

Trinity College Dublin
The University of Dublin
Minutes of the People and Culture Committee
Faculty Board Room, Arts Building
Thursday, 28th November 2pm to 4pm

PRESENT:

Prof. Darryl Jones (Chair)
Ms. Antoinette Quinn (Secretary - Director of HR)
Prof. Eoin O'Sullivan (Senior Dean)
Prof. Lorraine Leeson (AVPEDI)
Mr. Lucky Khambule (External Staff Member)
Ms. Neha Deshmukh (Postgraduate Student)
Dr Rachel Moss (College Staff Member)
Prof. Sylvia Draper (Dean of STEM)
Ms. Gillian Connolly, secretarial support

APOLOGIES:

Mr. David Treacy (Undergraduate Student)
Ms. Kathryn Whyte (External Member – Chief People Officer Enterprise Ireland)
Ms. Paula Hicks (College Staff Member)

Section A1

PPC/23-24/26

The Chair welcomed and introduced Ms Neha Deshmukh, the post graduate representative to the People and Culture Committee. The Chair mentioned Mr. David Treacy, the undergraduate representative to the People and Culture committee was invited to the meeting as an observer but sends his apologies. The Chair also mentioned that Ms Mary Leahy, Head of Employee Relations was in attendance for the full meeting.

The Chair noted that this was the Director of Human Resources' last People and Culture meeting and thanked Ms. Antoinette Quinn for her hard work, support, and dedication to the committee.

Minutes

The minutes of 24th September were approved by the Committee for signing by the Chair.

The Dean of STEM enters the meeting

Section A2

PPC/23-24/27

Matters arising from the Minutes:

Prof Lorraine Leeson raised the issue of the Trinity-INC Funding. She explained that the Trinity Inclusive Curriculum Project has been running since 2021 in the College, and she was recently informed that this initiative will cease in August 2025. Provision of training which has to date being delivered across the college would be phased out, with some training continuing under the remit of the Senior Lecturer for academic staff, with no plan for continuing for professional staff.

Prof Lorraine Leeson raised the point that the Trinity-INC professional Learning Module in inclusive practice is targeted at academic staff, and they would like to continue to make this available to professional staff and students.

The Chief Operations Officer queried how much the Trinity-INC Funding amounts to.

In response to this, Prof Lorraine Leeson advised that she thinks it's €125,000 but she will double check this figure.

There were a number of contributions to this topic all speaking in favour of keeping the training for all staff. The general view of the meeting was that to cease the initiative and only allow training for academic staff would be a retrograde step in terms of inclusion and discriminatory, particularly in light of the relatively small costs. The Chair was asked if this matter can be looked into as this is an important initiative to the College.

The following questions were also asked:

- Who emailed Prof Lorraine Leeson to advise that the funding would cease?
- Was this matter raised at Planning Group?

In response to this, Professor Lorraine Leeson noted that she was advised in August 2024 by email from ASD that the funding period for Trinity INC had been agreed at the widening Participation Committee meeting in June 2020, but that the EDI office had not been aware of these minutes prior to August 2024. Professor Lorraine Leeson noted that the EDI office was asked to prepare a budget for 2024/5 for ASD with regard to HEA Access fund monies which was the source of funds that had supported the Trinity INC work, in August 2025 (prior to being made aware of the Widening Participation Committee minute).

Action: The committee agreed that the Chair will raise this matter at the Board meeting in February 2025.

Mr. Andrew Duffin raised the point that the Athena Swan application template on share point does not include data for professional staff.

The Dean of STEM mentioned that the EDI Terms of Reference were not up to date on share point.

Action: Prof Lorraine Leeson advised that she would check the Athena Swan information is up to date on SharePoint.

It was noted that Trinity Global, the office of the Vice President for Global Engagement was the first professional unit within Trinity College Dublin to engage in the Athena SWAN application process.

Mr. Lucky Khambule enters the meeting

Section A3

PPC/23-24/28

Presentation on the Gender Pay Gap data for Trinity College.

