

Equity and Diversity

During 2004 an Equity Plan was developed for the University covering equity and diversity issues pertinent to staff and students. Following the Human Rights Act, the University recognises that there should be equality of opportunity in education and employment for all, irrespective of their backgrounds. Thus age, gender, ethnicity or any type of disability should provide no disadvantage or barrier to the appointment and professional development of staff or to successful study for students.

Formal responsibility for implementing the Equity Plan rests with the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Arts (Equity and Diversity portfolio), aided by a new Equity and Diversity Advisory Committee. It is recognised, however, that equity and diversity issues underpin the core business of the University and hence should be of concern to every member of the University community. As such, it is recognised that an awareness of these issues and a commitment to addressing them needs to become an integral part of the University culture.

The content of the Equity Plan reflects the fact that the University places great value on both staff and students and hence espouses equity and encourages diversity in all matters. Of significance here, the University is committed to the principles embodied in the Treaty of Waitangi and to the particular encouragement and development of educational and employment opportunities for the peoples of the Pacific. Moreover, the University welcomes the fact that an increasing number and range of international students are choosing to study at Canterbury and that appropriate provision should be made for the cultural diversity that this brings.

In devising the Equity Plan, various operating assumptions were made:

- Equity is a principle that informs the core business of the University
- Diversity is something that should be encouraged
- The implementation of the plan should be data-driven. That is, data should be collected and analysed with respect to Employment Opportunities (EO) and Equal Educational Opportunities (EEO) across all categories of staff and students and used to ensure equity and promote diversity
- The plan should be action-based with clear goals and key performance indicators
- Members of the Senior Management Team and, through them, Heads of Schools and Departments and Service Unit Heads will play key roles in implementing the plan
- Performance against the plan will be monitored by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor with responsibility for Equity and Diversity, aided by the Equity and Diversity Advisory Committee

Initiatives contained within the Equity Plan cover matters related to staff, students and University processes. Within these, particular emphasis has been placed on the following objectives:

Staff:

1. Increased appointment/recruitment, development and retention of Māori academic and general staff at all levels
2. Increased appointment/recruitment, development and retention of Pacific academic and general staff at all levels
3. Increased appointment/recruitment, development and retention of academic women staff at all levels
4. Recruitment and resourcing of staff with disabilities
5. Improved monitoring of equality of opportunity for research and leave
6. Ensure Human Resource policy meets the needs and requirements of staff with disabilities

Students:

1. Increased recruitment, participation, retention and achievement of Māori students
2. Increased recruitment, participation, retention and achievement by Pacific students
3. Increased recruitment, participation, retention and achievement of students from low-decile schools
4. Increased recruitment, participation, retention and achievement of female students in those Colleges with relatively low numbers of female students
5. Increased support for students with disabilities

Processes:

1. Improved collection of data relevant to Equity and Diversity
2. Monitoring of all relevant university documents to ensure that they conform to equity issues
3. Monitoring of assessment of workloads for both staff and students
4. Monitoring of University's practices to ensure conformity to the Human Rights Act

The Equity and Diversity Advisory Committee met twice towards the end of 2004. Formal implementation of the Equity Plan will commence in 2005 with progress being reported against specific strategic targets contained in the University's Profile (2005-2007). As a supplement to this a designated area for displaying equity data has been set up on the University's Intranet website. This will be added to and updated as data become available.

The University's Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) policy was redrafted during the year and was lodged in the University's Policy Library following endorsement by the Senior Management Team.