

# The University of Dublin

## Trinity College

### Minutes of Student Services Committee Meeting, 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008

- Present* Dr Amanda Piesse (Chair), Ms D. Flynn (Secretary), Dean of Students (Dr G. Whyte), Deputy Treasurer's Representative (Ms A. Mulcahy), SU Welfare Officer (Ms U. Faulkner), GSU President (Mr A. Frenda), Director of Sports and Recreation (Mr T. McAuley), Heads of School Representative (Dr. Stephen Matterson)
- Apologies* Dr E. MacCarthaigh, Senior Lecturer (Prof C. Kearney), College Secretary (Mr M. Gleeson), Senior Tutor (Dr M. O'Regan), Deans' Representative (Prof. Carol O'Sullivan)
- In attendance* Ms M. Garvey, Director of the Careers Advisory Service (Mr. Sean Gannon)  
Dr. Eoin O'Dell

#### SECTION A

- SS/07-08/89 Minutes** The Minutes of the meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2008 were approved, following a correction to **SS/07-08/84** in which 'student's' should have read 'students', and signed.
- SS/07-08/90 Matters Arising from the Minutes** Matters arising from the Minutes were discussed and are recorded below, (see Minutes **SS/07-08/91**, **SS/07-08/95**).
- SS/07-08/91 Trinity Experience Forum** The meeting of Friday 15<sup>th</sup> took place. Student Surveys of the Trinity Experience were discussed. The Dean of Student will follow this up with the IUA.
- SS/07-08/92 Accommodation needs of the Student Counselling Service** The Committee Secretary confirmed that, as it was not possible to gain further rooms in 199-200 Pearse Street, the Student Counselling Service has accepted four rooms in Luce Hall. Six members of staff have moved over. Apart from problems with the heating systems of the four rooms the move has gone smoothly.
- SS/07-08/93 Fitness to Practise** Work continues
- SS/07-08/94 Provost's Report to Council on the Review of the Tutorial Service** A sub committee had been set up to work on this and would meet on April 2<sup>nd</sup>, with the Senior Tutor.
- SS/07-08/95 Luce Hall Development** The SU Welfare Officer completed independent research on student reactions to the possible movement of the Counselling Service to Luce Hall. The Committee Secretary will bring the results of this to the next Committee Meeting. The Dean of Students represented Student Service at a meeting with Pat McDonnell regarding the development of Luce Hall on February 21<sup>st</sup> 2008.
- SS/07-08/96 Careers Advisory Service Annual Report 06-07** The Director of the Careers Advisory Service (Mr. Sean Gannon) presented the report. Highlights of the year included improvements to the Service's use of technology as a means of dispersing information, Summer Undergraduate Research Experience (SURE) and the Service's participation in the Post-Graduate Skills Summer School for the first time. The main concerns of the year involved engagement with post-graduate students and international students.

**First Destination Statistics for the class of 06** The first destination statistics reflected a buoyant employment market with a high rate of employment amongst graduates. With a slowdown in the economy it is expected that the class of 08 will experience greater difficulty gaining employment. It was noted however that the rate of unemployment amongst postgraduates is approaching levels seen in the UK. This indicates that post-graduate students could benefit from greater contact with the Careers Advisory Service.

**SURE (Summer Undergraduate Research Experience) Programme** The third SURE Summer Programme took place in 2007. This caters for students in engineering and the sciences. It was a great success. There had been concern regarding the future of the SURE programme. However, the School of Physics in partnership with the Schools of Chemistry and Engineering has successfully secured continued funding from SFI for the core UREKA site and is able to provide some limited administrative support in place of that supplied by the Service, thus enabling the continuation of the programme.

**Objectives** Mr. Gannon identified various objectives for the Careers Advisory Service for the coming year. Firstly the service aims at a more structured engagement with post-graduate students as per the results of the First Destinations Study. Secondly, more engagement is needed with international students, who often have added difficulties regarding work permits when seeking employment.