The Director of Human Resources presented on the Gender Pay Gap data for Trinity College. The slides include the Gender Pay Gap data by job category and explore the reasons for the gap. The data includes Academic Medical, Academic staff, Building & Services Staff, Overtime & Allowances, Occasional staff, Admin Staff and Research Staff. The data was extracted from the Core Personnel System in June 2024 and will be published in December 2024 under Government Legislation: S.I No. 264 of 2022.

The topic was opened to the committee members for discussion:

A very engaged discussion followed with the following points being raised:

In relation to the building and services area, it was noted that there is a lack of women in the craft area in TCD, and generally there is difficulty getting people in this area resulting in some services being provided by external providers. It was noted that the Unions have called for the employment of apprentices in these areas.

Academic Medical was another area discussed because of the big pay gap in this area. Some of the queries raised and addressed were in relation to allowances, who got them, and what they were for. It was explained that the allowances can have a multiplier effect on already high salaries.

Mr. Andrew Duffin raised a point whether implementing remote working arrangements could contribute to addressing the Gender pay gap disparities. It was noted that blended working and other forms of flexible working arrangements is something Trinity aspires to, which may have a positive impact on reducing the gender pay gap.

The Director of Human Resources responded to say that removing Blended working would have a negative impact on the community. She further mentioned that Career development will improve the situation for professional staff.

The Dean of STEM raised a point on slide 7, which contains data on the causes of Gender Pay Gap in Academics, that Trinity College is going in the right direction. In particular, she referred to the Associate Professors consultants who are progressing up the rank quickly.

The discussion moved on to Admin staff, and it was noted that while there is a majority of women on these grade, men seem to move to the higher end of the salary scales quickly. The Director of Human Resources said this was an area they had looked into and discovered that on appointment, men often look for more money (salary determination), while in general women accept the salary offered.

There was a question in relation to whether salary determinations applied to staff other than Academic Staff. The Director of Human Resources responded by clarifying that the same rules apply to all staff. Salary determination (or exceptions) can be allowed if there is a strong business case. All salary determinations are examined each year by the Comptroller and Auditor General.

Another question was asked about who signs off on these salary determination as they are rare. Again, The Director of Human Resources explained that a number of approvals are necessary. The Head of Department/School, the Head of Faculty/Division and finally the HR Director is the final signature on this process. She further explained that the College must abide by the government public sector pay guidelines, therefore only exceptions can be considered, failure to adhere to government pay guidelines could be detrimental to the university.

Action:

The Dean of STEM queried how the figures included in the data was calculated and recommends that a note should be included to clarify this.

There were questions in relation to who determines the pay scales for the childcare workers. The Director of Human Resources explained that this is done nationally for the sector by an Employment Regulation Order.

Mr. Andrew Duffin raised a question about the terminology, he noted the difference between the terms being used, as one is of a formal statistical nature, negative pay gap used to be called reverse pay gap.

In response to this, Ms. Antoinette Quinn explained that it is not an official term as such, but that new personal use a different terminology since Ms. Gwen Turner, former Head of Strategic Planning and Process Improvement left Trinity.

The Director of Human Resources mentioned to the committee to refer to the Gender Pay Gap report document that was circulated and welcomed committee members to make further recommendations.

Section B1.

Items for Approval and Noting

PPC/23-24/29

EDI Sub-Committee minutes 5th November 2024

The EDI Sub -committee minutes of 5th November were approved by members of the People and Culture Committee.

Prof Lorraine Leeson provided some EDI updates, mentioning that funding was secured for a Head of EDI role for 3-year cycle and for a Race Equality Officer role to be in post by quarter 1/2025.

Prof Lorraine Leeson also mentioned that she would like to show appreciation by thanking colleagues in Estates and Facilities for engaging with the EDI Sub-committee regarding an audit they carried out on alarm call systems in accessible bathrooms in the College. Prof Lorraine Leeson advised that the standard at present is being met but there is budget forthcoming to request for all systems to be alarmed.

