

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, 28 October 2004.

Present

Dr C Dickenson (Chair); Mr C Ackland, Dr D Battistutta, Dr J Carr, Ms R Christie, Dr C Dallemagne, Ms R Field, Dr E French, Ms M Kelly, Mr S Pincus, Mr J Slater, Dr J Synott, Mr T Wilson, Mr I Wynne, Assoc Prof P Yarlagadda, Ms C Young; Ms S Forrest (Secretary).

Apologies

Ms S Garske, Ms D Eden.

Absent

Dr C Dillon.

Attending

Ms C Brickell, Ms W Cusack, Ms Dobinson, Mr M Foth, Ms Hannson, Ms M MacKinnon, Ms B Thomson.

1. APOLOGIES, WELCOME AND FINAL STARRING OF AGENDA 02/0295

Equity Board noted the above apologies.

The Chair, Dr Dickenson, welcomed members noting that Ms Dobinson, Ms Cusack, Ms MacKinnon and Ms Thomson were attending as observers, Ms Brickell was observing as the 2005 Welfare Director, Student Guild, Ms Hannson was attending for Ms Garske, and Mr Foth was attending for Ms Eden.

Dr Dickenson called for starring of additional items on the agenda. In addition to items 1, 2, 5.4.1, 5.4.2, 5.4.3, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.7 and 6.8, items 5.1.1, 5.2.1 and 5.3.1 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 12 August 2004 were confirmed subject to correction of Ms Christie's title.

3. PRESENTATION

There was no presentation.

4. BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

There was no business arising from the minutes.

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

5.1 Low-SES Student Equity Committee 02/0334

5.1.1 Minutes of meetings – 22 July 2004

Equity Board considered a submission from the Chair, Low-SES Student Equity Committee, Dr Dallemagne, in relation to the unconfirmed minutes from the Low-SES Student Equity Committee held on 22 July 2004. The Chair, Dr Dickenson, invited Dr Dallemagne to speak to the submission.

Dr Dallemagne reported that the Committee had discussed the Equity Program Computer Scheme and ways of improving the scheme for students who did not have computer access and were therefore not aware of

the program until after their commencement at QUT. In response, the Equity Coordinator, Ms Kelly, reported that a similar, but expanded scheme would be conducted in 2005 over two semesters in consideration of students who were not successful, or who missed the cut-off date, in the first round.

Dr Dallemagne also drew members' attention to the issue of the cost of textbooks and the printing of materials. It had been noted that book lists produced for units were sometimes extensive and that some students felt that they had to purchase all of the books listed. This was perceived as a concern, particularly amongst new students who required guidance in this respect from unit coordinators.

Ms Kelly reminded members that this matter had been considered by the Board in October 2002 as part of a larger issue concerning unit costs to students, wherein it had resolved to refer the matter to Teaching and Learning Committee for consideration. While it was noted that a set of guidelines had been developed in relation to ways in which students might be informed by faculties of these costs, both in advance and at the time of enrolment, it was suggested that additional strategies needed to be developed to address the concerns raised and to increase awareness of the issue.

In the discussion that ensued the following strategies were suggested.

- Teaching and Learning Support Services (TALSS) be requested to include information in orientation week seminars and in *Unit Details – Week One* based on information received from unit coordinators.
- Flexiprint to be more actively promoted to students as a cost-effective print option.
- Academics be encouraged to utilise the flag tool provided in the Online Learning and Teaching (OLT) system to indicate those documents which are recommended for printing.
- Unit coordinators be more aware of the cost of the text books that they prescribe, and mindful of the importance of limiting the costs to only those items deemed essential for students to acquire in order to pass the unit.
- Unit coordinators to be requested to clearly identify Course Material Database (CMD) materials or other resources that might be printed from websites or databases as either critical to the unit objectives or as optional extensions to assist learning.
- Unit coordinators to provide students with advice on how to be selective when downloading materials.
- Equity Committee Chairs to raise the issue for consideration in their respective faculty / division.
- Information on low-income support for students to be more actively promoted to students and academics.

Dr Dickenson undertook to draft correspondence in relation to the printing issue raised, and the strategies discussed, and circulate for comment prior to disseminating to the wider University community.

Resolved to note the unconfirmed minutes from the Low-SES Student Equity Committee meeting held on 22 July 2004.

