Trinity College Dublin
The University of Dublin

Environment and Sustainability Committee

Thursday 20th June, 10am-12pm
Trinity Board Room

Minutes of Meeting

Present: Chair (Dr. Mary Kelly), VP Biodiversity and Climate Action & Secretary (Prof. Jane Stout), Dean of Research (Prof. Sinead Ryan), Librarian and College Archivist (Prof. Helen Shenton), Chief Operating Officer (Orla Cunningham), Vice Provost (Prof. Orla Sheils), Chief Financial Officer (Louise Ryan), Staff Representative (Dr. Conor O'Kelly), Mr. M. O'Cinneide.

Apologies: Dean of STEM (Prof. Sylvia Draper), Security Officer & Staff Rep. (Mr. Colm Ennis) and Chief Technical Officer & Unite Rep. (Maurice Sweeney),

Vacant: Undergraduate/Post-Graduate Student Representative.

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

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

ESC/23-24/26 **Minutes from last meeting**
Minutes accepted from the meeting of 2nd May.

Actions Call Over
Call over action is progressing with one outstanding action for the Chair.

Risk Register – Draft Trinity Sustainability Risk Register
Risk register was shared and updated with a more streamlined approach. The Committee approved the more concise approach.

Gift Acceptance Policy
The Trinity Development and Alumni gift acceptance policy was presented and discussed..The policy is stated in very general terms, but is the ESC is confident that the process in place is robust with due diligence and transparency. It was noted that times and attitudes change and therefore this policy should be consistently reviewed and ESC should have input

Ethics Policy
An updated ethics policy was presented and discussed. Ideally the draft policy should have come to the E&S committee beforehand, but it has already been approved. The VPBCA has already reviewed it and had input into it. The Committee noted that future iterations should be reviewed by ESC before being finalised.

Sustainability Policy (2017)
The sustainability policy is in place since 2017 and either requires updating or removing from the website as redundant now the Trinity Sustainability Strategy has been published. The VPBCA is awaiting advice from Secretaries Office. There was some discussion about the investment policy

statement and a section on sustainable investments. The policy takes account of ESG principles and ensures there are no investments in fossil fuels, armaments and tobacco as well as other areas related to ESG. The Committee noted that FSD is considering becoming a signatory to the UN Principles for Responsible Investments.

Capstone Project – Trinity East

A UG Capstone Project entitled '*A flood risk analysis of a low-laying region within Dublin City*' was shared with the committee which studied the potential risks associated with a projected 200yr flooding event in the south docks. This dissertation has already been shared with the Critical Infrastructure Committee (CIC) and Trinity East team. The study concluded that is a need to plan for such events in a shorter space of time – possibly within the next 30yrs and that Trinity should examine ways to mitigate coastal flooding including implementing a flood action plan.

The Committee noted that the report is an undergraduate student project submitted as part of heir degree award and not a peer reviewed study. The Committee commended the work and is satisfied that CIC will ensure appropriate flood planning is in place for th site. The ESC will monitor all development at Trinity East from an environmental perspective.

Further discussion focused on how to best use student research in general (in terms of feeding in, linking up, capturing outputs).

This project is an example of a living lab project and the recruitment of an ESD Student Experience Officer to support the development of a living lab implementation plan will support this.

A new Director for Trinity East will be in place over the coming weeks, and this will further increase capacity within the team. .

> Action 26.1 – Ask the new Director for Trinity East to present to the committee over the coming months.

ESC/23-24/27 Key Updates from other principal committees (from members of those committees)

Critical Infrastructure Committee:
- Cost of not doing things i.e. deferred maintenance is one example whereby costs have increased due to long standing maintenance issues.
- Iveagh grounds – this proposal can support Healthy Trinity also in terms of the objectives, and the potential climate and biodiversity benefits should be articulated.
- Sustainability – there is some reference to it, but more information may be required in relation to IT.

People & Culture Committee: focusing on risk and reward and identifying what needs to be progressed over time.

Finance Committee: last finance meeting was in May and it was agreed that capital projects would also look at non-financial reporting with respect to environmental reporting and impacts.

Risk and Compliance committee: sustainability issues are now in the top risks for the university (relating to risks of meeting climate targets).

ESC/23-24/28 Climate Action Roadmap

Trinity Sustainability is responsible for submitting annual Roadmaps. Previous roadmaps (March and Nov 2023) are on the website https://www.tcd.ie/sustainability/resources/sustainability-reports/.

Two presentations were delivered focusing on:
- Legislation, policy and reporting requirements of the Climate Action Roadmap.
- SEAI Gap to Target tool update, which outlined progress made to date with respect to our GHG emissions reduction and energy efficient target. A draft decarbonisation plan was also presented,

which focused on the infrastructure required to meet our targets (air source heat pumps, PV's, energy centres and district heating), the costs associated with increased electricity use (increased costs when switching to non-fossil fuel sources), challenges faced (electrification of the grid) and opportunities (Energy Performance Contracts, District Heating). There is a need for a) investment to assess what is required (consultants fees) b) to develop a plan for the installation of key infrastructure over the next three years and c) a communications plan to inform the community about the plan and to support behaviour change.

- The committee approved the draft Climate Action Roadmap 2024 for submission to HEA and SEAI.

Action 28.1: Continue to develop the Decarbonisation Plan and prioritise the projects with a budget.
Action 28.2: VCBCA and CFO to meet to discuss the funding opportunities for the projects.
Action 28.3: CAR and Decarbonisation plan to be presented to Board at first meeting in 2024-25.

ESC/23-24/29 **Healthy Trinity**

A presentation was delivered which outlined the work undertaken by Healthy Trinity and how it intersects with sustainability.

ESC/23-24/30 **College Strategic Plan**

The Vice Provost gave an overview of the formal process for the development of the new Strategic Plan for the college for the next 5 years. The consultation is now open, and a survey has been sent out to all staff members which can be completed as individuals, groups or units. The committee gave suggestions to the VP/CAO, which were noted, and agreed that a formal written response was not necessary, that the wording suggested by the VPBCA in the Trinity Sustainability submission was appropriate.

ESC/23-24/31 **Trinity Sustainability Updates**

Discussion on recruitment of staff to Trinity Sustainability, upcoming email to staff about climate leadership training opportunities and progress of the NTA funded TCD transport study.

ESC/23-24/32 **AOB**

The committee approved the SDSN letter to the UN Summit of the Future and recommended the Provost sign.

Next meeting 19th September 2024.

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