

CANTERBURY CHRIST CHURCH UNIVERSITY

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY COMMITTEE HELD AT 2.15 PM ON 30 APRIL 2008 IN THE FREDERIC MASON ROOM AT THE PRIORY

Present: Professor Tony Lavender (Chair), Ms Moira Mitchell (Equality & Diversity Manager), Professor Tony Booth (UCU Representative), Professor Jan Burns (Programme Director), Mr Ian Clark (Planning Officer), Mr Geoff Haworth (Director of Student Support & Guidance), Ms R Heard (President, Students' Union), Rev Jeremy Law (Dean of Chapel), Dr Kristina Masuwa-Morgan (Senior Lecturer), Dr John Moss (Dean of Education), Dr Burkhard Scherer (Senior Lecturer), Mr Simon Wright (Assistant Director, Human Resources)

In Attendance: Mr Paul Bogle (Clerk to the Governing Body)
Mrs Tracy Bell Reeves (Staff Development Officer)
Mrs Margaret Scott (Manager of Student Support)
Mrs Yvonne Stewart (Equality and Diversity Network Rep)
Mrs Heather McCulloch (Committee Officer)

247. Apologies

Apologies were received from Mrs Samia Abdiche, Mr Bob Cecil, Mr Ian Clark, Mr John Slater and the Vice Chancellor.

248. Declarations of Interest

There were none.

249. Chair's Remarks/Membership

The Chairman advised that membership of the Equality and Diversity Committee will be renewed in the customary way over the summer period, and the process will take account of the revised Faculty arrangements.

250. Minutes of the Meeting held on 16 January 2008

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 16 January 2008 were agreed and signed as a true record.

251. Matters Arising not appearing elsewhere on the Agenda

251.1 RAE Report [Minute 139.3 refers]

The RAE Report was currently being prepared for the Research Committee meeting this term, and will then be submitted to the next Equality and Diversity Committee meeting in October.

NOTED

251.2 Race Equality Policy Action Plan [Minute 142 refers]

Amendments to the Race Equality Policy Action Plan had been completed as a result of feedback received at the last Committee meeting, and the web site will be revised accordingly.

NOTED

251.3 Sexual Orientation Report [Minute 148 refers]

The Sexual Orientation Working Group had been working towards a position statement similar to those on (1) Age and (2) Religion and Belief. The recommendation of the Group was that the position statement become a policy document in due course.

The Committee emphasised the importance of a clear methodological approach and a clear definition of what would be included in the Report. A recommendation to monitor sexual orientation through the forthcoming staff survey will be considered by the Senior Management Team.

NOTED

251.4 Emergency evacuation procedures at Hall Place [Minute 149 refers]

Details of emergency evacuation procedures for the various University locations were now available on the Health and Safety web site. There were no particular issues at Hall Place as there were currently no identified students with Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans studying at this location. There was no lift at Hall Place, but a lift could not be used in the event of a fire. If a disabled student required particular consideration in future, then arranging teaching on the ground floor would be the obvious solution.

NOTED

252. Age Equality at CCCU: Position Statement [Paper Y125]

Members of the Committee received Paper Y125, Age Equality at CCCU: Position Statement. The paper had incorporated the changes suggested by the Committee since its last meeting. It had been approved by the Senior Management Team and was now ready to be published. The focus in future will be on implementing the recommendations in the Statement. It was suggested that a copy of the Statement be sent to the Director of Marketing for information.

A suggestion was made that student data be collected on Under 18s and Over 55s. The Director of Student Support and Guidance indicated that some was already collected for legal reasons but none of it was currently being retained.

A request to include more real examples in the Statement was made. The Chair indicated that Liz Hault had tried to extract principles from real examples and incorporate these into the Statement.

The Chair thanked Liz Hault and everyone who had contributed to the Statement. It will be submitted for approval to the Finance and General Purposes Committee in

June and thence the Governing Body in July, and will form part of next year's Equality and Diversity Annual Report.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND:

that Paper Y125 be approved by the Finance and General Purposes Committee and thence the Governing Body.

