

The University of Dublin

Trinity College

Minutes of Student Services Committee Meeting, 25th November 2008

Present Dr Amanda Piesse (Chair), Dr D McGrath (Secretary), Dean of Students (Dr G Whyte); Vice-Provost (CAO) (Prof P Prendergast), Senior Lecturer (Dr A Douglas); Acting College Secretary (Ms A FitzGerald); Deputy Treasurer's Representative (Janet Byrne), Senior Tutor (Dr M O'Regan), Head of School (Prof N Claffey), SU Welfare Officer (Ms O Foley), GSU President (Mr R Hodson), Dr E MacCarthaigh, Director, College Disability Service (Mr. D Treanor).

Apologies Deans' Representative (Prof C Williams)

In attendance Ms G Conroy.

SECTION A

SS/08-09/23 **Minutes** The Minutes of the meeting held on 28th October 2008 were approved, and signed.

SS/08-09/24 **Matters Arising from the Minutes** Matters arising from the Minutes were discussed and are recorded below, (see Minutes SS/08-09/25, SS/08-09/26, SS/08-09/27, SS/08-09/28, SS/08-09/29, SS/08-09/30).

SS/08-09/25 **Trinity Experience Forum** The Forum had met on 4th November 2008. The format of the questionnaire was awaited, and was expected to roll out in January 2009.

SS/08-09/26 **Strategic Plan Update** The final report would be presented as an agenda item for the next SSC meeting, 6th January 2009.

SS/08-09/27 **Student Centre Update** The SU had drawn up a working brief of requirements – social spaces, society and unions offices, communal, respite and prayer space – following a visit to the Student Centre in QUB, and a survey of current students. A similar visit to QUB had been made by a small delegation of student services personnel prior to devising their brief for a one-stop student services shop. Broad consultation is under way with the aim of developing a building plan based on need rather than attempting to fit into an existing structure.

SS/08-09/28 **Day Nursery Report** The report prepared by Ms Rita Melia, National Childcare Policy Advisor of NCNA, on the Day Nursery management needs had been presented in draft form to the COO. Its findings must be communicated to the Day Nursery staff, in advance of its presentation to the SSC at a single item meeting on 20th January 2009. The separate assessment of the current and future childcare needs of the students and staff was under way with a survey to determine current and future needs in the course of preparation.

SS/08-09/29 **Student Charter A** Graduate Students charter had been referred to in the Calendar Part II; a search was under way for a hard copy. The SU President and SU Education Officer were continuing with rewriting and updating the current Student Charter, liaising with the GSU President. It was hoped to present a draft for consideration by the SSC in January 2009.

SS/08-09/30 **Callover of SSC projects funded under Estimates and Special Allocations** The allocation of €50,000 to the College Day Nursery had been subsumed

into its accounts for 2007-08, instead of being utilised for the purposes granted, administrative support and sick leave/ maternity cover. The Chair undertook to pursue the matter with those responsible, and with the COO if necessary.

SS/08-09/31 **Self Assessment of Student Services Committee** Item 6 of SSC Terms of Reference requires annual performance evaluation, to be reported in draft minutes to Board. A self evaluation form based on the Audit Committee template would be utilised by the Chair and Secretary of the SSC.

SS/08-09/32 **Student demographics, future planning** Hard data on changing student demographics would be necessary for student services to plan properly and seek appropriate funding in the future.. College Health, Student Counselling, Careers and Disability Service have or are collecting data. Tutorial Service data is more difficult to collect, though the additional needs of non-traditional students have been noted, and remarked upon. All services need to assemble data for input into the planning process under the direction of the Vice-Provost.

SS/08-09/33 **Financial Assistance Committee Annual Report 2007-08** The Financial Assistance Committee performs a key function in student support services in which students benefit from the confidentiality and anonymity of the approval process. The Committee was gratified that the Executive Officers recognised the value of its work and approved the request for an increase in the Hardship grant. The Committee had met 5 times during the year, and had approved financial assistance to 209 students, disbursing €202,835: average award €971, awards ranging from €200 to €2,300, from Benefactions, ESF Student Assistance Fund, Student Hardship Fund, and Trinity Annual Fund support.

Students of Nursing and Midwifery had constituted 46% of financial assistance recipients in 2007-08, the next highest course cohort being TSM at 10%. 79% of all financial assistance recipients in 2007-08 had been mature students. 230 applications for Sports Centre charge waivers had been granted via the Senior Tutor's Office over the course of the academic year.

European Social Fund (ESF) Student Assistance Fund total allocation to College (administered by the STO) for the year had been €587,560. Formal notification from the HEA of the ESF Student Assistance Fund allocation for 2008-9 had been delayed in anticipation of Budget 2009, and had not yet been received. Informally, the budget cut was expected to be 21%, in real terms a reduction of approx €50,000 in the STO apportionment due to a re-aligning of the proportions as Trinity Access Programme had experienced a considerable reduction in corporate sponsorship for 2008-09.

The very high proportion of continuing mature students requiring financial assistance and budgeting advice, in tandem with the volume and nature of enquiries from new entrants following mature student orientation in September, had resulted in a new initiative proposed by Ms Conroy to the Mature Student Officer, for a Money Doctor Workshop to take place early in July, to coincide with CAO offers to mature students and to inform acceptance of a university place based on sound financial 4-year planning.

SS/08-09/34 **Any other Business** It had come to the attention of the SU Welfare Officer that the ordinary degree of Bachelor of Dental Technology was not "approved" for local authority or VEC higher education grant. Prof Claffey undertook to look into the matter.

SECTION B

There were no items in this section

SECTION C

There were no items in this section

Signed: *ALP*

Date: *20th January 2005*