

# QUEENSLAND UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

## EQUITY BOARD

### MINUTES

Equity Board met in the Council Room, Room U214, Level 2, U Block, Gardens Point Campus, at 2:00 pm on Thursday, 4 March 2004.

#### **Present**

Dr C Dickenson (Chair); Dr D Battistutta, Dr J Carr, Ms R Christie, Ms P Coghill, Dr C Dallemagne, Dr C Dillon, Ms D Eden, Ms R Field, Ms E French, Ms M Kelly, Mr S Pincus, Mr J Slater, Mr T Wilson, Ms C Young; Ms S Whitehead (Acting Secretary).

#### **Apologies**

Ms S Garske, Mr I Wynne, Assoc Prof P Yarlagadda.

#### **Absent**

Mr C Ackland.

#### **By invitation**

Mr C Brown (observing), Ms L Bryan (for Ms S Garske), Ms W Cusack (observing), Ms D Redfern (for Assoc Prof Yarlagadda).

#### **1. APOLOGIES, WELCOME AND FINAL STARRING OF AGENDA**

Equity Board noted the above apologies.

The Chair, Dr Dickenson, welcomed members.

Dr Dickenson called for starring of additional items on the agenda. In addition to items 1, 2, 5.1.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, 6.6 and 6.7, items 5.1.2 and 7.5 were starred. All items remaining unstarred were noted or adopted as appropriate.

No conflicts of interest were declared at the opening of the meeting.

#### **2. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

The minutes of Equity Board's meeting of 30 October 2003 were confirmed, subject to the amendment of Ms Christie's title, and removal of Mr Slater from the list of absent members.

#### **3. BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES**

There was no business arising from the minutes.

#### **4. PRESENTATION**

##### **4.1 Structured Training and Employment Program (STEP) for Managers and Supervisors – Indigenous Employment Strategy** 04/0209

Ms Coghill gave a presentation to the Board on the Structured Training and Employment Program (STEP) for Managers and Supervisors arising from the Indigenous Employment Strategy.

Ms Coghill advised the Board that the University currently had 32 indigenous staff, with a target of 70 full-time positions (2.6%) by 2007. The Board noted that STEP was a partnered agreement between QUT and the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, with the aims of:

- increasing the numbers of indigenous staff in ongoing employment;
- increasing their level of occupational skills; and
- improving their employment prospects.

The program places indigenous people in positions at QUT for 6-12 months and was supported with wage assistance, employee training and mentoring, cross-cultural training for managers and supervisors and

support from the Indigenous Employment Strategy project officer. Ms Coghill advised that there were currently three people in STEP placements at QUT, and that the target was to have ten by September 2004.

The Board noted that QUT was the first employer to implement STEP and that the program would be launched in mid-April. The Chair, Dr Dickenson, thanked Ms Coghill for the presentation and encouraged all members to consider using the program in their operational areas.

## **5. REPORTS FROM SUB-COMMITTEES / FACULTY AND DIVISIONAL COMMITTEES**

### **5.1 Low-SES Student Equity Committee**

#### **5.1.1 Minutes of 15 October 2003 meeting** 99/0921

Equity Board considered the minutes from the Low-SES Student Equity Committee from its meeting of 15 October 2003. The Chair, Dr Dickenson, invited Dr Dallemagne to speak to the item.

Dr Dallemagne advised the Board that the minutes had since been confirmed.

**Resolved** to note the Low-SES Student Equity Committee meeting minutes of 15 October 2003.

#### **5.1.2 Courses Bulletin 26/03 – Unit costs for students** 03/0309

Equity Board considered Courses Bulletin 26/03 - Unit costs for students relating to Teaching and Learning Committees' guidelines for the disclosure of unit costs to students.

In relation to this item, Dr Dallemagne suggested that two recent reports from QUT Counselling Services, which had been circulated at the Nelson Review Working Party, titled *Impact of University Course Structure on Centrelink Eligibility* and *Financial Issues for Tertiary Students* should be distributed more widely. The Chair, Dr Dickenson, undertook to find an appropriate mechanism to further distribute the reports throughout the University.

#### **Resolved:**

- (i) to note Courses Bulletin 26/03 on unit costs for students; and
- (ii) that the Chairperson determine an appropriate mechanism for more widely distributing the reports titled *Impact of University Course Structure on Centrelink Eligibility* and *Financial Issues for Tertiary Students*.