**Discussion:**

**Non-Traditional Students:** The Chair highlighted the fact that the Careers Advisory Service, like other student services who have presented annual reports this year, have found that additional resources are required to meet the needs of post-graduates and non-traditional students. This will be noted in the Student Services Annual Report.

**SURE:** The Committee Secretary asked Mr. Gannon whether there were any plans to expand SURE into other academic areas. Mr. Gannon replied that without funding this would be impossible. Originally SURE was funded by the HEA. It does not fall into a priority area for SIF. However, he predicted that increased focus on research and the fourth level would require greater support for students wishing to get research experience at undergraduate level. SURE gives students valuable experience of research and the fourth level. Mr. Gannon noted a lack of funding for Arts and Social Sciences students wishing to get such experience. For example, Engineering and Science students may obtain remuneration from SFI (under the UREKA Supplement or Site schemes) or HRB yet no alternatives exist in Arts and Social Sciences.

The Committee extended their thanks to Mr. Gannon and the Careers Advisory Service for all their work within the Service and on the annual report.

**SS/07-08/97**

**Presentation on Statutes** Dr. Eoin O'Dell was welcomed to the committee in his capacity as Chair of the Statutes Review Committee. He began by giving the background to this review. The current College Statutes are outdated, an inaccurate reflection of the current state of affairs, and in great need of amending.

It is the aim of the Statutes Review Committee and Board that the Statutes reflect reality. Currently there are gaps in what the Statutes cover. For example, students are only mentioned in relation to discipline. It is hoped that the new Statutes will include a chapter on the College Community, and that this will focus on students. As there is no previous template for students within the Statutes, the committee requests the aid of the Student Services Committee in drafting this chapter.

The aim is to give statutory backing for students and student services. The plan is not for a point by point description. The Statutes aim to 'capture reality without constraining it' and to 'protect and enable' students and student services. Therefore, the committee require short descriptions on which to build. These descriptions are to be more than just a summary of terms and references. A description is required regarding the Student Services Committee. This should consist of a few sentences describing the rationale and goals of the Student Services Committee. Individual entries from the various services would also be good.

Policy decisions regarding the Statutes are to be taken by the end of this term. The aim is to have a full draft of the new Statutes prepared by July 12<sup>th</sup>, ready to go to Board for September 3<sup>rd</sup>. A deadline for the reception of entries will be decided at the Board Meeting of April 23<sup>rd</sup> 2008.

#### **Discussion:**

The Chair asked whether a distinction should be made between undergraduate and postgraduate students. The response was that the Universities Act makes this distinction and they can be distinguished as appropriate in policies. A change in policy would need to be approved by the appropriate policy makers. Dr O'Dell was thanked for his helpful presentation and assured that the Student Services Committee would contribute appropriately and in good time.

**SS/07-08/98**

**Sports and Recreation Annual Report 06-07** The Director of Sports and Recreation (Mr. Terry McAuley) presented the report. He opened by commenting that it may be useful to attempt to get reports in at an earlier stage next year. The main highlight of 06-07 was the opening of the new Sports Centre.

**Background** Sports and Recreation has responsibility for the running of the Sport Centre, the Pavilion, the sports facilities at Santry and Islandbridge, and the College playing fields.

#### **Highlights:**

**New Sports Centre** The Sports Centre opened to the public in April 2007 (official opening ceremony with the Minister for Sport April 7<sup>th</sup> 2008). Two thousand students accepted invitations to participate in a tour of the building within the first week of opening.

**Costings:** The Sports Centre is self-financing and so needs to generate income. The centre has a three year business plan to generate income to meet anticipated expenditure associated with running the Sports Centre. One major area of expenditure is Staffing. Fourteen new staff were employed and there is ongoing training in health and safety. The other main area of expenditure is the upkeep of the building, e.g. maintenance, security, insurance. This is paid at ARAM rates at nearly one million a year. The service would like to see a breakdown of payments at the end of each year. After a referendum in Trinity Term 07 it was agreed that all students would pay a membership fee of seventy euro annually to aid in meeting this expenditure. The Sports and Recreation facilities are also open to graduates, staff and the local community for a fee.