5.2 Disability Services Committee 95/0786

5.2.1 Minutes of meetings – 17 August 2004

Resolved to note the unconfirmed minutes from the Disability Services Committee meeting held on 17 August 2004.

5.3 Cultural Diversity Committee 96/0803

5.3.1 Minutes of meetings – 30 August 2004

Equity Board considered a submission from the Chair, Cultural Diversity Committee, Assoc Prof Yarlagadda, in relation to the unconfirmed minutes from the Cultural Diversity Committee meeting held on 30 August 2004. The Chair, Dr Dickenson, invited Assoc Prof Yarlagadda to speak to the submission.

Assoc Prof Yarlagadda expressed concern in relation to certain membership issues including the lack of an external member, general staff member, and an Indigenous representative on the Committee. Assoc Prof Yarlagadda further stated that his term as Chair was due to expire and that he would not be requesting a new term.

The Chair, Dr Dickenson, thanked Assoc Prof Yarlagadda for the report and undertook to pursue the matter of support for the new Chair with the Faculty Dean.

5.4 Reports from Faculty / Division Committees

5.4.1 Faculty of Science Report

04/0530

Equity Board considered a tabled report from the Chair, Faculty of Science Equity Committee, Dr Dallemagne, on equity matters in the Faculty of Science. The Chair, Dr Dickenson, invited Dr Dallemagne to speak to the report.

Dr Dallemagne highlighted the following from the report.

- The Committee had decided to focus on increasing equity awareness in the Faculty of Science. The current focus was on disability services and it was proposed that presentations would be made in relation to disability issues at School meetings.
- Initiatives of the Committee included an equity library which allowed students to borrow books for a semester; use of Community Service Funds in certain schools for bursaries and scholarships for financially disadvantaged students; \$100 book vouchers to support low SES students.
- The Faculty of Science currently did not have an Equity Officer.

Dr Dickenson thanked Dr Dallemagne for the report.

Resolved to note the report from the Chair, Faculty of Science Equity Committee.

5.4.2 Faculty of Law Report

04/0530

Equity Board considered a report from the Chair, Faculty of Law Equity Committee, Ms Rachael Field, on equity matters in the Faculty of Law.

Ms Field tabled a document titled *Faculty of Law, Report to Equity Board*, from which the following key equity activities in 2004 were highlighted.

- A promotional postcard detailing the Faculty's support programs for equity students had been developed and would be included in Faculty information packs and used at annual course and career days and Q-Step faculty days.
- The Faculty had been successful in the nomination of Ms Susan Francis for the Faculty's Outstanding Alumni award for 2004.
- The Faculty Equity Officer, Ms Cusack, and Equity Chair, Ms Field, had received faculty support to attend the 8th Pacific Rim First Year in Higher Education Conference which focused on supporting first year students of diverse backgrounds.
- As part of the Faculty's strategy to increase the number of female staff with PhDs, sponsorship had been secured for two Level A female academics to attend the Early Researchers in Law Conference.
- The School of Justice Studies had adopted a policy to support professional staff in attending conferences as part of their professional development. Funding for conference attendance was excluded from the University policy on professional development for professional staff. The Equity Committee was seeking to have the policy adopted in other schools and areas within the Faculty.
- Two women Level A lecturers had been promoted to Level B; one female Level B lecturer had been promoted to Level C; and one female Level C lecturer had been promoted to Level D.

- Professor Behrendt, Professor of Law and Indigenous Studies at UTS, had recently delivered the 2004 Clare Burton Lecture – *Law Stories and Life Stories: Aboriginal Women, the Law and Australian Society*.
- A commitment to equity had been included in the Faculty's value statement in the Quinquennial Review Implementation Plan.

The Chair, Dr Dickenson, thanked Ms Field for the report.

Resolved to note the report from the Chair, Faculty of Law Equity Committee.

5.4.3 Faculty of Education Report

04/0530

Equity Board considered a verbal report from the Chair, Faculty of Education Equity Committee, Dr Carr, on equity matters in the Faculty of Education. The Chair, Dr Dickenson, invited Dr Carr to speak to the report.

Dr Carr highlighted the following from the report.

- The Faculty of Education Equity Committee had decided to make student poverty, cultural diversity and Reconciliation the main foci for its activities this year. An additional objective had been to raise student and staff awareness of equity issues and activities within the Faculty. The Committee had allocated a significant proportion of its annual budget to appointing an Equity Project Officer to help achieve these aims.
- A professional development workshop was being developed for Faculty staff and would be offered before the end of 2004. This would be a two hour workshop which had been designed to provide a structure and a stimulus for discussion around issues relating to cultural diversity, internationalisation and Reconciliation.
- A textbook load scheme had been set up with more than 150 books donated and catalogued. 36 successful load applications had been processed in semester one, and a similar number in semester two.
- Two \$500 bursaries had been offered via the Central Equity Bursary system.

Dr Dickenson thanked Dr Carr for the report.

Resolved to note the report from the Chair, Faculty of Education Equity Committee.

6. SUBMISSIONS

6.1 Working Party Review of Equity Board

95/0831

Equity Board considered a submission from the working party established to review the Committee's reporting practices and the performance and membership of its sub-committees. As the process also involved a review of the current practice of submitting an annual report to the Vice-Chancellor, the Chair, Dr Dickenson, requested that agenda item 6.8 be taken into consideration in the discussion. Dr Dickenson invited the Chair of the Working Party, Mr Wilson, to speak to the submission.

Mr Wilson briefed the Board on prior consideration of the review indicating that it had been considered by the Board at its meeting on 12 August 2004 wherein it had resolved to establish a working party to conduct a self-review of its reporting practices, in particular the submission of an annual report to the Vice-Chancellor as provided for in the Board's terms of reference; and the performance and membership of the Board's four committees: Cultural Diversity Committee, Disability Services Committee, Equity Award Committee, and Low-SES Student Equity Committee.

Mr Wilson reported that the QUT Quality Framework had been used as the conceptual model for the review, and that the Chairs of each of the Board's committees had been requested to provide a brief written submission which addressed certain key questions that corresponded with each stage of the quality improvement cycle.

Mr Wilson invited each Chair to speak to their submission following which a discussion ensued in relation to key areas for possible operational improvement.

While it was agreed that the Cultural Diversity Committee, Disability Services Committee, and Low-SES Student Equity Committee should be retained as sub-committees of Equity Board, it was noted that there were various strategic, administrative, membership and role related changes which could be made to improve the performance of the committees. The following key changes were recommended in relation to membership.

- Broaden the membership of Cultural Diversity Committee to include members of Human Resources, Teaching and Learning, International and Development, and Marketing and Communications to enhance collaboration across the University.
- Expand the membership of Disability Services Committee to formally include a representative of international students.
- Update Low-SES Student Equity Committee membership categories in accordance with current University and external organisational contexts; remove membership category *President of Q-Step Students Association (ex officio)*; and include a membership category *Student Guild representative*.

In relation to the role of the committees and their terms of reference, it was suggested that Disability Services Committee develop a greater role in policy review.

Key administrative changes pertained to the establishment of secretarial procedures and scheduling processes for Disability Services Committee to enhance communication and organisation. It was further suggested that the committee's first meeting each year should focus on the Disability Action Plan.

Key strategic directional changes related to the utilisation of the Staff Diversity Network by the Cultural Diversity Committee to increase the Committee's profile amongst the University community; enhanced collaboration by Cultural Diversity Committee and Disability Services Committee with external organisations and closer contact with community organisations; a greater concentration on designing and implementing strategies by Low-SES Students Equity Committee; promoting the committees and their substantive work.

The Equity Coordinator, Ms Kelly, reported that the working group had also determined that it was appropriate for the Board to make an annual report to the Vice-Chancellor covering an analysis of progress across the institution on equity-related matters and recommendations arising. The annual reporting arrangements under the previous strategic plan had involved the Equity Section gathering data from faculties and divisions and compiling this into an annual report on the Equity Plan. The working party had agreed that this annual comprehensive reporting process should remain in place, but that faculties and divisions now needed a guidelines document in lieu of the previous Equity Plan. The Board noted that this was the subject of a separate submission on the agenda.

The Chair, Dr Dickenson, commended the working party and the sub-committees on their input in the review process and undertook to prepare a draft report and recommendations, in consultation with the Equity Coordinator, Ms Kelly, for the Board's endorsement.

Resolved to note that a draft report and recommendations in relation to outcomes from the self-review of Equity Board and its committees would be prepared for forwarding to the Vice-Chancellor's Committees Review Panel by the end of 2004, and circulated to the Board for endorsement.

