



# **TCDSU**

## **STRATEGIC PLAN**

### **2019-2023**



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# PART I

# FOREWORD

A Chairde,

Trinity College Dublin Students' Union celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2018 and, since its foundation, each group of officers has been instrumental in its continuing success. As with any organisation, there have been ups and down, successes and failures, impactful campaigns and late night negotiations. As the organisation has grown to encompass the representation, services and support that it currently provides, it has become essential to develop a multi-year plan to enable the union to evolve. This plan represents the second such iteration of this forward thinking.

This is not an easy undertaking by the Sabbatical Team and staff of the Students' Union. Adhering to a plan over a number of years requires alignment, consistency and vigour. With its annual elections, the Union loses a substantial amount of institutional memory on a yearly basis. This strategic plan is essential in mitigating against this loss, to ensure the services to students are improved each and every year.

And that is what this strategic plan is all about - the students. To help us better serve them, better represent them, better support them. This document is the contract between the Students' Union and the students, binding us to achieve those goals - and I am sure future Union teams will achieve success in upholding this contract. We may not know what will happen in the coming years, but it is reassuring to know the custodians of the Union are thinking strategically on behalf of its members. And even if things change radically, remember the prophetic words from Dwight D. Eisenhower: "Plans are useless, but planning is indispensable."

**John Mannion**

**Chairman, Board of Trustees, TCDSU**

# PART II

# INTRO DUCTION

'We work for you' is the motto of the Students' Union and this message rings through in the ever-expanding array of services. From fighting to protect the quality of and access to education, providing for the welfare and well-being of its members, and catering to the social and political interests of the student community, members and their interests are central to everything TCDSU does.

Over the next four years, many questions about the future of education in Ireland will undergo much scrutinization, and it is imperative that a strong Union exists to fight for student interests throughout this process and ensure that these are heard on a national platform.

Within the College during this time, a new strategic plan, a provostorial election, and ambitious expansion plans will change the fabric of the University. The Union must be responsive and agile in catering to the

ever-evolving needs of an increasingly diverse student body.

In order to achieve this, we must build a robust Union that is effective, and focused in carrying out its mission.

This plan will see the Union build upon the decades of work and dedication put in by thousands of representatives, officers, and students. Capturing the mission of the Union in three goals:

- Promote and protect the quality of education in Trinity and work to remove barriers to entry and equality of experience for all current and future students**
- To campaign and provide for the betterment of the welfare, well-being and also for the societal interests of all of our members**
- To keep working to build a sustainable and robust TCDSU that is responsive and adaptable to students' needs**

For each of these goals, the outputs are designed and mapped out to strengthen each aspect of the Union over the course of the next four years. This plan is a living document, to be reported upon and delivered upon by the Officers of the Union. The membership, through its Council, owns this plan and it is upon them to ensure it is adhered to.

**Shane De Rís, TCDSU President 2018/19**

**PART III**  
**WHO**  
**WE ARE**  
**AND**  
**WHAT**  
**WE DO**

### **3.1**

## **FIFTY YEARS WORKING FOR THE STUDENTS OF TRINITY**

TCDSU was established in 1968 to work for the benefit of and provide services to the students of Trinity. The Union has worked to improve its members' academic lives within Trinity, and to address social and equality issues affecting Trinity's student body, higher education, and Ireland for more than fifty years.

