

The University of Dublin

Trinity College

Minutes of Student Services Committee Meeting, 9<sup>th</sup> March 2007

- Present* Dean of Students (Mr B Misstear, Chair), Senior Tutor (Dr C Laudet), Ms D Flynn (Secretary), Dr D Abrahamson, Dr M Coffey, Ms D Keogh, Ms Ruth Pe Palileo.
- Apologies* College Secretary (Mr M Gleeson), Treasurer's representative (Ms Janet Byrne), Prof PP Walsh, Senior Lecturer (Prof C Kearney), Mr T McAuley, Dr E MacCarthaigh.
- In attendance* Disability Services Co-ordinator (Mr D Treanor) (items **SS/06-07/49** and **SS/06-07/53**).

SECTION A

- SS/06-07/46** **Minutes** The minutes of the meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2007 were approved and signed.
- SS/06-07/47** **Matters Arising from the Minutes** Matters arising from the Minutes were discussed and are recorded below (see minutes **SS/06-07/48**, **SS/06-07/49**, **SS/06-07/50**, **SS/06-07/51**).
- SS/06-07/48** **Working Party on Mental Health** A meeting of the Working Party was being convened to which the Registrar, the College Secretary, the Junior Dean, a representative of the Chaplains, and the Warden of Trinity Hall would be invited. Following this meeting the updated draft policy would be more widely circulated.
- SS/06-07/49** **Disability Act 2005: Responses from Student Services** Arising from the survey, the Disability Services Co-ordinator reported that priority was being given to access to buildings, information and services, with the primary focus on buildings and information. The Senior Lecturer's Area, Student Counselling Service, Careers Advisory Service and Accommodation Office are strategically important services receiving top priority. An action plan is to be devised by the Luce Hall Planning Group, in which the Student Counselling Service and the Careers Advisory Service are among the priorities identified for Luce Hall accommodation. In relation to the Senior Lecturer's Area and Accommodation Office, a one-stop information shop in Front Square is under discussion. The Communications Advisory Group is developing a College-wide policy for accessible information.
- The Senior Lecturer's Area has taken responsibility for the new requirement for all higher education institutions to implement data collection on the cost factor of non-traditional students; supplying the data is optional for the relevant students. On the basis of the collected data a funding premium of 1.33 will be applied.
- SS/06-07/50** **Student Services Committee Terms of Reference** Feedback from Board had requested some stylistic changes in the Terms of Reference, to be circulated for the next meeting of the Committee.

- SS/06-07/51** **Estimates for 2006-2007** The Dean had written a memo to the Treasurer's representative, for inclusion with the Draft Estimates to Executive Officers, outlining the requirements and priorities for the Student Services Strategic Plan. The Dean would send a follow-up memo to the College Secretary reiterating the anticipated additional budgetary requirements for meeting priority items, including the College Health Service in connection with the forthcoming retirements of the two psychiatrists, as well as the pressing need for a budgetary allocation for IT support for all Student Services.
- SS/06-07/52** **College Health Service Annual Report 2004-2005** This item was deferred until the next meeting of the SSC, to allow for a more up to date report to be presented.
- SS/06-07/53** **Student Disability Service Annual Report 2005-2006** The Disability Services Co-ordinator presented the Annual Report. Following the Departmental Review of the SDS in May 2005, a number of key recommendations had been made by the Provost to Board, some of which have been implemented, and others are in the course of implementation. The SDS is now a stand-alone Service. Core posts of 1 Disability Officer and 2 Executive Officers within the Service have been made permanent.

**Developments within the Service:** a new support service, UNILINK 2, has been developed in a joint project with the School of Occupational Therapy. The Assistive Technology and Information Centre (ATIC) continues its service development e.g. pod casting of lectures, a multi-media librarian in the Ussher Library. The Deaf Needs Assessment (DNA) Project, a newly funded project under the HEA Strategic Initiative Fund, had achieved many of its objectives in the year. Service evaluations had been carried out during the year; insightful suggestions on service improvements made by users will be acted upon. National Needs Assessment Tool research and National research of Supplementary Admissions Procedures were undertaken by the Disability Service Co-ordinator during the year.

**Current issues and Service objectives:** the Service continues to be understaffed, operating at half the recommended level of 1 disability officer per 5000 students, thereby limiting the support available to students, at the same time as limiting participation in development opportunities. The lack of an integrated database continues to present a range of difficulties in the efficient operation of the Service. The development of a 3-year strategic action plan for equity of access, and improved information dissemination are the main objectives for 2006-2007. A data collection system as required for the new funding model must be designed and developed.

A post-graduate Diploma in Education (Needs Assessment Management) is being developed by the Service in collaboration with the School of Education TCD and the Disability Support Services in DCU.

It was noted that plans for the cobblestone reduction programme for Front Square, and improved access to the Pavilion, were still to be finalised by the Site and Facilities Committee.

The Dean thanked the Disability Service Co-ordinator for the comprehensive report, suggesting that reflection on the activities of the Service, and assessment of their effectiveness should be included in future reports.

**SS/06-07/54 Student Counselling Service Annual Report 2005-2006** The Director of Student Counselling Service presented the Report. The main achievements for the year were the consolidation of Learning Support, progress in the Mental Health Initiative including the launch and on-going operation of the Mental Health Portal, the development of the Feeling @ Home in TCD project for International Students, and the appointment of a half time Administrative Officer. Key concerns were: appointment availability, and the overcrowded and limited accessibility of the present accommodation of the Service.

Implementation of recommendations from the Quality Review of the Service in 2005 is continuing. Consolidation of the strategic plan for the Service had been successfully achieved using the Student Services Strategic Plan as a framework. Review of the management of Peak Demand Periods had been undertaken. The Service thinks it important to offer students appointments within a fortnight and a request for a sessional budget to facilitate this has been submitted to the Secretary's Office.

IT review and upgrade is essential, and is included in the overall IT strategy for Student Services. Improvement in physical access to the Service is a priority. Resource issues for non-traditional students need to be highlighted, and the Report on the Research Project on the counselling needs of Access and other non-traditional students will be helpful in this regard. The referral rates of non traditional students to the Counselling Service continues to be higher (10%-22%) than the overall referral rates for all students (4.39%).

A proposal has been submitted to the Senior Lecturer recommending that Learning Support should be located within CAPSL and outlining arrangements which would need to be put in place for such a move. The learning support staff in the Counselling service as well as The Director of CAPSL and the Dean of Students had been involved in this submission.

There had been a small percentage increase in the numbers of students attending the Service. The Service continued its support, consultancy and training in Trinity Hall for Assistant Wardens, on general counselling skills for new Tutors, for Student Support Staff and for the Junior Dean and Assistant Junior Deans. The Service also provided continuing support to Niteline volunteers, and co-facilitated with the Chaplaincy the Bereavement Support Group. On-going professional development ensured the continued provision of a high-quality service.

The Dean thanked the Director for the comprehensive report, suggesting that reflection on the activities of the Service, and assessment of their effectiveness should be included in future reports.

**SS/06-07/55 Any Other Urgent Business** An additional meeting of the Committee was to be scheduled for April; proposed date, either Friday 13 April or Wednesday 18 April, to be finalised immediately after the meeting.

## **Section B**

*There were no items in this section*

### **Section C**

**SS/06-07/56**

**Capitation Committee**

The Committee noted and approved the minutes of the meeting of 12<sup>th</sup> January 2006 and 16<sup>th</sup> November 2006.

**SS/06-07/57**

**Financial Assistance Committee**

The Committee noted and approved the minutes of the meeting of 27<sup>th</sup> January 2007.