



Legacies Working Group

28th March 2024

Henry Jones Room, Old Library

Present: Eoin O’Sullivan (Chair), Aidan Marsh (Secretary), Siobhan Ward (HS), Rachel Moss (IFUT), Clíona O’Farrelly (Fellows), Helen Shenton (Librarian), Linda Hogan (VPEDI), Catriona Crowe (Former NAI), Lynn Scarff (NMI), Ciaran O’Neill (TCL) and, Catherine O’Mahony (Comms),

In Attendance: Aine Kennedy (Chair of Historical Society), Patrick Walsh (TCL)

Apologies: László Molnárfi (SU), Aoife Bennett (SU), Hamza Bana (SU), Francis O’Toole (AHSS), Patrick Wyse Jackson (STEM) David O’Shea (TDA), Sinead McBride, (College Solicitor),

TLRWF/23-24/012 Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of 15th December 2023

The minutes of 15th December 2023 were approved.

TLRWF/23-24/013 Public Event in the Exam Hall on Renaming the Library

The Chair of the University Historical Society gave a presentation to the Working Group on an event held by the Society in the Exam Hall on 7 February 2024. Five guest speakers and five students speakers spoke in favour of 10 names which had been selected by the Society based on popular suggestions received. A video of the event can be found at <https://youtu.be/sl8MWRiahoM>.

Feedback for the event was that it was well received, and that it was considered a good way to examine the naming of the Library. Individuals who had been strong supporters of some names reconsidered their opinions following the presentations.

The event formalised the question of why people might be considered as notable in terms of “Why should Trinity College honour this individual?”. Paul Koralek was highlighted as an example of this; the speaker supporting the Library be named for Koralek emphasised that while he became a noted architect later in his career, he had been a young individual when he designed the Library, and that naming the Library for him would emphasise honouring the achievements of young individuals.

A final piece of feedback following the event was that consideration should be given to the ease of speaking the name.

TLRWF/23-24/014 Overview of Submissions Received

Aidan Marsh gave a presentation to the Working Group providing an overview of the submissions received. Following the presentation, the Group was reminded that the submissions were to be considered as suggestions only, and that the submissions process was not the determinant of a new name for the Library.

TLRWF/23-24/015 Criteria to Assist in Decision Making

The history of the current name was summarised for the Working Group. When first constructed the building was referred to as the “New Library”. It was renamed after Bishop Berkeley in 1978 as set out in the Working Paper on Berkeley’s Legacies at Trinity which can be found at <https://www.tcd.ie/media/tcd/legacies/pdfs/berkeleyTLRWGworkingpaper.pdf>.

The Chair noted that a criterion already established by the Working Group was that the name of a living person should not be considered. It was queried as to whether this criterion might be reconsidered. It was agreed by the Committee that as this criterion had been established before the opening of the public submissions process, to change at this point could require that submissions be re-opened to allow for new submissions because of the change in criteria and this course of action was not advisable.

It was raised as to whether College should consider a donor-led process for the naming of The Library, but the Committee were of the view that the process should be based on an honourific re-naming.

There was discussion on establishing principals regarding the naming of buildings in College. There is presently a set of guidelines under the Policy for the Acceptance of Gifts and Donations, however this should not be taken as being something which should also be linked in with the honourific naming of buildings. It was noted that Princeton University makes a distinction between honourific naming and donor naming and that this is a model which College could use in the future.

The Chair noted that it is not the responsibility of the Working Group to develop naming policies and that if such policies are developed, then the Working Group may use them in matters raised in future; however at present the remit of the Working Group is solely regarding the naming of the Library.

It was noted by the Group that there are presently no buildings in College named after women. The group considered if positive discrimination should be considered as a criterion in the naming process. It was recognised that the College Equality Policy makes clear that any discrimination, including positive discrimination, is not permitted by College, and that therefore representation, in itself, could not be considered as a criterion.

The observation was made that the statue of Provost Salmon (who is reported to have said “Over my dead body will women enter this college”) has been ‘appropriated’ as a symbol of women’s progress by, for example, women students being photographed by the statue, and being referenced in these terms by tour guides.

It was decided that “Being in Keeping with the Values of College (as listed in the Strategic Plan 2020-25)”, would provide the primary criterion for naming options, and therefore that any options must be representative of being “Inquisitive, Pioneering, Responsible, Inclusive and Collaborative”.

TLRWF/23-24/015 Next Steps

The Working Group decided that best practice, in this instance, would be to present Board with a series of options for names, together with a rationale meeting the established criteria for each name presented.

Following discussion, the Working Group decided that three options would be presented to Board, representing a person, a date, and a concept. The final decision on these options would be made at the next meeting of the Working Group.

TLRWF/23-24/016 AOB

There was no other business.