

The University of Dublin

Trinity College

Minutes of Student Services Committee Meeting, 4th December 2007

<i>Present</i>	Dr Amanda Piesse (Chair), Ms D Flynn (Secretary), Senior Lecturer (Prof C Kearney), Dean of Students (Dr G Whyte) Deputy Treasurer's Representative (Ms A Mulcahy), Senior Tutor (Dr M O'Regan), Prof H Delany, SU Welfare Officer (Ms U Faulkner), GSU President (Mr A Frenda), Dr E MacCarthaigh, Mr T McAuley.
<i>Apologies</i>	College Secretary (Mr M Gleeson), Prof S Matterson.
<i>In attendance</i>	Ms G Conroy

SECTION A

- SS/07-08/44 Minutes** The Minutes of the meeting held on 13th November 2007 were approved and signed.
- SS/07-08/45 Matters Arising from the Minutes** Matters arising from the Minutes were discussed and are recorded below, (see Minutes **SS/07-08/46**, **SS/07-08/47**, **SS/07-08/48**, **SS/07-08/49**, **SS/07-08/50**, **SS/07-08/51**).
- SS/07-08/46 Mental Health Working Party** The planning meeting for the formation of a Fitness to Practise Working Group had taken place on November 28th. It was well attended. The Dean of Students would follow up by meeting with Co-ordinator of Disability Services, and Bethan Collins. The Mental Health Working Party was awaiting estimates for printing the policy document. The Communications Office would provide guidance on design. The launch date would be finalised around the availability of the Minister of State at the Dept. of Health and Children as the invited main speaker. Opinions on the print run should be communicated to the Deans of Students; the Policy would also be available on the web.
- SS/07-08/47 College Day Nursery** The Senior Tutor, Dean of Students and the Chair of the Student Services Committee would meet with the College Secretary and the Staff Secretary on 17th December to discuss the situation.
- SS/07-08/48 Risk Management and Risk Registers** All Student Services risk registers bar that of the College Day Nursery had been provided to the College Secretary.
- SS/07-08/49 Governance of Irish Universities Document** The Chair reported that the subgroup (Dean of Students, the Chair, the SU Welfare Officer and SU President) had considered the Student Charter of 1995 very useful as a framework document, although it would require considerable revision. The

SU executive had approved its use, and the SU Council would be consulted. The sub group would report back to the Committee early in the new year, having completed the revisions.

SS/07-08/50 **Review of Student Services Strategic Plan** The proposed meeting of the Student Services' Heads Forum was becoming more urgent with the approach of the Estimates; it would be rearranged very shortly, and the Dean of Students would report back to the Committee.

SS/07-08/51 **Luce Hall Development** A preliminary meeting had been held among the SU, Mr McDonald, Trinity Foundation and the Bursar to move plans forward. The Chair, Nick Sparrow, Pat McDonnell, The Bursar and the President of the SU had also meet to discuss planning and fund raising. In response to a query from the GSU Vice President, The Chair undertook to ensure that the GSU would be included in future discussions. There would be regular reporting back to the SSC as matters progressed.

SS/07-08/52 **Estimates** The Estimates would be discussed at the Heads of Services forum in order to prioritise the rolling out of Student Services Strategic Plan actions, and brought back to the Committee at its January meeting.

SS/07-08/53 **Student Counselling Service Annual Report 2006-2007** Strategic objectives had been in line with those specified in the Student Services Strategic Plan. Over 90% of the objectives had been realised by the year end.

