



**Trinity College Dublin
The University of Dublin**

Environment and Sustainability Committee

Thursday 19th September, 10.00-12.00

West Theatre Meeting Room

Minutes of Meeting

Present: Mary Kelly, VP Biodiversity and Climate Action & Secretary (Jane Stout), Chief Technical Officer & Unite Rep. (Maurice Sweeney), Dean of Research (Sinead Ryan), Librarian and College Archivist (Helen Shenton), COO representative Director of Campus Infrastructure (Mike Clark), Dean of STEM (Sylvia Draper), CFO representative Deputy CFO (Patrick Moore), Bursar representative Projects and Enablement Manager (Shumane Cleary), Staff Representative (Dr. Conor O’Kelly) and Mr. M. O’Cinneide.

Apologies: Chief Operating Officer (Orla Cunningham), Vice Provost (Orla Sheils), Chief Finance Officer (Louise Ryan), Bursar (Eleanor Denny) and Staff representative Colm Ennis.

Vacant: Undergraduate/Post-Graduate Student Representative.

In Attendance: Sustainability Manager and minute-taker (Jane Hackett).

ESC/23-24/25 No statements of Interest declared.

No conflicts of interest

ESC/23-24/26 Minutes from last meeting

Minor changes to be made to the previous minutes as follows:

- Remove ‘Prof’ from Helen Shenton’s title.
- Change statement around gift policy to indicate that this committee will review – remove word ‘consistently’.
- Climate action roadmap - add to the note that the Board has to approve the final plan.

ESC/23-24/27 Actions Call Over

Updates – a number of actions in progress including the following; follow up with the IT director, the Chair is to clarify how this committee can feed into the masterplan, review ethics and gift acceptance policy.

ESC/23-24/28 Updates from Trinity Sustainability

28.1 Trinity Sustainability Budget

The budget for Trinity Sustainability was submitted to planning group and approved in principle this week (19th Sept). The budget included funds of €600k+ for decarbonisation planning to undertake decarbonisation projects over the next 5 years. In addition, two procurement roles (ESG reporting and category manager role) were funded which will allow FSD to move forward. A discussion followed about the role of the committee with respect to future budget proposals as it was recognised that the current model for budget planning is out of sync with the committee.

A communications plan may be required to inform the college community of how the budget will be spent and what it will 'do' for the university, support from the committee will be required for this.

Action 28.1– include a memo for each paper/submission made to the Committee.

28.2 Climate Action Roadmap

The college's Climate Action Roadmap 2024 is in draft form and has been submitted to the HEA and SEAI. It will now be presented to the Board for approval in October and this is an opportunity to update the Board about the work undertaken in Trinity Sustainability as well as the implications for the college in terms of cost, challenges faced, funding constraints and potential savings. There was a short discussion about the function of the committee in terms of acting as a channel of communication to the Board, not only to the Board but from the Board i.e. two-way communication.

Action 28.2 – The Chair to email the Secretary's Office to seek time on the agenda for the next Board meeting.

28.3 EDI and Risk training

Risk management platform training will be delivered to members of the committee on Monday 23rd September to introduce them to the new risk dashboard on Decision Time. EDI training should be undertaken by all members of the committee.

Action 28.3 – Share the Risk teams invite again to all members.

Action 28.4 – Share link to online EDI training.

ESC/23-24/29 Key updates from other principal committees

People and Culture – There have been some changes around paternal leave and other leave in line with legislation. There are other updates about senior academic promotions and staff on 'uncommon' contracts i.e. short-term contracts. Senior academic promotions committee proposal is to radically change the academic promotion process, form and criteria, which might also involve information relating to impact, and potentially sustainability/societal impact. There is a huge amount of people involved in this process and the timeline is tight in Q1 25.