253. Religion and Belief at CCCU: Position Statement [Paper Y126]

Members of the Committee received Paper Y126, Religion and Belief at CCCU: Position Statement. The Dean of Chapel stated that this was the final version of a document that was begun a year ago. It had tried to balance the nature of the University's relationship with the Church of England with a commitment to embrace those of all faiths and none. The Working Group and others had debated the contents of the Statement at some length. The Statement's remit ranged from discussing the notion of "Institutional Ethos" and promoting good inter-faith relations, to practical considerations around resources, recruitment and publications. The document produced was both original and comprehensive and was the product of stimulating academic debate.

Professor Tony Booth, a contributor to the Statement, commented that this version was much improved and was a good piece of work. He still had reservations regarding the section on institutional ethos. Firstly, he considered that it presupposed a notion of institutional ethos before a desire for one had been expressed. Secondly, an "institutional ethos" had many strands and should be considered as a plural term rather than a singular one, thus giving someone permission to agree with some strands and not others. The Dean of Chapel responded that a singular notion of "ethos" would be easier to control and shape. Dr Burkhard Scherer thought the use of ethos was appropriate to this context, and enlightened the Committee by explaining the original Greek understanding of the concept.

Other members of the Committee expressed support for the Statement and felt it conveyed an accurate picture of what the University was trying to achieve in this area; it would give applicants a basis for understanding the position of the institution.

The Director of Student Support and Guidance advised the Committee that a multi-faith calendar already existed, but it needed to be displayed more prominently on the web site. He would speak to the Web and Support Services Manager regarding this matter.

There was some discussion among members of the Committee regarding the section on dress code, but it was decided to consider this further at a later date.

The Chair thanked all who had contributed to the Statement. It will be submitted for approval to the Finance and General Purposes Committee in June and thence the Governing Body in July.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that recommendation iii in section 7 be amended from "a multi-faith calendar" to "its multi-faith calendar";

- (ii) that the reference to the "Faith Council" in section 6 1) iii be amended to "Faith and Belief Council".

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND:

that Paper Y126 be approved by the Finance and General Purposes Committee and thence the Governing Body.

254. Equality and Diversity Annual Report 2007/08 [Paper Y127]

Members of the Committee received Paper Y127, the Equality and Diversity Annual Report. The Chair advised that this was a report on the work of the Committee over the year and will be submitted for approval to the Finance and General Purposes Committee in June and thence the Governing Body in July. It had already been approved by the Senior Management Team subject to a number of comments being taken into account. There was a legislative requirement to publish the Report by the end of April, and it will be publicly available in draft form on the University's web site from today.

The Equality and Diversity Manager stated that this year's Report brought together the three different schemes – Disability, Race and Gender – but they will be amalgamated into one scheme for next year's Report. The Report also reflected the work undertaken in the other three areas of (1) age, (2) sexual orientation and (3) religion and belief. It was recognised that the process of data collection and analysis could be improved, and the intention was to refine it further by the time of the next Report.

The Committee discussed the Report and the following points were made.

- There was a suggestion to include a section in the Report on the work of the Governing Body.
- Governors will be offered a training session on equality and diversity issues on 1 July prior to the Governing Body meeting.
- Areas which had posed significant challenges could be included as well as the more positive aspects highlighted in the report.
- The Annual Report should be put on the agenda of the second meeting in the academic year in order to allow sufficient time for comments and amendments.
- It was recognised that the quantitative data was important but it would be useful for this to be supplemented with qualitative case studies.
- The Report could be shortened with some reduction in appendices.

The Chair requested that any comments on the Report be directed to the Equality and Diversity Manager within the next three weeks. The Committee's appreciation of the work of the Equality and Diversity Manager was expressed.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND:

that Paper Y127 be approved by the Finance and General Purposes Committee and thence the Governing Body.

255. Dignity at Work Policy [Paper Y128]

Members of the Committee received Paper Y128, the Dignity at Work Policy. The Assistant Director, Human Resources had prepared this draft after reviewing the policies of other Higher Education institutions, and following consultation with the Equality Challenge Unit and University staff. It contained more information providing advice and guidance and less on procedural detail.