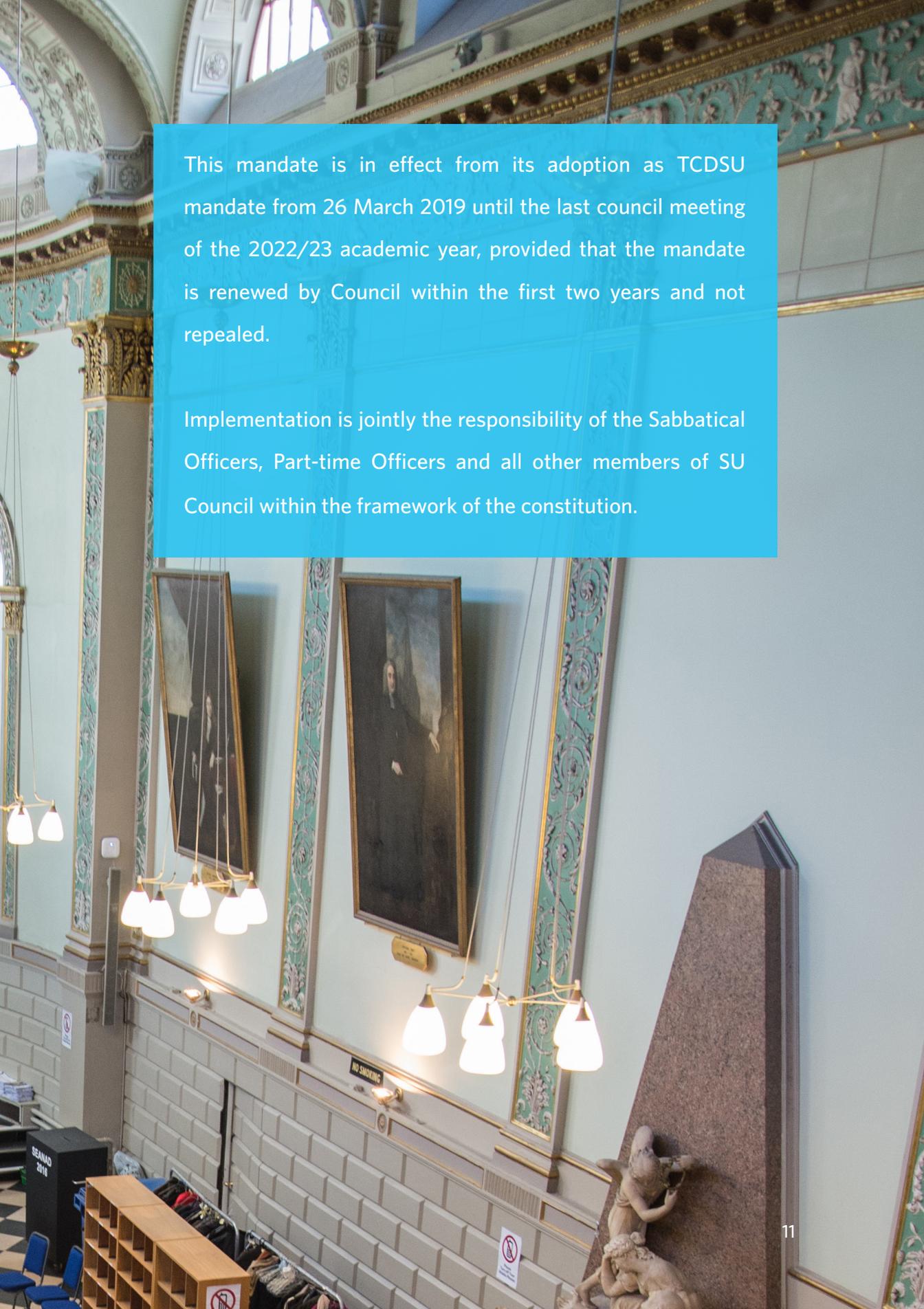
The past half century has seen some major changes in the SU and in the issues that it tackles and the kinds of students that make up the union.

This strategy sets the direction for the next four years of work for your SU, as we embark on the next 50 years. The next few years are not without challenges: the funding of the higher education is an increasingly important national policy issue, there remain significant barriers to entry and participation in Trinity (such as student accommodation) and both the university and the SU are going through periods of significant organisational change.

## 3.2 OUR STRATEGIC AND CONSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

TCDSU is an unincorporated membership association bound by a constitution with its assets and liabilities held on behalf of the members by a Board of Trustees. The constitution sets out the purpose and structures of the organisation and the rules for how decisions are made and how duties and responsibilities are distributed.

