



**Trinity College Dublin
The University of Dublin**

Minutes of a meeting of Student Life Committee

7 November 2023, 11am, Trinity Boardroom, Trinity Business School

Present: Prof Richard Porter (Dean of Students, in the Chair), Dr Stephen Smith (Senior Tutor), Mr Matt Dossett (Deputy Director of Sport & Physical Activity), Dr David McGrath (Director, College Health Centre), Ms Trish Murphy (Director, Student Counselling Services), Rev Steven Brunn (Chaplaincy), Mr Samuel Isijola (Chairperson, Central Societies Committee), Ms Breda Walls (Director of Student Services), Mr Liam Bean (Chairperson, Trinity Sport Union), Mr David Wolfe (Deputy Chairperson, Trinity Publications), Mr Andrew Burgess (representative, Scholars' Committee), Mr Nigel Stevenson (Warden of Trinity Hall) Mr Martin John McAndrew (Postgraduate Student Support Officer), Mr Laszlo Molnarfi (President, Students' Union), Ms Aoife Bennett (Welfare Officer, Students' Union)

Apologies: Dr Donal MacDonaill (Junior Dean & Registrar of Chambers), Ms Louise Staunton (nominee, Director of Internationalisation), Mr Declan Treanor (Director, College Disability Service), Ms Eimear Rouine (Transition to Trinity Officer), Ms Sorcha Mulcahy (Acting Director, Careers Advisory Service), Mr Fergus O'Brien (Chair of Trinity Sport Union)

In attendance: Ms Cristina Boccardo (Secretary),
(*by invitation*) Ms Susan Kirwin (Coordinator, SLD), Ms Siobán O'Brien Green (Equality Officer)

The newly appointed Dean of Students introduced himself to the Committee and welcomed and allowed all Committee members and staff in attendance to introduce themselves. The Dean proposes Ms Cristina Boccardo, Administrative Officer in the Senior Tutor's Office as new secretary for Student Life Committee, replacing Mr Martin McAndrew, the Committee unanimously agreed (**SLC/23-24/11**).

SECTION A: Policy and Implementation Matters

SLC/23-24/01 A.1 Minutes

The minutes dated 23 May 2023 were approved as presented

SLC/23-24/02 A.2 Matters Arising

SLC/23-24/01 No Matters Arising

SLC/23-24/03 A.3 H-TOT— Healthy Trinity Online Tool

Prof Catherine Darker and Ms Mary O'Neill presented an update on the H-TOT, explaining that the tool has been developed into four Blackboard modules available to first year TCD students. It has been established in 2015 and improved and updated since. Prof Darker highlighted two

problematic areas for the future of the tool: the likely migration in the future from Blackboard to Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) and the lack of a centralised College marketing approach.

VLE will require further updates and work on the H-TOT but would also expand the number of students who could access the tool, it is envisaged that it might be made available to both the undergraduate and postgraduate communities and to staff as well. There are ongoing discussions with IT Services on how this can happen, including the possibility of developing an app, if funds were secured. However, to sustain the project and its expansion, it is vital that TCD takes a central marketing line, with a more professional promotional approach. During the discussion the Director of Student Services reinforced the support to the tool and suggested possible solutions, such as the centralisation of the H-TOT within the Digital Trinity Group and possibly the inclusion under the sustainability theme of Healthy Trinity, which is a project the Provost is following closely. It would also be useful to have promotional material developed for distribution among all students' services.

Suggestions were made to promote the H-TOT at orientation and also that Trinity Global might be able to reach out to a wider students' audience through their comms channels.

Both the Director of College Health and the Students Union President acknowledged their support to the marketing requirements of H-TOT to get more people to access it and use it regularly.

ACTION: Student Life Committee noted and approved the paper dated 25 July 2023 and agreed on the need for further actions in relation to the Healthy Trinity Tool

SLC/23-24/04 A.4 Strategy for Sport & Physical Activity – Implementation update

The Deputy Director of Sport & Physical Activity presented to the Committee the paper dated 31 October 2023, outlining updates on the quinquennial 'Realising Potential' strategy for Sport & Physical Activity, launched in March 2021 and focusing on the concept of 'Sport at the heart of Trinity experience'. Progress was made thank to the input of three steering committees (Finance, Outdoor Facilities, and Governance), and the implementation of three strategic pillars (Student Experience, One Trinity and Impact) is very much ongoing.

To make sport and physical activity more widely available to students, substantial funding is required as well as investments in greater outdoor facilities, with particular focus on the development of the Iveagh Sports Grounds in Crumlin.

The Forecast Strategy Implementation 2024-onwards was also presented, with focus on objectives that are on target, at mild or significant risk of delays. A full detailed analysis of each objective is currently being drafted for review by the Strategy for Sport Steering Committee at their next meeting. Following this, a further update will be issued to the Student Life Committee for discussion and comment.

The need was also highlighted to expand the concept of sport not just in a high-level competitive sense, but also to include non-traditional sport activities (ex. spinning classes) for a

broader community engagement; it was also suggested to give focus to the social aspects around physical activities.

Potential strategies that are being considered include the review of clubs and societies subscription and retention data; greater Alumni engagement and participation through TDA; expanding the Campus 5K race from 300 to 1,000 participants among students and staff.

There was general consensus among the committee members that TCD sport is underfunded, and a funding strategy should be devised. It was mentioned that the Provost is very aware of the sport and financial activity focal point in students' life and there is a Financial Group currently working on possible recommendations for extra funding. Increased Alumni involvement was also suggested as one possible generator of extra income. Other income-generating activities were mentioned such as sports camps, which could involve the students but also the wider community.