He indicated that the concept of mediation was new, and will be used as an additional tool to the current procedures following consultation with the Joint Negotiating & Consultative Committee which includes all three trade unions. He emphasised the importance of confidentiality in the mediation process, and for that reason it could not be subject to monitoring or form part of the evidence in a formal grievance procedure.

The Assistant Director, Human Resources stated that not all issues were appropriate for mediation, and it required the agreement of both parties before it could be implemented. Examples of issues appropriate for mediation had been removed from the Policy at the request of the unions.

The Director of Student Support and Guidance made the point that managers could also be bullied by staff, and asked that reference be included in the Policy. In addition, some members of the Committee considered there was a gap in provision between mediation and the formal grievance procedure.

The Chair stated that the Policy will be submitted to the Senior Management Team once minor amendments had been completed. There was discussion of whether to include questions about issues of bullying and harassment in the forthcoming staff survey. The Chair recorded his thanks to the Director and Assistant Director of Human Resources and to the Equality and Diversity Manager.

RESOLVED:

that reference in the Paper to "firm" management be amended to "good" management.

256. Support for Disabled Staff Report [Paper Y129]

Members of the Committee received Paper Y129, Support for Disabled Staff Report. The Equality and Diversity Manager reported that a small group had been formed to consider and make recommendations to address the inconsistencies in provision for disabled staff across the University. The outcome of this work was a recommendation for a centralised system to evaluate staff needs and to provide equipment and/or adjustments under the Access to Work scheme; the system would reside within the Human Resources Department.

The Committee noted that a centralised system would speed up the process for a new member of staff wishing to claim under the Access to Work scheme. It was recommended that a department should pay the first £300 of any costs incurred; beyond that level further expenditure would be offset against Access to Work funding or against a centralised budget. A record of expenditure in this regard would be monitored for the first time.

RESOLVED:

- (i) to amend part of the title of the Report from "Disabilities/Health Issues" to "Disabilities and/or Health Issues";
- (ii) to submit the Report to the Senior Management Team.

257. Minutes from the Meeting of the Equality and Diversity Delivery Group held on 12 February 2008 [Paper Y130]

Members of the Committee received Paper Y130, the Minutes of the Meeting of the Equality and Diversity Delivery Group held on 12 February 2008 for information.

NOTED

258. Staff Development [Paper Y131]

Members of the Committee received Paper Y131 on Staff Development. The Staff Development Officer highlighted the STEPS workshop in which senior managers had participated; it had been arranged in response to a need to ensure equality and diversity issues were embedded in the approach of senior managers to their staff.

The Equality and Diversity Manager noted that the external training provider, STEPS, is being considered for a workshop at this year's staff conference.

An annual action plan will be in place to monitor progress in this area of staff development beginning with one for 2008/09. In turn, this report will form part of the Equality and Diversity Annual Report.

NOTED

259. Equality and Diversity Network [Oral Report]

The Equality and Diversity Manager reported that no-one attended the last meeting of the Network, although some feedback was received by email. It was advertised with a focus on disability. No dates had yet been set for Network meetings next year. The development of a consultation and communication strategy would be part of next year's work.

NOTED

260. Any Other Business

- Dr Burkhard Scherer reported a problem with the Buddhist meditation room. It should be a dedicated space, but this was being challenged by Resources making other bookings for that room.
- The Staff Development Officer reported an incident of the Muslim prayer room being locked when a student wished to use the facility.
- The Director of Student Support & Guidance informed members that an e-learning equality and diversity module was available for students. Committee members were asked to find ways of encouraging students within their faculties and departments to complete the module. Completion certificates would be issued.

261. Date of Next Meeting

To note that provisional dates have been set for meetings of the Equality and Diversity Committee in 2008/09:

Wednesday 15 October 2008	2.15pm
Wednesday 14 January 2009	2.15pm
Wednesday 29 April 2009	2.15pm