

QUEENSLAND UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

EQUITY BOARD

MINUTES

Equity Board met in the Council Room, U214, Level 2, U Block, Gardens Point Campus, at 2:00 pm on Thursday, 9 March 2006.

Present

Dr C Dickenson (Chair); Dr B Atherton, Dr E French, Prof S Grieshaber, Ms C Jackson, Ms M Kelly, Mr J Knowles, Mr C Melvin, Mr S Pincus, Ms D Redfern, Dr B Senadji, Dr G Smith, Mr M Thomas, Ms C Young; Ms S Whitehead (Acting Secretary).

Apologies

Dr D Battistutta, Dr C Dallemagne.

Absent

Mr E Jones, Mr A Perrau.

By invitation

Ms D Dobinson, Ms W Cusack.

1. APOLOGIES, WELCOME AND FINAL STARRING OF AGENDA

06/00033

Equity Board noted the above apologies.

The Chair, Dr Dickenson, welcomed members to the meeting, particularly welcoming new members, Prof Grieshaber, Ms Jackson, Mr Knowles, Mr Melvin, Dr Smith and Mr Thomas. On behalf of the Board, Dr Dickenson extended her thanks to former members, Ms Brickell, Dr Carr, Ms Christie, Ms Eden, Ms Field and Ms Garske.

Dr Dickenson called for starring of additional items on the agenda. No further items 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 17 November 2005 were confirmed, subject to a minor amendment in item 4.2.1, third dot point to read: *The Committee felt it would be beneficial...*

3. PRESENTATION

There was no presentation.

4. REPORTS

4.1 Chair

The Chair, Dr Dickenson, briefed members on recent developments across the University.

Professor of Indigenous Studies

Dr Dickenson advised members that Prof Aileen Moreton-Robinson has recently been appointed as a Professor of Indigenous Studies in the Faculty of Education.

New Student Management System

06/00455

Dr Dickenson informed members that two vendors, PeopleSoft and StudentOne, were currently under consideration for the provision of a student management system to replace Callista. Dr Dickenson advised that the University was expected to enter into negotiations with the successful vendor by the end of March, and the outcome finalised by mid-April 2006.

Voluntary Student Unionism (VSU) legislation update

06/00198

Members noted that voluntary student unionism legislation would take effect in July 2006, and that from that date the Student Guild fee would become a voluntary payment for students. The Student Guild was currently taking into consideration the implications of the introduction of VSU on its operations, and Dr Dickenson had warned the Guild of the probability that few students would make such a voluntary payment.

QUT Blueprint

06/00241

Dr Dickenson advised members that the Blueprint would be reviewed in 2006 and preliminary work would commence with the Senior Staff Conference in May. The Vice-Chancellor would subsequently visit all campuses to share initial thoughts, and top-level plans including the People and Culture plan, would be reviewed by July. Key performance indicators (KPIs) for 2006 would be also developed by July.

In response to a query, Dr Dickenson advised that she was still waiting to hear about the KPIs for 2005, but that, most likely, they would be the existing 2004 KPIs rolled over with changes for individual KPIs as required.

4.1.1 Business arising from minutes - Post-meeting action sheet for Equity Board 17 November 2005 meeting

PMA Item 4.1.1 – Business arising from the minutes – Post-meeting action sheet for Equity Board 1 September 2005 meeting

PMA Item 4.2.2 - Disability Services Committee

Action: Liaise with DVC(TILS) in relation to the status of the Web Accessibility Officer position, currently vacant, and report back to Equity Board.

Action Officers: Chair, TILS Equity Committee.

Outcome: Ms Young advised that a small working group, including the Equity Coordinator, Ms Kelly, would meet to discuss compliance with web accessibility at QUT, and that there was an ambition to mainstream accessibility into the QUT web team capabilities.

PMA item 5.4 Prayer room for Muslim students and staff on Gardens Point campus

06/00241

Action: Discuss the issue of space and cost requirements with Executive Director, Finance and Resource Planning and, in liaison with Chair, EB, create a consultation group to consider and progress this issue.

Action Officers: Chair, EB, and Senior Equity Officer.

Outcome: Dr Dickenson advised that a space had been identified on Gardens Point campus, which would impact on the Student Guild. There would be a meeting between Dr Dickenson and the Student Guild to discuss the issue.

4.2 Equity Board Sub-Committees

4.2.1 Low-SES Student Equity Committee

There was no report.

4.2.1.1 Confirmed minutes of meeting – 8 November 2005

Resolved to note the confirmed minutes of the Low-SES Student Equity Committee's 8 November 2005 meeting.

4.2.2 Disability Services Committee

There was no report.

4.2.3 Cultural Diversity Committee

There was no report.

4.3 Divisions / Faculties

4.3.1 Summary reports – Chair, Faculty and Divisional Equity Committees

There were no reports.

5. SUBMISSIONS

5.1 2006 Equity Board orientation

Equity Board considered a submission providing orientation material for the Board. For the benefit of new members, the Chair, Dr Dickenson, reminded members that Equity Board was a Vice-Chancellor's committee and reported back to him. Dr Dickenson advised members that if they were unsure whether or not they needed to disclose any interests, they should contact the Secretary for advice.

