

The University of Dublin

Trinity College

Minutes of Student Services Committee Meeting, 1st February 2007

Present Dean of Students (Mr B Misstear, Chair), Treasurer's representative (Ms Janet Byrne), Senior Tutor (Dr C Laudet), Ms D Flynn (Secretary), Mr T McAuley, Ms D Keogh, Ms Ruth Pe Palileo.

Apologies College Secretary (Mr M Gleeson), Dr M Coffey, Prof PP Walsh, Senior Lecturer (Prof C Kearney), Dr E MacCarthaigh.

SECTION A

SS/06-07/32 Minutes The minutes of the meeting held on 8th December 2006 were approved and signed.

SS/06-07/33 Matters Arising from the Minutes Matters arising from the Minutes were discussed and are recorded below (see minutes **SS/06-07/34**, **SS/06-07/35**, **SS/06-07/36**, **SS/06-07/37**).

SS/06-07/34 Working Party on Mental Health A meeting to discuss the draft policy had been held on 24th January 2007. The draft is to be forwarded initially to the College Secretary and Registrar for consideration with regard to its legal and policy implications.

SS/06-07/35 Student Services Committee Terms of Reference The revised draft terms of reference had been forwarded to the College Secretary on the 8th of December, following approval by the Committee earlier that day. In response to an enquiry from the Dean of Students, the Secretary's Office had clarified that it was up to the Student Services Committee if it wanted to request the subcommittees to revise their terms of reference along similar lines. The Dean recommended that a decision on this should await any feedback from Board on the terms of reference of the Principal Committee.

SS/06-07/36 Disability Act 2005: Responses from Student Services The combined report on the review of the accessibility of Student Services had been forwarded to the College Secretary's office on 8th December. The College Secretary will refer the physical access issues outlined in the report to the Site and Facilities Committee, and other access issues will be brought to the attention of other appropriate fora in College.

SS/06-07/37 The College Open Day This Senior Tutor reported on the open day which took place on 13th December, and also on the open evening for Mature Students. The students attending the open day had sought general information and also had specific questions on e.g. sport and sports scholarships. Several queries from students regarding disability issues had been dealt with during the open evening for mature students and the Disability Service had remained open for the evening.

SS/06-07/38 Estimates for 2006-2207
Introducing this item, the Dean of Students said that HEA guidelines recommended that each college should have a forum, containing student

representatives, which would be consulted by college authorities in relation to the proposed distribution of the student charge, and that the Student Services Committee provided such a forum. He also indicated that the HEA guidelines stated that the student charge was intended to contribute towards the cost of student services, registration and examinations.

Presenting this item, the Financial Resources Manager drew the Committee's attention to the documents that had been circulated in advance of the meeting: the Draft Estimates for 2007 and the Actual Income and Expenditure figures for 2006. She also pointed out that the Draft Estimates for 2007 are to be presented to Executive Officers, Finance Committee and Board for approval in February 2007, and so may be subject to change. The Dean pointed out that he and Mr Sean Gannon had met with Treasurer's Office representatives on two occasions in advance of this meeting, to discuss the figures in detail and to seek clarifications where appropriate.

Outlining the basis for the preparation of the Estimates the following points were highlighted:

- The student charge workings show the costs charged to the *cista communis* under the headings as shown.
- The student charge is set by the Minister for Education annually. For the 2006/07 academic year, this charge was set at €800 per student (2005/06: €775). Of this total, €250 is offset annually against the reduction in core grant income notified by the HEA in 2002.
- Part-time students and postgraduates are deemed to pay the student charge. Part-time student charge income is calculated at a modified rate of 39% of the student charge.
- The College has no discretion over the level of the student charge.

Turning to the Actual 2006 workings, the Financial Resources Manager said that these were based on the actual audited Funding Statements for the year ended 30 September 2006, which were approved by Board on 24th January 2007. The figures excluded Targeted Initiative Funding, but included provision for FTWA and for incremental salary increases. In relation to the positive overall variance of €190k between the Actual 2006 outcome and the 2006 Estimates, this was primarily a result of under spends in certain areas (e.g. due to delays in appointments) that have been carried forward into 2007.

The Draft Estimates for 2007 were presented and it was pointed out that the estimates are based on the best information to hand at the current time. The income for 2007 shows an increase of €400k on the previous year, which is a result of an increase in the net student charge of €25 per student set by the Minister in August 2006.

The pay estimates are based on last year's payroll plus known pay awards, increments and appointments, while the non pay allocations are based on the baseline budget and nursing allocations, together with the under spends brought forward from 2006. The Committee noted that the Disability Service was not in receipt of a "nursing allocation" (the *cista communis* portion of the Disability Service budget is included under the "Student Services" budget heading for the first time in these 2007 draft estimates). The Financial Resources Manager agreed to look into this matter.

