

The University of Dublin Trinity College

Draft Minutes of Student Services Committee Meeting, 6th February 2013

- Present Professor Eileen Drew (Chair), Mr. Sean Gannon (Secretary), Professor Amanda Piesse (Dean of Students), Mr. John Coman (College Secretary) (for items SS/12-13/29 to SS/12-13/40), Ms Cathy Gallagher (deputising for the Head of Sport and Recreation), Professor Agnes Higgins, (Head of the School of Nursing and Midwifery), Professor Claire Laudet (Senior Tutor), Ms. Aisling Ní Chonaire (SU Welfare Officer), Mr. Andrew McEwan (GSU Vice President), Ms. Linda Wright (Treasurer's Office) (for items SS/12-13/29 to SS/12-13/40), Professor Mary McCarron (Dean of Health Sciences)
- Apologies Professor Howard Smith (Head of the School of Psychology), Professor Veronica Campbell (Dean of Graduate Studies), Professor Patrick Geoghegan (Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies), Ms. Noreen Murray (IS Services),
- In Attendance Ms. Simone Cameron-Coen, (Recording Secretary), Mr. Martin McAndrew (GSU President), Dr. David McGrath (Director, College Health Service), Mr. Declan Treanor (Director, Disability Service), Ms. Deirdre Flynn (Director, Student Counselling Service), Ms Aoife Cox (Manager, Day Nursery & Crèche) for item SS/12-13/40,

Section A

SS/12-13/29 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held 10th December 2012 were approved.

SS/12-13/30 Matters Arising from the Minutes.

Matters arising from the minutes were discussed and are recorded below (SS/12-13/31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, and 39)

SS/12-13/31 Child Protection Officer

The Dean of Students updated the committee on the work done to date. The Head of Human Resources, the Dean of Students and the College Solicitor were scheduled to meet and the matter should be resolved by the next meeting of the committee.

SS/12-13/32 College Alcohol Policy

This item was held over to the next meeting of the committee.

SS/12-13/33 Fitness to Practise Policy

The revisions had been communicated to the Director of the Disability Service, who was satisfied with them and the policy was now ready for implementation.

SS/12-13/34 Summer Internship Scheme

The Dean of Students updated the committee on progress. The Global Relations Office post –sourcing internships for international students/promoting mobility amongst home students - had been filled.

SS/12-13/35 Off Books Policy

The policy had been discussed at the Heads of Services Forum as recommended by the committee. At that meeting the Senior Tutor suggested that using the existing “re-orientation status” with a flat fee of €500, might address the matter of access to services for students off books and doing exams. The Dean of Students had spoken informally to the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies and he was happy that the matter be progressed in this way. The Chair welcomed the proposed solution.

SS/12-13/36 Student Charter

The charter was to be amended as discussed and a covering memo drawn up by the Dean of Students. Once the College Secretary was satisfied that its provenance was legally sound it could progress to Board for noting.

SS/12-13/37 Working Group to review the Terms of Reference of the Committee

The College Secretary noted that this sub-group of the committee had yet to meet.

SS/12-13/38 Allocation of Global Relations Strategy funding to Student Services

The Global Relations Strategy was being reviewed and a submission on the impact on Student Services was being prepared.

SS/12-13/39 START Report

The Dean of Students reported that the Heads of Services had had two meetings with Clarion Consulting regarding the START recommended move of Services from the COO to the VP/CAO area. The Dean of Students confirmed that the change of reporting would impact on the Terms of Reference of the Committee.

SS/12-13/40 Annual Reports

College Health Service

Dr. David McGrath, Director, presented the annual report. He made the following points:

- The College Health Service was the first college service in the country to have a psychiatric service and this had been in place since 1999.
- College Health was funded 60% by College and 40% from fee-related services. However the service was under pressure with only 3 ½ GPs for over 16,000 patients.
- The Service was limited in that only one patient could be seen at a time; group sessions could not be held as in some other Services. Waiting time had increased from less than a week three years ago to two weeks last year. To off-set this, emergency clinics had been established, but that took a GP out of other duties which impacted on routine appointments.
- Use of the Service varied with Irish undergraduate students having a rating of 1 and international postgraduate students having a rating of 4.5. Premises were the major issue for the attention of the Student Services Committee. The Health Centre was built 25 years ago with an expectation of there being no more than 10,000 students. It now served more than 20,000 students and staff.