**Usage:** There were 160,764 recorded visits to the Sports Centres in 06-07. In 06-07 8,000 students, from a total of 15,000 enabled their ID cards with the Sports Centre. This is over 50%, while the average usage of third level Sports facilities among the student population is 33%. Furthermore, 631 staff joined the Centre and there were 19,000 recorded uses of the new Sports Centre pool between May and September 2007. As well as providing sports facilities, the sports centre runs recreation programmes.

Concerning the Michaelmas term 07 Mr. McAuley noted that there were 73,000 recorded visits to the sports centre, 16,000 visits to the pool and that Tuesdays and Wednesdays are the busiest days.

**College Health and Sports Week** This ran from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> of April 2007 and was a success. However, the Director would like to stress that this is not a Sports week. It involves more than the sports centre. He stated that the concept of 'health and exercise' is more inclusive of the entire College community than 'sports'.

**Trinity Golf Classic** This took place in September 07. This event funds sports scholarships and pays for eight College rooms for sports clubs.

**Off Campus Facilities** There are new agreements with the local community regarding the use of Trinity's off-campus sporting facilities in Ringsend and Santry.

**Finance:**

Concerns regarding accounts include the fact that new contracts for Sports and Recreation staff are of indefinite duration and their extension requires sufficient profit in the previous year. Furthermore, it is envisaged that the replacement of equipment will constitute a large expense. Due to the level of use it is expected that equipment will need to be replaced every 2 to 4 years. This equipment is very expensive. It is hoped that in the future the Centre will be able to attract enough staff and graduates on higher membership rates so that it can keep its student rate down while covering its expenditure.

**Objectives:**

There is a need to refurbish the squash courts and boxing courts in Luce Hall in the coming year. There are also plans for an extension to the Pavilion, allowing for universal access and new toilet facilities. Islandbridge is also in need of refurbishment. Finally, consideration needs to be given to the use of the Santry facilities in the medium to long term. These are hard to get to and hard to maintain.

The Committee extended their thanks to Mr. McAuley and Sports and Recreation for all their work within the service and on the annual report.

**SS/07-08/99**

**Director of Student Services** The Dean of Students brought this to the Heads Forum meeting of March 7<sup>th</sup> 2008. The Heads agreed to it in principle with three caveats. Firstly, the financing of the new posts should not be taken from the existing student services budget. Secondly, the Heads of Student Services would like to be involved in the creation of the job specification. Thirdly, the current Heads of Student Services are concerned as to how this new position would affect their status and positions in the future. For example, would it impact on future promotions and replacements? This is a concern for services with staff on professional scales.

**Discussion:**

The Chair expressed concern regarding the relationship between the Senior Tutor, the Director of Student Services and the Dean of Students. The Committee Secretary agreed and said that the Heads Forum meeting on March 7<sup>th</sup> had discussed the role of the Dean and had agreed that it was important that the Dean be seen as central. They said that the Director ought to be executor of policies, while the Dean would be the policy maker. The Director of Sports and Recreation stated that the position would be one of Student Services developer rather than Student Services manager. It was important that the Dean represent Student Services in Council and on the Academic Management Group. The Chair noted that it was important to stress that this position is not intended to replace the Dean of Students. The Dean is Student Services' link to the academic aspects of the College. The SU

Welfare Office and the GSU president concurred on behalf of their respective unions.

The Chair noted that the committee ought to articulate their vision of what the Director of Student Services should be. It was agreed to revisit this issue once the new COO is in place (Interviews to take place on April 10<sup>th</sup>). Issues to be addressed will include the funding of the position, how it related to the Statutes revisions, the job specification and the relationship between the Director and the Dean of Students.

It was agreed that the position is welcomed but with real concerns. This issue will be addressed in the end of year report.

