

**The University of Dublin**

**Trinity College**

**Draft Minutes of the Student Life Committee**

**8<sup>th</sup> April, 2015**

**Present:** Prof. Kevin O’Kelly (Dean of Students (Chair), Dr. Claire Laudet (Senior Tutor), Mr Brendan Tangney (Warden, Trinity Hall), Ms. Kathryn Smith (Library), Dr Erika Doyle (Global Officer Co-ordinator), Mr Ian Mooney (SU Welfare Officer), Mr Domhnall McGlacken-Byrne (President TCDSU) , Mr Declan Treanor, (Disability Service), Ms. Claire Buttanshaw (Vice Chair DUCAC), Mr. Liam Hunt (Secretary, CSC), , Ms. Eimear Farrell (Deputy Chief Financial Officer), David McGrath (Director, College Health Service), Mr. Adam Hanna (GSU Vice President), Mr. Adrian Neilan, Commercial Revenue Unit)

**Apologies:** Ms Deirdre Flynn (Director, Student Counselling Service), Ms. Megan Lee (GSU President), Ms. Michelle Tanner (Head of Sports and Recreation), Ms. Leona Coady (Academic Registry), Mr Seán Gannon (Director, Careers Advisory Service), Rev Julian Hamilton (Chaplaincy), Ms. Lee Mills (Representing John Murphy, Information Systems Services)

**Absent:** Mr. Andrew Burrows (Chair, CSC), Prof Emma Stokes (Registrar of Chambers), Ms Aoife Cox (Manager, Day Nursery & Crèche), Jennifer Cahill (Chair, Publications Committee)

**Present:** Ms. Helen Richardson (Minutes)

**Section A**

**SLC/14-15/34 Minutes (A.1)**

The apologies were noted. The minutes were approved and signed following an amendment to item SLC/14-15/33: that “A concern was raised by Eanna Drury **on behalf of Societies**”

**SLC/14-15/35 Matters Arising (A.2)**

The Dean of Students informed the committee that he has met with the web office and that we will now be able to track traffic from the web to capture complaints, both formal and informal. There are currently no resources to track individual complaints; however the Dean of Students stated that most units have a complaints tracking system in place. The Senior Tutor raised concern that very few academic departments have a complaints procedure in place and Declan Treanor is concerned that there is no audit trail. The Dean of Students will talk to the web office to ask if the current system can be built on further to include a way of measuring complaints. The SU President suggested that a system where the complainant is asked if their complaint was dealt with appropriately and that there needs to be an owner of complaints. The Dean of Students stated that the purpose of the

procedure is not to track and audit, but to capture areas that are receiving a lot of complaints. The Dean of Students will raise the additional concerns to see if another level can be incorporated.

Student Death Protocol – The Senior Tutor informed the Committee that there has been a lot of work put into the revision of the Student Death Protocol and that she hopes to be able to have a document ready for the next Student Life Committee meeting.

ISSE Survey – Response rate was very good. 18% responded in comparison with 12% last year.

Accommodation issue – results of the survey, over 2000 respondents. The most important issues were price and distance from college (up to 30 minutes). The lowest importance was that the accommodation was managed by Trinity and en-suite bathrooms.

Deans Roll of Honour has been rolled out. There were 15 applicants for legacy, 250 for Dean's list, 89/90 for leadership. It was agreed that raising the standards was a good idea and a review is now taking place but time frame is tight.

### **SLC/14-15/36 Dean's Report – College Strategic Plan (A.3)**

The Dean of Students referred to the strategic plan report on projects that are linked to the Student Life Committee. Transition to College from first communication to the end of semester 1 will be looked at. The Dean of Students made it very clear that there is a need to appoint a First year experience officer to ensure that the transformation is made. It is hoped to expand the role of S2S and support and also student learning development and careers which in turn could bring in alumni.

Plagiarism – students should be educated better on this at entry rather than the punishing approach afterwards. It needs to be defined clearer. There is a committee that will be looking at this to clarify and make it more defined.

Student Charter – there has been a committee put in place to rewrite but implies things such as service level agreements, policies and processes which must support student led activities. Mr. Brendan Tangney raised the issue of deadlines for academic work when students are so heavily involved in College life.

Student environments need to include informal learning spaces and policies should be put in place to reflect this.

Student wellbeing was discussed, although it is not a project in traditional terms. This is ongoing and there is no specific timeframe/deadline. David McGrath said that the College health Promotion Officer is currently on maternity leave and no replacement. Contracts of year to year only being offered, there is a need for contracts of at least indefinite duration to provide a solid service to students.

Student Life website is ongoing. There is working group in place and the first round of consultation will happen soon. There is also a working party on digital life in College that is considering the use of social media.

Student Activity – there have been discussions with alumni and careers for a series of lunch time workshops to raise awareness. Hopefully there will be two such seminars in the next academic year.