The following comments arose in discussion:

- The Director of Buildings Office had received proposals for new premises several times. However, it appeared that premises for the College Health Centre were not in the present capital projects portfolio as there was no money for the project. Dr. McGrath confirmed that Trinity Foundation had been asked about financing but there was no agreement for fund raising as yet. It was agreed that the issue of the Service's premises should become a priority item for the committee. A well-functioning health centre was essential to student well-being in College. The Dean of Health Sciences indicated that she would champion this proposal.
- In relation to the development of a College pharmacy, Dr. McGrath noted that neither the HSE nor the City Council were in favour of such an initiative and in any event he was not convinced of its long-term viability.
- Dr. McGrath confirmed the impact of current economic conditions as more students used the Service over the summer, many co-ordinating appointments with trips back to Dublin. In addition one of the chargeable services, travel vaccinations, had seen a substantial downturn. Where previously there were 3-4 clinics weekly generating income, vaccinations were happening less frequently leading to a drop in income of €60,000.

Disability Service

Declan Treanor, Director, presented the annual report. He reported that

- The Service was operating to a three phase model – orientation, retention and progression. In phase 1 he noted that Trinity had the highest number of students accepted through the DARE program and in overall terms, at almost 1200, the highest number of students with disabilities registered in the country.
- The demographic of students in Trinity was different from the national demographic; there were more with mental health difficulties, perhaps due to the specialist supports offered by the College such as the recent launch of the Asperger's syndrome website. In phase 2 which related to retention, he pointed to the availability of reasonable accommodations which are now incorporated within the College Calendar. In phase 3 which related to transitioning to employment, the Disability Service worked closely with the Careers Advisory Service and had recently successfully completed a Leonardo funded project with a number of European partners. Unemployment amongst graduates with disabilities remained high and there was a need for the Disability Service to support students during this transition.
- The key issues in the annual report were staffing at Unilink (see item SS/12-13/41) and the budgeting situation. 60% of the funding came from external sources with the remaining 40% being provided by College. Although the amount of money from external sources had not been reduced it had not been increased as the numbers of students registered with a disability increased, so in effect there was less money to go further; this was a national as well as a College issue.
- The Global Relations fund for 2014 was not yet accessible, and there were on-going discussions around the Service's unspent balances.
- Monies held in the unspent balances were allocated for physical access works that had not yet been executed by College, and the continuing availability of that money was now under threat.

Resolution needed to be reached on this funding which was outside the scope of the ABC budgeting process.

The following points arose in discussion:

- Was the increase in mental health issues the result of increased occurrence or better diagnosis? Mr Treanor responded that it was both, and that strong links between the Disability Service, Counselling, Health and Psychiatric services in College helped to manage the situation. With better support for individuals in secondary schools, many more students now had the opportunity to access third level.
- Regarding unspent balances, the Dean of Students welcomed any advice on that situation from the committee on how and where the issue could be resolved. The Dean of Health Sciences agreed to bring the issue up in the context of the ABC discussions adding that acknowledged priorities were reviewed by the Planning Group and by Executive Officers but against a background of overall diminished funding for the College.

Careers Advisory Service

Seán Gannon, Director made the following points about CAS:

- The economy was not generating enough jobs to absorb the numbers graduating with unpaid internships, short term contracts and emigration acting as safety valves. Overall unemployment for the College's primary degree graduates was 7% with a jump to 17% for postgraduates. There was a fluctuating demand for services with a slight reduction in the numbers coming for individual appointments compared with a 50% increase in the numbers coming for CV reviews. While there had been an overall reduction in the cost of service provision per student it was likely that costs would increase since the Service was now based off campus while many of its activities (sector specific employment fairs, for example) were located on campus.
- Replacement of staff was the key issue for the Service at the moment. Inevitably the strict application of the 1 in 3 replacement policy in the case of those retiring would lead to a reduction in services with consequent reputational damage for the College.
- The Civic Engagement Officer had had a 32% increase in the number of applications for the Dean of Students' Roll of Honour. She was working to promote service learning in the curriculum with initiatives in the Schools of Engineering as well as Social Work and Social Policy.

Responses to Mr Gannon's comments included the following:

- 1 in 3 students did not appear to know what the relevance of their degree to specific jobs was and increased contact between CAS and academic staff could help.
- College needed to support students transitioning into employment. The careers advisers were crucial to phase 3 in the student journey, viz. successfully securing and keeping suitable employment.

Day Nursery and Crèche

Ms Aoife Cox, Manager, presented the annual report. She made the following points:

- Strict HSE guidelines governed the operation of the Nursery and Crèche which could be subject to inspection at any time. At the moment staff levels were 14 FTE which breakdown to 12 F/T and 4 P/T with three lunch staff cover from an existing pool of TCD students to ensure ratios are covered during lunch. Staffing was the highest cost and the ratios must be maintained.
- At the moment the capacity was 6 babies, 10 wobblers, 10 toddlers, 12 Montessori, 14 pre-school – a total capacity of 52. Demand was high but the Nursery was not working at full

capacity. Currently 42 were attending but this could go up to 49 in July, depending on when offers were made, how long a family had been on the list, and also the age of the child. Students were given priority except when there was already a sibling attending, in which case siblings got priority.

