

QUEENSLAND UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

EQUITY BOARD

MINUTES

Equity Board met in the Council Room, Level 2, U Block, Gardens Point Campus, at 2:00 pm on Thursday, 22 May 2003.

Present

Dr C Dickenson (Chair); Dr D Battistutta, Ms P Caldwell, Ms R Christie, Ms E French, Ms K Fu, Dr S Grieshaber, Mr C Horner, Ms M Kelly, Ms S Lusan, Dr J Synott, Ms C Young, Dr S Wallace, Mr T Wilson, Ms C Young; Mr G Allen (Secretary), Ms D Russell(Secretariat).

Apologies

Dr C Dallemagne, Ms R Field, Dr K Oloyede, Mr S Pincus, Mr C Dillon.

Absent

Prof J Jones.

By invitation

Ms W Cusack, Ms G O'Brien, Dr R Reeves.

1. WELCOME AND FINAL STARRING OF AGENDA

The Chair, Dr Dickenson, welcomed members to the meeting and called for starring of additional items on the agenda. In addition to items 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 4.2, 4.4, 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3, item 6 was starred. All items remaining unstarred were noted or adopted as appropriate.

2. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The minutes of the Equity Board meeting of 4 March 2003 were confirmed.

3. BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

3.1 Unit costs to students – update 03/0309

Resolved to note the update on unit costs to students.

3.2 Indigenous representation 02/0334

Resolved to note the report on indigenous representation.

3.3 Support for low SES students video – report back from faculties/divisions 03/0629

Equity Board considered a submission on a proposed low SES students video.

The Chair, Dr Dickenson, asked the chairs of faculty and division equity committees to report on responses to the proposed video. The following comments were made.

- There was a need to focus on more general information when marketing the University to Year 9 and 10 students, rather than specifically on low SES student issues.
- Many year 9 and 10 students who belong to a low SES group would not identify themselves as such.
- As QUT does not have set practices in relation to low SES students, such a video could be perceived as "false advertising".
- The medium of video might not be appropriate. Less expensive alternatives, particularly a PowerPoint presentation which could be edited as required, were suggested.
- Some members also reported that their faculty or division felt the video was not appropriate in the present climate of potential fee increases.

3.4 Cultural Diversity Policy – report back from faculties/ divisions

02/0336

Equity Board considered a submission on the University's cultural diversity policy.

The Chair, Dr Dickenson, invited the chair of each faculty or division equity committee to report on current activities in the area of cultural diversity. The following activities were noted.

- A Community Service Grant project establishing a mentorship program for refugee claimants.
- Indigenous employment initiatives.
- Staff training/workshops in cultural diversity.
- A survey to more accurately identify the cultural backgrounds of students.
- A Teaching and Learning grant to assist in embedding Indigenous material in curriculum.
- Buddy system for non-English speaking background (NESB) and international students.
- A study of stereotypical attitudes and beliefs amongst pre-service teachers.
- Promotion of library materials relating to cultural diversity issues.

While discussing faculty and division activities, the Equity Coordinator, Ms Kelly, reminded members that the NESB criteria applied only to students who had lived in Australia for less than 10 years, spoke a language other than English in their home and were not international students

It was noted that the monitoring of cultural diversity activities and reporting on these activities was the responsibility of the Cultural Diversity Committee. Ms Kelly commented that the Committee also needs to monitor what is not being done in relation to cultural diversity.

Faculty and division chairs were asked to liaise with the Cultural Diversity Committee in relation to the implementation of the plan.

Resolved:

- (i) to note faculty and division verbal reports in relation to existing action on cultural diversity;
- (ii) to note the Map of Cultural Diversity Activities; and
- (iii) to request Cultural Diversity Committee to liaise with faculties/divisions in relation to the implementation of the plan.

3.5 Student poverty – report back from faculties/ divisions

03/0629, 95/0831

Equity Board considered a submission on student poverty.

The Chair, Dr Dickenson, invited the chair of each faculty or division equity committee to report on current activities in the area of student poverty.

Current programs included:

- student bursaries (faculty based);
- computer recycling programmes;
- provision of book vouchers to low income students;
- sponsoring students to attend a women's law dinner;
- subsidised uniform purchasing;
- recruiting low income students to assist with functions in return for photocopying privileges; and
- financial support to enable low income students and families to attend graduation(s).

Ms Kelly, Equity Coordinator, reported on University-wide programs which included:

- student bursaries;
- computer recycling programme (hope to expand in near future); and
- scholarships (with an anticipation that these will be expanded in near future).

Ms Kelly reported that there are currently plans to conduct a mid-year computer recycling program to assist students who were unsuccessful in first semester.

Ms Kelly also noted that the Equity Section is currently seeking to encourage faculties to promote their low income assistance officer so students have a point of contact.

In response to a question about students who were unable to pay Student Guild fees, Ms Kelly, noted that Counselling Services offer a no-interest loan scheme to assist in such situations. She suggested that grants to low income students to cover Guild fees should be considered in the future.

Resolved:

- (i) to note faculty/division reports in relation to existing action on student poverty, and the potential to embark upon new action in this area;
- (ii) to note that a map of student poverty activities is currently being finalised; and
- (iii) to request faculty/division Chairs to communicate activities relating to student poverty to the Equity Officer, Ms Danelle Dobinson.

4. REPORTS FROM SUB-COMMITTEES/FACULTY AND DIVISIONAL COMMITTEES

4.1 Low-SES Student Equity Committee

4.1.1 Low-SES Student Equity Committee minutes 19 November 2002 99/0921

Resolved to note the Low SES Committee minutes of 19 November 2002.