**SS/07-08/100** **TVOF** There will be a symposium on May 1<sup>st</sup> on Student Volunteering and Engagement in the Arts Block of TCD. Mary Davis will be the Opening Speaker. There will be three workshops: Supporting and Recognising Volunteering in our Colleges, Life-Cycle Volunteering and Government Policy and Volunteering. Representatives from the Community Knowledge Initiative at NUIG will attend. The Committee Secretary suggested inviting the Dept. of Community, Rural, and Gaeltacht Affairs. Suggestions for invitees should go to the Dean of Students to pass onto Sarah Byrne, the guest list co-ordinator.

**SS/07-08/101** **Restructuring Implementation Oversight Group** The Heads of Student Services forum have suggested that the sub committees (excluding the Capitation Committee and the Financial Assistance Committee) of the Student Services Committee could be disbanded. The Chair and Dean of Students had met with the Senior Lecturer to discuss this. The Senior Lecturer suggests that there could be a formal Heads of Student Services Committee instead. The Chair noted that there is currently no SU representative on the Heads of Student Services Forum. A possible solution would be to increase the number of SU representatives on the Student Services Committee. A formal submission on this matter needs to be with the restructuring Implementation Oversight Group (RIOG) by April 29<sup>th</sup>. The Committee Secretary suggested that having two Heads of Services on the Student Services Committee should be continued. If a Director of Student Services is appointed s/he could have one of these places. The Committee Secretary and the Chair will draft a memo regarding this matter to RIOG. It will highlight the possibility of making the Director of Student Services a full time member of the committee, the formalising of the Heads of Student Services Committee and the formalising of reporting structures between the Student Services Committee and the Heads of Student Services Committee.

**SS/07-08/102** **Estimates** The Deputy Treasurer's Representative, Ms Áine Mulcahy presented the 2008 estimates to the meeting.

The HEA introduced Student Services charges when free fees were introduced. However, there is always an excess of expenditure and College covers this. The actual expenditure over income for 2007 was €1.68 million. This was €136k less than the original estimates which was due to staff positions not being filled and balances not being spent.

The Careers Advisory Service did not spend its full budget, needing to keep money in reserve for the coming year's pay budget, and this will be carried forward to 2008.

The 2008 estimates have been approved by Board. There is a €450,000 increase in income due to an increase in the Student Services charge of €25 per student. The 2008 pay estimates are based on last year's pay roll and known new appointments. Expenditure for 2008 is estimated to be €922,000

greater than 2007. The excess of expenditure over income is estimated to be €473,000 greater than 2007.

The estimated cost of Registration in 2008 is €192k over the actual 2007 costs due to vacant staff positions now being filled.

Student Services includes the Tutorial Service, deans' expenses and the Day Nursery. The estimated costs of Student Services is €237k greater than the actual cost in 2007. €122k of this increase is due to the Student Services submission in the Estimates process 2008 which was approved. The balance is due to the tutorial non pay balances brought forward.

**Discussion:**

It was noted that the senior dean's administrative support comes from the Student Services budget. It was queried whether this should come from elsewhere.

The Head of Schools Representative noted that exam expenditure was high. In UCD exams are paid from school budgets. The Deputy Treasurer's Representative was not aware of any plans to change this in Trinity.

The Dean of Students noted that there was approval for once off funding from Board for Student Services (€122,000). The committee had previously agreed precise areas for the allocation of this funding should it be granted; once all cost codes are assigned for the disbursement of the monies, the Chair is to be notified of them.

**SS/07-08/103 Any Other Business**

The Dean of Students raised the question of student death protocol and the awarding of posthumous degrees. This only happens if the degree is completed and approved by the exam board by the time of death. He queried why posthumous degrees could not be awarded to those who had successfully completed their work. He said he would check with Dr. O'Dell to see if this rule has a basis in the College Statutes. All agreed that this issue should be followed up.

**Date of Next Meeting** - April 29<sup>th</sup> 2008.

**SECTION B**

*There were no items in this section*

**SECTION C**

**SS/07-08/104 Careers Advisory Service**

The Committee noted and approved the minutes of the meeting of 12<sup>th</sup> February 2008.

Signed:.....

Date:.....