

University of Malta
Gender Issues Committee

Annual Progress Report
Academic Year 2011-2012

Members

During the academic year 2011-2 there were some changes to the composition of the Gender Issues Committee (GIC). Dr Patricia Micallef (Department of French, Junior College) was appointed on the GIC in lieu of Ms Georgina Debattista (Counselling Services, Junior College) who stepped down from the Committee at the beginning of the academic year.

At the beginning of the academic year Ms Anabel Mifsud joined the GIC as secretary to the Committee and Ms Abigail Cremona was welcomed on board as KSU Representative to the GIC. Due to health reasons, Ms Abigail Cremona resigned prematurely and was replaced by Ms Isabelle Camilleri.

Consequently the members on the GIC were:

- Prof M.T. Camilleri Podesta' – Chairperson (Faculty of Medicine & Surgery)
- Dr Andrew Azzopardi – Member (Faculty of Education)
- Dr Josette Farrugia – Member (Faculty of Education)
- Dr Ruth Farrugia – Member (Faculty of Law)
- Dr Georg Mallia – Member (Faculty of Media & Knowledge Science)
- Dr Patricia Micallef – Member (Department of French, Junior College)
- Dr Janet Mifsud – Member (Faculty of Medicine & Surgery)
- Ms Isabelle Camilleri – KSU Representative
- Ms Anabel Mifsud – Secretary

A short profile of the incumbent members has been included in Appendix I of this document.

Meetings

During the academic year 2011-2 the GIC met monthly for Committee meetings which were held on the following dates:

- November 1, 2011
- November 22, 2011
- December 19, 2011
- January 23, 2012
- February 20, 2012
- March 26, 2012

- May 7, 2012
- June 5, 2012

Each Committee meeting starts with the reading of the minutes of the previous GIC meeting, followed by the presentation of the progress report and discussion of the agenda items. Salient items on the agenda were: the revamping of the Mentoring Scheme run by the GIC; the GIC study on dating and sexual violence; the GIC study on the experiences of senior female academics at the University of Malta; the GIC seminar in celebration of International Women's Day; participation at the Seventh European Conference on Gender Equality in Higher Education; set of lectures on gender equality and sexual harassment for academic members of staff and the NCPE Equality Mark.

Apart from the Committee meetings, the Chairperson and the Secretary also met on several occasions for informal meetings to discuss the progress of initiatives and events organised by the GIC.

Events & Initiatives

The following is a succinct description of the main activities and initiatives undertaken by the GIC during the academic year 2011-2.

1. *Revamping of the Mentoring Scheme:*

The Mentoring Scheme is an initiative organised and operated by the GIC with the aim of reaching out to students at crucial decision-making stages in their lives and helping them to have the confidence to continue in their chosen field of study. Depending on the individual needs and stage of study of the mentees, the mentors provide impartial advice on careers and support personal and professional development. At the beginning of the academic year, the list of mentors on the Mentoring Scheme was updated and a call for mentors was placed on NOC which had a good response. Sixteen academics volunteered to join the Scheme. The total number of mentors on the Mentoring Scheme adds up to 35. During the activities organised as part of Freshers' Week, the Chairperson made a short presentation on this subject to raise awareness among students.

Later on the GIC obtained several quotations for the printing of brochures and bookmarks about the Mentoring Scheme. Offset Press Ltd was entrusted with the printing of the leaflets and bookmarks. They will be used to increase awareness about the programme with the students, particularly first years', and will be disseminated during Freshers' Week.

The GIC is also planning to organise a training course for the new mentors at the beginning of the next academic year.

2. GIC Posters:

The GIC obtained quotations for the printing of posters about sexual harassment and mentoring. Palmyra Printing Services undertook the printing of the posters. The posters will be put up in the new buildings on campus to sensitise students and staff to sexual harassment issues and mentoring and to promote the work of the GIC.

3. NCPE Equality Mark:

Members on the GIC followed up the University's application for the NCPE Equality Mark. A meeting was held between Prof Camilleri and Ms Jacqueline Fenech, Director, Human Resources Management & Development regarding this matter.

4. GIC Study on Dating & Sexual Violence:

In 2010 the GIC launched a study on dating and sexual violence among University students. The aims of the study were: (i) to explore attitudes on dating behaviours among University students and (ii) to investigate cases of sexual and dating violence. Data was collected using a questionnaire which was distributed among University students. Participation was voluntary and anonymous. A total of 116 students answered the questionnaire. Analysis of the raw data started at the beginning of December 2012 and was concluded in February 2012.

The findings of the study were presented at the GIC Seminar held at the end of February 2012 and at the Seventh European Conference on Gender Equality in Higher Education which was hosted in Norway at the end of August 2012.

5. GIC Seminar:

On the occasion of International Women's Day, the GIC organised a seminar which was held on Wednesday, 29th February at the KSU Common Room. The seminar included guest speakers Prof Cynthia Pemberton, Fulbright Scholar (Idaho State University) who delivered a presentation on "Educating for Equity and Empowerment" and Ms Bernadette Gerada, PhD Graduand, who presented her study on gender differences in non-verbal skills. The findings of the GIC study on dating and sexual violence were presented for the first time during the Seminar.

The discussion among the audience was chaired by a panel made up of Ms Maud Muscat, National Commission for the Promotion of Equality; Ms Mary Gaerty, National Council of Women; and Ms Renee Laiviera, Malta Confederation of Women's Organisations.

The turnout for the seminar was good and present in the audience were the British High Commissioner for Malta, Ms Louise Stanton and Mr Elijah Waterman, Attaché to the Embassy of the United States of America.

6. *GIC Study on the Experiences of Senior Female Academics:*

In January 2012, the GIC launched a study on the career experience of female academics serving at the University of Malta from the grade of senior lecturer upwards. The aim of the study is gather personal experience narratives by female academics about their academic career progression. The findings will be presented as individual narratives in a booklet published by the GIC and will be targeted to encourage and inspire junior female academic members through the experiences of these role models.

An invitation letter and a study information sheet were sent to all eligible prospective participants. Prospective participants were invited to answer a set of open-ended questions. A total of 19 participants contributed to the study. The findings will be published during the academic year 2012-3.

7. *Seventh European Conference on Gender Equality in Higher Education:*

The GIC presented the findings of the study on dating and sexual violence at a Poster Presentation at the Seventh European Conference on Gender Equality in Higher Education which was held in Bergen, Norway between the 29th – 31st August 2012.

8. *Set of Lectures on Gender Equality and Sexual Harassment to Academic Members of Staff*

In May 2012, the GIC proposed to Prof Alfred Vella to organise a repeat of the set of lectures on Gender Equality and Sexual Harassment to academic members of staff. Prof Vella informed the Committee that the University will be organising a programme of lectures for academic staff at the beginning of the next academic year and that the GIC lectures could be included in this programme.

Participation at Seminars / Conferences

The following is a list of seminars / conferences attended by members on the GIC:

- European Gender Summit – 8th – 9th November 2011
- Unlocking the Female Potential (Conference organised by NCPE) – 16th January 2012
- Equality in the Workplace: Zero Tolerance on Gender-Based Discrimination and Harassment in Europe (Public Policy Symposium in Brussels) – 6th March 2012
- NCPE Annual Conference – 18th May 2012
- Gender Mainstreaming in Practice (NCPE) – 13th June 2012
- Seventh European Conference on Gender Equality in Higher Education – 29th – 31st August 2012

Appendix I

Profiles:

Prof. Camilleri Podesta' is the Chairperson of the Gender Issues Committee. She has been working in the Department of Anatomy for the past 40 years, starting as a research assistant and currently occupying the post of professor. She has also held the post of head of department for several years. She has conducted numerous studies both locally and abroad, which have contributed to the knowledge on diverticular disease of the colon, bile acid secretion, as well the effects of plant products on cancer cell lines. Her work includes collaboration with other faculties within the University of Malta and the University of Pisa. She has also supervised several M.Phil. and Ph.D. students.

She was Chairperson of the National Commission of Mental Health. She is also a member on various other committees, including the ACCESS Committee, the University Research Ethics Committee and the Council of Health and is chairperson of the Faculty Admissions Committee. She also carries out forensic autopsies as requested by the courts.

Dr Andrew Azzopardi is Senior Lecturer at the University of Malta. His lecturing & research focus on inclusive education, sociology, critical pedagogy, disability politics, youth & community studies. He has published extensively in the field of disability studies, youth studies and inclusive education. He is a Member of the Editorial Panel of the highly acclaimed International Journal of Inclusive Education and has edited a special edition called Creating Inclusive Communities. He has contributed extensively in a number of other applauded journals. He has published the following texts amongst other, Career Guidance for Persons with Disability (2008) (JP Advertising), Reading Stories of Inclusion – Engaging with different perspectives towards an agenda for inclusion (2009) and Understanding disability politics in Malta (2009) (VDM Verlag Dr. Müller). He also co-edited Inclusive Communities: A Reader (Sense Publishers), and is sole editor of Roots to Inclusive Education – A question of wellbeing and Making sense of inclusive education – where everyone belongs.

