

University of Malta
Gender Issues Committee
Annual Progress Report
Academic Year 2013-2014

Members

During the academic year 2013-14 there were little changes to the composition of the Gender Issues Committee (GIC). Mr Luke Azzopardi was nominated as KSU Representative on the GIC in lieu of Ms Zoe Farrugia, however Mr Azzopardi did not attend any GIC meetings. Ms Tara Giacchino was nominated by the Malta Medical Students Association (MMSA) as another student representative to the committee. She was actively involved in the Committee's work through the year.

The members on the GIC were:

- Prof. M.T. Camilleri Podestà – Chairperson (Faculty of Medicine & Surgery)
- Dr Andrew Azzopardi – Member (Faculty of Education)
- Dr Ruben Paul Borg – Member (Faculty for the Build Environment)
- Ms Patricia Camilleri – Member (Communications and Alumni Relations Office)
- Dr Josette Farrugia – Member (Faculty of Education)
- Dr Ruth Farrugia – Member (Faculty of Law)
- Dr Gorg Mallia – Member (Faculty of Media & Knowledge Science)
- Dr Patricia Micallef – Member (Department of French, Junior College)
- Prof Janet Mifsud – Member (Faculty of Medicine & Surgery)
- Prof Emmanuel Sinagra – Member (Faculty of Science)
- Ms Anabel Mifsud – Secretary

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

Meetings

During the academic year 2013-14 the GIC met approximately every month for Committee meetings that were held on the following dates:

- September 25, 2013
- October 28, 2013
- December 5, 2013
- January 23, 2014
- February 27, 2014
- April 7, 2014
- May 9, 2014
- June 26, 2014

Committee meetings start with the reading of the minutes of the previous GIC meeting, followed by a discussion of the items on the meeting's agenda. Salient items on the agenda were:

1. The composition and chairpersonship of the GIC;
2. Increasing the involvement/interest of students in gender related issues;
3. The two study-units offered as part of the Degree Plus programme;
4. The GIC seminar in celebration of International Women's Day 2014;
5. The need to set up a Wellbeing Clinic on campus for students and staff
6. The GIC study on work-life balance and career advancement among support staff;
7. Collaboration with the Department of Gender Studies.

Apart from the monthly Committee meetings, the Chairperson and the Secretary met for several informal meetings so as to discuss the progress of the 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 2013-14.

1. *The composition and chairpersonship of the GIC*

The previous year it had been decided to put forward recommendations to Rector for another two male members of staff to join the Committee. As a result of this, at the beginning of the academic year 2013-4 two male members were welcomed to the committee: Prof Emmanuel Sinagra and Dr Ruben P Borg.

The chairpersonship of the GIC were discussed on several occasions. Prof. Marie Therese Camilleri Podestà expressed her wish to step down from the role of Chairperson to give others the opportunity. It was agreed that she will stay on as Chairperson until December 2014.

2. *Increasing the Involvement of Students with the GIC*

The issue of whether students perceive the GIC as relevant was discussed during a number of meetings. After the issue had been raised with the President of KSU during the last academic year, a meeting was scheduled for the 29th November 2013 at the KSU Common Room where students were invited to give feedback and listen to what they have to say about the subject of gender issues and the role of the GIC. Furthermore, the GIC held meetings with Ms Romina Tolu, a representative from the student organisation "We Are"

which is an organisation for LGBTQQI students and youths. The committee wishes to collaborate with this organisation and offer support to LGBTQQI students.

3. *The two study-units offered as part of the Degree Plus programme*

As an offshoot of the GIC's collaboration with Dr Charmaine Gauci and Dr Anna Vella (Substance Misuse Outpatients Unit) on the Wellbeing Clinic, the GIC was instrumental in setting up two study-units as part of the Degree Plus programme: one on healthy living (knowledge-based; covering healthy eating, smoking cessation and substance abuse), and another one on sports and adventure (practical-based). These study-units were offered at the start of academic year 2013-14.

4. *GIC Seminar in celebration of International Women's Day 2014*

The GIC Seminar in celebration of International Women's Day 2014 was held on 27th March 2014 at the Conference Room at the Student House. The presenters at the seminar were Dr Marceline Naudi and Ms Anna Borg. The opening address was delivered by Prof. Camilleri Podestà. It was suggested that next year the seminar could be held earlier in March, closer to International Women's Day.

5. *The Need to Set Up a Wellbeing Clinic on Campus*

The need to set up a Wellbeing Clinic on campus was discussed on multiple occasions. The GIC's vision for a Wellbeing Centre is to establish a safe place where students and staff could receive information and professional advice about keeping physically healthy and enhancing mental wellbeing. It is hoped that the Wellbeing Clinic would serve as a place where students could be advised and referred to specialists in specific fields. This is not intended to cope with any medical emergencies, which should directly be referred to Mater Dei Hospital.

