

The University of Dublin

Trinity College

Minutes of Student Services Committee Meeting, 18<sup>th</sup> April 2007

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

*Apologies* Senior Lecturer (Prof C Kearney), Dr M Coffey, Prof PP Walsh.

*In attendance* Ms G Conroy.

SECTION A

**SS/06-07/58 Minutes** The minutes of the meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2007 were approved and signed.

**SS/06-07/59 Matters Arising from the Minutes** Matters arising from the Minutes were discussed and are recorded below (see minutes **SS/06-07/60**, **SS/06-07/61**, **SS/06-07/62**).

**SS/06-07/60 Working Party on Mental Health** Meetings of the Working Party had been convened to which the Registrar, the College Secretary, the Junior Dean, a representative of the Chaplains, and the Warden of Trinity Hall were invited. Legal advice on duty of care is now being sought, following which the updated draft policy would be circulated and considered by the Committee.

**SS/06-07/61 Estimates for 2006-2007** The Dean had sent a follow-up memo to the College Secretary re-iterating the anticipated additional budgetary requirements for meeting priority items, including the College Health Service in connection with the forthcoming retirements of the two psychiatrists, as well as the pressing need for a budgetary allocation for IT support for all Student Services. The Executive Officers had reviewed the submission, and recommendations are to be considered by Board in May.

**SS/06-07/62 College Health Service Annual Report 2005-2006** This report will be presented at the May Committee meeting, along with reports from Careers Advisory Service, Sports and Recreation, and Capitation Committee.

**SS/06-07/63 Revised Student Services Committee Terms of Reference** Minor revisions to the Terms of Reference had been made in line with suggestions from the Assistant College Secretary, and would be sent to the next Board meeting. Each sub-committee should receive a copy, for guidance in the annual revision of their committee Terms of Reference, and to ensure consistency in reporting structure to the SSC. Performance Evaluation of Principal Committees and sub-committees is desirable, and The Secretary and Board are to consider how this might best be achieved.

**SS/06-07/64 College Day Nursery Annual Report 2005-2006** It was noted that most of the students' children in the Day Nursery were not babies - the Day Nursery has only six baby places. A waiting list of 141 emphasised the pressing need for expansion. The budgetary deficit had been eliminated in the year, a notable achievement. The index-linked subsidy is provided from the Student Charge.

The appointment of a line manager is the most urgent action required. The Secretary informed the Committee that imminent new appointments in Staff Office should enable the appointment of a suitably qualified senior HR person as line manager.

**SS/06-07/65 Financial Assistance Committee Annual Report 2005-2006** The main points of note in the Report were the increasing numbers of students seeking financial assistance; numbers of students in receipt of support had increased by almost 50% from 2004-2005. The second instalments of awards had been reduced by 35% to enable all qualifying applicants to receive support. A significant increase in the number of applications from Nursing students is being brought to the notice of the School of Nursing. There are also increasing numbers of applications from “non-traditional” students from outside the EU, but who have leave to remain in Ireland: they are required to pay EU fees, which is a heavy burden, as it is often on top of childcare and associated family costs and responsibilities.

The application for an increase in the basic SU Hardship Grant from central funds had been made in November 2006 to Executive Officers, and granted. The Dean thanked the Committee Officers for the continuing very valuable work in student support.

**SS/06-07/66 Student Services Risk Assessment Reports** The production of Risk Assessment Reports by student services, compiled in relation to the College Risk Register, had been requested in order to identify the main risk issues that need to be managed. Risk assessment is an emerging and developing facet of management and risks are assessed on the basis of Severity and Probability, along with Residual Risk.

The Dean identified some risks from the College Risk Register that pertained especially to Student Services; medium level financial risk that Schools becoming more autonomous might leave central administration under-resourced; a high level HR risk that poor administrative accommodation would militate against recruitment and cohesiveness in admin areas; a medium level academic risk that College student services would be inadequately resourced to serve the needs of an increased Post Graduate population; a low-level Student Support risk in relation to international and post-graduate students in need of support from under-resourced services, and emphasised the need to review priorities and scope, and ensure implementation, of Student Services Strategic Plan; a high level risk for Management and Administration in relation to delivery of services and retention of key support staff; a high level risk for Management and Administration in the event of a Critical Incident and the management of such an incident including stress debriefing (CISD); a medium level risk that the tutorial system would have difficulty in attracting academic staff to volunteer for this role; a high level risk that College would fail to deliver a new Student Administration System thereby damaging the College’s reputation; a low-level risk that College would incur legal action by students under the Disability Act 2005.

The following high level risks were noted on the individual services’ registers:

**Careers Advisory Service:** Failure to retain staff could lead to a loss of expertise not easily replaced. Because mobility-impaired users do not have

equality of access to the main facilities at East Chapel, action could be taken against the College for breach of the Disability Act 2005.

**Student Counselling Service:** Critical Incident Plan should be included in review of College emergency plans; the service accommodation is inadequate and is not accessible to all students with disabilities; staff concerns that exiting from the building in the event of a fire would be very difficult.

**Student Disability Service:** risk that as the profile and diversity of TCD's student population changes in line with legal requirements, the level of support provided by the Disability Office will not be sufficient; staffing within the Service is still under-resourced thus staff unable to carry out detailed supports with students, and unable to participate in development opportunities that would improve services – services will not be adequate; lack of integrated database, required to function efficiently, continues to lead to inefficient work practices.

**College Health Service:** Service is stretched to the point of being on borderline of being able to provide a safe service; two long-serving consultant psychiatrists are both due to retire in June 2007; management of significant communicable disease on Campus; business continuity procedures in the event of major damage such as fire or flood.

**Sport** Sports facilities and activities are all around the Campus and off-Campus with good risk reduction training, informed recruiting and good management in place, and keeping abreast of legislation. The main risks are: the financial risks associated with the new Sports Hall that has a €2 million turnover. DUCAC is in the process of preparing its own risk register.

All services are required to ensure that staff attend a stated number of training events on a 3-5 year cycle so as to ensure professional registrations this has time as well as financial implications for services

The Dean thanked the services for their work to date on preparing their risk registers; further guidance will be provided by the Secretary's Office as to how these risk reviews are undertaken in the future. It was noted that the Student Service Heads and Directors meet twice annually to review the Student Services Strategic Plan, which includes a review of how the Services are resourced in respect of responding to the needs of Non traditional and international students.

SS/06-07/67

**Date of Next Meetings**

Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> May at 4 pm

Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> June at 4 pm

SS/06-07/68

**Any Other Urgent Business** There was no other urgent business

**SECTION B**

*There were no items in this section*

**SECTION C**

*There were no items in this section*