

# CANTERBURY CHRIST CHURCH UNIVERSITY

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY COMMITTEE HELD AT 2.15 PM ON WEDNESDAY 28 APRIL 2010 IN THE FREDERIC MASON ROOM AT THE PRIORY

**Present:** Dame Janet Trotter (Chair), Professor Tony Lavender (Pro-Vice Chancellor [Dean of Social and Applied Sciences]), Ms Moira Mitchell (Equality & Diversity Manager), Mr Paul Carney (Director of Partnerships and Widening Participation), Ms Ren Chinnadurai (Governor), Mr John Hallam (Director of Human Resources), Miss Paulette Holmes (Business School), Dr Janet Melville-Wiseman (Health & Social Care), Mr Mike Murray (Deputy Facilities Director [Operational Services]), Mr Liam Preston (Students' Union President), Dr Burkhard Scherer (Arts & Humanities)

**In Attendance:** Mr Paul Bogle (Clerk to the Governing Body)  
Mrs Heather McCulloch (Committee Officer)

### **253. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Mrs Samia Abdiche, Professor Jan Burns and the Vice Chancellor.

### **254. Declarations of Interest**

There were none.

### **255. Chair's Remarks**

The Chair highlighted the proposed changes to the Committee's terms of reference and membership which would be discussed as part of the agenda. These changes followed on from the change in the reporting structure and reflected the realignment of the Committee with a more strategic remit.

### **256. Minutes of the Meeting held on 27 January 2010**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 27 January 2010 were agreed and signed as a true record.

### **257. Matters Arising not appearing elsewhere on the Agenda**

#### **257.1 Draft Disability Equality Scheme [Minute 162 refers]**

The Clerk confirmed that the Draft Disability Equality Scheme was approved by the Governing Body at its meeting on 30 March 2010.

**NOTED**

## **257.2 Points Based Immigration System/Student Attendance Policy [Minute 165 refers]**

The Pro-Vice Chancellor reported that, along with all other UK universities, the University had recently been granted 'highly trusted sponsor' status by the UK Border Agency (UKBA). This status will be reviewed when the University is audited in the future.

The current proposal was that universities should be given two reporting options; either to hold a register of students three times per year or to have a monitoring system by which students who miss ten consecutive learning encounters were reported to the UKBA. The University had already established the latter and will continue to operate this arrangement.

**NOTED**

## **257.3 Ethnic Minority Mentoring Project**

The Equality and Diversity Manager reported that a final meeting with mentors and mentees will be held this weekend, following which presentations will take place with the students describing their experiences at the University.

A report on the project will be presented to the next Committee meeting in October.

**NOTED**

## **258. Terms of Reference and Membership [Paper B141]**

Members of the Committee received Paper B141, Terms of Reference and Membership. Following the revised reporting arrangements for the Committee, which now reported directly to the Governing Body, the Clerk advised that a review of the Committee's terms of reference and membership had taken place to ensure that it operated effectively as a Governing Body Committee. The review included a comparison with other Governing Body Committees, particularly the Health and Safety Committee, which had a similar strategic and monitoring role. Following the review the Chairman's Committee proposed a reduced membership from twenty one to sixteen and revised terms of reference.

The main change to the terms of reference was that the Committee will no longer develop proposals and action plans. Instead this would be undertaken by the Delivery Group and the Committee will consider the Group's proposals and recommend them for approval by Governors. The changes to the membership and terms of reference were approved by the Governing Body at its meeting on 30 March 2010.

The Committee discussed the terms of reference and membership changes that will be implemented at the start of the next academic year and a number of issues were raised.

## Representation

A member of the Committee stated opposition to the Dean of Chapel being a full member of the Committee because the basis of his membership was that he represented the Church of England and other religions and/or groups were not represented in this way. This was not in any way a reflection on the current Dean of Chapel's valuable contribution to the committee but was a question of the principles and framework of the committee.

The Clerk responded that the Dean of Chapel's inclusion as a full member of the Committee, rather than 'in attendance by invitation', had been discussed in some depth at the Chairman's Committee and it was agreed that he should be a full member.