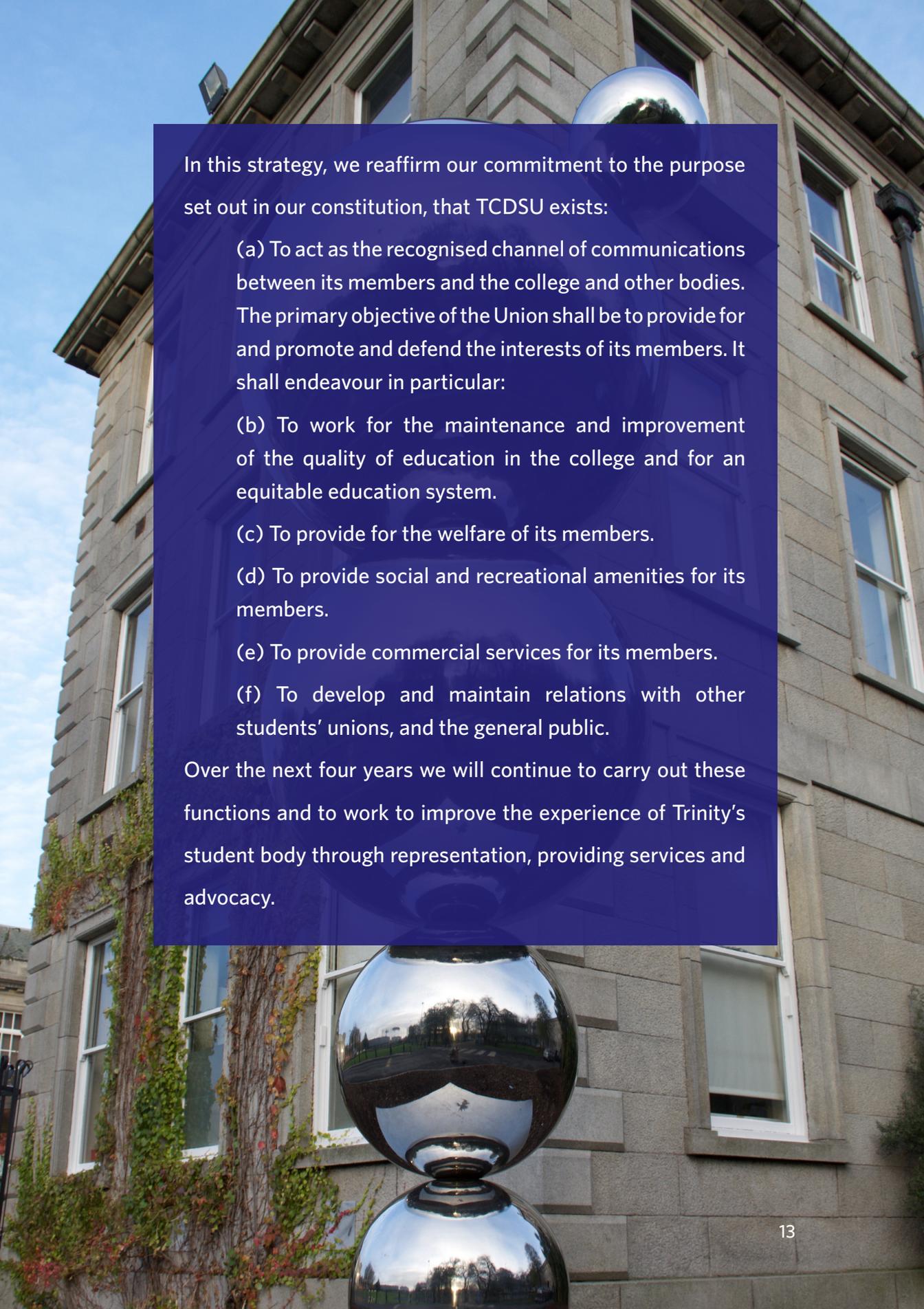
This Strategy is adopted by the TCDSU Council and as such all Officers are mandated to work towards the achievement of the Goals and Objectives set out in this document.



This mandate is in effect from its adoption as TCDSU mandate from 26 March 2019 until the last council meeting of the 2022/23 academic year, provided that the mandate is renewed by Council within the first two years and not repealed.

