

# 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 Monday 3 July, 2006.

#### **Present**

Dr C Dickenson (Chair); Dr B Atherton, Dr C Dallemagne, Dr J Fraser, Dr E French, Ms C Jackson, Mr E Jones, Ms J Lampert, Dr B Senadji, Dr G Smith, Ms C Young; Ms S Keech (Acting Secretary).

#### **Apologies**

Ms M Kelly, Mr C Melvin, Mr S Pincus, Ms D Redfern, Ms W Cusack (observer).

#### **Absent**

Ms J Duczmal, Mr J Knowles, Mr A Perrau, Mr M Thomas.

#### **By invitation**

Ms D Dobinson, Ms M MacIndoe (for item 7.1), Ms S Williamson.

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

Equity Board noted the above apologies.

The Chair, Dr Dickenson, welcomed members to the meeting, particularly welcoming new members, Dr Fraser and Ms Lampert. On behalf of the Board, Dr Dickenson extended her thanks to former members Dr Battistutta and Prof Grieshaber.

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 9 March 2006 were confirmed.

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

#### **3.1 Post-meeting action sheet for Equity Board's 9 March 2006 meeting**

##### **PMA Item 5.2 – Equity Board 2006 priorities setting and discussion**

Action: Prepare discussion paper on strategies to promote attraction and retention of Indigenous staff and students.

Action Officers: Equity Coordinator.

**Outcome:** Ms Dobinson advised that two seminars had been held regarding strategies to promote attraction and retention of Indigenous staff and students.

##### **PMA Item 5.3 – Annual Report to Vice-Chancellor – draft structure**

Action: Prepare discussion paper on raising awareness of equity through PPRs for 3 July 2006 meeting.

Action Officers: Equity Coordinator.

**Outcome:** Ms Dobinson informed the Committee this item was still pending and that a paper would be brought to the 7 September 2006 meeting.

### **4. REPORTS**

#### **4.1 Chair**

06/00484

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

## Student Load

Dr Dickenson provided members with an overview of the student load management position at QUT. She reported that nationally there has been a 5 percent decline in the number of applications between 2003-2006, however 18,000 new Commonwealth places had been made available. The drop in demand and the increased number of places has resulted in a lowering of OPs across the sector. Unmet demand decreased significantly from 36,000 in 2004 to 14,000 in 2006. The number of applications through QTAC increased slightly against the national trend, however the acceptance rate fell from 76 percent to 69 percent.

QUT offers had increased by 10 percent at the beginning of the year to 11,000 offers, with 60 percent of these going to Queensland school leavers. QUT's acceptance rate was 80 percent. In 2006 QUT offered deferrals for the first time with 650 students deferring offers. Fifty percent of this year's intake were females and the student body was approaching a female contingent figure of 60 percent. Research conducted by QTAC Board shows this was an Australian-wide trend.

Student load targets across the University had been met, and in the case where a discipline was under target the load was shifted in order to meet Government sanctions. It was noted that Commonwealth grant funding was made available in accordance with load targets.

## 5. SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS

### 5.1 Low-SES Student Equity Committee

06/00129

Equity Board noted the minutes of the 21 February 2006 meeting of the Low SES Student Equity Committee.

Dr Dallemagne commented on the Low SES Students Equity Committee's concerns about ongoing support for students who gained a place at QUT through Q-Step. The financial difficulties for which they gained an OP bonus are likely to continue and the committee should ensure they have financial support, eg computer, vouchers and the like. A discussion ensued at Equity Board on the impact of voluntary student unionism on activities and services provided by the Student Guild. Another matter of concern to committee members is the access to parking, particularly at Kelvin Grove where the future cost of parking may be prohibitive for Low SES students.

The Chair acknowledged the problems at Kelvin Grove in regard to parking availability and future cost, advising that appeals had been made to the Council not to implement parking fees while construction was underway. So far these appeals had been successful but would only be shortlived. QUT was currently trying to source other areas of unoccupied land to use for parking. However, bus services between campuses had been extended and people were being encouraged to use these services and park elsewhere.

**Resolved** to note the confirmed minutes of the Low-SES Student Equity Committee's 21 February 2006 meeting.

### 5.2 Disability Services Committee

06/00099

Equity Board noted the minutes of the 7 November 2005 meeting of the Disability Services Committee and the tabled document, *AVCC Guidelines relating to Students with a Disability*.

Ms Dobinson advised that Mr Stephen Pincus had been appointed as the new Chair of the Disability Services Committee and that Genes Soh was the new Student Guild representative. Catherine Cassar, the new Social Justice person in the Student Guild would also liaise with the Committee regarding equity issues for disabled students.

The Disability Services Committee had discussed a number of matters which included the development of a manual for staff on the management of students and staff with a disability, and training for professional staff regarding issues for students with a psychiatric disability. Contact with the Library had also been made about access issues to media files and their translation for students with reading or sight impairment. Ms Dobinson further advised that the disability action plan would be reviewed in Semester 2 and Equity Board members were advised they may be contacted for further consultation in regard to this.

Dr Dickenson advised that work was currently in train to improve the quality of CMD documents for use by students with sight impairment. This has been in response to problems experienced in text distortion by the software. The Board acknowledged the immense workload this entailed and the considerable expense of the exercise, and commended the Library on its excellent work.

Ms Dobinson would arrange to circulate the link for *The Second AVCC Action Plan for Women Employed in Australian Universities 2006-2010* to Equity Board members.

Concern was also expressed that buses running between Carseldine and other campuses were difficult for students with a disability to use as many of these vehicles did not appear to carry the appropriate equipment.

**Resolved** to note the confirmed minutes of the Disability Services Committee's 7 November 2005 meeting.

### 5.3 Cultural Diversity Committee

06/00123

There was no report received for this Committee. Nominations for the position of Chair of the Cultural Diversity Committee are being sought and expressions of interest can be forwarded to the Secretary.

