

The University of Dublin

Trinity College

Minutes of Student Services Committee Meeting, 27th April 2006

<i>Present</i>	Dean of Students (Mr B Misstear), Senior Tutor (Dr C Laudet), Deputy Treasurer (Mr I Mathews), Dr M Coffey, Mr S Gannon, Ms S O'Brien, Dr A Piesse, Mr R Sheridan.
<i>Apologies</i>	College Secretary (Mr M Gleeson), Senior Lecturer (Prof C Kearney), Ms M Leahy, Dr P P Walsh.
<i>In attendance</i>	Ms G Conroy

SECTION A

- SS/05-06/053 Minutes** The minutes of the meeting held on 21st February 2006 were approved and signed.
- SS/05-06/054 Matters Arising from the Minutes** Matters arising from the Minutes were discussed and are recorded below (see minutes **SS/05-06/055**, **SS/05-06/056**, **SS/05-06/057**, **SS/05-06/058**)
- SS/05-06/055 Student Services Strategic Plan** The Plan would be launched at 4 pm on Tuesday 2 May in the East Dining Hall at a short reception to which the staff of all the Student Services, the Executive Officers, the Deans and Heads of Schools, the Director of Accommodation and Catering, the CSC executive and staff, the Publications Executive, DUCAC executive, the GSU and SU sabbatical officers, the Senior Dean, the Junior Dean, the Warden of Trinity Hall, the assistant junior deans and assistant wardens, were invited. The Provost and the Dean of Students would speak.
- SS/05-06/056 SDS, CAS and SCS Reports** It had been proposed that all three review reports would be presented by the Provost to Board at its June meeting. The Dean of Students would be present to respond.
- SS/05-06/057 Line Management of SDS** On endorsement of the SDS review report by Board, the line management issue would be addressed.
- SS/05-06/058 Estimates for 2005-2006** There had been no response from the Senior Lecturer to the query on the costs of examinations and registration.
- SS/05-06/059 Quality Review Report for the Student Counselling Service** A report from the Provost to Board on the review of the Student Counselling Service had been circulated, and was presented to the committee by the Dean of Students, in the unavoidable absence of the College Secretary.

The overall impression of the reviewers was that the SCS, which had undergone considerable growth in the last 11 years, was well integrated into the College community, and contributed well to the College's agenda and needs through the professionalism and creative endeavours of its committed staff. The staff:student ratio of 1:3200 was higher than the best practice ratio of 1:2000. The reviewers noted that the service was under-resourced, with an unacceptable dependency on short-term contracts, an issue that had been addressed to some extent since the report had been received.

The reviewers highlighted the need for effective waiting lists to reduce excessive waiting times, and the need to inform clients at the outset the extent of what was being offered, i.e., the number of sessions. A lack of clarity between the role of the SCS and that of CAPSL in Learning Support was also highlighted. Research projects, especially the Peer Support Project, had received positive comments. The working relationship between the SCS and the College Health Service could be strengthened, in particular to benefit the development of such key initiatives as Mental Health Strategy and Policy.

The reviewers, taking as a starting point the needs of the College and the student body, recommended that College should consider two alternative models for the strategic development of the SCS: a) the SCS should retain the current organisation but change its name (to reflect its role in providing learning support) and secure adequate and reliable funding, **or**, b) the service should separate Counselling and Learning Support into two separate units, with Learning Support being relocated within CAPSL. The Dean noted that since receipt of the report, 2.5 short-term (HEA funded) learning-support posts in SCS had been converted to contracts of indefinite duration, a commitment by College in line with the recommendations of the external reviewers and the Student Services Strategic Plan.

The Dean of Students and the Director of the Service welcomed the report, agreeing that the issue of staffing was critical and commenting that a move to CAPSL by Learning Support would create difficulties in relation to the skills base within the core group in SCS, and would generate additional resource implications. The committee agreed that the location of the Learning Support function required urgent decision and that a key factor in determining location should be the delivery of a high quality service to students. Accordingly the Dean of Students was requested to hold discussions with the Senior Lecturer, the Director of CAPSL and the Director of the Student Counselling Service in relation to the location of Learning Support and the management and resourcing of this function.

The committee noted and approved the report's recommendations to Board, that the Service should:

- (i) consolidate its strategic objectives in the context of the strategic plan for Student Services;
- (ii) review its procedures and processes for dealing with periods of peak demand for the Service, and consider how this might be differently addressed;
- (iii) review the relationship with other student support areas, including the Health Service, with a view to exploring how each area could get maximum benefit from mutual co-operation;
- (iv) in conjunction with Student Services Committee, and in cooperation with other support areas, review requirements for IT Services.