Implementation is jointly the responsibility of the Sabbatical Officers, Part-time Officers and all other members of SU Council within the framework of the constitution.

**PART IV**  
**OUR**  
**VISION**  
**FOR**  
**2023**

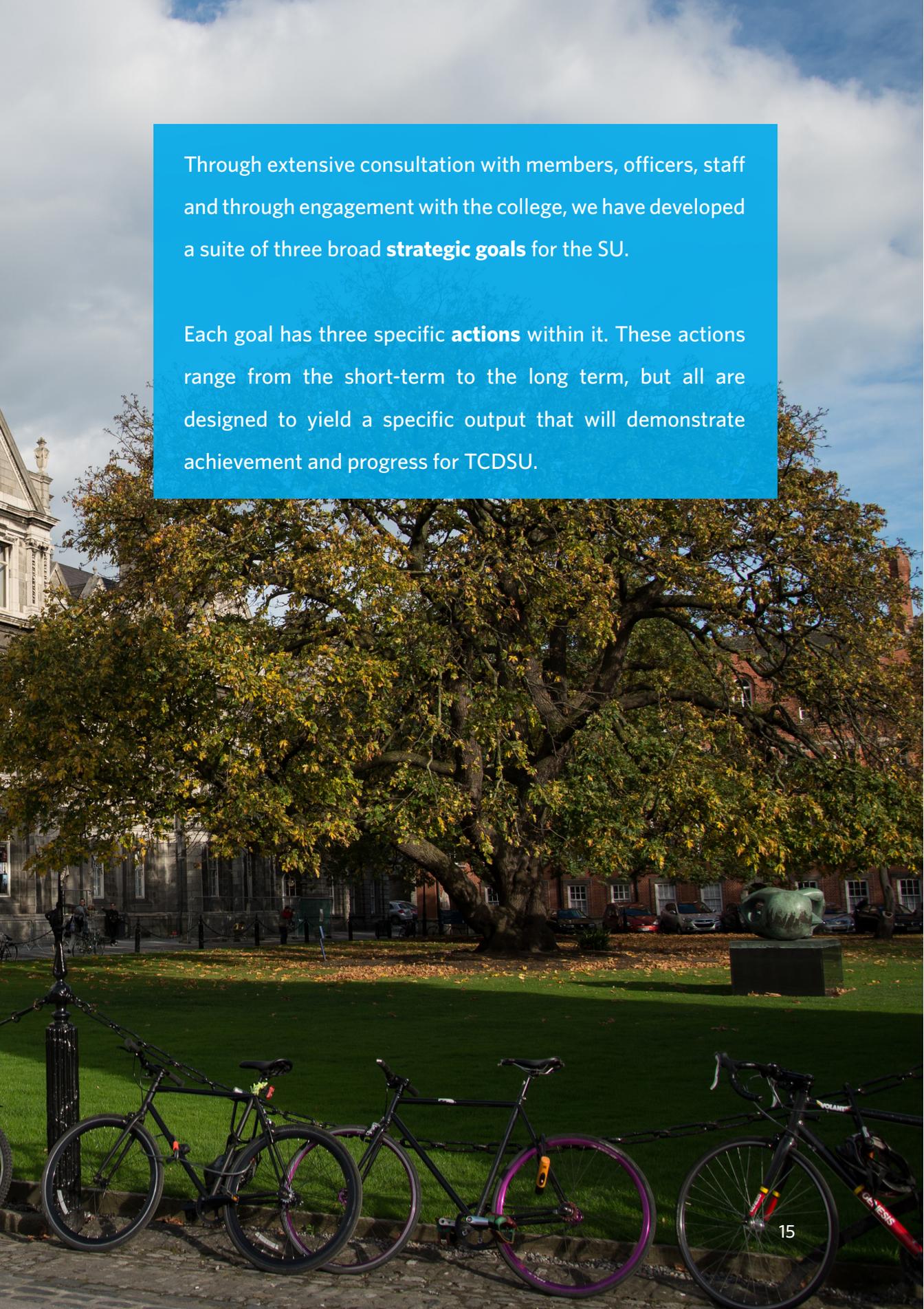


In this strategy, we reaffirm our commitment to the purpose set out in our constitution, that TCDSU exists:

