

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, 15 November 2007.

Present

Dr C Dickenson (Chair); Dr B Atherton, Mrs R Carpenter, Dr C Dallemagne, Dr J Fraser, Dr S Gleed, Mr E Jones, Ms M Kelly, Dr B Senadji, Dr G Smith, Ms J Stokker; Mr I Wright (Secretary).

Apologies

Ms A Gabiola, Ms J Lampert, Mr S Pincus, Mr M Thomas, Dr R Wickramasekera

Absent

Ms S Parkin, Ms D Redfern, Ms K Williams.

By invitation

Ms W Cusack, Ms A King, Ms G Obrien (observers).

1. APOLOGIES, WELCOME AND FINAL STARRING OF AGENDA

Equity Board noted the above apologies.

The Chair, Dr Dickenson, welcomed members and observers to the meeting.

Dr Dickenson called for starring of additional items on the agenda. No additional 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 23 August 2007 were confirmed.

3. BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

3.1 Equity-related items in PPr agreements – 2007 revised guidelines and report framework (item 3.3 of minutes 8 March 2007)

At the request of the Chair this item was deferred until the Board's first meeting in 2008.

3.2 Overseas Study and Low-income Students Working Party Report (ref. 07/01084, 07/00634 9.2, 23/8/07)

Equity Board considered a submission from the Equity Co-ordinator, Ms Kelly and the Chair, Overseas Study and Low-income Students Working Party, Dr Atherton, which recommended that the Board consider the recommendations of the Working Party. The Chair, Dr Dickenson, invited Dr Atherton to speak to the item.

Dr Atherton commented that the support available to low-income students for overseas study was small and that the working party had been established to look at the ways the University could fill the gap. The type and level of practical support offered at other universities had been surveyed. The working party concluded that it would be inappropriate to redeploy existing Equity funding to this area. It was recommended that the incoming Deputy Vice-Chancellor (International and Development), Mr Sheppard, consider the issue when or if there was an expansion of QUT's support programs. The working party proposed that the Board encourage faculties to consider low-income students in any existing or emerging faculty-based programs.

Dr Dickenson noted that the current proposal was a zero sum game in that it was about taking funding from one area of need to support another. The incoming Deputy Vice-Chancellor (International and Development), Mr Sheppard would be requested to consider the issue further.

During the discussion the following points were made.

- Should study abroad students be requested to make a report as a way of sharing the benefit of their experience?
- A faculty could make the sharing of experience a requirement of its financial support.

Resolved:

- (3) to note the recommendations of the report of the Overseas Study and Low-income Students Working Party; and
- (ii) to note that the Equity Coordinator would discuss the issue of support for low-income students with the new Deputy Vice-Chancellor (International and Development) early in 2008.

3.3 Restructure of Equity Board Committees

06/00254

Equity Board considered a submission from the Equity Co-ordinator, Ms Kelly which recommended that the Board endorse the disestablishment of the Equity Board subcommittees and a process for the bodies to continue as working parties from 1 January 2008.

The Chair, Dr Dickenson, commented that the proposal that the Equity Sub committees be converted to working parties mirrored the structure adopted by Teaching and Learning Committee. The new approach would give greater flexibility to the Board to address the policy priorities it identified and manage the working parties within the Equity Section.

Ms Kelly noted that the new proposals would retain the activity of the groups but change to a less formal setting. There would also be an opportunity for the groups to self reflect on their role and activity and make recommendations to the Board in 2008.

Resolved:

- (i) to endorse that the four Committees of Equity Board continue as working parties from 1 January 2008, with their current membership and terms of reference;
- (ii) to endorse that policies A8.1.1, A8.1.2, A8.1.3 and A/8.2 be rescinded; and
- (iii) to endorse the transition process outlined in this submission.

3.4 Equity Board 2008 priority setting

Equity Board was advised by the Chair, Dr Dickenson, that there would be further consideration of the Board's priorities at its first meeting in 2008. Issues around the recruitment and retention of Indigenous staff, and equity scholarships had featured prominently and would remain high priorities in 2008.

In response to a member's query about the prospect of QUT offering sporting scholarships, which had been mentioned at a recent scholarship network meeting, Dr Dickenson, commented that while the Student Guild had offered sporting scholarships in the past QUT had no record of offering such scholarships. There had been some discussion about allocating funding from the Vice-Chancellor's merit scholarships to support sporting scholars.

4. CHAIR'S REPORT

4.1 Equal Opportunity for Women

08/00398

The Equity Coordinator, Ms Kelly, advised that the information at item 8.7 *QUT Gender Equity Report 2006-2007* would be circulated to management within the University.

Ms Kelly commented that QUT's position was improving relative to that of the sector as a whole. There had been growth in the number of female Level C academic staff, but possibly at the expense of numbers at

Level D. Thirty percent of all professional staff were women, which was high by international standards. The rate of improvement was better sector wide but QUT remained at the top of the range.

