

CANTERBURY CHRIST CHURCH UNIVERSITY

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY COMMITTEE HELD AT 2.00 PM ON 27 JANUARY 2010 IN BURRSWOOD AT THE SALOMONS CAMPUS

Present: Dame Janet Trotter (Chair), Professor Michael Wright (Vice Chancellor) [for items 6,7,9,11], Professor Tony Lavender (Pro-Vice Chancellor [Equality & Diversity]), Ms Moira Mitchell (Equality & Diversity Manager), Ms Amanda Browne (Operational Services), Professor Jan Burns (Social & Applied Sciences), Mr John Hallam (Director of Human Resources), Revd Jeremy Law (Dean of Chapel), Mrs Lynn Revell (Education) [for items 1-8], Ms Helen Reynolds (Quality & Standards)

In Attendance: Mr Paul Bogle (Clerk to the Governing Body)
Mr John Slater (Director of Admissions & Recruitment)
Mrs Heather McCulloch (Committee Officer)

157. Apologies

Apologies were received from Mrs Samia Abdiche, Mr Paul Carney, Mr Geoff Haworth, Dr Richard Henson, Miss Paulette Holmes, Mr Derek Maslin, Mr Liam Preston, Dr Burkhard Scherer and Dr Janet Wiseman.

158. Declarations of Interest

There were none.

159. Chair's Remarks

The Clerk reminded the Committee that proposed changes to the reporting arrangements of the Equality and Diversity Committee had been approved by the Governing Body at its meeting in November 2009. The outstanding task was to revise the composition and terms of reference of the Committee.

Following a comparative look at equality and diversity committees at other institutions, it was proposed to reduce the number of members from twenty-one to approximately fourteen. In addition, it was proposed that the terms of reference clarify the strategic purpose of the Committee. The Equality and Diversity Delivery Group will decide how to implement the strategic decisions taken by the Committee, and arrangements for the Group to report to the Committee will be formalised. It was agreed that the Pro-Vice Chancellor with responsibility for Equality & Diversity should chair the Delivery Group.

These proposals will be submitted to the Chairman's Committee on 9 March.

160. Minutes of the Meeting held on 29 April 2009

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 6 October 2009 were agreed and signed as a true record.

161. Matters Arising not appearing elsewhere on the Agenda

161.1 Single Equality Bill Update [Minute 25 refers]

The Pro-Vice Chancellor (Equality & Diversity) reported that the Single Equality Bill was still being debated in Parliament and looked likely to be subject to amendment before introduction onto the statute book.

NOTED

162. Draft Disability Equality Scheme [Paper B96]

Members of the Committee received Paper B96, the draft Disability Equality Scheme. It had been extensively debated at the last Committee meeting and minor amendments had been incorporated as a result of suggestions made at the meeting. The aspect of the Scheme regarding carers for people with disabilities was an area of work for further examination in the future.

The Equality and Diversity Manager advised that the Committee was receiving the Paper for information today with an invitation to recommend its approval to the Governing Body. The draft Scheme had been published on the University's web site by the statutory deadline.

The Chair congratulated the Equality and Diversity Manager on a good piece of work.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND:

that Paper B96 be presented for approval by the Governing Body.

163. Draft Gender Equality Scheme [Paper B97]

Members of the Committee received Paper B97, the draft Gender Equality Scheme, which was being presented to the Committee for the first time in its revised form. The draft Scheme had been developed in consultation with the Equality and Diversity Delivery Group and key members of staff. It had a similar format to that of the draft Disability Equality Scheme; this would facilitate the merging of the two Schemes at a later date when the University developed a Single Equality Scheme. The Action Plan had been circulated to all staff with responsibility for leading or monitoring the planned actions.

The Committee discussed the Scheme and the focus of the discussion centred on pay issues and occupational segregation. Whilst the University fulfilled its obligations on equal pay by gender in all pay grades and remained within the 5% differential recommended by the Equality Challenge Unit, there were other issues to consider. There were apparent inequalities in terms of the numbers of males and females employed within certain occupations: for instance, housekeeping and administrative staff tended to be female; estates and security staff and senior managers tended to be male. The Committee debated whether these occupational segregations should be subject to change and how it could be achieved. The following points were made.

- A suggestion to focus on particular groups of workers and collect data which could be benchmarked against that of other institutions.

- Advertisements and job descriptions could be reviewed to ensure no hidden occupational bias was present.
- It was more important to employ the right person for the job than to fulfil a quota for male or female employees.
- A suggestion to consider the issue 'globally' and look at all employees and determine whether women bore a disproportionate burden of the lowest paid occupations.
- A suggestion to consider the skills needed for a post first, and then to consider equality issues subsequently.
- If areas of occupational segregation were to be challenged, the composition of recruitment panels would need to be carefully considered in order to ensure a lack of bias at that initial stage.