- (a) To act as the recognised channel of communications between its members and the college and other bodies. The primary objective of the Union shall be to provide for and promote and defend the interests of its members. It shall endeavour in particular:
- (b) To work for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of education in the college and for an equitable education system.
- (c) To provide for the welfare of its members.
- (d) To provide social and recreational amenities for its members.
- (e) To provide commercial services for its members.
- (f) To develop and maintain relations with other students' unions, and the general public.

Over the next four years we will continue to carry out these functions and to work to improve the experience of Trinity's student body through representation, providing services and advocacy.

**PART V**  
**OUR**  
**STRATEGIC**  
**GOALS**  
**AND**  
**ACTIONS**

A large, leafy tree with green and yellow leaves stands in a park-like setting. In the background, a building with a clock tower is visible. In the foreground, several bicycles are parked on a paved area. The scene is set against a blue sky with some clouds.

Through extensive consultation with members, officers, staff and through engagement with the college, we have developed a suite of three broad **strategic goals** for the SU.

Each goal has three specific **actions** within it. These actions range from the short-term to the long term, but all are designed to yield a specific output that will demonstrate achievement and progress for TCDSU.

# GOAL ONE





**TRINITY!**  
**Can I help?**

**“TO PROMOTE AND PROTECT THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN TRINITY AND WORK TO REMOVE BARRIERS TO ENTRY AND EQUALITY OF EXPERIENCE FOR ALL CURRENT AND FUTURE STUDENTS”**

---

*A core priority of TCDSU is to represent the student body to the college and to work with, and to challenge the institution to make changes that are for the benefit of students. This means working in partnership with the college where our priorities align and ensuring students’ voices are heard where we disagree*

# GOAL 1.A

WE WILL MAINTAIN THE STUDENT PARTNERSHIP POLICY BETWEEN TCDSU AND TCD

## OUTPUT

Review and report on the relevant Student Partnership theme

Review of student representative positions within TCD committee structures

## BY

Annually

First Council 2019/20

# GOAL 1.B

WORK WITH THE COLLEGE ON THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TCD STRATEGIC PLAN TO 2024; AND HOLD THE COLLEGE TO ACCOUNT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THEIR STUDENT-FACING OBJECTIVES

## OUTPUT

Ensure that the development of the student experience in Trinity is central to the implementation of the college's strategic plan

## BY

Biannually

Annual reports to SU Council on the achievement of the college's strategic plan

Annually

# GOAL 1.C

PLAN AND FOCUS APPROPRIATE RESOURCES ON ACTIVITIES TO ADDRESS EQUITY OF ACCESS TO, QUALITY AND FUNDING OF HIGHER EDUCATION, IN TRINITY IN PARTICULAR

## OUTPUT

Present and execute campaign plans to SU Council for:

Equity of access \_\_\_\_\_

Quality \_\_\_\_\_

Funding \_\_\_\_\_

Report on collaboration with stakeholders (such as TCD Committees, the Irish Universities Association, USI etc.) on issues of mutual interest

## BY

Present and execute plans by:

