

The University of Dublin

Trinity College

Minutes of Student Services Committee Meeting, 31st March 2009

<i>Present</i>	Dr Amanda Piesse (Chair), Dr D McGrath (Secretary), Dean of Students (Dr G Whyte); Senior Lecturer (Dr A Douglas); Deans' Representative (Prof C Williams); Acting College Secretary (Ms A FitzGerald). Deputy Treasurer's Representative (Jane Corcoran), Senior Tutor (Dr M O'Regan), Dr E MacCarthaigh; SU Welfare Officer (Ms O Foley), GSU President (Mr R Hodson), Director, College Disability Service (Mr. D Treanor).
<i>Apologies</i>	Vice-Provost (CAO) (Prof P Prendergast); Head of School (Prof N Claffey);
<i>In attendance</i>	Ms G Conroy; Ms D Flynn for item SS/08-09/89

SECTION A

SS/08-09/83	Minutes The Minutes of the meeting held on 24 th February 2009 were taken as read, approved following two amendments to minute SS/08-09/75: First sentence to read: "Ms Byrne had met with the Chair, the SU President, and Dean of Students ..." and final sentence to read: "Details of the Student Service Charge Actual 07/08 and Estimate 08/09 income and expenditure accounts would go to Finance Committee following approval by Board on 25 th February 2009 of the 2009 Estimates.", and signed.
SS/08-09/84	Matters Arising from the Minutes Matters arising from the Minutes were discussed and are recorded below, (see Minutes SS/08-09/85, SS/08-09/86, SS/08-09/87).
SS/08-09/85	Capitation Committee Draft Terms of Reference The Chair had sent on the Capitation Committee Terms of Reference to the Vice-Provost, who would respond in due course.
SS/08-09/86	SS Strategic Planning The strategic planning team for the student experience had been formed, and had already met on three occasions to prepare a framework document.
SS/08-09/87	College Day Nursery Shortlisting for the post of College Day Nursery Manager would be done on Friday next. The survey to determine current and future childcare needs of students and staff would be sent out next week.
SS/08-09/88	Student Services Self Evaluation The self evaluation exercise had been analysed. There had been a 50% response from Committee members. The overall evaluation had been good. Number of meetings, length of agenda, attendance and communication were noted as areas for attention and improvement. There should be more focus on policy and oversight than on management, and on being proactive rather than reactive.
SS/08-09/89	Student Counselling Service Annual Report 2007-08 Expressing sincere thanks to her staff in the Student Counselling Service, Ms Flynn presented the report. The Service had had contact with over 4,500 students during 2007-08, an increase of approximately 10% on 2006-07. These increases were across a range of services: 9% in students attending one to one counselling; 73% in students attending one to one Learning support, and an increase in Counselling Group numbers, from 28 students to 195. There was a

disproportionate number of international students attending the Service for one to one counselling, who represent 20.8% of one to one counselling clients.

2007-2008 saw the development of therapeutic options other than one to one counselling; the pilot of on-line CBT programme Beating the Blues, further research and selection of self-help programmes (CALM) for roll-out in 2008-2009, and the growth of Group Therapy solutions. Group therapy and preventative psycho-educational workshops were designed to address students' main presenting problems - stress, anxiety and depression. To help at peak demand periods a sessional counsellor was employed. Funding was secured for a full-time Peer Support (Student to Student) Co-ordinator to develop Peer Mentoring programmes within College in addition to services already provided.

The HEA Targeted/Strategic Initiatives-funded report 'Looking Forward: Investigating the Counselling and Support Needs of Non traditional Students in Irish Third Level Education' had been launched in the autumn of 2007. This project highlighted the disproportionate numbers of these students attending counselling and the need for resources to meet their needs so as to assist retention and progression.

The Learning Support & Development Team in partnership with CAPSL had hosted a postgraduate writing and research skills summer school for the second year; and The S2S Network, in association with the Student Counselling Service, organised and hosted the first International Peer Support Symposium with key international speakers.

The Service continued monitoring effectiveness of its one to one counselling by measuring and researching counselling outcomes using an electronic rating system (ASIST); feedback was also obtained from the Annual Online Service User Survey and from paper-based surveys following all Groups and Workshops. Overall, student feedback was extremely favourable, notably strong endorsements of the administrative team in front office. A marked amelioration in presenting symptoms for both clinical (85.3%) and learning support clients was noted. Service impact on retention had been favourable.