- The Nursery and Crèche was running at a deficit. Sudden cancellations could have an adverse effect on income. The financial cuts for students had also had an impact on what they could afford. The 2012 budget of €121,277 for the Service was a reduction of €60,000 on the previous year. CETS and CCS government funded schemes were in place but these related to the social welfare status of the students and were for the benefit of the students rather than providing income for the Nursery.
- There were no HSE inspections in 2011 or 2012. There was a recent Environmental Health inspection in January 2013.
- This year more physical activities and a focus on healthy eating were planned. There would be more summer excursions to the free facilities in the area. A number of staff training programmes had been put in place and the Nursery was seeking parent involvement in reviewing current user policies. Children would also have input into the process.

The nursery manager was congratulated on the dynamic and developing programmes she had introduced. The following points arose during discussion:

- User statistics indicated a 50:50 breakdown between staff and students and within the student cohort it was 50:50 UG-PG. However postgraduate students had different needs from undergraduate students as they studied for the full 12 months of the year and had different patterns for vacation requests.
- Asked how the fees related to other nurseries and crèches in the area, Ms Cox explained that there was usually a sliding scale of fees relating to the age of the child with babies' fees being most expensive (€1000 outside College) and the fees reduced as the child got older. Trinity had a flat rate of €145 per week for students and €223 for staff.
- Offers of short term places helped offset the waiting list especially in the summer months.

The Dean of Students congratulated Ms Cox on the prospect of 49 out of 52 places being filled by July. She was also delighted to hear that student evaluation was beginning so early. The Dean undertook to re-establish the Student and Staff Nursery Users Group (SNUG) and asked that it be recorded that Ms Cox's work in the dynamic development of the Nursery had been noticed and noted.

Sports and Recreation

Ms Cathy Gallagher, deputising for Ms Michelle Tanner, presented the annual report.

- The Olympics was a major theme for 2012, with both the Olympic torch relay and the Trinity Olympian event as well as the two Trinity students competing in the 2012 games.
- Day to day sport contributed to the student experience. 10,000 students activated their cards in 2011/2012, averaging 22 visits per student per year. Students formed the core business for the Sports Centre. There were over 330 student-run events in 2011/2012.
- Twenty two sports scholarships had been awarded. There was a need to formalise academic flexibility arrangements for high performing athletes to allow them to compete nationally and internationally.
- The forthcoming launch of *Get Trinity Active* would emphasise student input and ownership.
- Financially, *cista communis* contribution to Sport was now down to almost zero. The income for Sports and Recreation was 80% funded through memberships but there was no wish to displace

students with members of the public. Out of a total income of €1.1 million, €900,000 was paid to the Director of Buildings' Office in respect of maintenance and other charges. The College lagged behind other third level institutions in terms of sports facilities which impacted on student choice when applying to third level. An investment of €6m would be necessary to address this.

- Only 5% of a recent VAT increase had been passed onto members at present with the full amount being implemented next year.

The following points arose in discussion:

- Sports and Recreation was fundamental to the student experience supporting physical and mental well-being, retention and employability.
- Trinity should not become a money-making machine at the expense of students. The committee welcomed the fact that Sports and Recreation kept students central to their ethos.

Ms Gallagher responded that it would be challenging to safeguard this last point in the current financial climate, but that it was vitally important.

Student Counselling Service

- Ms Deirdre Flynn, Director, presented the annual report, explaining that the Counselling Service was an umbrella for three distinct services – Student Counselling (SCS), Student Learning and Development (SLD) and Student2Student (S2S). 21% of students engaged across the services. In 2011-12, 5,853 students kept appointments. Of those, 4,500 were 1 to 1 appointments, 684 were groups and 661 were online appointments. There had been an increase in those requiring crisis and emergency appointments. 10% of international students and 6.8% of home students engaged with the Service with 87% of those attending reporting a positive change. During the year the COO had released 2 small tranches of funding to enable the clearing of waiting lists. This reduced complaints about accessibility from 25% to 13%. She noted that quick access was very important to students. The Service offered late evening opening as well as lunchtime consultations.
- A service level agreement had been signed with Marino which benefited College financially but in turn this led to improved services for students.
- Training for the Psychological Response Team was on-going with more academic staff volunteers required.
- SLD saw 913 students with 88% of those reporting positive change. Students engaged predominantly in groups but extensive online resources were also available.
- The key recommendation arising from a quality review of SLD was that it should have a College-wide co-ordinator, preferably located in Counselling. However this year's ABC process did not provide for that.
- The S2S service was run jointly with the Senior Tutor's Office. It had expanded and now all JF students engaged with the Service. Surveys had indicated the importance of peer mentoring. Trinity successfully hosted the 2011 annual peer mentoring conference and received very positive feedback.
- SLD staff were stretched and current College policy on non-replacement of staff was a major concern since the effect was to add to already lengthy waiting lists. The contract for the S2S co-ordinator contract was ending in May and this role needed to be mainstreamed.