B2. The Staffing Disability Working Group

Prof Lorraine Leeson mentioned that the Staff Disability Working Group is being reactivated for 2025. The Acting Quality Officer met with Dr Patricia McCarthy, who is the Chair of the Staffing Disability Working Group to review the work of the Staff Disability working group, the membership, and Terms of Reference.

Prof Lorraine Leeson mentions that the Working Group are seeking a HR Representative.

Mr. Andrew Duffin queried when members of the EDI Sub Committee would be finalized.

A discussion took place regarding the EDI Sub Committee and the three members of staff, a suggestion was made by Mr. Andrew Duffin and Ms. Mary Leahy that at least one of the members should be a staff representative from the group of unions, not just a staff member by self-nomination.

Prof Lorraine Leeson responded that they hope to finalise members soon, some colleagues have left, and others have returned. They would like to do a self-nomination call to all staff.

Mr. Andrew Duffin raised a question on how the self-nomination process would work, since an “all-staff call” was mentioned.

Action: Pro. Lorraine Leeson said a sub-group of the sub-committee would

review applications and decide. Prof Lorraine Leeson advised that EDI colleagues engage with the Secretary's office to assist with circulating an all-staff email where colleagues can self-nominate.

B3. The Race Equality Action Plan

Prof Lorraine Leeson mentioned that members of the People and Culture Committee are asked to consider and approve the Trinity College Dublin Race Equality Action Plan (2023-7).

Prof Lorraine Leeson gave an overview of the Race Equality Action plan and the HEA requirements, advising that each HEI must have a stand-alone race equality action plan in place and the REAP document seeks to fulfil this obligation.

Members of the People and Culture approve the REAP document.

B4. Revised Maternity leave Policy.

The Head of Employee Relations, Ms Mary Leahy provided an update on the revised Maternity leave Policy.

The Maternity leave policy is updated to reflect the legislative changes of the definition of a still birth in accordance with the Civil Registration (Electronic Registration) Act 2024, and S.I. No. 435/2024 - Civil Registration (Electronic Registration) Act 2024 (Commencement) Order 2024, effective 16 September 2024.

The changes in the Maternity leave policy are as follows:

- Section 5, pg11: replace 24th with 23rd (week of pregnancy)
- Process section, pg 12: delete '*after the 24th week of pregnancy*' and replace it with '*at a minimum of four weeks prior to the expected due date.*'

The Head of Employee Relations explained that this change is to provide clarity as to when Maternity Leave can be applied for, as there is no legislative requirement to wait till 24th week.

The Dean of STEM queried how much maternity leave is costing the College.

Ms Mary Leahy responded to this expressing that determining this figure would be challenging.

The Chief Operating Officer comments that the figure could be around 2 million per annum.

Action: The Dean of STEM suggests checking how much maternity costs per annum to the College.

Ms Mary Leahy raised a point that policies on the website are updated only after they have gone through the appropriate approval channels, EOG, People and Culture and Board. She explained that this has led to the perception that our policies are not aligned with current legislation, though changes are actively being implemented with immediate effect. Ms Leahy advised the committee that a memo will be brought to the next committee meeting to address this going forward.

Section C1.

PPC/23-24/30

PCC Memo- Response to Maternity Leave and Adoptive Leave Queries.

Ms Mary Leahy brought forward a memo to the People and Culture Committee responding to queries on adoptive leave that were raised at the last People and Culture committee meeting on 19th September.

Mr. Andrew Duffin raised a query regarding the scope of maternity leave and the funds allocated by the department would be available for adoptive leave parents. He questioned whether this would extend eligibility to a broader range of genders than previously envisioned. Noting that this is under the colleges EDI initiative, he asked whether maternity leave should be made available to all.

C2. PPC/23-24/31

Any Other Business

Mr. Andrew Duffin mentioned that he would like to wish Ms. Antoinette Quinn, the outgoing HR Director, all the very best for the future on behalf of the staff.

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

Handwritten signature: Ian Jones

Signed:

Date:.....20/02/2025.....