2006-07 had brought an overall 7% increase on 2005-06 in usage of the Service. One to one Counselling had increased by 12%. Highlights of the year included a successful application to European Science Foundation to run a workshop with international experts on 'Technology in counselling and psychotherapy: Mental health education and service delivery at university' over 2 days, which had taken place in May 2007. A mindfulness-based cognitive therapy group project had been successfully piloted in Trinity term. Feeling @ Home in TCD for International Students had run two pilot projects with 20 international students participating. The peer-supported online mental health portal had increased membership from 389 to 594 during the year. Two pieces of research around the portal had been presented at the International Conference for Suicide Prevention. Extended opening hours (to 8 pm one evening per week) pilot had proved worthwhile and would be continued one evening per week. An electronic outcomes measurement (a psychological instrument) pilot had been conducted; it was now planned to mainstream it throughout the Service. Mature students continued to present at a higher than average rate, as did students registered with the Disability Service. Stress and depression had been the most common complaints at presentation. On the learning Support side, writing and research skills, and a skills-development summer school had been offered to postgraduate students. One to one learning support consultations rose by 21%. Students are to be encouraged to attend the learning support workshops rather than one to one consultations when appropriate.

The Service website had been redesigned.

The Service continued its support, consultancy and training in Trinity Hall for Assistant Wardens, on general counselling skills for new Tutors, for Student Support Staff and for the Junior Dean and Assistant Junior Deans. The Service also provided continuing support to Niteline volunteers, and co-hosted with the Chaplaincy the Bereavement Support Group. On-going

professional development and training both in Ireland and the UK ensured the continued provision of a high-quality service.

Key items of concern are space and accommodation both of which are at crisis level, and impacting on service delivery. An interim space solution must be found in advance of the development of Luce Hall and its space potential. Student-2-Student funding is due to run out in April 2008. Funding to retain the Mental Health Portal is being sought through SIF application with other universities. Staffing is still below the recommended level; recognising that the appointment of an additional counsellor would not be possible, a sessional budget had been sought, to meet additional needs and based on a waiting list of more than two weeks.

The cost to *cista communis* of running the SCS (COUNSELLING AND LEARNING SUPPORT) for the year had been €866,265.

The Senior Lecturer thanked the Director for the comprehensive report, commending the Service for its very valuable contribution to Trinity life. Discussion on the increase in demand for counselling services could uncover no specific explanation. In response to a question from the SU welfare officer continuation of Student-2-student service would be actively pursued.

The Dean of Students and Director of Sport left the meeting at this point.

SS/07-08/54 Financial Assistance Committee Annual Report The Senior Tutor presented the report. The Committee had met 5 times in the year to approve financial assistance awards from 3 principal sources, Benefactions, Hardship fund and ESF Student Assistance Fund. In total 181 students received assistance, awards being paid in two instalments, some from more than one source. The numbers of students seeking assistance had increased rapidly, in particular Nursing students, who formed 33% of all recipients in 2006-07, and to date their number had risen to 39% for 2007-08. All applicants had been interviewed, and had to provide receipts to the amount awarded from the ESF Student Assistance Fund. The Student Sports Centre charge waiver had been administered by the Student Support Officer - 185 waivers had been processed to date. The significant increase in applications in the current year (at this point up from 119 to 156) had led the Financial Assistance Committee to reduce the second instalment award, payable towards the end of HT, by 60% to ensure that all eligible applicants could be assisted.

Thanks were recorded to the Student Support Officer for her role in supporting students in financial difficulties, and for preparing the report. In discussions on the plight of Nursing students, the majority of whom would be required to pay EU fees, although most would also be social welfare recipients, the Senior Lecturer suggested that this was a diversification and Access issue and recommended that the Financial Assistance Committee should consult with the Head of Nursing and the TAP Access Officer. It was also suggested that the matter should be discussed by the Directors of Nursing at a sector level and brought to the attention of the Department of Health

SS/07-08/55 Intermission of Studies Policy The Committee approved the recommendations contained in the Report of the Working Group on Intermission of Studies for Extra-curricular Reasons.

SS/07-08/56 Any Other Business There was no other urgent business.

SS/07-08/57 Date of Next Meeting - 8th January 2008

SECTION B

There were no items in this section

SECTION C

SS/07-08/58 College Day Nursery Committee
The Committee noted and approved the minutes of the meeting of 16th November 2007.

Signed:

Date: