

The University of Dublin

Trinity College

Minutes of Student Services Committee Meeting, 8<sup>th</sup> January 2008

*Present* Dr Amanda Piesse (Chair), Ms D Flynn (Secretary), Senior Lecturer (Prof C Kearney), Dean of Students (Dr G Whyte) College Secretary (Mr M Gleeson), Deputy Treasurer's Representative (Ms A Mulcahy), Senior Tutor (Dr M O'Regan), SU Welfare Officer (Ms U Faulkner), GSU President (Mr A Frenda), Dr E MacCarthaigh, Prof S Matterson.

*Apologies* Mr T McAuley.

*In attendance* Ms G Conroy

SECTION A

**SS/07-08/59 Minutes** The Minutes of the meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2007 were approved, following two corrections to **SS/07-08/51** in which 'meet' should have read 'met' and 'GSU Vice President' should have read 'GSU President', and signed.

**SS/07-08/60 Matters Arising from the Minutes** Matters arising from the Minutes were discussed and are recorded below, (see Minutes **SS/07-08/61**, **SS/07-08/62**, **SS/07-08/63**, **SS/07-08/64**, **SS/07-08/65**).

**SS/07-08/61 Mental Health Working Party** Following the meeting with Co-ordinator of Disability Services, and Bethan Collins on Fitness to Practise, the Dean of Students had sought information on core competencies from relevant staff in departments offering professional training. A Fitness to Practise meeting of UK universities to which representatives of professional bodies are invited, would take place on 11 February 2008. The Director of Student Counselling and the Coordinator of Disability Services expected to attend .

**SS/07-08/62 Governance of Irish Universities Document** Revision of the Student Charter of 1995 for use as a framework document continues.

**SS/07-08/63 Review of Student Services Strategic Plan** A review and forward planning day with an external facilitator, student services directors and key stakeholders would be held at the end of Hilary term.

**SS/07-08/64 Luce Hall Development** The Chair would meet the Director of Buildings on Wed 9 January to discuss both the Luce Hall Development, and Greenane as a potential satellite Day Nursery, and would report back to the Committee.

**SS/07-08/65 Tutorial Service Review and Senior Tutor Annual Report 06-07** The Senior Tutor presented the report. Highlights of the year had been the completion of the Mental Health Policy and planning for the quality review of the tutorial service. Thanks were recorded to the previous Senior Tutor Dr Claire Laudet, and to Ms Gaye Conroy and Ms Helen McLeod for their dedication and commitment in preparing for the review.

Preparation for the review had included web-based surveys of students, tutors, and student services, administrative and academic support staff. 1733 student replies had provided interesting feedback, revealing that 60% had felt no need to see their tutor , 70% rated their tutor as very good to excellent and 61% rated their tutor good in resolving issues. 56% reported becoming aware of the tutorial service from the orientation pack. Academic difficulties

was the main reason for seeking meetings with tutors. 14% of those surveyed regretted not having contacted their tutor sooner. It is hoped that the CAPSL Student Experience survey, to be administered during 2008, will include questions on the tutorial service.

The tutor survey had shown that the main challenges faced by tutors were time pressure and unrealistic expectations from some students. Less than full attendance at training workshops had been due to time pressures. Low referral rates from tutors to chaplains had been noted. A reduction in chamber size and the transmission of exam results to tutors prior to their publication were key desired improvements. The surveys had been a valuable resource in planning for the future.

A review of groups of students without tutors was under way. These groups such as dental nursing students were in the process of having tutors assigned. As core activities of the office, orientation and tutor induction and training were being reviewed and amended. Financial assistance administration continued to play a significant role in the support of students in difficulties.

The quality review report had been received and would be presented to Council and Board. It was hoped that recommendations arising from the review would be implemented without delay. Principal recommendations included the immediate appointment of a second administrative officer, the extension of the service to all registered students, a review of the services offered by the Senior Tutor's Office.

The Senior Lecturer thanked the Senior Tutor for the comprehensive report, commending the tutorial service for its very valuable contribution to the student experience. The review report had provided a very clear message on the need to expand the tutorial service as well as a model for its expansion. Resources for expansion of the service would be pursued following presentation of the review report to Council and Board.

SS/07-08/66

**Disability Service Annual Report 06-07** The Disability Services Co-ordinator presented the report. A line management change, from the Senior Tutor to direct reporting to the College Secretary, had occurred midway through the year. Three main objectives of the year had been to assist College in achieving compliance with the Disability Act 2005, to progress the Fitness to Practise project, and to establish the post-graduate diploma in Education (Disability Needs Assessment), along with continued support for students and staff in the College.

**Disability Act 2005.** A review of access to services had been conducted and a full audit to identify access to and egress from all College buildings would be undertaken in the current year. The Director of Buildings had sought clarification on the date by which heritage buildings were to be brought into compliance. Under the Act, Mr Treanor had been appointed Access Officer and Ms Conroy and Ms Alcock had been appointed Inquiry Officers for students and staff respectively. One official complaint by a student had been fully and satisfactorily investigated to date.

**Fitness to Practise.** Issues broader than disability had emerged as the project got under way with a seminar in January 2007. The Dean of Students had set up a College-wide working group on Fitness to Practise, which would further the work begun by the Disability Service.

**Post-graduate diploma in Education (Disability Needs Assessment).** The diploma course devised by Mr Treanor in conjunction with the School of

Education and DCU, for staff who work in the area of disability, had commenced in October 2007 with more than 20 registered students.

**Continued support for students and staff.** The number of students presenting to the Disability Service was fairly constant, while support needs had become more complex, requiring liaison with other services, especially in the area of mental health. The Unilink project had been very successful, serving more than 50 students. All the staffing recommendations in the quality review report had been implemented. Data collection is a complex matter currently awaiting SAS action. Objectives for the year include outreach activities and a broadening of the recruitment of undergraduate students. Disparity between numbers of students availing of psychiatric services and those registered with the Disability Service for psychiatric and mental health support suggest that only about one in three register with the Disability Service. A mental health publicity campaign was in the course of preparation. 147 new entrants had registered with the Service. It was noted that undergraduate students only were covered by the ESF funding to the Service. The part-time Library Liaison Officer post is currently being reviewed – the library is seeking to have it converted into a full-time post.

The Senior Lecturer thanked the Disability Services Co-ordinator for the clear and well written report, commending the Service for its professionalism. The Sport and Health project (2.6) report for students with disabilities required some minor clarification.

- SS/07-08/67** **Estimates** An additional meeting of the Committee would take place on Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> January with Estimates as the only Agenda item.
- SS/07-08/68** **College Day Nursery** The Chair, Senior Tutor and Staff Secretary, had met with the College Secretary on 17<sup>th</sup> December for a full discussion on the issue of line management of the Day Nursery. The new line manager would be named in mid-January. Emergency funding for sick leave cover would be sought. Long-term operational and financial issues would be addressed on the return from maternity leave of the permanent supervisor.
- SS/07-08/69** **Launch of Mental Health Policy** The College Secretary undertook to fund the design and publication of 500 copies of the Mental Health Policy @ €3,900, and its launch at a cost of up to €2,000. Funding for training @ €3,000 would be sought from the Staff Office.
- SS/07-08/70** **Trinity Experience Forum** The Dean of Students will shortly convene a meeting of relevant parties to discuss the establishment and functions of the Trinity Experience Forum. There was a lively debate on this issue.
- SS/07-08/71** **Review of Strategic Plan** A review and forward planning day with an external facilitator would take place in March 2008, to update the Student Services Strategic Plan 2006-08.
- SS/07-08/72** **Any Other Business** There was no other urgent business.
- SS/07-08/73** **Date of Next Meeting** – An additional meeting would be held on Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> January at 4 pm to discuss Estimates. The meeting scheduled for 12<sup>th</sup> February 2008 would remain.

## SECTION B

*There were no items in this section*

## SECTION C

SS/07-08/74

**Capitation Committee**

The Committee noted and approved the minutes of the meeting of 20<sup>th</sup> November 2007.

SS/07-08/75

**Disability Service Committee**

The Committee noted and approved the minutes of the meeting of 20<sup>th</sup> November 2007.

Signed:.....

Date:.....