During a meeting held with students on the 29th of November 2013, KSU announced that they have been able to procure a room for this purpose. The room will also have the function of a breastfeeding area and accordingly will be equipped with a microwave, fridge, kettle and a nappy changer/table. There is also the idea to add promotional material in the room for those interested to pick up. The wall paint and windows are to be fixed internally by Estates and Works.

A meeting was also held with Dr Charmaine Gauci – Director of the Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Unit – to seek their collaboration on this endeavour for the engagement

of a sexual health Nurse in the clinic. Additionally, there is the idea to offer the services of a sexual health psychologist in the future.

The room is to be available all times between 08:00 and 17:00 and once it is completed it will be advertised by KSU and News On Campus.

6. *GIC Study on Work-life Balance and Career Development among Support Staff*

During the academic year 2013-4, the GIC held meetings with Ms Jacqueline Fenech – Director, Human Resources Management and Development to get her feedback on the questionnaire regarding the study on work-life balance and career advancement opportunities among administrative and technical staff. The questionnaire continued to be developed by the committee for launch during the next academic year.

7. *Collaboration with the Department of Gender Studies*

The Department of Gender Studies was recently set up within the Faculty for Social Wellbeing. This prompted a discussion about a possible change in the role of the Gender Issues Committee. Following a meeting with Dr Marceline Naudi, Head of the Department of Gender Studies, it was concluded that the roles of both the GIC and the Department are distinct and complimentary, with the GIC retaining an internal focus on University of Malta students and staff. The GIC invited the Department to send a representative to all GIC meetings as an observer. It was further noted that the two entities can collaborate on research and promote the findings of the other.

Participation at Meetings & Seminars / Conferences

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

- Meeting with students – 29th November 2013
- Meeting with Ms Jacqueline Fenech – November 2013
- Meeting with NCPE Commissioner Ms Renee Laiviera – October 2013
- Meeting with We Are representative Ms Romina Tolu - 9th May 2014
- Meeting with Dr Marceline Naudi, Head of the Department of Gender Studies - 9th May 2014
- Meeting with Dr Charmaine Gauci, Director of the Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Unit – 10th July 2014

Appendix

Profiles:

Prof. Marie Therese Camilleri Podestà 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 and the University Research Ethics Committee, and is chairperson of the Faculty Admissions Committee. She also carries out forensic autopsies as requested by the courts.

Dr Andrew Azzopardi is a 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 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. Azzopardi has published the following texts; Career guidance for persons with disability (2008) (JP Advertising), Reading stories of inclusion – Engaging with different perspectives towards an agenda for inclusion (2009), Understanding disability politics in Malta (2009) (VDM Verlag Dr. Müller), Young people in Gozo – A study 2 (2011) (Artwork Publications) and Roots to Inclusive Education – A Question of Wellbeing (2012) (LAP Lambert Academic Publishing, Germany). He is the Co-Editor of Inclusive communities: A critical reader (2012) (Sense Publishers). Azzopardi has also edited Youth: Responding to lives - An international reader (2013) (Sense Publishers).

Dr Ruben P Borg Dr. Ruben Paul Borg is Senior Lecturer at the Faculty for the Built Environment, University of Malta. He studied Architecture and Civil Engineering at the University of Malta and read for a Specialisation in Structural Engineering and Reinforced Concrete Structures at the Politecnico di Milano, Italy and a Ph.D. in Materials Engineering and Sustainable Concrete at the University of Sheffield, UK. He has also been collaborating on

research and lecturing as a visiting academic at the Technical University of Milan (Politecnico di Milano) Italy since 2004. Dr. Borg has participated in and coordinated a number of European funded and International Research Projects on materials engineering, sustainable construction, structural vulnerability and disaster resilience.

He was appointed chairman of the European Council of Civil Engineers for Knowledge and Technology; board member of the International Initiative for a Sustainable Built Environment; member of the European CEN TC350: Sustainable Construction. He was appointed as Malta's representative of the Institution of Civil Engineers, UK in 2013. He is also a member of the Scientific Committee for the Conservation of the Megalithic Temples of Malta, member of the Executive Board of the Building Industry Consultative Council (BICC) Malta and Coordinator for Research and Innovation in Construction, and member of the Structural Eurocodes Technical Committee, MCCA Malta. He is co-founder and President of Sustainable Built Environment (SBE) Malta, which aims at promoting sustainable development. Dr Borg participates in international research fora on materials engineering, sustainable construction and structural vulnerability and resilience of cultural heritage, and has published widely in these fields.