In the discussion which followed, several points were noted:

- Some monies/under spends were carried forward by some Services (notably Careers and Counselling) and that these related to staff salaries which were being paid from non pay budgets, unavoidable delays in filling posts, or FTWA accruals which were less than budget.
- The actual non pay budget for Sports had decreased as the department no longer pays a subsidy for the use of the Markievicz swimming pool.
- The budget for Health was higher in the 2006 Actuals as there were once-off costs associated with the recruitment the new Medical Director.
- Space costs have increased considerably. The calculation is based on the total square metreage associated with student recreational / social usage multiplied by the unit cost per square metre, using the HEA unit cost returns and incremented by inflation (11% in 2007 due to the rise in energy costs). It was noted that ARAM calculates space cost differently. The Committee felt there should be a unified way of calculating space costs throughout the College.
- The general "Student Services" budget heading includes the Tutorial Service, the costs associated with Deans (Junior Dean, Senior Dean, Dean of Students and Assistant Junior Deans), the annual subsidy to the Day Nursery and certain Accommodation Office costs. The Accommodation cost is based on the full time salary for an EO. The Dean of Students had met recently with the Accommodation Officer and agreed that Student Services should fund only 50% of this EO. The Dean therefore requested that the Financial Resources Manager make this adjustment in the 2007 Estimates.

In the context of the Student Services Strategic Plan 2006-2008, the Dean of Students noted that at the time of the Plan, the allocation of the student Services charge was 32% for examinations and registration and 68% for student services (2005 Estimates). It was recommended that the Action Plan could be funded if the student services' proportion increased to 74%. The 2006 Actuals and 2007 Draft Estimates indicate a division of approximately 30% : 70%. Welcoming this change, the Dean expressed the hope that further progress could be made towards the proposed 26% : 74% division.

The Student Services Strategic plan outlines several priorities actions. Actions related to the consolidation of learning support posts and the creation of a second disability officer post have been implemented by College. Other proposed actions include increased core funding for the Health service and the development of shared IT systems for student services. In regard to Health, the Committee noted that the Health Centre's costs are rising, medical inflation is running at nearly 10%, and there will be a need to replace the College psychiatrist / Assistant Medical Director later this year (on the retirement of Dr Sinead O'Brien). In relation to IT development, a strategy is being prepared with IS Services using a once-off allocation from the Change Fund, but additional resources will be needed to implement the proposed IT and web-based systems. The Committee noted that the second sabbatical officer position in the GSU is also being funded by a once-off Change Fund allocation. Ms Pe Palileo informed the Committee that the GSU is currently reviewing its operation, including the supports it provides to students.

The Financial Resources Manager reiterated that the 2007 Estimates are draft only and have to be approved by Executive Officers taking into account the

grant notification which College expects to receive shortly. While the Committee appreciated that the financial outlook is not optimistic, it felt that it was important to highlight to Executive Officers the funding requirements for achieving the objectives of the Student Services Strategic Plan. Accordingly, the Dean undertook to write to the Executive officers, enclosing a draft minute of this discussion.

The Dean of Students thanked the Financial Resources Manager for her presentation and noted how it had provided an opportunity for the student representatives to participate in discussions on the proposed division of the student charge, in keeping with HEA guidelines. The Dean also thanked Ciara Lynch from the Treasurer's Office for all her work in preparing the draft 2007 Estimates and in responding to queries.

SS/06-07/39 Any Other Urgent Business

Ms Flynn informed the Committee that Mr Gerry Whyte has resigned as the Law School representative on the Student Counselling Committee. The Student Services Committee agreed to the nomination of Mr Alex Schuster to the Counselling Committee and asked Board to approve this nomination.

Section B

There were no items in this section

Section C

SS/06-07/40 College Day Nursery Committee

The Committee noted and approved the minutes of the meeting of 24th November 2006.

SS/06-07/41 College Health Committee

The Committee noted and approved the minutes of the meeting of 21st September 2006.

SS/06-07/42 Financial Assistance Committee

The Committee noted and approved the minutes of the meeting of 9th November 2006.

SS/06-07/43 Sports and Recreation Committee

The Committee noted and approved the minutes of the meeting of 21st February 2005 and minutes of the meeting of 12th September 2006

SS/06-07/44 Student Counselling Service Committee

The Committee noted and approved the minutes of the meeting of 13th November 2006.

SS/06-07/45 Student Disability Service Committee

The Committee noted and approved minutes of 21st November 2006.