6.2 Annual Self-Assessment Review

95/0831

Equity Board considered a submission on its annual self-assessment review. The Chair, Dr Dickenson, briefed the Board on the submission indicating that Council and Vice-Chancellor's committees were required to review their performance annually against their terms of reference. In undertaking the review, Dr Dickenson requested the Board give consideration to its achievements in 2004, and its potential for improvement in 2005.

In the discussion that ensued the following comments were noted.

- The Board felt that it would benefit from holding an informal meeting / discussion forum at the beginning of the year at which issues could be prioritised and an annual schedule of business determined.
- A document was being developed, which would fulfil a similar function to what was previously the Equity Plan, in which priority strategic issues and targets would be identified. As such, the document

would provide a basis upon which the Board would be able to evaluate its performance and could be used to provide an annual report to the Vice-Chancellor.

- In conducting the self evaluation, the Committee noted the attendance record of its members, however did not undertake an assessment of individual participation.
- As part of the self evaluation, the Board identified the need to have alternate members for Chairs of Faculty / Division Committees.
- Consideration should be given to developing a web discussion forum for Board members.

Resolved that the Chair and the Secretary prepare a report to Council on the Committee's self-assessment, based on the comments received, for forwarding to the Vice-Chancellor.

6.3 Working Party Review of Equity and Indigenous Policies 02/0336

Equity Board considered a verbal report from the Equity Coordinator, Ms Kelly, in relation to the working party review of equity and Indigenous policies. Ms Kelly reported that a meeting of the working party had been scheduled and indicated that it was intended to conduct the review in conjunction with the review of Equity Board prior to the end of 2004.

6.4 Student Equity Scholarships Update 03/0416, 03/0159,
00/1018, 04/0157

Resolved to note information provided by the Equity Coordinator, Ms Kelly, in relation to Commonwealth Learning Scholarships; QUT Equity Scholarships, Bursary and Computer schemes; QUT Access Scholarships; and Vice-Chancellor's Scholarships.

6.5 Temporary Protection Visa Students Update 03/0669

Resolved to note the correspondence attached to the submission in relation to Refugee Students on Temporary and Permanent Protection Visas.

6.6 Student Statistics 2004 Report 02/0267

Resolved to note the report tabled by the Equity Coordinator, Ms Kelly, titled *QUT Student Equity Report – 2004*.

6.7 Student Guild Fees and Fines 01/0185

Equity Board considered a verbal report from the Welfare Director, Mr Slater, in relation to a recent announcement that legislation would soon be debated in Parliament which would make student union payments voluntary for university students, and the effect this would have on services and support provided to students.

The Chair, Dr Dickenson, reported that a meeting had been scheduled to discuss the matter with the Vice-Chancellor the following week.

6.8 Annual Report from Equity Board to the Vice-Chancellor 00/0710

Equity Board considered a submission from the Equity Coordinator, Ms Kelly, in relation to proposed annual reporting arrangements from Equity Board to the Vice-Chancellor. The Chair, Dr Dickenson, invited Ms Kelly to speak to the submission.

Ms Kelly briefed the Board on the background to the submission indicating that until the emergence of the *QUT Blueprint* and relevant strategic plans, the *QUT Equity Plan* had been the primary planning document guiding the implementation of Equity initiatives at the University. The *QUT Equity Plan* had identified the objectives and strategies for staff and student equity, and formed the basis of the annual report on equity across the University.

While equity related targets and goals were now embedded throughout the top-level strategic plans that had been developed in support of the QUT Blueprint, it was proposed that a document be developed which would fulfil a similar function to that of the *QUT Equity Plan*. Further, as the Board was required to fulfil a

more formal reporting function direct to the Vice-Chancellor, the document would assist in annually reporting to the Vice-Chancellor.

Resolved to

- (i) endorse the development of an appropriate document to guide the implementation and reporting of Equity initiatives in the faculties and divisions in line with the *QUT Blueprint* and relevant strategic plans;
- (ii) constitute a small working party to develop that document; and
- (iii) forward such document to a future meeting of Equity Board for endorsement.

7. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

The following items were noted.

7.1 Post-meeting action sheet for Equity Board – 12 August 2004 meeting

7.2 Items pending sheet for Equity Board – October 2004

8. OTHER BUSINESS

9. NEXT MEETING

This was the final meeting for 2004. The next scheduled meeting was 3 March 2005.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 4:00 pm.

Confirmed

.....
Chair

.....
Date