

EQUALITY STEERING GROUP

Minutes of the Sixteenth Meeting of the Equality Steering Group

24 September 2003

Present: Albert Pratt (Chair)
Mary Ainscough (Equality Director)
Marian Burns
Claire Byrne
Martin Conry
Lisa Looney
Padraig MacNeela

1. Apologies: Ellen Breen
Richard O'Doherty (SU Officer)
Xiaojun Wang

2. Minutes of the Meeting of 3 July 2003 were approved.

3. Matters Arising

3.1 Code of Practice for the Employment of People with Disabilities:

The Equality Director enquired as to the status of the Code, that it is still remains unclear whether the Code has been approved or not.

The HR Director outlined an issue in relation to employee medical examinations which had been raised at Governing Authority in the context of the draft Code. The Code was deemed adopted subject to satisfactory clarification of the medical issue.

The HR Director undertook to clarify the medicals matter with the relevant member of Governing Authority and would report back to the Group at its next meeting.

4. Chairman's Business

There were no topics for the Meeting under this item.

5. Policy Review And Development

5.1 DCU Policy to Promote Respect and Protect Dignity:

On 11 September, Governing Authority adopted the amendments to the policy agreed by the Steering Group at the last meeting.

The President, Ferdinand Von Prondzynski, would launch the policy formally at an event at the Helix on 25 September. The Chief Executive of the Equality Authority, Niall Crowley, would be guest of honour at the event. All members of DCU staff would be invited to the launch.

5.2 DCU Staff Training and Development Policy

A draft policy would be brought to the next meeting of the Steering Group

6. Equality Review and Action Plan

6.1 Progress on the Equality Review:

The Chairman provided an update to the Group on the equality review. The Chairman had asked that the draft interim report be presented to the Senior Management Group on 30 July. The report presented contained errors and inaccuracies which had to be corrected. A second draft still contained errors. The auditors had a further meeting with the Chairman and HR Director, along with the Equality Director. Progress had been made and two further equality focus groups were now planned: one with Human Resources staff, and one with the Equality Steering Group.

The Steering Group discussed issues in relation to the draft report, including issues around the presentation of the survey data and focus groups data, statistical validity, the conclusions drawn, and the need to identify correctly the areas where the University needs to make progress.

Other issues related to the report were discussed: the timeline for the presentation of the final draft of the report; the formation of the Equality Action Plan task group.

It was agreed that a timeline which suited the University should be adhered to; that the proposed focus groups with HR and the ESG would take place on 6 October; that the report should be finalised before taking steps to draw up the Equality Action Plan; that the formation of the Equality Action Plan task group would be considered at the next meeting of the Steering Group.

7. Any Other Business

The Disability Officer informed the Group that a Disability Steering Group had been established. As part of its Terms of Reference, meetings would be held at times similar to those of the ESG. This scheduling of meetings would facilitate reports by the Disability Officer into the ESG.

8. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Equality Steering Group will take place on Wednesday, 22 October 2003