Ms Patricia Camilleri was born and brought up in the UK and lived in Italy for two years before coming to live in Malta. In 1991 she graduated B.A. in Italian, Communications Studies & Archaeology and immediately joined the University of Malta with the task of setting up the new Communications Office. The Office has grown over the last twenty years to include a team of eight - each with his/her area of expertise in the field of Communications. Alumni Relations was added to Patricia's remit as Director and in the last years the University's Alumni Online Community database has been set up in collaboration with other strategic areas of the University. Patricia has hosted several different radio programmes on campusFM and currently presents 'University Matters' in which she interviews academics about their research as well as Administration staff and students concerning events held on campus.

In 2001, Patricia graduated M.A. with a dissertation on museum theory.

Dr Josette Farrugia holds a B.Ed (Hons) 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 of the University of Malta (MATSEC) and is currently a Senior Lecturer in Science Education with the Department of Mathematics, Science and Technical Education of the Faculty of Education at the University of Malta. Her research interests are related to various aspects of science education and educational assessment and include problem solving; practical work and investigations; school-based assessment; students' understanding of scientific ideas and concepts especially those related to chemistry; and inquiry-based learning. She has participated in conferences and published work related to 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 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 United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR). She has been chairperson of the Children Care Orders Board and drafted the Children Act, Commissioner for Children Act and Gender Equality Act.

Dr Farrugia is currently expert to the Council of Europe Human Rights and Legal Affairs Division, legal advisor to the Malta Commissioner for Children, country expert to the Comparative European Family Law Commission and the Common Core in Family Law Group and has recently been appointed to the PRMIII Experts Group of the European Commission. She has published widely in the field of family law, child law, asylum and human rights.

Dr Gorg Mallia 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 has recently also been researching the use of Social Networking in education (The Social Classroom: Integrating Social Network Use in Education, that he edited, was published by IGI Global, of Hershey, PA, USA, in 2014). He is also researching and lecturing in graphic narrative and storytelling. Dr Mallia is also a children's book writer, illustrator and cartoonist. He was the chairman of the National Book Council between 2005 and 2013.

Dr Patricia Micallef is a Senior lecturer of French at the University of Malta, Junior College. She also lectures within the Department of Arts and Languages in Education, Faculty of Education, University of Malta.

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 Micallef has published several papers on the Maltese islands as seen by the 17th and 18th century traveller and has also participated in international conferences on the subject.

Prof 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 and 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 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.

Dr Marceline Naudi Marceline Naudi received her first degree from University of Malta (1980), her Master's Degree in Women's Studies from University of Bradford (U.K.) (1990) and her Doctorate (in Social Work) from Manchester University (U.K.) (2004).

A social worker by profession, her years of practice (in England, Ireland and Malta) has included work with children and young people in care and their families, ex-offenders, homeless people, persons with mental health support needs and survivors of domestic violence. She is currently Head of the Department of Gender Studies. Dr Naudi also contributes to teaching within several other University departments and Faculties on gender issues, violence against women and other anti-oppressive issues (sexual orientation, race, disabilities) at both Bachelor and Master level.

She is also active in the issues of women's rights, and domestic violence, as well as wider equal opportunity issues, and as such has convened, chaired and presented at many conferences, seminars and meetings, both locally and abroad. She represented Malta at the Council of Europe ad Hoc Committee on Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (CAHVIO) which drafted the Istanbul Convention, and has recently been elected onto its monitoring body, the GREVIO. In a voluntary capacity she has supported and acted as consultant to various agencies in the field of violence against women, gender, LGBTIQ, racism and ethnicity. She also sits on the Women Against Violence Europe (WAVE) Network Board, and the European Women's Lobby (EWL) Observatory on Violence against Women Strategy Group.

Prof Emmanuel Sinagra graduated from the University of Kent at Canterbury in 1986 with a B.Sc. (Hons) degree in Chemistry with Environmental Science. In the same year he was awarded a Science and Engineering Research Council grant to enable him to do a M.Sc. course in Surfaces and Colloids. After obtaining his M.Sc. in 1987, he was awarded a studentship by Exxon Chemicals to assist him in his studies for a Ph.D. which he obtained in December 1992. During 1992, Prof. Sinagra was employed with the University of Bristol as a Research Associate on a project supported by British Nuclear Fuels.

In 1993, Prof. Sinagra joined the Department of Chemistry at the University of Malta as lecturer in 1993, became senior lecturer in 1998 and recently became associate professor in 2011. His teaching interests have been in the areas of physical chemistry, polymer chemistry as well as environmental chemistry. Prof. Sinagra has tutored a number of students doing research at undergraduate and postgraduate level. He has been head of the Department of Chemistry since 2008 and deputy dean of the Faculty of Science since 2009. Prof. Sinagra is also Chairman of the Faculty of Science M.Sc. Committee as well as the Faculty's Doctoral Committee.