### **5.2 Disability Services Committee**

#### **5.2.1 Minutes of 8 December 2003 meeting** 95/0786

**Resolved** to note the Disability Services Committee meeting minutes of 8 December 2003.

### **5.3 Cultural Diversity Committee**

#### **5.3.1 Minutes of 4 December 2003 meeting** 96/0803

**Resolved** to note the Cultural Diversity Committee meeting minutes of 4 December 2003.

### **5.4 Reports from Faculty / Division Committees**

#### **5.4.1 Report from Faculty of Health** 95/0831

**Resolved** to note the Faculty of Health report.

#### **5.4.2 Report from Division of Administrative Services** 95/0831

**Resolved** to note the Division of Administrative Services report.

#### **5.4.3 Report on TILS Equity Action Plan 2003-2004** 95/0831

**Resolved** to note the Division of Teaching, Learning and Information Support Equity Action Plan 2003-2004.

**5.4.4 Report schedule for faculty / division committees** 95/0831

**Resolved** to note the report schedule for faculty/division committees.

**6. SUBMISSIONS**

**6.1 Committee orientation** 95/0831

**Resolved** to note the orientation materials detailed in the submission, including the Equity Board terms of reference.

**6.2 Report from Nelson Working Party 14 January 2004 meeting** 03/0630

Equity Board considered a report from the Nelson Working Party meeting of 14 January 2004. The Chair, Dr Dickenson, asked Ms Kelly, Equity Coordinator, to speak to the item.

Ms Kelly reminded the Board that the Nelson Working Party had reported to the last meeting of the Board with ten recommendations to guide the University when formulating its policy related to student fees and contributions. The Working Party had met again, with the addition of representatives from the Student Guild, to revisit the recommendations after the relevant legislation had been passed by Senate. Ms Kelly advised the Board that Council had since met and, although it resolved to approve the maximum 25% increase in HECS fees, many of the Working Party's major recommendations were endorsed and taken on board.

- The Working Party recommended that any increase in HECS should only be made if necessary, and a set percentage of the revenue be directed to scholarships and other mechanisms to assist low-income students. Council agreed to put aside 15% of extra revenue generated into support measures to assist low-income students.
- The Working Party recommended that QUT does not introduce full-fees for undergraduate students. Council deferred this issue and will review it at a later date.
- The Working Party recommended that support measures be allocated to a range of measures which would be reviewed annually. Council agreed that support measures should be allocated strategically and requested a long-term plan for endorsement.
- The Working Party recommended that support for low-income students should be viewed strategically and not only as a financial issue. Council incorporated the Working Party's four-part framework in supporting low-income students into its decision.

Ms Kelly and the Chair, Dr Dickenson, thanked the members of the Working Party for their hard work. The Chair advised the Board that procedures supporting these measures would be submitted to Council for endorsement. The Board noted that the University must develop a detailed pricing methodology consistent with Federal guidelines. During discussion the following points were clarified.

- QUT has no control over the fees charged to students who exhaust their learning entitlements which are imposed by regulations.
- Visiting students who are paying full-fees are not able to apply for a loan and this is an issue which needs to be addressed.
- Students will still be charged full-fees for summer program units.
- There will be no change to the University's special entry programs, such as Q-STEP, which reduce the required OP score for eligible students with the advent of minimum OPs.
- Faculties have been requested to review multiple entry points to courses, as QUT currently has 136 entry points compared to UQ's 75.

**Resolved** to note the report and recommendations from the second meeting of the Nelson Working Party.

**6.3 Report to DEST Reforms Working Group from Scholarships Working Party** 03/0630

Equity Board considered a report prepared by the Equity Coordinator of the Scholarships Working Party to the DEST Reforms Working Group. The Chair, Dr Dickenson, invited Ms Kelly, Equity Coordinator, to speak to the item.

Ms Kelly advised the Board that the University had been allocated 287 Commonwealth Learning Scholarships (CLS), worth \$2000 and \$4000, which must be given out by the end of April. The Board noted that students hold these scholarships for four years, and that they are not counted as income for tax purposes, unlike the University's own scholarships. All undergraduate students are eligible to apply for CLSs, unlike QUT scholarships for which only commencing students are eligible. The Board noted that there were currently no scholarships available for postgraduate coursework students.

The Board noted that the Scholarships Working Party had recommended that it would be beneficial to integrate administration of CLSs and QUT's scholarships and that the Equity Section was in a good position to administer this. Ms Kelly advised the Board that it was intended that CLSs be allocated primarily on a needs basis, similar to QUT's scholarships.

**Resolved:**

- (i) that the Equity Coordinator investigate options for the offering of scholarships or bursaries to postgraduate coursework students; and
- (ii) to note the report from the Scholarships Working Party to the DEST Reforms Working Group attached to the submission.

**6.4 Summary of financial support measures** 03/0629

The Board considered a submission from the Equity Coordinator which provided a summary of financial support measures. The Chair, Dr Dickenson, invited Ms Kelly, Equity Coordinator, to speak to the item.

Ms Kelly advised the Board that the summary was a snapshot of financial support measures offered by the University in 2003, and that it was not comprehensive. The Board noted that indications show that financial support measures for 2004 were similar to 2003, but that there would be an increase in the growth and spread of the measures in 2005.

**Resolved** to note the summary of financial support measures attached to the submission.

**6.5 Late Guild fee payment penalty fee** 01/0185

The Chair, Dr Dickenson, gave a verbal report to the Board on this item and provided a brief background of the advent of the revised Student Rules which had been approved by Council in October 2002. The Board noted that the Rules provided for students who had not paid the specified fees, including the Guild fee, at the time of enrolment, to be disenrolled. Dr Dickenson advised that the University had not yet acted on this provision, and was taking an approach of encouraging students to pay their fees through administrative charges rather than disenrolling them.

Dr Dickenson advised that the late Guild fee payment penalty fee would not be introduced in 2004, and undertook to consult with the Student Guild before to its implementation.

**6.6 Queer Collaborations Brisbane 2004**

This item was deferred to a future meeting.

**6.7 Review of HEEP Scheme and National Equity Framework** 95/0049, 04/0007

The Equity Coordinator, Ms Kelly, gave a verbal report to the Board on this item. Ms Kelly advised the Board that the Commonwealth Government was proposing a review of the National Equity Framework in conjunction with a review of the Higher Education Equity Program (HEEP). It was expected that the new

HEEP scheme would reflect the revised National Equity Framework and would be ready by the end of 2004 for implementation in 2005.

The Board noted Ms Kelly's concern that the University had only been given 25 days to respond, the tight timeframe being driven by the necessity of reviewing the HEEP scheme. Ms Kelly advised that the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee would be requested to approach the Department of Education, Science and Training with a suggestion to split the two reviews. This would allow the HEEP scheme to be reviewed immediately, and would provide for an extended timeframe to review the National Equity Framework and address some of the important issues surrounding equity and education.

The Board noted that the University would employ someone with expertise to develop its response to the National Equity Framework review, and that it would be necessary to establish a working party.

**Resolved** that a working party consisting of Ms Kelly, Ms Field, Ms Cusack, Mr Pincus and a staff member from the Strategic Management and Information Analysis section, be established to prepare the University's response to the review of the National Equity Framework.

## **7. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

The following items were noted.

### **7.1 Post-meeting action sheet for Equity Board 30 October 2003 meeting**

### **7.2 Items pending sheet for Equity Board – March 2004**

### **7.3 2003 Equity Bursaries Report**

### **7.4 2003 QUT Equity Awards**

### **7.5 Equity Resources on the Web**

Dr Dallemagne queried whether it would be possible to provide a similar hardcopy printout of equity resources available on the web, specifically aimed at students. Ms Kelly, Equity Coordinator, undertook to prepare such a printout.

### **7.6 2004 Equity Training and Development Calendar**

### **7.7 Staff Diversity Network**

### **7.8 Cultural Diversity at QUT Brochure**

### **7.9 2004 Meeting Schedule**

## **8. OTHER BUSINESS**

### **8.1 University Planning Process**

00/0710

The Chair, Dr Dickenson, briefed the Board on the revised planning process for the University, based on the QUT Blueprint. The Board noted that Dr Dickenson would be the sponsor of the People and Culture plan, which was one of the four top-level institutional plans. The Board noted that the draft top-level plans would be discussed at the Senior Staff Conference in April and would be approved through the University committee structure during May.

Dr Dickenson advised the Board that there would no longer be an Equity Plan, but that equity would be embedded into all of the top-level plans. In response to a query, Dr Dickenson clarified that if equity was identified as an issue in any of the plans, it would then be dealt with through the faculty/division operational plans which sit under the top-level plans.

Ms Kelly, Equity Coordinator, advised the Board that the revised process did not change the aspirations of the Equity Plan, and that faculties and divisions should continue implementing their equity plans.

### **8.2 Dial-in access for QUT HECS students**

96/0976

Dr Dallemagne questioned the variation between dial-in access between HECS students and international full-fee paying students and queried whether all students should have the same level of access, and whether this disadvantages low-SES students.

Ms Kelly, Equity Coordinator, advised the Board that domestic students have always been required to pay for access to QUT online services through an ISP, but that the University provided 1000 E-dial connections via the staff connection for low-income students. The Board noted that the University was also running a computer loan system for students on a needs basis.

Ms Young undertook to investigate whether QUT's procedure relating to dial-in access for HECS students differs from other universities, and to report back to the next meeting of Equity Board.

**8.3 Inclusion of information on anti-discrimination in Course Unit Outlines** 98/0103

Ms Christie queried whether it was possible for the Course Unit Outline to be modified to contain a note or information on anti-discrimination. Ms Kelly, Equity Coordinator, undertook to discuss this with the Director, Academic Policy and Programs.

**9. NEXT MEETING**

Meetings for the rest of 2004 were scheduled for 20 May, 12 August and 28 October.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 3:34 pm.

Confirmed ..... Date  
Chair