The Chair noted the points made and indicated that it was an area for future consideration and work.

The Committee also discussed the gaps in data collection for staff by gender with regard to internal promotion, sickness rates and disciplinary and grievance processes. It was agreed to try and collect more related data and incorporate it into the Annual Report which will be brought to the next Committee meeting in April.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND:

that Paper B97 be presented for approval by the Governing Body.

164. Student Data Monitoring [Paper B98]

Members of the Committee received Paper B98 on Student Data Monitoring, which highlighted the main points arising from analysis of the latest HESA data tables. Further student data on degree classification, student procedures, student destination and the disability advice team was not yet available but will be included in the Annual Report next term.

The Committee noted the issues with regard to male students, in particular poor retention rates in comparison with their female counterparts.

The Committee also noted the high percentage category 'no data supplied' with regard to data on the religious beliefs of students. The Dean of Chapel recognised the difficulty of obtaining this information from students at the point of registration, but would welcome any suggestions for improvements that could be made to the response rate.

The main focus of discussion for the Committee was around how to organise and standardise the analysis of data across faculties and departments. One suggestion was to engage the Widening Participation Officer for each Faculty in this work, with the added benefits that working more closely together and streamlining the work would bring. The Equality and Diversity Delivery Group would consider how this might be implemented.

The Committee also discussed the need for clarity regarding the collection of particular data and the purpose for its collection. The provision of data was a key function of the Planning Office and the Committee needed to liaise closely with the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Academic) in this regard.

NOTED

165. Points Based Immigration System/Student Attendance Policy [Paper B99]

Members of the Committee received Paper B99 on the Points Based Immigration System/Student Attendance Policy. The Equality and Diversity Manager indicated that the Policy had been revised in response to the requirements of the Points Based Immigration System. She made it clear that the Student Attendance Policy applied to all students and the Cause for Care and Concern Procedure had been retained for all students. However, there was a legal requirement for the University to report non-EEA students to the UK Border Agency for absences of 10 consecutive expected student learning contacts, and therefore there were inevitably differences in the treatment of Home/EU and International students.

The practicalities of implementing the Policy were being finalised and there will be a new designated post initially within the Registry and later the International Office solely for this purpose.

NOTED

166. Equality Impact Assessment [Paper B100]

Members of the Committee received Paper B100 on Equality Impact Assessment, which detailed the activity undertaken in this regard in 2008/09. The Equality and Diversity Manager noted that it was likely that processes which mirrored equality impact assessments were taking place routinely and not being recorded. Conversely, there were policies being developed without equality impact assessments being undertaken, and the question was how more uniformly to embed the process.

The Committee discussed whether there should be one designated person responsible for ensuring that policies had been equality impact assessed and then placing them in one location on the web. The Chair highlighted this as an issue for the Governing Body under the heading of risk management.

The Committee also discussed the flexible working policy which currently only extended to those people included within the University's statutory obligations. There was an argument to broaden its scope to include all staff as other universities had done.

NOTED

167. Staff Survey Follow-Up Outcomes [Paper B101]

Members of the Committee received Paper B101, Staff Survey Follow-Up Outcomes, which was the Vice Chancellor's report on progress and outcomes following the publication of a report on the University's first comprehensive staff survey that took place in the autumn of 2008. The report highlighted the actions the University wished to take in response to issues raised by staff in the survey.

The Vice Chancellor commented that the actions could be divided into those related to practical issues and those to cultural issues. Practical issues were easier to resolve and solutions could be implemented within a given timescale. Cultural issues were more concerned with people's perceptions and included such issues as

appraisals, promotions and communication. These would take longer to resolve and actions had been put in place to begin the process of change. He hoped that by the time of the next staff survey people will feel more positive about these issues, but he recognised that there were always likely to be new issues of concern arising for staff.

The Committee noted that a system of staff advisors, with whom individuals could discuss concerns regarding perceived bullying, will be established.

NOTED

168. Ethnic Minority Mentoring Project [Oral Report]

The Equality and Diversity Manager informed the Committee of an ethnic minority mentoring project that was being undertaken as a result of a piece of research that had been initiated by Mary Andall-Stanberry, a senior lecturer in the Childhood Studies department.

The project was being funded from the Student Retention Fund which came under the remit of the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Academic). The project included 13 – 14 mentors working with students and was progressing well. A report at the end of the project will be brought to the Committee.

NOTED

169. Notes of the Meeting of the Equality and Diversity Delivery Group held on 27 October 2009 [Paper B102]

The Committee received Paper B102, the Notes of the Meeting of the Equality and Diversity Delivery Group held on 27 October 2009 for information.

NOTED

170. Any Other Business

There was none.

171. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 28 April at 2.15pm at the Priory, Canterbury.

The meeting closed at 3.55pm.