The Equity Coordinator, Ms Kelly, highlighted that the Board's role differed significantly from faculty and division equity committees, in considering broad policies and strategies at the University-level.

Resolved:

- (i) to note the orientation materials provided including the Board's constitution and membership as attached to the submission; and
- (ii) that members complete and return, as required, the *Disclosure of Interests Form*, at Attachment 3, to the Secretary.

5.2 Equity Board 2006 priorities setting and discussion

Equity Board discussed its priorities for 2006. The Chair, Dr Dickenson, reminded the Board that the current People and Culture Plan contained four equity-related key performance indicators (KPIs): low-SES students, Indigenous students, Indigenous staff, and women in senior positions, and that long-standing priority areas for the University were poverty, racism and reconciliation. Members agreed that it would be beneficial for the Board to concentrate on one priority in 2006, preferably an issue which required greater attention and promotion.

During the ensuing discussion the following points were made.

- Some of the targets set for the equity-related KPIs were over-ambitious and it was unlikely the University would be able to reach them, particularly the KPIs for Indigenous staff and students which were very difficult to achieve partly due to cultural issues over which the University had no control.
- Whatever the priority chosen by the Board, the strategies and actions developed must readily translate to faculties and divisions to be truly successful. It was suggested that the Annual Report could provide an opportunity to flag actions and activities for faculties and divisions in the coming year, as well as reporting on achievements in the previous year. These actions and activities could then be reported on, on an interim basis, throughout the year.
- Faculties and divisions have varying degrees of success in achieving targets in the different priority areas.
- Although inclusion of equity-related activities in PPRs would be a useful strategy for embedding equity, there was already concern from some senior staff in the University that too many objectives were expected to be achieved through the use of PPRs.
- The success of the low-SES and related programs meant that poverty was less of a pressing issue, but that racism was a live issue across the University.

After deliberation, the Board agreed that for 2006 its priority would be the attraction and retention of Indigenous students and staff, and greater progress towards the KPIs on this issue. It was agreed that the Board would discuss how faculties and division could become more active on this priority, and how the Equity Section and the Oodgeroo Unit could assist in achieving this.

Resolved:

- (i) that the 2006 priority for the Board would be the attraction and retention of Indigenous staff and students;
- (ii) that members advise their respective faculty or division equity committee of this priority; and

- (iii) that the Equity Coordinator prepare a discussion paper on strategies to promote the attraction and retention of Indigenous staff and students for the next meeting of the Board.

5.3 Annual Report to Vice-Chancellor – draft structure

06/00098

Equity Board considered a submission from the Equity Coordinator, Ms Kelly, in relation to the Annual Report on Equity to the Vice-Chancellor. The Chair, Dr Dickenson invited Ms Kelly to speak to the submission.

Ms Kelly thanked members for the submission of their respective faculty or division reports and asked members to provide input into the structure and content of the first Annual Report on Equity to the Vice-Chancellor. The Board agreed that a wider audience than just the Vice-Chancellor should be considered, as it was very likely that the Report would be forwarded to the Vice-Chancellor's Advisory Committee, Council and also released publicly.

The following points were made during discussion.

- The Report would compare the University's equity achievements with past results, with other universities, such as the ATN group, and with the KPIs and aspirational and other targets.
- It would be best for the Report to make a few, high impact recommendations, kept at the broad University-level.
- The Report should highlight achievements, but also areas with less success and the reasons for not achieving expected targets.
- Consideration should be given to disseminating the information back to staff, preferably through an executive summary of the Report's highlights.
- Case studies of best practice could be used to illustrate particular issues.
- Members again raised the question of including equity-related goals in PPRs.

Resolved:

- (i) to endorse the draft structure of the Annual Report on Equity to the Vice-Chancellor as detailed in the submission;
- (ii) that the Chair and Equity Coordinator give thought to the dissemination of information contained in the Annual Report;
- (iii) that the Equity Coordinator prepare a discussion paper on raising awareness of equity through the use of PPRs for the next meeting of the Board;
- (iv) that the Equity Coordinator provide access for members to all reports received from faculties and divisions via fileshare; and
- (v) that members provide feedback to the Equity Coordinator on the faculty and division reporting process.

5.4 Low-SES outreach update

06/00877

The Equity Coordinator, Ms Kelly, tabled a Memorandum of Understanding between the University and the Smith Family.

Resolved to note the developments in outreach to low-SES students.

6. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

The following items were noted for information.

6.1 2006 Meeting Schedule

6.2 Rural and regional student access and participation

The Equity Coordinator, Ms Kelly, tabled the *outoftowners* guide for members.

6.3 Female Student to Academic Staff Pipeline

6.4 Final Report on Equity Initiatives Grants 2005

7. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

8. NEXT MEETING

Meetings for 2006 were scheduled for 13 July, 7 September, 16 November.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 3:25 pm.

Confirmed
Chair Date