2019/20

2020/21

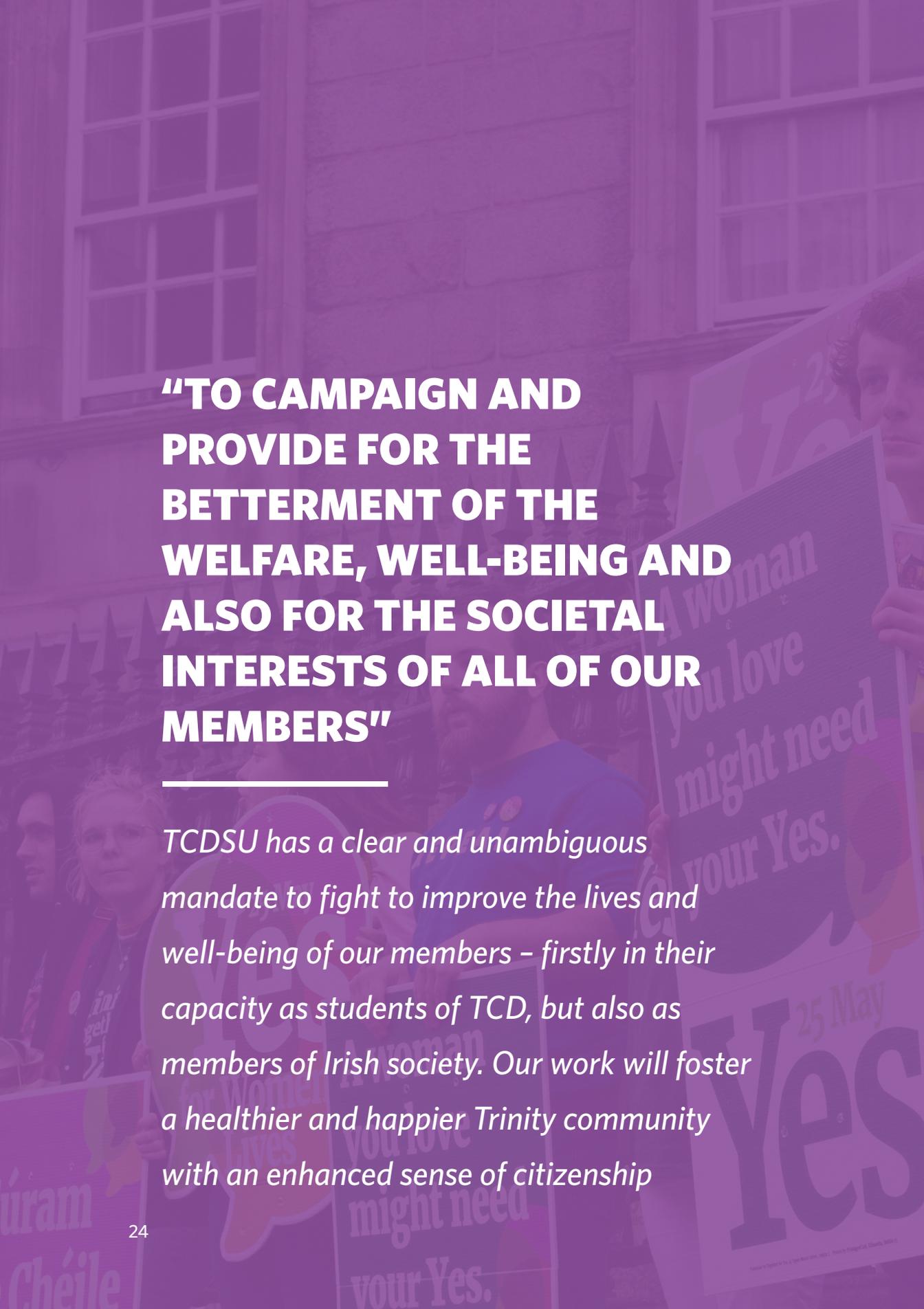
2021/22

Ongoing

# GOAL TWO





The background of the page is a photograph of a protest, overlaid with a semi-transparent purple filter. The image shows a crowd of people, with several individuals holding large signs. One prominent sign in the foreground reads "A woman you love might need your Yes." Another sign below it says "25 May Yes". The overall scene suggests a social or political demonstration, likely related to the Irish referendum on the 25th of May.

