

INTERNAL MEMORANDUM

To: Site & Facilities Committee
From: Tom Merriman, College Safety Officer; Noel McCann, Facilities Officer
Re: Out of hours/lone working
Date: 28th October 2005

A paper on out of hours/lone working was presented to and discussed by the Site and Facilities Committee and the College Safety Committee in May 2005.

Both committees agreed that the paper should be widely circulated and comments invited. Thirty two responses were received, from both individuals and departments. While a minority of these responses were supportive of the proposals contained in that paper a significant majority were opposed, many strongly, to the recommendation that lone working after certain hours be prohibited. In many instances this, we believe, was based on a misunderstanding that the paper proposed a total ban on working after certain hours, others believed that the College was cosseting and overprotective and that they could personally waive the right to this protection while others simply did not want to give up the free access that they had traditionally enjoyed.

The original paper was tabled with a view to protecting the safety, health and welfare of staff and students and to assist College in doing all that is *'reasonably practicable'* in achieving this. After the fire in the Panoz Building the College was directed by the Fire Authorities to put in place arrangements to determine whether buildings or parts of buildings are occupied at any particular time. The recent Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 has reiterated this responsibility and states that this responsibility lies with individual managers as well as the corporate body.

In the context of doing all that is *'reasonably practicable'* it is worth noting that there is probably no similar institution where the same unfettered access is permitted to buildings at all times. Both DCU and UCD have very strict access control policies to their buildings after hours that require arrangements to be made in advance, as does the DIT. In any litigation or court proceedings these are the comparisons that will be made.

We are asking the Site and Facilities Committee and the College Safety Committee to endorse the following:

- That the College acknowledges the legal responsibility of Heads of School, Vice-Deans and Heads of Administrative and Support areas for the activities that take place in their areas of responsibility in as far as they have authority.
- That all lone working should be subject to a written risk assessment as required by law.
- That the Head/Vice-Dean put in place appropriate arrangements for lone working and after-hours* access.
- That undergraduates have access only to 24-hour designated areas or supervised facilities after hours.
- That Heads/Vice-Deans are required to implement arrangements to monitor building occupancy after hours, unless other arrangements are in place.
- That, while aspiring to provide universal access to all our facilities, there are particular risks that need to be addressed in attempting to provide for out of hours access or lone working for many persons with a disability.

*to be defined.