The Student Experience

Students had a profound impact on campus life – and indeed on Dublin life – this year when they voted through a student-led campaign, to end single-use plastic on campus. This means all cafés, eateries, Schools and departments on campus are now getting rid of disposable plastic cups, bottles, straws, and cutlery. This will impact visitors as well as staff and students and it’s a great example of how Trinity students shape the college’s traditions and take responsibility for the environment around them.

Students are represented on the college Board, and along with fellow Board members, they safeguard Trinity’s distinctiveness and good governance. Their role was reinforced last year with the introduction of Ireland’s first Student Partnership Policy, an agreement by the university and students’ unions to develop and support effective student partnership, engagement and representation. Student protests, entitled ‘Take Back Trinity’, against a proposed increase in the fee for supplemental exams took place in March and the Partnership Policy contributed to finding a solution through effective dialogue.

What we call the Trinity Education is centred on the curricular and the extracurricular - the lecture room and the playing fields, the lab and the debating theatres, the library, ‘the ramp’ and the Pav. The Student Experience refers to all the ways that Trinity students grow and develop through co- and extra-curricular activities, including sports clubs and societies, volunteering, activism and the Students’ Union.

The strength of these activities is that they are student-led, reflecting the passions and interests of the students themselves and allowing them to achieve and recognize benefits for themselves and others outside the academic sphere. Students involved in at least one activity outside the classroom are happier, better-adjusted, enjoy college life more, create broader networks of friends, perform better academically, and are better prepared for life after graduation.
→ Much work was done this year within the Trinity Education Project to ensure students have the opportunities to develop and enhance the graduate attributes...
Much work was done this year within the Trinity Education Project to ensure students have the opportunities to develop and enhance the graduate attributes - to think independently, to communicate effectively, to develop continuously, and to act responsibly - through engaging in co-curricular and extracurricular activities as well as academic exchanges and internships.

The Dean of Students champions the student experience, integrating the out-of-class activities of students with the academic mission of the university to ensure that the years in Trinity provide students with a vast array of opportunities for involvement, leadership, and personal exploration.

Orientation & transition to Trinity
The student experience really starts with orientation and Freshers’ Week. This year the transition to Trinity has been further developed through the 'Trinity in 12 Weeks' initiative which runs themed weeks of activities and information sessions through first semester to ensure a successful transition to college life. These include Healthy Living, Managing Money, Study Skills, Healthy Relationships, and Making the most of College. The Counselling Service, in cooperation with the Students' Union, ran very successful consent workshops for over 800 first year students as part of a healthy relationships initiative. The workshops are being rolled out to even more students and have been modelled by other institutions.

Student societies
This year Trinity offered 126 student societies and 49 sports clubs. As every year, Freshers’ Week showcased the huge diversity of Trinity clubs and societies including political, musical, cultural, volunteering and professional as well as plain fun and entertainment. It was followed by a very successful ‘Fourth Week’ at the end of October that allows the entire College community to try out societies they may have missed joining.

International guests are a feature of many societies – including notably the Hist, the Phil, the Law Society and SOFIA. This year 20 ambassadors joined students at SOFIA’s annual Ambassador’s Ball. The Historical Society had a wide range of speakers ranging from US civil rights activist Rev. Al Sharpton to author Jung Chang to Catherine Day, former Secretary-General of the European Commission.

At the 2017 Student Achievement Awards Ireland, Trinity organisations and individuals did very well:

— James Cotter, Aontas na Mac Léinn, won Feachtas Gaeilge na Bliana
— Outstanding Contribution to Student Media went to Dominic McGrath from The University Times. The University Times also won Student Media Outlet of the Year
— Student Leader of the Year saw both Alice Macpherson and Kevin Keane of the TCDSU nominated with Kevin Keane taking home the honours.
Trinity College Dublin Students’ Union (TCDSU) celebrated its 50th anniversary at a gala dinner in the Dining Hall in June at which 70 TCDSU alumni came together to mark the occasion.

**Volunteering**

This year the Dean's Roll of Honour recognized one outstanding student for the Trinity Legacy Award for Volunteering, 26 students for the Dean of Students Leadership Award for Volunteering, and 62 for the 2018 Dean's List for Volunteering. The awards were presented by the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Katherine Zappone, TD. The Legacy Award went to Tom O’Malley, president of Trinity St. Vincent de Paul. Among his many long-lasting achievements were developing links with Friends of the Elderly, establishing Teen Club for young children and a second branch of Trinity Club for adults with intellectual disabilities.

**Student Spaces**

A campus-wide network of student spaces, 'Zón Mac Léinn', continues to be developed with the three new student spaces being completed, one in the Trinity Biomedical Sciences Institute (TBSI), one in D'Olier Street and one outside the planned 24-hour Hamilton library. A new space in Tallaght hospital is also being explored. Spearheaded by the Student Life Committee and the Students’ Union, these are spaces designed for students to spend time between classes and relax with their fellow students wherever they are.

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