The Chair, Dr Dickenson, noted that this would be a standing item at future meetings.

5. SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS

5.1 Cultural Diversity Committee

There was no report.

5.2 Disability Services Committee

Resolved to note the unconfirmed minutes of Disability Services Committee's 3 October 2007 meeting.

5.3 Low-SES Student Equity Committee

Resolved to note the minutes and post meeting action sheets from the Low SES Student Equity Committee's 1 May 2007 and 9 October 2007 meetings.

6. FACULTY AND DIVISION EQUITY COMMITTEE REPORTS

6.1 Faculty and Division Equity Committee Reports

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

Division of Technology, Information and Learning Support

Chair of the Division of Technology, Information and Learning Support Equity Committee, Ms Stokker, highlighted the following issues.

- The 2007 action plan for TILS had included the promotion of staff equity training and encouraged managers to set aside time for equity training.
- Funding had been provided to develop an intranet site for TILS staff listing all TILS services that support students and staff from equity target groups.
- The staff newsletter would include reports on equity issues.
- There would be nominations for equity awards in 2007.

QUT Carseldine

Chair of the Division of Technology, Information and Learning Support Equity Committee, Dr Atherton, highlighted the following issues.

- The priority for equity at Carseldine in 2007 had been support to students, which included
 - equity and student bursaries;
 - orientation for students with disabilities;
 - providing meeting spaces for equity groups on campus;
 - providing a standard English Dictionary for school based examinations.

In discussion it was noted that the University had policy with regard to the use of dictionaries in examinations and there were long running issues of difference between the Equity Section and Teaching and Learning Committee on the use of dictionaries by students whose first language was not English.

Creative Industries Faculty

Chair of the Creative Industries Faculty Equity Committee, Mr Jones, highlighted the following issues.

- The Faculty made a Dean's Award for Equitable Practise in 2007.
- Funding of \$3,500 was provided for book vouchers for Indigenous and QStep students.
- There had been discussion within the Faculty about the merits of embedding Indigenous perspectives into foundation Units compared with retaining separate Units.

Faculty of Health

Chair of the Faculty of Health Equity Committee, Dr Fraser, highlighted the following issues.

The Faculty had undertaken or taken part in the following equity projects: tailored support for mature age students particularly those without computers or with low levels of IT literacy, the Indigenous Employment Strategy, support to staff managing cultural issues related to clinical placements and international students, and mentoring programs for early career academics with senior academics.

During the discussion it was noted that the Faculty could be duplicating support and training in IT literacy for mature students currently provided by the Division of Technology, Information and Learning Support. The Chair further commented that it would be counter productive to provide hard copy information to mature students when the University's student systems were almost exclusively delivered through online systems.

The Chair, Dr Dickenson, thanked the Chairs for their reports and requested that in 2008 written faculty and division reports be provided to the Secretary in advance of the meeting for circulation with the agenda.

7. SUBMISSIONS

7.1 Mandatory EO Online Training

08/00397

Equity Board considered a submission from the Equity Coordinator, Ms Kelly, which recommended the endorsement of mandatory Equity Training for all staff and to forward the proposal to the Staff Development Network for consideration.

Ms Kelly commented that there had been low take-up rates with the current optional training program. The Staff Development Network (SDN) was designing and implementing integrated staff training using technology that could deliver training modules online and monitor and report completion. It would be timely to integrate the existing Equity training into the suite of modules under development by the SDN and would assist in meeting the Equal Opportunity for Women Australia reporting requirements.

Resolved:

- (i) to endorse the implementation of a mandatory training program for EO Online at QUT as follows;
 - inclusion as a condition of employment in all appointment offers;
 - completion before the cessation of the probation period or, where probation does not apply within the first month of employment, to be included in employment contracts;
 - completion by 31 February 2008 by all existing staff who did not complete Equity Basics in 2005/2006;
 - completion by all continuing and contract staff on a biennial basis thereafter to meet Equal Opportunity for Women Australia reporting requirements; and
- (ii) to support referral of this recommendation to the SDN Steering Committee for consideration.

8. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

The following items were noted.

- 8.1 Post-meeting Action Sheet for Equity Board's 23 August 2007 meeting
- 8.2 Equity Board Items Pending Sheet – 15 November 2007
- 8.3 QUT Committee meeting schedule for 2008
- 8.4 Equity Board Report – annual to triennial
- 8.5 2007 QUT Equity Scholarship Schemes Report
- 8.6 QUT Student Equity Report 2007
- 8.7 QUT Gender Equity Report 2006-2007

9. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

10. NEXT MEETING

Meetings in 2008 were scheduled for 13 March, 12 June, 28 August and 13 November.

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

Confirmed
Chair Date