Ms Patricia Camilleri (née Boland) was born and brought up in the UK. She left England in 1973 and spent a year working in Sicily. Following some months of study in Malta, she spent a year working in Rome, returning to live on the island in 1976. In 1988 she joined the University of Malta and read for a B.A. degree in Italian, Archaeology & Communication Studies. After her final exams in 1991, she started working at the University of Malta where she was entrusted with the setting up the Communications Office and went on to become Director of the Communications & Alumni Relations Office. Ms Camilleri has been a member of the Gender Issues Committee for many years and has participated in many seminars and meetings concerning gender both in Malta and abroad. In 2001 she gained her Master of Arts degree

with a thesis entitled: L'analisi strutturale: verso una semiologia museale. Her special research interests are museum theory and the catacombs of Malta.

Dr Josette Farrugia holds a B.Ed. from the University of Malta and a Ph.D. from the University of York. She has taught Chemistry at secondary and post-secondary level for a number of years. She has also worked as Principal Subject Area Officer for Sciences with the Matriculation and Secondary Education Certificate Examinations Board (MATSEC) and is currently a Senior Lecturer in Science Education with the Department of Mathematics, Science and Technical Education of the Faculty of Education. Her research interests include various aspects of science education and educational assessment.

Dr Ruth Farrugia is an advocate and senior lecturer in the Faculty of Laws at the University of Malta. She studied at the University of Malta, University of Strasbourg, Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies and Metropolitan Ecclesiastical Tribunal. She is a former consultant to the deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Social Policy, the Social Affairs Committee in Parliament and UNHCR. She was commissioned to draft the Children Act, Commissioner for Children Act and Gender Equality Act for Malta and has worked as an expert for the Council of Europe on the Child Access to Justice programme, for the EU as an expert on the PRMIII group and in a number of other international drafting and academic commissions, including the EJJO academic council, focusing on Child Rights, Family Law and Human Rights. She has published widely in these areas and is currently working for the Council of Europe within the Violence against Children programme.

Dr Gorg Mallia is a communications academic, author and cartoonist working on the island of Malta. He is a senior lecturer at the Faculty of Media and Knowledge Sciences, University of Malta. He has a B.A. (Hons) in English Literature and an M.A. in Communications, both from the University of Malta, and a Ph.D. in Instructional Technology, from the University of Sheffield, UK. He specialises in Print and Presentation Media, Personal Communications, Personal Branding, and Instructional Design and Technology (particularly Transfer of Learning). He is also researching graphic narrative and storytelling, as well as social network usage in instruction.

Dr Mallia has published books of fiction for children, which he has also illustrated, as well as books of experimental short stories. He has published extensively (in Maltese and English) both in his academic fields of interest and creatively, children's and adult fiction. For the past nine years, he has been the chairman of the National Book Council.

Dr Patricia Micallef is a lecturer of French at the University of Malta, Junior College. Prior to this position, she has taught this language at various levels in different institutions. Her main area of study is French literature during the 17th and the 18th century, with particular interest in literature related to the period of the Order of Saint John in Malta.

Dr Janet Mifsud B.Pharm. (Hons), Ph.D. (QUB) is a member of the Department of Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics, University of Malta. She was appointed the Commissioner, National Commission for the Promotion of Equality for Men and Women between 2004-2010 and has represented Malta at several gender EU, UN and EuroMed policy meetings. She has been active in the gender and science field for several years. She has been invited by EU DG Research to attend Women in Science Fora held in Brussels, and she has also been appointed several times expert evaluator for proposals submitted under the Quality of Life and Marie Curie Actions FP5, FP6 key actions and now also FP7 calls. Locally, she has chaired the Gender Issues Committee for the University of Malta and was previously a member of the Public Service Commission.

Dr Mifsud has published extensively in the area of the therapeutic management of neurological disorders especially epilepsy. She was Secretary for the European Epilepsy Academy and is presently Vice-President for the International Bureau for Epilepsy and a member of the Epilepsy Advocacy Europe. ,.