ACTION: Student Life Committee noted and approved the memorandum of 31 October 2023 and agreed on the requirement of extra funding for Sport & Physical Activities.

SLC/23-24/05 A.5 Trinity Disability Service Internships

Ms Eithne Coleman, Senior Occupational Therapist in the Disability Service presented an update on DS Internship, part of the Community Engagement Project, with emphasis on Employability.

The aim of the project is to merge with the DS community beyond graduation by creating internships programmes at local level.

The programme has seen substantial growth since it started in 2020 and from 4 interns, there are now 11 internships on rolling offer ranging from 6 to 12 weeks in duration and across various TCD sectors, such as Academic Registry, Botany, TCD Careers, Day Nursery, TAP, TCD Sense, TCD Sport, Trinity Trails.

DS is hoping to expand the internships to other College areas and offers a tailored package to support students who would like to apply as well as staff members who would like to be part of the programme and offer an internship. The feedback received is excellent from both staff and interns alike.

The Committee unanimously recognised the superb value of this internships programme and would like to see these opportunities better advertised at local level. In terms of departmental costs, there is some flexibility, depending also on the duration of the internship, but as a rule, the minimum-wage level should be acceptable.

ACTION: Student Life Committee considered the report presented by Ms Eithne Coleman and recognised the excellent value of the DS Internship Programme

SLC/23-24/06 A.6 Period Dignity on Campus

The TCDSU Welfare Officer presented a position paper to advocate in favour of a College supply of period products to be available to students and staff at various facilities location around Campus.

Following the success of a pilot initiative funded by Trinity Trust last year, the SU proposes an investment of € 70K per year to fund the availability of period products around Campus to tackle period poverty, which can result in students missing lectures and activities and living in poor sanitary standards.

While the Committee unanimously favoured the proposal, it also noted that Student Life does not have any authority on financial matters, which should be referred instead to Council as the next logical step. It was also noted that there is a wider plan at governmental level to fund period products for menstruating people and the SU should look into lobbying in this context, as it may guarantee a more sustainable outcome with a higher-level initiative. Comments were made that it will be unlikely that College will be able to commit to such funding.

ACTION: Student Life Committee considered favourably at unanimous level the proposal, however, recommended to seek different funding avenues, as the committee does not have jurisdiction over financial matters.

SLC/23-24/07 A.7 Dean's Report – 2023-24 workplan and priorities

The Dean of Students spoke to the Committee about his observations since taking up his post, highlighting lack of communication as a main problem. Therefore, he explained that the strategy as Dean of Students is to establish channels of communications with student bodies and societies, to ensure that voices are heard and listened to. Naturally following from better communication, his next item is to establish relationships between students and services. The ultimate goal is to be present among the students and listen to their ideas and needs.

ACTION: Student Life Committee noted the workplan and priorities from the Dean of Students and wished him well in the role.

SLC/23-24/08 A.8 Any other urgent business

The Committee welcomed the new Dean of Students and wished him well in his role and extended their thanks to Mr Martin McAndrew for his time as Secretary.

SECTION B: Reports from SLC Working Groups

SLC/23-24/09 B.1 Mental Health Policy

The Director of Student Counselling advised that:

- Work is underway although due to staff commitments it is proving difficult for the group to meet regularly, however an update is to be expected in the near future

SLC/23-24/10 B.2 Student Centred Working Group

The TCDSU President noted that:

- the working group is expecting to be called to meet by the Dean of Students

SECTION C: Items for noting and/or approval

SLC/23-24/11 C.1 Secretary to Student Life Committee

Ms Cristina Boccardo replaces Mr Martin McAndrew as Secretary of Student Life Committee

ACTION: Student life Committee noted and approved the the memorandum, dated 31 August 2023

SLC/23-24/12 C.2 Capitation Committee

A member noted the delay in receiving timely updates from the Capitation Committee and the committee agreed again to advise the Capitation Committee that dreaft minutes are required by Student Life Committee as soon as possible after a meeting of Capitation.

ACTION: Student life Committee noted and approved the minutes dated 18 May 2023

SLC/23-24/13 C.3 Financial Assistance Committee minutes

ACTION: Student Life Committee noted and approved the minutes, dated 28 June 2023

SLC/23-24/14 C.4 Postgraduate Financial Assistance Advisory Group minutes

ACTION: Student Life Committee noted and approved the minutes, dated 29 May 2023

SLC/23-24/15 C.5 Student Life Committee Membership 2023-24

ACTION: Student Life Committee noted that the following would serve *ex officio* on Student Life Committee for the 2023-24 academic year:

Name	Position
Sorcha Mulcahy	Acting Director, Careers Advisory Service
Lara Mellett	Chairperson, Trinity (DU) Publications Committee

And

To note that the Chair of Trinity (DU) Publications Committee has confirmed David Wolfe, Secretary to Trinity Publications Committee, as her nominee on SLC for semester 1 2023.

SLC/23-24/16 C.6 Student Life Committee circulation and meetings dates 2023-24

ACTION: Student Life Committee noted the remaining Student Life Committee dates for this academic year as follows:

Circulation date	Meeting Date
5 December	12 December
13 February	20 Feb
12 March	19 March
23 April	30 April
14 May	21 May

Venue: Trinity Boardroom, Trinity Business School

Meeting times: 11am – 1pm