## 6. FACULTY AND DIVISION EQUITY COMMITTEE REPORTS

### 6.1 Summary reports – Chair, Faculty and Divisional Equity Committees

The Chair advised that meeting dates for reports by faculty and division Equity Committee Chairs would be designated for the remainder of 2006. Advance notice would be given and reports could either be written or verbal.

The Board received the following verbal reports from faculty and division Chairs on recent equity-related activities.

06/01306

**Faculty of Science** – Dr Dallemagne informed the Board that the Faculty of Science had an Equity Library Scheme, whereby students could borrow books for one semester. Donations of books were being sought from publishers.

06/01312

**Division of Administrative Services** – Dr Dickenson reported that a survey of divisional front line staff had been conducted regarding their level of knowledge about equity-related issues.

The Board was informed that a mobility scooter was available at both the Gardens Point and Kelvin Grove campuses for use by people with a permanent or temporary disability. It was agreed greater awareness was needed about this under-used resource.

06/01313

**QUT Carseldine** – Dr Atherton commented on the small budget at Carseldine, half of which was devoted to financial support for Honours and Postgraduate students. Another focus area included mature age students and their integration into the University. A number of profile-raising events had been held to assist with this in 2005 and 2006.

The Board acknowledged that in 2006 a priority was to seek assistance from the Alumni Office in organising some similar events for Indigenous students.

06/01315

**Faculty of Education** – Ms Lampert mentioned the raising of awareness of equity through PPRs.

Dr Dickenson suggested that people be encouraged to take up any equity-related issues within their faculty and to tailor PPRs more specifically in relation to these issues.

06/01317

**Faculty of Business** – Dr French reported that the Faculty of Business Equity Committee had given advice to the Faculty about how they could respond to the Reconciliation Statement. In regard to the Faculty's primary strategy focus for 2006 which is indigenous inclusivity, three equity committee members attended Equity Office training on Indigenous recruitment and on the issues for Indigenous students and staff. Collaboration is underway with the Faculty Research and Development Committee to target training for new researchers, women in research and career development for women, and two of these activities have been undertaken so far this year. Twenty-five bursaries have been granted for Low SES students and the Equity Initiatives Grant Scheme for 2006 is underway. Three new projects helped infuse equity throughout the faculty, namely the business card which is given to all starting students and has equity contact information on the back, new web page updates, and post it notes for staff identifying new web page updates.

06/01328

**Divisions of Research and Commercialisation / International and Development** – Ms Williamson advised that an ATEM course was being offered at Griffith University which provided assistance about how

women could get published. Nominations for the course were being sought by all Heads of Schools and would be funded by research and equity committees.

06/01318

**Creative Industries Faculty** – Mr Jones informed Equity Board that the Creative Industries Faculty had decided to allocate funds for a new Equity Initiatives Grant which sought applications with equity outcomes for grants up to \$4,000. Other faculty initiatives included the promotion of performing arts at QUT, aimed at Indigenous people at post secondary level and the idea of a Smart State Academy was also being considered for Indigenous students.

## 7. SUBMISSIONS

### 7.1 2005 Annual Report from Equity Board to the Vice-Chancellor

06/00098

Equity Board considered a submission from the Acting Coordinator, Equity Section, Ms MacIndoe, which sought endorsement of the 2005 Equity Board Annual Report, for forwarding to the Vice-Chancellor.

The Chair acknowledged the contributions of equity committees to this document. She also recognised the enormous amount of work the report had entailed and suggested that in future the report be produced triennially. Dr Dickenson invited Ms MacIndoe to speak to the report.

Ms MacIndoe provided the Board with an overview of the report's compilation process and findings. She reported that as part of the planning cycle, Equity Board reported to the Vice-Chancellor each year on the state of equity at QUT. Faculties and divisions were asked to report on equity performance using a set of reporting guidelines, which covered five main areas of equity-related activity: Student diversity; Student inclusivity and support; Staff diversity and support; Research and community engagement; and Institutional commitment.

Following an analysis of the information provided by faculties and divisions, the report structure was finalised which outlined equity-related activities in 2005, benchmarks for QUT, a comparison of performance with other Universities and National and State averages.

Ms MacIndoe highlighted the following points.

- It was noted that DEST had not yet released data for 2005 which meant the information contained in the report was not the most current for all areas.
- There was an increase in the number of students with a disability but a decline in students from non-English speaking backgrounds.
- Table 4 of the report provided information on the position of each faculty showing student attrition at QUT by equity target group. The retention success rate showed a positive result.
- It was anticipated the report would provide a positive structure for embedding equity in all divisions and faculties.

On behalf of the Equity Board, Dr Fraser gave a vote of thanks to Ms MacIndoe for an excellent report.

The Chair commented that the report provided a good commentary on QUT's equity position in 2005. She thanked Ms MacIndoe for producing a very useful and informative document.

In discussion the following comments were made.

- That the words "and retain" be added after the word "increase" to the first line of the first recommendation, and that titles preface each recommendation.
- For ease of reading, it was suggested a table of contents be added plus page reference numbers for each of the recommendations.
- That a small presentation summary be developed to accompany the document.
- Following endorsement by Equity Board the final document would be forwarded to the Chair for presentation to the Vice-Chancellor. The Chair would advise when the document could be made public.

**Resolved** to endorse the 2005 Annual Report, as attached to the submission, for forwarding to the Vice-Chancellor.

**8. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

There were no items for information.

**9. OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business.

**10. NEXT MEETING**

Meetings for the remainder of 2006 were scheduled for 7 September and 16 November.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 3.45 pm.

Confirmed .....  
Chair Date