Finance Committee – This took place on Tues 10th September. There is a small surplus this year. Cost base has increased, and the amount of funds sourced in FY23-24, but there is no guarantee for this level of funding going forward. A benchmarking exercise was undertaken to determine a cost base against other universities including UCD/Galway and many universities are under the same pressure. Our balance sheets look good, but our cash balance is very low due to restricted nature of funding. Next meeting is in Nov.

ESC/23-24/30 Work Programme Review

Action 30.1 – Defer the work programme and circulate it for the next committee.

ESC/23-24/31 Risk Review

The committee were updated about the risk review, which has been consolidated into eight core risks for the university. The review also states that ecological degradation and global climate change risks have informed the review. However, while Trinity can contribute to mitigating these risks, it is not within our power to fully control the external risks.

A financial audit is being undertaken by PwC and some information has been sought in relation to sustainability especially with respect to reporting on climate and commitments made. A gap analysis has been undertaken by Financial Services Division to determine the gaps with respect to Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive and the International Sustainability Standards Board (ISSB). The report will be completed by end of September. There is also an Irish Universities Association working group addressing non-financial reporting. The idea is to come up with a standardised approach for all institutions.

Action 31.1 – Review risk report at next meeting and include a memo to outline progress or lack of.

ESC/23-24/32 Trinity Sustainability Updates

32.1 Sustainability Strategy update

The committee was updated about the action plan which supports the Sustainability Strategy. There has been some progress with respect to the academic, operations and integrated delivery actions, however many actions are yet to be started. The most progress has been seen in the academic objectives and actions due to the appointment of the Education for Sustainable Development Fellows who have delivered the ESD module. The action plan is a living document and will be updated/changed with the input of the Sustainability Management Group.

32.2 Trinity Sustainability Updates

The committee were updated about the new appointments made to the team including a Green Labs Officer, Communications Officer and Student Experience Officer.

Action 32.2.1 – Send on the call for updates to financial actions to Patrick and he will disseminate to his team.

Action 32.2.2 – Put together a dashboard reporting the action plan progress.

ESC/23-24/33 Culture

33.1 Discussion on how to embed sustainability in college culture.

The committee members discussed the importance of engaging academics who work on culture/behaviour change and to use the tools of social marketing to engage staff & students. Influencers (either students or staff) can support this culture change by promoting messages/information about what is happening across the college. The communication of 'good news' stories can support behaviour change but structural change is also required to

allow people to make ‘easy’ choices. We can not assume that students are engaged as there are so many competing messages and capacity for engagement, offer them opportunities that support them i.e. careers events. Climate Leadership training has identified a network of staff members who are interested in taking a leadership role within their roles, however there is still a need for some focused direction when it comes to actions that they can take and influence. Should the message simply be; “it’s just how we do things around here” this would require changes to policy, changes to procurement and changes to all aspects of college life.

Action 33.1- Presentation from Katie Byrne Communications Officer about communications plan and what works/doesn’t work in terms of communications.

Action 33.2 – Keep culture on the agenda for every committee meeting.

ESC/23-24/34 Sustainability Policy

The Secretary of the College was invited to speak to the committee about the sustainability policy and how a policy and strategy differ. A policy and strategy need to align and ‘talk to each other’ and a policy has overarching principles and guidance which reflects the overarching approach of the university. Policy has guiding rules to adhere to. The sustainability policy was last updated in 2017, is due for updating, and there is a policy framework to set out how to update the policy. The Secretary will work with the VPBCA to update the policy and it will then go for consultation and then to the EOG, E&S committee and board for approval.

Action 34.1 – JH and JS to work with Sec Office and circulate draft to this committee.

Action 34.2 - Board - Papers by 2nd October – memo and roadmap – presentation on 9th.

ESC/23-24/35 AOB

- Postdoc Academy should be included when communicating with the research community.
- Gift Acceptance Committee – would be useful to understand better how the committee operates in terms of due diligence and if sustainability has been embedded in the process.

Action 35.1– Invite a member of the Gift Acceptance Committee to present and outline the process of due diligence.

Next meeting 28th November 2024.
