

Equal Opportunities Committee – Women and Work

Submission from College Development Network

Foreword

Colleges have a dual role in relation to women and work as they are both employers and providers of education and training for future employees.

College Development Network (CDN) welcome the opportunity to contribute to this important consultation. Below we have set out some issues in terms of progress as employers, and potential future issues and trends in terms of opportunities for and patterns of study among students currently training in colleges, which may also be helpful for the committee to consider in terms of the ongoing equality agenda.

Workforce issues and meeting equalities duties

As employers, colleges show an overall gender balance. In 2010/11 there were 19,546¹ staff employed of which 58% are female. The slightly higher ratio of women to men is evident in both teaching and support roles. In senior management, women make up just under half of college principals, with slightly fewer women in depute/assistants principal roles, but in other senior management roles the gender balance was even.

Many colleges have implemented policies to ensure their employees have the right work-life balance. These cover areas such as flexible hours, job sharing and working from home. In addition, there are flexible leave arrangements in relation to parental and carers leave. Colleges have also been involved in promoting healthy working lives, providing employee advisory services, managing stress workshops, childcare referral services and keeping in touch programmes for women on maternity leave.

Colleges are in the process of preparing to meet the Scottish specific equality duties and by 30th April 2013 will publish their gender pay gap information, their statements on equal pay and information on the composition of their employees, disaggregated by protected characteristic, as well as information on the recruitment, development and retention of staff. This will provide a clearer picture of the role of women in the workforce of Scotland's colleges.

CDN has been working closely with Close the Gap, the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) and Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) to support staff in colleges to advance equality of opportunity and meet the requirements of the equality duties. CDN has also contributed to the published guidance by Close the Gap on information on gender and employment, equal pay and occupational segregation. More information and detail on these is available on request.

Future workforce issues and trends

Scotland's future lies in making the most of the talent across the current and future workforce. Ongoing discrimination and segregation in training, employment and caring roles undervalue women and men and undermine Scotland's potential.

¹ Staffing Statistics for Further Education Colleges in Scotland: 2010-11, Scottish Funding Council, 2012

In 2010/11 there were over 300,000 students studying in colleges across Scotland of which 54% were female. The vast majority of learners study part-time – more than two thirds of the total. Statistics show students age 25 and over are more likely to be studying on a part-time basis and are also more likely to be female. The numbers of learners in college has been falling overall – around 70,000 fewer between 2008/9 and 2010/11², with the largest proportion of this among female learners. The trend reflects both the move to prioritising full-time provision for younger learners, as well as some reported falling demand for evening and weekend courses, given individuals having less disposable income in the recent economic downturn.

College courses range from those that serve for individuals with low or no skills – providing a lifeline into work – to degree level qualifications. Over 30% of college students come from the most deprived areas of Scotland. In colleges serving the most deprived areas, this can rise to over 70%. Women from SIMD Q5 totalled over 50,000 – just over 50% of the total learners from that group in 2010/11³. The availability of these courses is an essential route of access for those from such communities.

Comparable figures from 2011/12 will not be published by the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) until March 2013.

Funding

The teaching grant and fee waiver is allocated to colleges by the SFC to pay for core teaching and learning provision and constitutes the most important part of the budget for the sector. This is provided on an academic year (AY), rather than financial year (FY) basis. Between AY 2010/11 and AY 2012/13 the teaching grant has fallen by £72.9m, equivalent to 15.8%⁴.

While colleges continue to strive for efficiency, funding presents an ongoing challenge for the sector in maintaining both quantity and quality of provision. As stated above, the prioritisation of full-time provision for young people, will potentially see an ongoing impact in terms of reduced number and breadth of part-time courses.

Childcare

One of the biggest factors for many women in deciding whether to return to work or commence studies is the provision of good quality and affordable childcare. Very few colleges now have nurseries on or near their premises and in many cases, suitable childcare is not available near a place of work or study, and does not always match the hours of work. Facilities which do exist are often over-subscribed and expensive. Students relying on childcare funds or employees relying on child tax credits may still have difficulties meeting costs.

