

University of Malta

Gender Issues Committee

Annual Report – 2006-2007

The committee was appointed by council on the 23<sup>rd</sup> November, 2006 as follows:

Chairperson: Professor M.T. Camilleri

Members: Dr Josette Farrugia, Education Department

Dr Ruth Farrugia, Department of Civil Law

Dr Gorg Mallia, Centre for Communication Technology

Dr Marceline Naudi, Department of Social Policy and Social Work

Dr David Zammit, Department of Civil Law

The Committee co-opted Ms Patricia Camilleri (Communications Officer)

The KSU was represented by Mr David Herrera, President.

It was felt that the Junior College should also be represented and the Principal subsequently nominated Ms Georgina Debattista.

The NCPE was represented by Ms Theres Bugeja who was on some occasions replaced by Dr Janet Mifsud.

Dr David Zammit informed the Committee that he was unable to attend and tendered his resignation on the 22<sup>nd</sup> March, 2007.

The Committee met 8 times during the Academic Year 2006-2007.

On the 8<sup>th</sup> November Anne Robruk and EU representative, visited university to look at Gender distribution within the university. She spoke to a number of members of the GIC.

A meeting was called on the 29<sup>th</sup> November, 2006 for both academics and non-academics to inform those interested in gender issues about the objectives of the committee and to see what was expected out of it. This meeting was entitled “Gender Parity on Campus: Reality or Fiction”. The guest speakers at the meeting were Dr Mary Anne Lauri – Pro-Rector, Dr Janet Mifsud – Chairperson NCPE.

A meeting was held on the 4<sup>th</sup> December with Dr Dione Mifsud, Head of Counselling Services, together with Dr Marcleine Naudi and Ms Patricia Camilleri to discuss health issues. Following

this meeting it was agreed that there existed a need to set up a “Wellness Centre” within the University. The proposal was also discussed with Dr David Cassar (Head of Psychiatry) and Ms Mary Anne Massa (Health Information Unit) and there was a general consensus on the importance of such a centre in principal. Points on this proposal were submitted to Dr Mary Anne Lauri.

Dr Josette Farrugia presented her data on the performance of male and female students at S.E.C. and MATSEC level. These figures are very worrying in that it appears that male students are now doing badly compared to female students. As a consequence a meeting was held with Dr Janet Mifsud and Ms Sina Bugeja at the NCPE headquarters on the 30<sup>th</sup> April. The NCPE representation agreed that the figures were alarming but felt that they were not in a position to delve deeper into the problem posed by these figures. I suggested that we should try to access funds to do so. In fact the Chairperson contacted Prof Farrugia who is the chairperson who receives applications for UNESCO funds with the aim of applying for funds to delve into the problem on the suggestion of Dr Gorg Mallia. A meeting was held with Cynthia Busuttil with the idea of having an article in the Times on this topic. Unfortunately to date this has not appeared.

It was felt that the mentoring scheme needed to be reactivated. For this reason the mentoring subcommittee met and proposed to produce about 7000 bookmarks and about 12 posters to be ready for use at the beginning of the next academic year.

Dr Mallia prepared some visual to promote the mentoring scheme. It was suggested that the mentoring scheme should be also introduced at Junior College with the help of Ms Gina Debattista.

Mr Keith Vella, who on occasion replace Mr Herrera as the KSU representative, pointed out that it might be best to include information on the mentoring scheme and GIC in general in the Fresher’s Guide book and another available KSU publication and website.

A letter was received from Dr Naudi in her capacity as chairperson the Commission on Domestic Violence on the 10<sup>th</sup> April, 2007. Dr Naudi requested the GIC to write to the relevant faculties and institutes requesting that the issue of domestic violence should be included in the curricula of their respective professions. A positive response was obtained from the Dean, Faculty of Medicine and Surgery, the Head of Youth and Community Studies, the Head of the Department of Psychology, the Head of education and the Director of the Institute of Forensic Studies. A reminder was sent to those who did not reply.

On the 10<sup>th</sup> May UMASA published its recommendations for the new education act. Two suggestions made by the chairperson were incorporated in its recommendations viz that the 2 genders should be represented by at least 30% of unelected members of council and that there should be at least one male and one female in all selection and promotion bodies.

Dr Valerie Sollars was appointed Dean of the Faculty of Education. She is the first woman to occupy the post of dean. The GIC congratulated her on her appointment.

Seminars and Other Activities

Collaboration with organizations such as the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality and the National Council of Women, resulted in a number of invitations to seminars and other activities. The chairperson and/or various members participated in several activities, such as:

1. Symposium on “Arab and Euro Mediterranean Women”, held on the 20<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> February, 2007.
2. Seminar “Improving the representation of Women at specialist and managerial levels at the main public hospital in Malta” on the 11<sup>th</sup> May
3. “Obstacles to the participation of women in Decision Making Positions”
4. “Gender Gap in Science and Technology in Malta” organized by the NCPE in collaboration with the ETC and funded by UNESCO. This was held on the 30<sup>th</sup> May at the Radisson Hotel.

An invitation to attend the 3<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary conference organized by the NCPE was held at the Dolmen Qawra. Unfortunately this arrived late and thus was not attended.

Work planned for the coming year:

1. Reactivating mentoring scheme
2. Investigating the gender gap in sec/matsec performance
3. Following up the recommendations for a wellness centre at university
4. Continuation of liaison with other gender entities.