presentation on EDI Agenda in the University

Prof. Lorraine Leeson (AVPEDI) and Dr. Siobán O'Brien Green, Head of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion presented on EDI Agenda in the University.

The Chair welcomed the AVPEDI to present to the committee and explained that this was a long-awaited presentation due to the fact that the committee had a lot of reports to consider at previous meetings.

Prof Lorraine Leeson (AVPEDI) gave a comprehensive presentation on the work of

the EDI office in the University, starting with the scope which is to work across all aspects of college for students, staff, and visitors. She outlined the vision was to co-create a Trinity community in which we want to study and work, where diversity is celebrated and everyone belongs.

One of the key items raised by the AVPEDI was the issue of funding, explaining that the view of the HEA was that EDI activities should be 'mainstreamed' as part of the overall running of the University, and therefore there was no extra funding available for the EDI agenda from the HEA. This funding issue impacts the staffing in the EDI office where funding for some key roles are approved on an annual basis.

She also pointed out that an independent review of the EDI structure recommended that a further two roles should be included as part of the team, but there is no funding for these roles at this time.

The AVPEDI outlined the journey the University has come on in relation to adoption of Athena Swan since 2018 when Trinity held four School Bronze awards and one Bronze Institutional Award. Today Trinity holds 20 Athena Swan awards, 18 School awards of which two are silver, and we have recently received a Bronze award for professional services which is the first one in Ireland. At an institutional level, we have now achieved a silver award which is a great achievement for the University.

Work is continuing on Athena Swan with six schools due to make a submission in June this year, some for renewals and some for the first time, with a further five schools getting ready to make submissions in January 2025. For any submissions over six in a year there is a cost of 1K to the University for each submission.

Dr. Siobán O'Brien Green, Head of EDI outlined that in 2022 the European Commission set a requirement that all institutions must have a Gender Equality Plan (GEP) in place, however she explained that mandatory components of the GEP are covered by our Athena Swan Action Plan.

The Head of EDI informed the meeting that in 2023 the HEA launched its Anti-Racism Principles which Trinity has signed up to, and it now require all HEI's to have a stand-alone Race Equality Action Plan. Trinity is finalising its plan at the moment.

The Head of EDI outlined the new targets in the Disability Act (2015) which requires public bodies to meet the 6% target disabled staff by 2025. There was some discussion around this item where it was explained that while the official figures for people with a disability is recorded as low, but from other questionnaires and data collected in the college, there is a believe that the real figure is probably higher. There was a suggestion that Leaders in the University should encourage staff to declare if they have a disability, and ensure they feel safe doing so.

The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act (2014) – section 42 Public Sector Duty was explained. It very clearly sets out that all public bodies need to set out in its strategic plan an assessment of the human rights and equality issues it believes to be relevant to the functions and purpose of that bodies. It is also required to outline in its strategic plan, policies in place or actions proposed to address these issues, and it is required to report on developments and achievements in its annual report. The Head of EDI explained that while Trinity does have policies and action plans to address human rights and equality issues, we do not comply with the act as we have not put these into our strategic plan. There was a short discussion at this time, highlighting that it was opportune now to be discussing this as the next University Strategic plan is currently being developed.

The presentation concluded and the topic was opened up to the meeting for discussion:

Prof. Sylvia Draper, the Dean of STEM suggested to the AVPEDI that Faculty Deans should be approached to fund the 1K cost per school for each submission rather than ask the schools.

Ms. Antoinette Quinn, Director of Human Resources raised the issue of funding for roles and initiatives which the University agrees to do at a strategic level, but quite often there is no funding in place to fulfil these commitments.

Prof. Lorraine Leeson (AVPEDI) suggested that like some other Universities, perhaps a percentage of research overheads could be diverted for EDI activities.

Prof. Sylvia Draper, the Dean of STEM outlined that as budgeting was done on an annual basis, areas didn't know from one year to the next what their budget was, therefore they were reluctant to commit to initiatives/roles for longer than that. She also outlined that a lot of these initiatives are seen as more of a compliance issue against which there is a lot of pushback. The discussion moved on to whether the P&C committee should have a budget to ensure these commitments were implemented or should make strong recommendations to Board that a budget is set aside to meet these statutory requirements. Prof. Eoin O'Sullivan, the Senior Dean suggested that perhaps there should be some consideration given to the cost of commitments, which the University should budget for.

Dr. Siobán O'Brien Green, Head of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion leaves the meeting

Section B1.1 Items for Noting

PPC/23-24/20 EDI Sub Committee Terms of Reference

Prof.Lorraine Leeson (AVPEDI) outlined the Draft Terms of Reference for the new EDI sub committee which she explained had been drafted last year with the Registrar, Prof. Neville Cox, and the Secretary's Office.

There was some discussion about the proposed make up of the committee, which those speaking expressing the view that it appeared to be very senior, and perhaps consideration should be given to ensuring staff (not necessarily senior staff) should be given an opportunity to participate in this committee.

Action: There was general agreement on this and the AVPEDI agreed to take the TOR away

and redraft taking on board the views expressed at the meeting.

Ms. Mary Leahy, Head of Employee Relations enters the meeting

B1.2 Policies (Adoptive Leave & Garda Vetting)

Ms. Mary Leahy, the Head of Employee Relations presents the amended policies on Adoptive Leave and Garda Vetting. In relation to the adoptive leave policy she explained that this was part of a suite of family friendly policies which the HR team had been working on. Some of the changes to the policies, some of which came to the last P&C meeting, were in response to new legislation, but some of the changes were to bring the policies in line with plain english approach to make them more accessible to staff.

Prof. Sylvia Draper, the Dean of STEM asked if there was a fund to replace someone who takes up adoptive leave.

Action: Ms. Mary Leahy, Head of Employee Relations was not aware of a fund, but said she would investigate and report back.

The changes in the Garda Vetting policy now allow vetting of an individual to be carried out by one organisation rather than two, if there is a joint appointment or a partnership between Trinity and another organisation. In the past both organisations had to apply for vetting for the same person, which delayed the onboarding process considerably.

Mr. Andrew Duffin raised a query in relation to the income protection in the Sick Leave Policy. He advised that he could not see it referenced in the policy.

Action: Ms. Mary Leahy noted the query, and agreed to send on a link with income protection information on the website to Mr. Duffin. Please see link to the voluntary income protection scheme at this link:

[Income Protection and Life Assurance \(Death-in-Service\) - Human Resources – Trinity College Dublin \(tcd.ie\).](#)

Ms. Mary Leahy, Head of Employee Relations exits the meeting

B.10 Administrative 3 to Administrative 2 Progression Recommendations

The Director of Human Resources outlined that the people on the memo were comprehended by a WRC recommendation, which allowed for progression from AO3 to AO2 for people on the AO3 grade at the time of the recommendation. This is a legacy issue which will cease when all the people on the AO3 at the time of the move across to AO2. There was no issue with this item.

PPC/23-24/21

Section C Any Other Business

The Dean of STEM inquired where the project on SAP Renewal was at in terms of progression, as there was no sight of a project plan or timelines.

Action: It was agreed that the Chair of the P&C Committee would make inquiries with the Vice Provost as she is leading that People Project.

Action: The Chair mentioned that the schedule for the next P&C meetings will be circulated to Committee members.

No further items were raised, and the meeting was concluded.

Signed:



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**Date:16 October
2024.....**

