



**Trinity College Dublin
The University of Dublin**

Minutes of a meeting of Student Life Committee

3 February 2026, 11am, TBS Boardroom

Present: Present: Prof Richard Porter (Dean of Students, in the Chair), Dr Stephen Smith (Senior Tutor), Ms Grace McNally (President, Students' Union), Ms Deirdre Leahy (Equality and Welfare Officer, Students' Union), Rev Peter Sexton (Chaplaincy), Mr Chuck Rashleigh (representative, Director of Student Counselling Services), Ms Breda Walls (Director of Student Services), Mr Declan Treanor (Director, College Disability Service), Ms Michelle Tanner (Director of Sport & Physical Activity), Mr Conchúr Ó Cathasaigh (Chairperson, Central Societies Committee), Mr Maximillian Evans-Schmid (Chairperson, Trinity Publications), Ms Eimear Rouine (Transition to Trinity Officer), Mr Martin John McAndrew (Postgraduate Student Support Officer).

Apologies: Ms Camilla Persello (representative, Scholars' Committee), Ms Orla Bannon (Director, Careers Advisory Service), Dr David McGrath (Director, College Health Centre), Ms Louise Staunton (Associate Director of Trinity Global), Ms Jane Prendergast (Chair of Trinity Sports Union), Dr Dónal MacDónaill (Junior Dean & Registrar of Chambers), Mr Nigel Stevenson (Warden of Trinity Hall), Mr Aziel Zafar (Postgraduate Taught Officer, Students' Union).

In attendance: Ms Cristina Boccardo (Secretary), Mr Peter Dudley (Deputy Head of Readers' Service), Mr Joel McKeever (Equality Officer), Ms Susan Kirwin (Coordinator, Student Learning Development), Ms Rachel Skelly (Dignity, Respect & Consent Response Manager), Ms Wendy Crampton (Director of Trinity Access Programmes).

The Dean of Students welcomed members to the fourth meeting of the academic year 2025/26.

SECTION A: Policy and Implementation Matters

SLC/25-26/34 A.1 Minutes

The Committee approved the minutes dated 16 December 2025.

SLC/25-26/35 A.2 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from the minutes or from the previous SLC meeting.

SLC/25-26/36 A.3 Capitation Committee Update

The Committee received an update from the Senior Dean, in his capacity as Chair of the Capitation Committee, together with the Annual Financial Report for 2024–25.

Members were reminded that the Capitation Committee, as a sub-committee of Student Life Committee, is responsible for apportioning the capitation fund assigned by Board to the capitated bodies and for undertaking such additional functions as may be delegated by Student Life Committee. The Committee noted the representative composition of the

Capitation Committee, including College officers, Financial Services, and student body representatives.

The Committee noted that audited financial statements for the Central Societies Committee, Trinity Sports Union, Students' Union, and Trinity Publications were reviewed by the Capitation Committee and are available from its Secretary. It was further noted that the Capitation Committee financial statements form part of the College's annual audited financial statements.

Members heard that total income for the year to 30 June 2025 amounted to €1,471,276, with total expenditure of €1,479,442, reflecting allocations to the capitated bodies and associated student activity supports. The Committee noted that the Trinity Ball 2025 generated a surplus of €4,227, to be apportioned among the capitated bodies in line with standard allocation arrangements, and that ticket pricing had been increased to ensure cost coverage for future events.

The Committee further noted progress relating to the Student Space Levy, now in its sixth year, which is ring-fenced for the development of student spaces and a future student centre. The levy capital project held a year-end balance of €3,079,370, of which €625,569 remains available for commitment to student space development projects.

Members also noted preparatory work undertaken across capitated bodies in relation to implementation of the Irish Language levy from College Year 2025–26, as well as the establishment of a working group to review external audit arrangements, with new auditors expected to be in place for the 2025–26 accounts.

ACTION: SLC members thanked the Senior Dean and the Capitation Committee for the report and noted the update.

SLC/25-26/37

A.4 Revised Student Capacity/ Capacity to Study policy

The Committee considered a memorandum and the revised Capacity to Study Policy, presented by the Postgraduate Student Support Officer, and was invited to approve the policy for onward consideration through College governance structures.

Members were reminded that the policy replaces the former *Fitness to Study Policy* and has been revised to ensure alignment with recent amendments to the Consolidated Statutes relating to Student Conduct and Capacity. As the policy is made pursuant to those statutes, corresponding revisions were required following statutory change.

The Committee noted a number of statutorily mandated updates incorporated into the revised text. These included the removal of references to the former Committee on Student Conduct and Capacity and confirmation that appeals will now be considered by the Academic Appeals Committee; clarification that cases must commence at Level 1 or Level 2 with Level 3 accessible only by appeal; expansion of the list of decision-makers to include the College Secretary, Registrar of Chambers and Warden where access to campus, facilities or accommodation is relevant; and revised provisions enabling temporary suspension where there is a clear and reasonably imminent risk to the student or others.

Members further noted operational refinements arising from experience of implementing the previous policy, including clearer case-management steps, provision for referral directly to Level 2 by the Dean of Students where School-level management is not appropriate, a distinct section addressing Letters of Certification, and the retention of supportive and student-centred language within the guiding principles.

The Committee noted that the revised policy continues to provide a structured and transparent framework for managing complex cases where concerns arise regarding a student's physical or mental capacity to engage with university life, while emphasising sensitivity, equality of opportunity, and support for students to continue or resume their studies wherever possible.