The Committee considered that there was a need for clarity over the 'in attendance by invitation' role. The Deputy Facilities Director (Operational Services) questioned why his role was 'in attendance by invitation' rather than as a full member role.

The importance of representing all equality strands on the Committee was emphasised, and the reason for each member's representation on the Committee should be transparent.

The Clerk advised that the membership of the Committee was revised at the end of each year, and this summer particular attention will be given to the task in light of the changes to be introduced. When nominating from their areas the Pro-Vice Chancellors/Deans will need to give careful consideration to the experience and expertise their nominees can bring to the Committee.

Dr Melville-Wiseman suggested that an equality impact assessment be undertaken in relation to the composition of the Committee. The Chair regarded this as an excellent idea that would lead to greater transparency, and requested that it be undertaken jointly by Dr Melville-Wiseman and the Equality and Diversity Manager.

The Director of Human Resources suggested that the composition of the Delivery Group be taken into account during the assessment and overall representation be considered across both groups of members.

The Chair resolved to raise the issues discussed at the next meeting of the Chairman's Committee in the autumn.

## **NOTED**

### **259. Equality and Diversity Annual Report 2008/09 [Paper B142]**

Members of the Committee received Paper B142, the Equality and Diversity Annual Report. The Equality and Diversity Manager advised that the Report had been considered by the Senior Management Team and its suggested amendments had been incorporated. The Report was being presented to the Committee for comment before being submitted for approval by the Governing Body.

The production of the Report was an annual legal requirement and followed a similar format each year. The following points from this year's Report were highlighted by the Equality and Diversity Manager.

- A staff data validation exercise conducted by Human Resources in 2009 resulted in 6.2% of staff declaring a disability, a significant increase on the 1.3% recorded in the previous year.
- The same exercise resulted in an increased percentage of declared ethnic minority staff from 3.8% to 4.8% over the same period.
- Data for this year's Equal Pay Audit was not yet available due to a change in timescales, but indications from the raw data showed that the University remained within the 5% variation band set by the former Equal Opportunities Commission.
- Under the section on Staff Development a table of training sessions delivered by the Equality and Diversity Manager had been included for the first time. Further specialised training sessions had been offered by the Manager of Student Support Services.
- As a result of comments made in the staff survey the Dignity at Work policy had been reviewed and a network of Dignity at Work volunteers would be established.
- Student recruitment activity will continue to focus strongly on Widening Participation in the future.
- The section on Equality Impact Assessment included a table detailing the assessments that had been completed during the year.
- The conference celebrating lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender History Month, and led by Dr Scherer, had now become an international annual event.
- The section on Student Procedures had been delayed due to difficulties in obtaining the data; the Assistant University Secretary was working towards its completion.

The Pro-Vice Chancellor reported on a more detailed analysis that had been undertaken regarding the less successful record of ethnic minority applicants for staff positions in reaching the interview stage of selection. Three reasons had been suggested for this; (1) overseas applicants were submitting general CVs not targeted at advertised posts, (2) they did not have the necessary professional qualifications and (3) they did not have, or would not be eligible for, work permits.

The Pro-Vice Chancellor raised some concerns he had regarding figures on student attainment: 51% of white graduates achieved a good honours degree compared with 31% from an ethnic minority background; 50% of graduates without a disability achieved a good honours degree compared to 37% of disabled graduates. These figures reflected a national trend, but the Chair suggested that further analysis might highlight those universities which had a more successful rate of attainment with these groups of students.

The Equality and Diversity Manager commented that University initiatives focused on student retention, but that student attainment did not receive the same level of attention. This led to a general discussion among members of the Committee regarding the need for more sophisticated and qualitative analyses of data with regard to equality and diversity issues. Suggestions included an annual research budget or a dedicated staff post. It was considered particularly important to

coordinate and streamline the collection of data that was being undertaken at Programme, Department and Faculty level.

**RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND:**

that, subject to the addition on Student Procedures (when available), Paper B142 be presented to the Governing Body for approval.