**“TO CAMPAIGN AND  
PROVIDE FOR THE  
BETTERMENT OF THE  
WELFARE, WELL-BEING AND  
ALSO FOR THE SOCIETAL  
INTERESTS OF ALL OF OUR  
MEMBERS”**

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*TCDSU has a clear and unambiguous mandate to fight to improve the lives and well-being of our members – firstly in their capacity as students of TCD, but also as members of Irish society. Our work will foster a healthier and happier Trinity community with an enhanced sense of citizenship*

# GOAL 2.A

REVIEW THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE ANNUAL HEALTH, WELFARE, CITIZENSHIP AND OTHER CAMPAIGNS, AIMING TO ESTABLISH MEASURES FOR **ENGAGEMENT, IMPACT AND VALUE**

## OUTPUT

Report on effectiveness of welfare campaigns

Report on effectiveness of external campaigns

Report on the effectiveness of environment/citizenship campaigns

## BY

Last Council 2019/20

Last Council 2020/21

Last Council 2021/22

# GOAL 2.B

ESTABLISH A COORDINATED AND SYSTEMIC APPROACH TO THE MANAGEMENT OF WELFARE AND ACADEMIC ADVISORY CASEWORK FOR THE BENEFIT OF MEMBERS

## OUTPUT

Review the existing casework management system

Invest in and establish standard operating protocols for casework

Provide statistical reports on casework loads to inform planning of service delivery, campaigns and engagement with College

## BY

First Council 2019/20

First Council 2020/21

Last Council 2021/22

# GOAL 2.C

CAMPAIGN FOR IMPROVEMENTS IN **STUDENT ACCOMMODATION** (IN TERMS OF AVAILABILITY, AFFORDABILITY AND QUALITY), AND FOR IMPROVEMENT OF **STUDENT SPACES** IN TRINITY

## OUTPUT

Monitor allocation of the student space levy towards a student centre and other student space initiatives

Review the accommodation advisory service with a view to improving accommodation services within the SU

Lobby for the provision of affordable student accommodation

## BY

Annually

Last Council 2019/20

Annually

# GOAL THREE







**"TO KEEP WORKING TO  
BUILD A SUSTAINABLE  
AND ROBUST TCDSU  
THAT IS RESPONSIVE AND  
ADAPTABLE TO STUDENTS'  
NEEDS"**

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*TCDSU operates in a changing and dynamic landscape. Our organisational model must adapt and evolve to ensure the future sustainability and quality of the services we provide and the campaigns we run*

# GOAL 3.A

REVIEW THE SU'S CONSTITUTION AND STRUCTURES TO ENSURE PROPER DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES AND ALIGNMENT WITH THE SU'S RESOURCING MODEL

## OUTPUT

Review Sabbatical & PTO positions and propose new structures

Establish new standard handover and succession plans for officer and staff positions

## BY

First Council 2019/20

Last Council 2020/21

# GOAL 3.B

ASSESS THE SU'S COMMERCIAL, FINANCIAL AND SERVICE POSITION ACROSS ALL SERVICES IN RELATION TO **SUSTAINABILITY, VALUE FOR MONEY AND IMPACT**

## OUTPUT

## BY

Return the SU to an annual financial surplus to ensure appropriate investment in services and campaigns

Last Council 2021/22

Review and report on commercial and student-facing service

Last Council 2020/21

Establish a forward-looking commercial and service development strategy

Last Council 2021/22

# GOAL 3.C

TO REPORT BIANNUALLY ON THE PROGRESS TOWARDS THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THIS STRATEGY AND ITS GOALS AND ACTIONS

## OUTPUT

Bi-annual reporting to Council and the Trustees

## BY

Biannually

THIS STRATEGIC PLAN WAS PREPARED BY **CROWE IRELAND**  
IN CONSULTATION WITH **TCDSU**, AND APPROVED BY TCDSU  
COUNCIL ON MARCH 26<sup>TH</sup> 2019

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**PHOTOGRAPHS** IVAN RAKHMANIN, ANNA MORAN,  
GUY BOGGAN, RÓISÍN POWER, SINÉAD BAKER,  
EDMUND HEAPHY



**Crowe**

A black rectangular sign with a white border is mounted on a black post. The sign contains text in English and Irish Gaelic. The background shows a large green lawn with a person sitting on the grass and a bicycle nearby. In the distance, there is a large, multi-story building with a green roof and many windows. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

**PLEASE KEEP OFF  
THE PLAYING FIELDS**  
*Ná gabh ar na pairceanna  
imeartha, led'thoil*