Ms. Flynn invited comments and questions. The following arose in discussion:

- The Counselling Service was thanked for its excellent work, especially the quality of the online content. As online education is being developed resources should be put in place to ensure quality of content and a virtual campus experience. Ms Flynn responded that the Service was committed to developing quality online services.

Staff costs had been omitted from the report in error and would be circulated to the committee immediately after the meeting.

Senior Tutor's Office

The Senior Tutor presented the annual report.

- There was an on-going difficulty regarding tutors' allowances and this had an impact on recruitment of tutors. In addition to the allowances, the multiplicity of posts of responsibility that many academic staff had to cover, (e.g. directors of teaching and learning, course directors etc.) also impacted recruitment. As a result chambers had grown to 97 students, which was too large for an effective service. A resolution to the allowance issue through tutor support funds was expected by the academic year end.
- The value of tutorship should be promoted and College should acknowledge formally the contribution that tutors make to College and the student experience. The Postgraduate Advisory Service had been accessed increasingly, but was still only funded on a year to year basis. This Service should be mainstreamed as College recruited more postgraduate students, particularly international postgraduate students.
- The value College placed on research over and above other contributions devalued the many other roles undertaken by academic staff. This was the real problem at the heart of tutor recruitment.

The Senior Tutor invited comments and questions. The following arose in discussion:

- The point that contribution by tutors needed to be recognised in the promotion process was fully supported. Tutorship was perceived to be the thread running through the Services and enabling student retention.
- The Service represented a unique selling point for College. Student Learning and Development and the Postgraduate Advisory Service were initiatives that were identified as necessary, planned, and launched, but College needed to make clear their value to the student experience by creating a sustainable funding model - thereby demonstrating its long term commitment to these Services.
- The SU President has written to the Minister for Education and Skills concerning the remuneration of tutors and the SU Welfare Officer has spoken with Senator Avril Power on the matter.
- The needs of the Postgraduate Advisory Service should be placed alongside those of the Tutorial Service and there should be parity of service. The 5,000 postgraduate students had a skeletal service of 9 advisors. Pressure on graduate supports would only increase as the College sought to recruit more postgraduate students.

SS/12-13/41 Unilink Strategy

Mr Treanor presented the strategy. Unilink, commended by the HEA, was a unique Service for students with high support needs and was a collaboration between the discipline of Occupational Therapy and the Disability Service. The posts that existed in the Service were under threat for funding and Employment Control Framework reasons. Discussions involving the COO, Human Resources and the

Treasurer had appeared to arrive at an agreement concerning on-going funding for contracts of indefinite duration but the final position was still unclear. He emphasised the need for the Service, its multidisciplinary approach to managing complex cases and its cost effectiveness in reducing student use of other Services. Unilink earned €120,000 income from other institutions in the Dublin region which accessed the Service. Mr Treanor asked the committee to acknowledge that the Service was an essential one and required on-going financial support.

The Dean of Students asked that the committee agree that secure funding be identified for contracts of indefinite duration in the Unilink Service. She noted the special commendation from the HEA for the Service and noted the example of leading best practise. She asked that the Chair draw attention to these comments at Board.

The Senior Tutor reiterated the importance of the Unilink service.

SS/12-13/42 Student Parent and Carer Policy

Due to time constraints it was agreed that this item be moved to the next meeting. It was also agreed that in the meantime the draft policy could be brought to the Undergraduate Studies and Graduate Studies Committees so that it could begin the committee process in order to facilitate implementation in the next academic year.

SS/12-13/43 Space Allocation

Due to time constraints this item was moved to the next meeting.

Section B

SS/12-13/44 Dates for Future Meetings

- Wednesday 8th May 2013

Section C

SS/12-13/45 Minutes of the Capitation Committee, 27th November 2012

The Committee noted the minutes of the Capitation Committee.

SS12-13/46 Implementation of START proposals in respect of Student Services

The Committee noted the memorandum from the Dean of Students.

Signed:.....

Date:.....