

The University of Dublin

Trinity College

Draft Minutes of the Student Life Committee

27th November, 2013

Present: Prof. Amanda Piesse (Dean of Students (Chair)), Ms Leona Coady (Head of Academic Registry), Dr Erika Doyle (Global Officer Co-ordinator), Mr Seán Gannon (Director, Careers Advisory Service), Mr Stephen Garry (SU Welfare Officer), Mr Ryan Kenny (GSU President), Dr Claire Laudet (Senior Tutor), Mr Tom Lenihan (President TCDSU), Dr David McGrath (Director, College Health Service), Mr Donal McKeating (Chair, CSC), Mr PJ Moloney (Chair, Publications Committee), Mr John Murphy (Director, Information Systems Services), Mr Trevor Peare (Keeper of Readers' Services, Library), Ms Sarah Smith (GSU Vice President), Mr Brendan Tangney (Warden, Trinity Hall), Mrs Michelle Tanner (Head of Sports and Recreation), Mr Declan Treanor (Director, Disability Services), Mr Conor Traynor (Vice Chair DUCAC).

Apologies: Ms Janet Byrne (Financial Services Division), Ms Aoife Cox (Manager, Day Nursery & Crèche), Mr Graham Daniels (Director of Accommodation and Catering), Ms Deirdre Flynn (Director, Student Counselling Service), Fr Peter Sexton (Convenor, Chaplaincy), Dr Emma Stokes (Registrar of Chambers)

Present: Ms Simone Cameron-Coen (Minutes)

Section A

SLC/13-14/18 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 16th October, 2013 were approved.

SLC/13-14/19 Matters Arising

Matters arising from the minutes of 16th October, 2013 were discussed and are recorded below as items (SLC/13-14/20/21/22).

(SLC/13-14/20) Branding

The project is now called the Identity Initiative. A College-wide survey has been circulated to staff and will be circulated in the same format to students.

(SLC/13-14/21) Strategic planning 2014-19

A Town Hall meeting will take place on 9th December which will update staff on the strategic planning process.

(SLC/13-14/22) Unauthorised Allowances Projects

The proposals for the projects have been sent to the Vice Provost. She will meet with the GSU and SU sabbatical officers and the Dean of Students next week to discuss the proposals further.

SLC/13-14/23 Orientation Review

The Dean of Students presented the draft document. She will present to Council in January. She

asked the committee for comment and feedback on the document. The following points were noted:

- A recommendation for a First Year Experience Officer should be added to the introduction of the document.
- There is now a strong evidence base to show the benefits of having an integrated delivery and co-ordination of the orientation process as shown with the example of the library staff being able to roll out the Library HITS series when the responsibility of tours moved to the S2S mentors.
- A recommendation for strengthening resources should be added, including a fit for purpose telephone system as the current system does not cater for what is required.
- Provision of residential accommodation needs to be included in the review document.
- Change 'international desk' to 'International Admissions Study Abroad Desk'.
- Fix the typing error on page 3 where the sentence appears unfinished.

The document will be amended and circulated to the committee.

SLC/13-14/24 Welcome Booklet

The Dean drew the committee's attention to the PowerPoint presentation outlining the draft of the welcome booklet and explained that it would bridge the gap between offers being made to students and letters of welcome arriving. She invited comment and feedback from the committee. The following points were noted:

- In the general FAQ section it was suggested that a question and answer on academic timetable be added.
- New questions regarding the fees process should be added to reflect the new protocol being developed.

Many of the committee were unaware of the new protocol. Students will no longer be able to register until all fees including accommodation fees are paid. This will have implications for the pre-registration and accommodation application processes. There was concern that the Warden of Trinity Hall, the Registrar of Chambers, the Director of Disability Services, and the Director of the Health Centre had no knowledge of the changes to the fees policy prior to this committee meeting, and therefore key steps in the process may have been overlooked. The Dean of Students would speak to those developing the policy and arrange a meeting with those listed above.

Mr Peare was concerned that students unable to register would not be able to access the library services properly and suggested that an interim solution for access be explored.

Mr Garry suggested that the document be available in PDF or through ISSU as well as in hard copy.

Ms Coady alerted the committee to the development of the 'Study in Trinity' website, a joint project between the Admissions Office and the Global Relations Office, which incorporates many of the elements of the student experience. The Senior Tutor was concerned that this website had not been developed in consultation with the Senior Tutor's Office or the Dean of Students.

There were concerns about the cost of printing the document and suggestions that it remain electronic only. However feedback from students has shown that they do not feel welcomed to Trinity when they do not receive a hard copy in the post. The committee understood.

SLC/13-14/25 Refreshers' Week Review

The Dean reported that the Refreshers' Week pilot ran successfully in the second half of week 6. The Here to Help stands and helpers were in place and there were a selection of leaflets available. The library had offered to extend HITS for Refreshers week but in the short time frame the dean had been unable to take them up on their offer. The week will be expanded next year to include the library.

The Senior Tutor suggested that each of the services develop a one-page leaflet on their services that would be easy for students to digest during Refreshers' Week.

SLC/13-14/26 Irish Survey of Student Engagement 2014

The Dean of Students referred to the memo circulated. Full roll-out of ISSE will be in January/February 2014. There is a three -week window centred on week six during which each institution can choose to run the survey. The Dean asked for feedback from the committee on when would be best to run it. The committee agreed that weeks 6, 7, and 8 of Hilary Term would be best. The survey would be advertised through postering and emails. Mr Garry asked if the survey was incentivised. The Dean confirmed that the ISSE working group had decided not to incentivise the survey. Following a discussion and strong examples of how incentives have worked with other surveys the Dean agreed to bring the feedback to the ISSE working group. The Dean asked for other suggestions to increase participation and the following suggestions were made:

- Staff engagement
- Feedback from the pilot which will happen in January
- A personalised front page on the survey
- A 'you said...we did' section
- A short video to be shown ahead of lectures
- Blackboard announcements

The Dean thanked the committee for their comments and contribution.

Section B

SLC/13-14/27 Dean's Role

The Dean of Students announced that she would be stepping down from the role. The role will be filled by the end of January.

The Senior Tutor, on behalf of the committee, thanked the Dean for her work over the past two and a half years, particularly in setting up the Student Life Committee and ensuring the communication among the different areas of College involved in the student experience.

SLC/13-14/28 Capitation Budget

Mr Traynor drew the committee's attention to a cut of 5% across the capitation budget for 2013/2014 allocations. Mr Lenihan added that a further 5% cut would be applied to the 2014/2015 allocation. There was concern that there had been no consultation about these cuts. An email from the Senior Dean one week in advance of the allocations meeting was the first time that the capitated bodies were made aware of the cuts. There seemed to be a lack of transparency around the decision. Mr Lenihan added that the cuts go against the HEA framework for allocating funds. Mr Kenny reminded the committee that College gets tremendous value from the capitated bodies especially during orientation. The cut to the GSU budget equalled the resources for orientation. Mr Garry confirmed that the cut of €16,000 to the SU budget would affect a number of services that the SU provides.

The Dean stated that College relies as an institution on the goodwill, hard work, and financial resources of the GSU and SU during orientation and throughout the year and the cuts will have an impact on delivery of essential services to College. This message would be communicated formally to the capitation committee by the Dean.

SLC/13-14/29 Sports Scholarships

Mrs Tanner announced that the Sports Scholarships would be awarded in the Pavilion Bar at 4.30pm and that the committee was welcome to attend.

Section C

There were no items for Section C.