The securing of adequate and accessible accommodation is a key priority for the service for 2008-2009. While the accommodation situation had been eased by relocation to Luce Hall mid-year, the provision of face-to-face counselling appointments remains restricted by the lack of room availability. This is a major concern for the Service. The College Strategic Plan to increase in the number of non-traditional students would undoubtedly affect the service and accentuate current accommodation issues. Furthermore the growth in mental health problems in the student population which is an international (UK and USA) trend, is leading to increased demands on the Counselling Service. This year by the end of March the Service had seen 812 students for one to one counselling 10 of whom have been hospitalised for treatment. The total number of students seen for counselling in 2007-8 was 821.

The Service has been given access to a sessional counsellor budget which is vital to meet increases in demand and ensure students could continue to be

served within 2 weeks of seeking help which has not been possible throughout the year.

A new database is also required for the Service as the current system is inefficient and not fit for purpose.

The Service would continue to look for external funding where possible, particularly as key innovations such as online service plans would require additional funding to guarantee success. The service would continue to research, develop, deliver, and evaluate multiple therapeutic options, both web-based and otherwise, to help meet these challenges and ensure access to services. Feedback and monitoring systems would continue to be enhanced to prioritise student voices in these developments, as well as to maintain the high professional standards that are synonymous with the TCD Student Counselling Service.

SS/08-09/90

College Health Service Annual Report 2007-08 Expressing sincere thanks to his staff in the College Health Service, Dr McGrath presented the report of current activities and trends at the College Health Service. Taking the report as read, Dr McGrath highlighted major issues for concern for the future, as observed in trends over preceding years. Three substantive issues were: i) space; ii) contractual arrangements of the part-time general practitioners; and iii) the GMS list.

Space was of major concern: the existing building had been designed for 10,000 students and staff, which number is now doubled. Hot-desking is an unacceptable practice long-term, but the only solution to the present space crisis. Demographic changes in the student body had resulted in a disproportionate change in workload, with non-traditional students creating 4 times the workload of traditional students in GP and psychiatry clinics. On the question of additional sessions, Dr McGrath expressed his gratitude to the Committee for supporting his request for psychiatric and GP sessions. Maintenance of the GMS list in the Health Centre belonging to Dr Thomas, whose part-time contract had been extended to September 2011, and its retention would be essential in order to access home country European Health Card funds on behalf of EU student visits – strategic thinking and planning in this regard would be essential, in particular should more students take up the option of Doctor Only medical cards, or become eligible for GMS cards.

Planned clinical developments for 2008-09 included a formal service for students with eating disorders, a reduction in the current 6 week waiting time for psychiatry appointments, and an alcohol management programme piloted with the Office of the Junior Dean.

A new database for the Centre to allow for on-line appointments and a self check-in facility would be installed during summer 2009. Dr McGrath reiterated that certificates would be issued only in the case of student illness of more than three days duration.

The Chair thanked both Directors for their very comprehensive and clear reports. Discussion centred on space issues such as those currently endured by College Health and Student Counselling, and the hold on the development of a Student Centre/ Student Services Centre. It was suggested that a clear

controlled development plan for College was vital to a resolution of space issues.

- SS/08-09/91 **Postgraduate Advisory Service** The Committee approved the Senior Tutor's request for the establishment of an advisory group to monitor the first few years' operation of the Postgraduate Advisory Service to be launched by the Provost on 7th April. The advisory group would meet once a term, and would report to the Committee.
- SS/08-09/92 **Feedback from Heads Forum** The most recent meeting had discussed: 1) the Student Centre/ Student Services Facility; 2) Advisory Group on Mental Health; 3) Student Services Management Team; 4) respite space; 5) Heads of Services representation on College Health & Safety Committee; 6) Strategic Plan; 7) International Committee meeting.
- SS/08-09/93 **Any Other Business** College Health Week would take place 6 to 10 April, to be launched by Mark Pollock.

SECTION B

There were no items in this section

SECTION C

- SS/08-09/94 **Capitation Committee**
The Committee noted and approved the minutes of the meeting of 20th January 2009.

Signed:.....

Date:.....28 April 2009