**260. Single Equality Bill [Paper B143]**

Members of the Committee received Paper B143 on the Single Equality Bill, which the Clerk had asked the Equality and Diversity Manager to prepare following approval of the Equality Bill by Parliament on 6 April 2010. The Paper was based on the Government briefing on what is contained in the Bill and what it will mean to different minority groups. Most of the new legislation was expected to come into force in the autumn, and a more detailed presentation on the Equality Act will be brought to the next Committee meeting in October.

The Committee considered that it would be useful to conduct a gap analysis and review current codes of practice in preparation for meeting the legal requirements of the new Act, and the Chair requested that this be undertaken before the next meeting. The Committee expressed a wish to embrace the spirit of the Act, as well as conform to its letter, and in this regard the issue of collecting data on staff and student sexual orientation was raised. It was acknowledged that this issue would need to be reviewed before the next Staff Survey.

**NOTED**

**261. Staff Survey [Oral Update]**

The Pro-Vice Chancellor provided a progress report to the Committee on actions being taken by the University as a result of issues raised by staff in the Staff Survey. The Director of Human Resources, working closely with the Vice Chancellor in this regard, advised the Committee that a progress report on the six areas of follow-up work will be presented to the Senior Management Team in June.

The progress report on the Staff Survey follow-up and outcomes will be presented to the Committee at its meeting in October.

**NOTED**

**262. Gender Equality Scheme [Oral Update]**

The Pro-Vice Chancellor confirmed that the Draft Gender Equality Scheme was approved by the Governing Body at its meeting on 30 March 2010.

**NOTED**

**263. Review of Support for Disabled Staff [Paper B144]**

Members of the Committee received Paper B144, a Review of Support for Disabled Staff. Following a report by the Commission for Disabled Staff in Lifelong Learning in 2007, which highlighted the low representation of disabled staff in Lifelong

Learning, the University had made significant progress in the support it provided for disabled staff. In June 2008 the University created a centralised and more equitable funding system which provided equipment and/or adjustments for disabled staff. Other universities had shown an interest in how the system worked. The system was managed by the Human Resources Department, and the team of Faculty Advisors shared responsibility for this across the University.

A review of the system was conducted in February 2010 and disabled staff, who had been supported by the new system, were asked to share their experiences. The feedback was generally positive but the system itself presented problems on occasion. Equipment sometimes took a long time to arrive and when it did there were difficulties with installation. Some of the staff supporting adaptations and the introduction of new equipment also lacked training and did not always appreciate the need for on-going support.

Under the 'Access to Work Scheme' an employer could claim reimbursement of costs associated with the provision of equipment/support when employing a disabled person. From 1 April 2010 under changes to the terms of the Scheme, employers will be able to claim substantially less in reimbursement than before. However, the University had resolved to bear the additional expense where appropriate.

The Committee was asked to comment on the appendix attached to the Paper and suggestions included:

- adding colour and illustration;
- adding 'good practice' stories;
- updating the section on 'buildings'.

The Equality and Diversity Manager agreed to incorporate the suggestions.

#### **NOTED**

#### **264. Notes of the Meeting of the Equality and Diversity Delivery Group held on 16 February 2010 [Paper B145]**

Members of the Committee received Paper B145, the Notes of the Meeting of the Equality and Diversity Delivery Group held on 16 February 2010. The Pro-Vice Chancellor reported that the issue of volunteers associated with the Dignity at Work policy was the main discussion point at the meeting. Two of the trade unions with representation at the University had accepted the principle of volunteers, but UCU was opposed on the grounds that volunteers would undermine its advisory role to staff. A meeting with the unions scheduled for 14 May will discuss this issue.

#### **NOTED**

#### **265. Any Other Business**

There was none.

**266. Date of Next Meeting**

To note that provisional dates have been set for meetings of the Equality and Diversity Committee in 2010/11:

Wednesday 20 October 2010	2.15pm
Wednesday 2 February 2011	2.15pm
Wednesday 27 April 2011	2.15pm

The meeting closed at 4.15pm.