

Disability Equality Scheme (DES) Steering Group

Summary of the thirteenth meeting held on 31 January 2011

- Dr. Stephen Goss (acting Pro-Vice Chancellor for Personnel and Equality) has succeeded Dr. Sally Mapstone as Chair of the GES Steering Group, Dr. Mapstone having been appointed Pro-Vice Chancellor (Education). The group expressed its thanks to Dr. Mapstone for her support for equality initiatives.
- An update was provided on accessibility issues in the Old Indian Institute Building.
- An update was provided on the progress of the Education Committee's review of support for students with Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD). The working group planned to formulate recommendations by the end of this academic year.
- The University had expressed concerns about the lack of consistency of treatment for disabled students by the different research councils. Mr Quinn (Head of the Disability Advisory Service - DAS) was liaising with other Russell Group universities to explore the possibility of a coordinated approach on this issue.
- Following the move of the DAS to Student Services, the DAS was no longer able to maintain the same level of support to disabled staff as in the past (the DAS was now primarily a student-facing service). The Disabled Staff Working Group had been set up to review provision in this area and expected to make a report with recommendations to the Personnel Committee during Trinity term. In the meantime, Personnel Services had oversight of all personnel cases, and Mr Quinn would be consulted for advice on disability issues as appropriate.
- Mr Quinn gave an oral update on the progress on the 2009 DES Action Plan (DES 11-03) including:
 - training on students with Asperger Syndrome, which had included a session in Michaelmas Term led by Dr Simon Wallace, a former member of Professor Bailey's team;
 - training on SpLD and mental health difficulties facilitated by DAS. Guidance notes for departmental and college disability contacts had been revised;
 - tailored training for departments on specific disabilities;
 - concern that the Buildings and Estates Sub-committee was being used in lieu of Access Consultants for buildings on the ROQ site;
 - improvements to ensure that the Graduate Studies team pro actively flagged potential accommodation issues for disabled students; and
 - recruitment monitoring data.
- Students with disabilities now featured in the Wall of 100 faces, and five films giving disabled students' perspectives of Oxford had been produced.
- Director of Welfare, Counselling and Disability Services (Ms Bell) gave an overview of the survey of students with disabilities.
- Mr Perry (OUSU VP for Welfare) reported that the Students with Disabilities Campaign Officer was Tanja Roembke. The OUSU Disability Guide required updating and, with advice from the Careers Service and the DAS, they were seeking funding to produce a guide for next academic year.
- Examples of meaningful involvement in which the University had participated in alongside other local disability groups were noted, including the Equality Act information fair held at Oxford Town Hall on 3 December 2010, which coincided with

the UN International Day for Disabled People; and work with OUSU and Oxfordshire Unlimited on the campaign “lock it don’t block it” to raise general awareness of bicycles blocking access to public areas throughout the city.

- In relation to the proposed development of the Centre for Sport at Iffley Road, the Director of Sport (Jon Roycroft) reported that a number of employees and residents with disabilities had been identified to provide feedback on the designs.
- The DES annual report will be published in May 2011. The DES steering group would be invited to comment on the draft at its next meeting on Monday 16 May.