The Dean of Students told the Committee that on the whole there are 6 main projects that the Student Life Committee will be responsible for and that they will be looked deeper into at the next meeting and future meetings.

#### **SLC/14-15/37 SU Strategic Plan (A.4)**

The SU President gave a brief presentation to the Committee on the Students Union Strategic Plan to 2018. The document went to the Executive Officers Group (EOG) last week. One of the main drives to write this plan is that there appears to be very little institutional memory and the same things seem to arise year after year. There was a big consultation process with students carried out and the main outcome was that students feel that the SU don't really have a plan in terms of what it does. The presentation to the EOG showed that College and students disagree on a lot, however they also agree strongly on other issues such as accommodation, student spaces and training of officers. This document will not be live for the next incoming sabbatical officers. The Dean of Students sat with the SU and looked at the strategic projects to ensure that there is student representation right from the beginning, not just at the end when the final decision is being made. Declan Treanor believes that the strategy is good and the idea of a long term plan is a great idea. David McGrath is concerned that the plan might be agreed with SU for 2/3 years in a row, but when it comes to a decision, that year when the decision is being made the team of SU officers in place might not agree and the whole project falls. The SU need to design a long term strategy that will last and it should be incumbent of following SU officers to continue with the same plan. This is where the role of the board of Trustees will be important. The board consists of ex union people who will make it very effective and strong. The Dean of Students congratulated the SU on the document and agreed wholly that support skills are needed for officers. The Student Life Committee all agreed that the SU Strategic Plan is a good idea and hope that it will be effective in the coming years.

#### **SLC/14-15/38 National Sports & Adventure Centre meeting (A.5)**

Declan Treanor spoke of this new centre. Trinity College were contacted to endorse the development of the centre with UCC leaders for students with disability. It is no cost to College, just looking for endorsement. The centre is the first of its kind in Ireland and key sports people from TCD have endorsed it. The Dean of Students and Declan Treanor met with the facilitator for the project. UCC have already signed up for it and Declan Treanor is encouraging TCD to endorse it. The Dean of Students believes that Trinity endorsing the

centre would be a good idea. It's accessible for all and he was very impressed. It was agreed by the Committee that the Dean of Students should sign off on the agreement. Claire Laudet asked if the endorsement at this level was sufficient and should it not be the Provost? The SU are meeting with the Provost on Thursday and will ask him then. Declan Treanor will give the endorsement letter to the SU to take with them to the meeting with the Provost on Thursday.

**SLC/14-15/39 Financial Assistance Postgraduate Hardship Fund & Appeal Procedure (A.6)**

Adam Hanna presented a document to the Committee for approval. It's the first time that a hardship fund has existed for postgraduate students other than the ESF money. A new fund has been set up, financial hardship fund for postgraduate students. Funds will be obtained mainly through fundraising events and donations. It will be administered by the Postgraduate Hardship Committee and will consist of the following members:

- Postgraduate Student Support Officer (Gillian Roddie)
- Vice President of the Graduate Students Union
- A nominated Postgraduate Advisor

To date there has been no official appeal procedure put in place for students who wish to appeal the decision made on their financial assistance application at any level, undergraduate, Access or Postgraduate. A document was drafted outlining the 3 different appeals Committees that will assess appeals. The 3 different appeals Committees suggested are as follows:

1. Undergraduate Students can appeal their decision to the a committee made up of the following:
  - Postgraduate Student Support Officer (Gillian Roddie)
  - Member from TAP financial assistance committee
  - Postgraduate Director of Teaching & Learning from Postgraduate financial assistance committee
  - GSO Vice President
2. TAP students can appeal to the following
  - Undergraduate Student Support Officer (Helen Richardson)
  - Member of Financial Assistance Committee Undergraduate
  - Postgraduate Student Support Officer
  - SU Welfare Officer
3. Postgraduate Students can appeal to the following
  - Undergraduate Student Support Officer (Helen Richardson)
  - Member of the TAP financial assistance committee
  - Member of the Financial Assistance Committee (undergraduate)
  - SU Welfare Officer

Student Life Committee  
8<sup>th</sup> April 2015

The Student Life Committee approved both the Postgraduate Hardship Fund and Committee and also the new appeals procedures and committees for students wishing to make an appeal on their financial assistance applications.

**SLC/14-15/40 Report from Counselling (A.7)**

Deferred until the next meeting as Deirdre Flynn is currently on sick leave.

**SLC/14-15/41 Any Other Business (B.2)**

Transgender issue – Declan Treanor would like general awareness in College. There is a need for training for College to address issue.

Exam issues – there is an ongoing issue with the scheduling of exams. The Dean of Students agrees and hopes it will be address in the student charter

The Next Student Life Committee is schedules to take place May 6<sup>th</sup> 2015 at 11am in the Boardroom.