Members also noted the consultation undertaken during the review, including engagement with senior academic officers, clinical and student support services, legal advisers, and Students' Union representatives, as well as the anticipated benefits of improved clarity, consistency and transparency for both staff and students.

The Committee welcomed the revised policy and the accompanying one-page guide and thanked those involved in its development.

ACTION: The Committee approved the revised Capacity to Study Policy and the associated guidance document for onward consideration by Undergraduate Studies Committee, Graduate Studies Committee, and subsequently Council and Board, as appropriate.

SLC/25-26/38

A.5 Student Counselling Services Annual Report

The Committee received a presentation of the Student Counselling, Learning Development and Student-2-Student Annual Report 2024–25, delivered by Mr Chuck Rashleigh, Student Counsellor.

Members noted that the service continues to operate within a mission of supporting students through collaboration, connection and compassion, with a vision of delivering accessible social, academic, mental health and emotional wellbeing supports across the Trinity community. The Committee heard that the service model emphasises timely needs assessment, tiered and flexible supports matched to student need, and a whole-campus partnership approach.

Key activity data for 2024–25 were noted, including 12,603 counselling appointments, 5,467 Student Learning Development attendances, and 3,767 first-year students supported through Student-2-Student mentoring, demonstrating sustained high engagement across the three integrated service strands.

The Committee noted continued strength in the Student-2-Student programme, including over 600 volunteers, redesigned accessibility-focused training, and successful reaccreditation under the *Investing in Volunteers* quality standard, alongside national dissemination of peer-transition guidelines.

In relation to Student Learning Development, members noted steady engagement across workshops, individual consultations, and facilitated writing supports, together with

increased postgraduate participation in structured skills provision and the introduction of teaching on the responsible use of generative AI in research.

The Committee further noted counselling service demand and responsiveness, including improved average waiting times for both assessment and post-assessment appointments in 2024–25 compared with previous years, alongside continued provision of emergency appointments and crisis interventions supporting significant numbers of students. Demographic data indicated broadly representative engagement across EU and non-EU cohorts and across undergraduate and postgraduate populations.

Members also noted qualitative student feedback highlighting the life-changing impact of counselling support, the value of peer connection through Student-2-Student, and the importance of holistic, joined-up wellbeing services across College.

ACTION: The Committee thanked Mr Rasheligh and the wider team for the comprehensive report and for the continued delivery of high-quality, student-centred wellbeing and learning support services.

SLC/25-26/39

A.6 Dean's report

The Committee received a verbal report from the Dean of Students, supplemented by a written briefing note.

Members noted ongoing progress in relation to the implementation of the College Strategic Plan *Thrive*, led through the Strategic Plan Implementation Group chaired by the Provost. Under Commitment 3, *Enhancing Student Belonging and Connection in an Engaged and Healthy University*, continued work is being progressed across four key areas: a fully supported student journey; the development of a student centre and network of student spaces; transformed sport and healthy living; and the promotion of a socially connected university.

The Committee was informed that the existing Fitness to Study framework, soon to be replaced by the Capacity to Study Policy, has been invoked frequently during the current academic year. In this context, the Dean highlighted the work of the Student Capacity Advisory Group (SCAG), which he chairs, and acknowledged the contribution of its members and of the associated Medical Cases (Free Fees / Letters of Certification) group in addressing complex student welfare cases with appropriate care and balance.

Members noted that the national StudentSurvey.ie will run from 24 February to 17 March 2026 and expressed appreciation to colleagues involved in preparing for its launch. It was noted that the revised survey instrument aims to provide an enhanced profile of undergraduate and postgraduate taught student experience and has the support of both the University and the Students' Union.

The Committee further noted that the Student Partnership Agreement 2025/26 has progressed through Student Life Committee and Undergraduate Studies Committee and is scheduled for submission to Council, with the required institutional and Students' Union signatories to be completed in advance of Council consideration.

The Dean also advised that nominations for Students' Union sabbatical positions closed on 30 January 2026.

Finally, the Committee noted that approval for the establishment of a Student Space Advisory Group (SSAG) was confirmed by the Bursar on 12 January 2026 and that work will now proceed to constitute the group.

ACTION: The Committee thanked the Dean of Students for the update.

SLC/25-26/40

A.7 Any other urgent business

There was no other business raised.

Section B: Report from SLC Working Groups

SLC/25-26/41

B.1 Student Centre Working Group

The Dean of Students updated the Committee on progress with the Student Centre Project. The Dean of Students reported that the project keeps moving forward in a timely fashion as well as on budget. A meeting is scheduled for the end of February after which there will be more progress update. Completion of works is currently expected for end of 2027, beginning of 2028.

SLC/25-26/42

B.2 Orientation Working Group

The Transition to Trinity Officer updated SLC on January orientation for Erasmus and Visiting students, which welcomed over 700 students coming to TCD for semester 2. In person engagement was slightly down from the previous year.

From 24 February to 18 March the Student Survey is planned to run, with a new format which is hoped should encourage more student participation, from undergraduate and postgraduate taught students.

Application for the 3-Minutes Thesis competition are closing on 23 February with event commencing later in March.

Section C: Items to note and/or approve

SLC/25-26/43

C.1 Student Life Committee circulation and meetings dates 2025-26

Student Life Committee noted upcoming dates for the current academic year.

The meeting ended at 11:57 am.