Occupational segregation

A recent statistical report⁵ by the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) documented the number of learners in 2010/11 by subject area and gender. As can be seen below, there is still an ongoing challenge in terms of likely occupational segregation in subjects being studied:

Subject Area	Female %	Male %
Art, Design	74.1	25.9
Business, Management and Administration	61.1	38.9
Care	71.3	28.7
Computing and ICT	56.6	43.4
Construction	8.0	92.0
Education and Training	64.3	35.7

² College Performance Indicators 2010-11, Scottish Funding Council, March 2012

³ Equality in colleges in Scotland: statistical report 2012, Equality Challenge Unit, September 2012

⁴ Scottish Funding Council – Outcome Agreements 2012/13

⁵ Equality in colleges in Scotland: statistical report 2012, Equality Challenge Unit, September 2012

Subject Area	Female %	Male %
Engineering	15.8	84.2
Hairdressing, Beauty, Complementary Therapies	96.3	*
Hospitality, Tourism	61.7	38.3
Land-based Industries	33.3	66.7
Languages, ESOL	65.0	35.0
Media	55.3	44.7
Nautical Studies	6.3	93.7
Performing Arts	55.5	44.5
Science	59.9	40.1
Social Subjects	68.7	31.3
Sport, Leisure	38.8	61.2
Special Programmes	51.6	48.4

As colleges have close links with industry, communities and local agencies, it puts them at the centre of economic development and regeneration in Scotland. They therefore play a critical and valuable role in delivering the skills, competencies and learning that fuels the economy. Colleges are working to create opportunities to tackle gender imbalance and occupational segregation in certain industries; with many working closely with employers and industry bodies to increase and support the participation of, for example, women in the science, energy, engineering and land-based sectors.

Some colleges already work closely with the Scottish Resource Centre for Women in Science, Engineering and Technology (SET)⁶ to support the aim of increasing the participation, at all levels, of women in SET. The Barony campus at SRUC has worked with the Scottish Resource Centre and the Forestry Commission to support female recruitment, retention and success in the land-based sector. In addition, they have signed the UKRC CEO Charter to show their commitment to addressing gender imbalance and to ensure that everyone gets support and encouragement to work.

In partnership with CITB-Construction Skills (the industrial training board and sector skills council for the construction industry) and the Scottish Resource Centre developed equality and diversity training workshops for construction craft apprentices attending four different colleges and students studying the built environment at HNC level and above. These training workshops were delivered in course time with the support of lecturers, emphasising that the issues are an important part of professional practice for people entering the construction industry.

Carnegie College, as part of a project on embedding equality and diversity in the curriculum in partnership with the CDN and the Higher Education Academy (HEA), has been looking at 'shifting the balance' in relation to gender imbalance in engineering. The college had a particular emphasis on female engineering students and set up a private Facebook page to create a safe place for students to discuss issues related to their course. They used female guest speakers from industry to inspire and motivate students and collaborated with careers and business development staff in the college to provide sessions on curriculum vitae and interview techniques. In addition, they devised marketing literature and marketing career opportunities to prospective recruits as a means of increasing the ratio of female to males undertaking engineering and promoted engineering, particularly the new renewables branch of engineering as a career for school leavers.

An aspect report in September 2012 by Education Scotland⁷ entitled *Land-based industries in Scotland's colleges* highlighted the further work that needs to be undertaken in some subject areas to challenge stereotypes and promote greater gender balance as well as advancing equality, diversity and inclusiveness more widely.

⁶ <http://www.napier.ac.uk/research/centresandprojects/src/Pages/src.aspx>

⁷ http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/LBISCSep%202012_tcm4-731973.pdf

Conclusion

We hope this provides a useful overview for the committee and the kind of activity being undertaken in the sector to support change.

CDN would be pleased to provide more information, if that would be helpful for the committee's consideration. We hope the committee will keep this issue under review for future years.

About Us

College Development Network supports the sector to deliver best practice, share innovations and develop colleges and their staff. We do this by:

- Delivering bespoke consultancy and tailored professional learning experiences
- Providing advice, guidance and support on curriculum, learning, teaching and assessment
- Delivering CPD activities for college staff
- Sharing learning tools and resources
- Facilitating subject-based networks and communities of practice for college staff
- Recognising sector achievements through annual awards.