4.1.2 Low-SES Student Equity Committee minutes 26 February 2003 99/0921

Resolved to note the Low SES Committee minutes of 26 February 2003.

4.1.3 Student Support Services Executive Committee – Monthly Area Manager’s Report 95/0287

Resolved to note the report.

4.2 Disability Services Committee 95/0786

The Chair, Dr Dickenson, invited the Chair of Disability Services Committee, Dr Wallace, to speak to this item.

Dr Wallace noted that, as there had not been a meeting of the committee for approximately one year, the meeting held on 14 April 2003 had been an attempt to catch up with new and existing members.

Issues and incidents affecting members/ others were discussed.

Key issues of concern that were identified included:

- construction;
- orientation; and
- web access.

Resolved to note the report from Disability Services Committee.

4.3 Cultural Diversity Committee

4.4 Reports from Faculty / Division Committees 95/0831

The Chair, Dr Dickenson, invited the Secretary, Mr Allen, to speak to this item. Mr Allen noted the past practice of scheduling a number of faculty or division committee chairs to report on equity issues in their area at each meeting of Equity Board. It was noted that, as all faculties and divisions had been required to report on key areas of concern at recent meetings, this practice had ceased. The Secretary suggested that he

develop a timetable for future faculty/division reporting and distribute this to members before the next meeting. It was suggested that two faculties/divisions report to each meeting in future.

Resolved to request the Secretary to establish a schedule of faculty/division reports to be tabled at each future meeting of Equity Board.

5. SUBMISSIONS

5.1 Nelson Review – update

02/0115

Equity Board considered a presentation and submission on the Nelson Review of higher education.

The Chair, Dr Dickenson, presented an update on issues covered in the briefings given to Australian Vice-Chancellors and key senior staff in Canberra before and after the release of the federal budget.

Key areas of concern to Equity Board that were noted included the following matters:

- The establishment of the Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council.
- Changes to criteria affecting indigenous students.
- Establishing the concept of a Learning Entitlement for students.
- Replacement of HECS with HELP:
 - setting of fees by Universities;
 - implications for students from regional areas and low SES Groups; and
 - implications for low income students, particularly in relation to the provision of scholarships.

The Board agreed the Nelson Review could have significant implications for equity issues such as the participation of students from low SES backgrounds.

It was noted that the income support and scholarship scheme did not seem to provide sufficient support.

The Board noted that the resulting issue of developing University-based scholarships is likely to be a major issue in the next twelve to eighteen months.

Resolved to note the update on the Nelson Review.

5.2 Establishment of Nelson Review working party

03/0630

Equity Board considered a submission on the establishment of a Nelson Review working party.

The Chair, Dr Dickenson, suggested the Board establish a working party to discuss and report back to the Board on equity issues resulting from the Nelson Review, particularly in relation to scholarships.

It was suggested that the working party membership include three nominees of Low SES Committee, and three nominees of Equity Board.

Three nominees were sought from Equity Board for the working party. Nominations were received from:

- Ms E French (Faculty of Business);
- Ms R Christie (Faculty of Information Technology); and
- Ms C Young (Division of Information and Academic Services).

As issues in relation to the Nelson Review develop, the working group would be expected to develop a discussion paper and proposal(s) addressing these issues. This information would then be used to inform discussion in other University committees.

Resolved:

- (i) to establish a working party to discuss and report back to Equity Board on issues resulting from the Nelson Review; and

(ii) to request Low SES to nominate three members to the Nelson Review working party.

5.3 Nomination to Low-SES Student Equity Committee

02/0334

It was noted that a vacancy existed on Low-SES Student Equity Committee in the category of *One Academic Staff member with expertise in the area of educational disadvantage, nominated by Equity Board*.

The Chair noted that Dr Peter O'Brien had expressed an interest in taking up this position.

Resolved to nominate Dr P O'Brien as member of the Low-SES Student Equity Committee in the category of *One Academic Staff member with expertise in the area of educational disadvantage, nominated by Equity Board*

6 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

The following items were noted.

6.1 Post-meeting action sheet for Equity Board 4 March 2003 meeting

6.2 Items pending sheet for Equity Board – 14 May 2003

6.3 Staff participation in Equity Training Sessions 1997 - 2002

6.4 Female percentage of staff

6.5 Submission to review of On-Line Teaching activities

7 OTHER BUSINESS

7.1 Teaching hours

96/0007

Ms Christie, Faculty of Information Technology, reported that classes had been scheduled between 9:00 and 10:00 pm in the Faculty during first semester. It was noted that this created several difficulties, particularly for female teaching staff and students. Ms Christie asked the Board if this was an equity issue that it should consider. Members noted that late class times were a problem in several faculties. It was noted that this issue should typically be addressed as part of the room allocation process. Dr Dickenson indicated this is an area she may be able to pursue outside the Board.

Resolved to ask the Chair to report back on actions in relation to teaching hours, as appropriate.

7.2 Reconciliation Week

99/0701

The Equity Coordinator, Ms Kelly, noted that Reconciliation Week was to be held from 26 May to 3 June 2003. She asked members to encourage staff involvement in their faculties/divisions and to actively participate in Reconciliation Week activities.

8 NEXT MEETING

The next meeting was scheduled for 31 July 2003, in the Council Room, Room U214, Level 2, U Block, Gardens Point Campus, at 2:00 pm.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 4:15 pm.

Confirmed

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Chair

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Date