It was noted that €30,000 had been allocated to Student Services from the Change Fund for shared IT Support.

Following discussion on staffing with contracts of indefinite duration, the draft Teaching and Learning Strategic Plan, and the necessity that Board be asked for direction on recommendation (i) below from the reviewers, the committee noted and approved the recommendations that College should:

- (i) taking account of the alternative possibilities for Student Learning support – through the Student Counselling Service or through CAPSL – consider where and how this may be most appropriately supported;

- (ii) through the Student Services Committee, and working with the Site and Facilities Committee and the Director of Buildings, consider how physical access to the Counselling Service for students with a disability could be improved;
- (iii) consider, through the Student Services Committee, the adequacy of resources, including staffing, available to the Service, in the context of changing student demographics, including the increasing numbers of international and non-traditional students.

- SS/05-06/060 Report of the College Day Nursery** The Senior Tutor presented the report, highlighting that the Day Nursery had come out of deficit at the year end, due in no small part to excellent management by the supervisor and line manager. The capacity of the Nursery had been insufficient to respond to demand, with a waiting list in September 2005 of 123. No further progress on increasing capacity by either relocation or extension had been made to date. A Working Party had reviewed the College Day Nursery in 2003; most of its recommendations had been implemented, though the issue of the future line management had still to be resolved. The Dean of Students would be meeting with the Bursar, the Chair of the Day Nursery Committee and the College Secretary to discuss the appointment of a new line manager and the possibilities for expanding the capacity of the crèche.
- SS/05-06/061 Report of the Financial Assistance Committee** The Senior Tutor presented the report, highlighting the smooth administration of Financial Assistance to an ever-increasing number of students. The Benefactions Fund had been reviewed during the year to devise means of optimising access to funds where there were strict criteria for disbursement. The total disbursed by the Financial Assistance Committee in the year 2004-05 had been €166,177. Childcare and accommodation costs are the single most pressing financial needs of students. The ESF Student Assistance Fund had been audited during the year, highlighting some inconsistencies in the reporting requirements as communicated at the time, vis-à-vis the audit regulations and expectations some 3 years later.
- SS/05-06/062 Report from the NASPA Conference** The Dean of Students had attended the annual conference of NASPA, an immense umbrella organisation of Student Services in North America. The conference had had 5,000 delegates with numerous parallel sessions. There had been an emphasis on Learning Development in a campus-wide context, with measurable learning goals, facilitated by Student Affairs personnel. Successful student social space, intern programmes for Student Affairs personnel, academic induction programmes that incorporate presentations from Student Affairs personnel, parental involvement, and student feedback were some of the key components highlighted as making positive contributions to the student experience. One of the current concerns expressed by Student Affairs personnel was the potential impact of 'virtual friend network' computer sites, such as Bebo, Facebook and MySpace.
- SS/05-06/063 Any Other Urgent Business** The closure of the SU shop in the Trinity Centre, St James's Hospital for a second time due to non-viability was disappointing. Best practice in the provision of Student Services in off-campus facilities was addressed in the Student Services Strategic Plan. The broader issue of linkages between off-campus locations and the main campus was a matter for Board.

There would be a further meeting of the committee in June.

Section B

There were no items in this section

Section C

SS/05-06/064 Chair of the Student Counselling Service Committee

This item had been withdrawn.

SS/05-06/065 Student Counselling Service Committee

The committee noted and approved the amended terms of reference.

SS/05-06/066 Student Counselling Service Committee

The committee noted and approved minutes of 1st March 2005 and 22nd June 2005.

SS/05-06/067 Capitation Committee

The committee noted and approved minutes of 10th November and 6th December 2005.

SS/05-06/068 Financial Assistance Committee

The committee noted and approved minutes of 27th October and 24th November 2005, and 26th January 2006.

SS/05-06/069 College Day Nursery Committee

The committee noted and approved minutes of 6th May and 17th November 2005.

SS/05-06/070 Student Disability Service Committee

The committee noted and approved minutes of 27th February 2006.

SS/05-06/071 Careers Advisory Service Committee

The committee noted and approved draft minutes of 6th December 2005.

SS/05-06/072 Graduation Destinations: Class of 2004

The committee noted and approved the report to the Careers Advisory Service Committee, December 2005.

Signed:

Date: