



**Trinity College Dublin
The University of Dublin**

Minutes of a meeting of Student Life Committee

19 March 2024, 11am, Trinity Boardroom, Trinity Business School

Present: Prof Richard Porter (Dean of Students, in the Chair), Ms Michelle Tanner (Director of Sport & Physical Activity), Dr David McGrath (Director, College Health Centre), Ms Trish Murphy (Director, Student Counselling Services), Dr Donal MacDonaill (Junior Dean & Registrar of Chambers), Ms Sorcha Mulcahy (Acting Director, Careers Advisory Service), Ms Louise Staunton (nominee, Director of Internationalisation), Mr Kieran Lewis (nominee, Director, College Disability Service), Mr Fergus O'Brien (Chair of Trinity Sports Union), Ms Breda Walls (Director of Student Services), Mr Andrew Burgess (representative, Scholars' Committee), Mr Nigel Stevenson (Warden of Trinity Hall) Mr Martin John McAndrew (Postgraduate Student Support Officer), Mr David Wolfe (Secretary to Trinity Publications), Mr Samuel Isijola (President, Central Societies Committee), Mr Jovan Jeromela (Postgraduate Student Representative), Mr Laszlo Molnarfi (President, Students' Union), Ms Aoife Bennett (Welfare Officer, Students' Union)

Apologies: Ms Susan Kirwin (Coordinator, SLD), Dr Stephen Smith (Senior Tutor), Rev Steven Brunn (Chaplaincy), Ms Siobán O'Brien Green (Equality Officer), Ms Eimear Rouine (Transition to Trinity Officer), Ms Claudia Peroni (Postgraduate Student Representative)

In attendance: Ms Cristina Boccardo (Secretary)

The Dean of Students welcomed everyone to the Student Life Committee meeting of 19 March 2024.

SECTION A: Policy and Implementation Matters

SLC/23-24/34 A.1 Minutes

The Committee approved the minutes dated 12 December 23.

SLC/23-24/35 A.2 Matters Arising

The Dean of Students mentioned the period products item from previous SLC meetings to update the SU that College would not be in a position to address the matter, but that the SU should opt to approach the Department of Health and seek a higher-level answer to the issue. The SU representative confirmed that a paper had been sent to the relevant Government offices to lobby for the availability of free period products around Campus.

SLC/23-24/36 A.3 Pathway to Belonging

The Global Experience Associate Director presented an update to SLC about Pathway to Belonging, a pilot initiative comprising a series of webinars and the availability of an app to assist incoming international students, both undergraduate and postgraduate to settle in TCD and in Dublin prior to their arrival to Ireland. The programme also involved Exchange and Erasmus

students. It has proven extremely successful. The app Goin', which launched in April 2023 has seen great download and usage levels. It is a community platform app for students to make 1-1 peer and group connections based on affiliation and interests. It complements services currently offered by Student Recruitment and Student Experience teams at Global. Ms Staunton illustrated the plan for 2024 consisting in developing new online resources to be implemented between June and August 2024 and to extend the app use to new incoming students and analyse the growth process.

The Committee was very complimentary of the initiative and expressed the wish to see the webinars expanded to students stating throughout the academic year (particularly postgraduates) and perhaps in the future to the undergraduate Irish cohort also.

A query arose on the monitor of potential bullying incidents and Ms Staunton reassured that the anti-bullying policy is part of the agreement with the software developer, however, so-far, no incidents had been reported from TCD users.

ACTION: Student Life Committee noted Ms Staunton's update on Pathway to Trinity and thanked her and Mr Coogan for all the great work.

SLC/23-24/37 A.4 Policy Review update

Mr Martin McAndrew presented the SLC with an update on TCD Fitness to Study and Alcohol policies review.

In relation to the FTS policy, this was first devised and approved in 2018; however, while its principles and rationale are solid, and the input of the Advisory Group is valuable, there are parts that require some re-definition. In particular, the process is unclear in some of its parts: sharing and storing of information; how AG is convened; how advice is transmitted to decision maker, and, lastly, the AG is not the decision maker and this can cause confusion on the ownership of this part of the process. Furthermore, there is no record of level 1 cases and most cases seem to fit into level 2 criteria, with only one case on record of level 3.

The current plan is to have the new policy review process complete for Council meeting in June 2024.

The Alcohol Policy dates back to 2002 and was initially revised in 2014. Its principles remain valid and solid; however, it requires some updating, in particular, the aim is to include problematic drinking behaviour in a similar way to the Drug Misuse Policy, while retaining limitations on promotion of alcohol, alcohol companies, and a commercial impact on sponsorship.

The Alcohol Policy revised text will require the approval of the Executive Officers' Group. Similarly to the FTS policy review, it is hoped that the process will be completed by Council and Board meetings in June 2024.

While commenting on the lengthy nature of the alcohol policy, some committee members expressed concern about alcohol companies' sponsorship, particularly indirect (e.g. zero alcohol beverages) and the need of the policy to be quite specific about what is and is not possible. The Dean of Students holds the ultimate say on the matter, but, as the issue could potentially lead to sensitive issues, it would be a good idea to include in the revision process the possibility of such decision being challenged.

ACTION: Student Life Committee received and noted the Policies Review update and thanked Mr McAndrew for the work on the review.

SLC/23-24/38 A.5 Disability Service Annual Report

The Disability Officer presented the 2022/23 DS Service report to the Committee.

In 22/23 Disability Service received an 11% increase in applications for reasonable accommodations from students, totalling to 785 applications, with 2,312 supported students throughout the academic year (10.8% of the TCD student population).

DS moved to Printing House Square in November 2022, a dedicated space for DS-related activities.

TCD vs national disability data were presented, showing a significantly higher percentage of population affected by mental health issues compared to the national statistic. Some Committee members commented that this is due to the facts that TCD offers a very strong support system for students affected by mental health, which is a strong catalyst for students.

The aim of DS is to create an accessible Campus based on the principles of integration, belonging and engagement and making students co-creators, co-designers and co-producers of an inclusive system of education.

The DS Officer illustrated to the Committee a series of collaborative initiatives DS carried out throughout the academic year with SCS, Health Centre, SU and Societies with the aim of creating a Trinity inclusive community for all students/staff and across all College areas.

One Committee member reported an issue relating to a specific student and around agreed reasonable accommodation that were not respected on an exam's day. Such issues unfortunately can happen from time to time and could be prevented by creating awareness among the exams invigilators and perhaps by introducing some compulsory training.

Another committee member inquired about ADD-ADHD assessment, which is quite expensive, but is required for some students, particularly adult females. Such students should still be referred to DS for support (although there will be no diagnosis nor medication prescription). It was also suggested that some Health Centres around the Country are beginning to offer this kind of assessment at a reduced cost and the divulgation of such services is expected to increase to meet the high demand.

ACTION: Student Life Committee considered the report presented by the Disability Officer and thanked Disability Service for all the great work throughout the year.

SLC/23-24/39 A.6 Dean's Report – March 2024

The Dean of Students updated SLC about his continuous effort to engage, connect and communicate with all students; in particular he highlighted recent engagement with the PG researchers and with S2S. Furthermore, he mentioned a meeting with Melbourne University Alumni which prompted a lot of good thought for upcoming initiatives.

The Dean will be involved in the Countdown to Olympics project in the coming months, with a series of events involving various College areas, mainly the Sport Centre in the run up to the Olympic games.

The Postgraduate representative thanked the Dean of Student for the recent initiative, particularly the Mixer. They also brought up to discussion the possibility of establishing a new service for current and perspective postgraduate research students to assist them understanding the official position of TCD regarding PhD status and the direct consequences thereof (tax exemption status, the Revenue form, etc.). The Dean of Students and the Postgraduate Advisory Officer offered to meet with the Postgraduate Rep for further discussions, as it would be outside the scope of SLC to consider such matters at a very germinal phase.

ACTION: Student Life Committee noted the update from the Dean of Students.

SLC/23-24/40 A.7 A.O.B

The Director of Student Counselling Services highlighted the need to update the student death protocol, particularly in relation to the post-suicide intervention, to adapt current practice to international recommendations, i.e. to hold one yearly memorial and avoiding individual ceremonies. It is well researched best practice to act with a uniform intervention, rather than individual ceremonies.

The SU Officer asked clarification about the immediate support offered to students and staff immediately after a student's death, but it was reinforced that such supporting initiatives will continue to be offered/organised.

ACTION: Student Life Committee noted the Director of Student Counselling's suggested item.

SECTION B: Reports from SLC Working Groups

SLC/23-24/41 B.1 Mental Health Policy

The Director of Student Counselling advised that:

- The mental health policy reviewed document is ready for comments and as such will be circulated to all stakeholders for feedback.

SLC/23-24/42 B.2 Student Centre Working Group

The Dean of Students and President TCDSU advised that:

- A SCWG meeting was going to be held on the following Thursday, 21 March.

SLC/23-24/43 B.3 Orientation and Transition Working Group

- No update.

SECTION C: Items for noting and/or approval

SLC/23-24/44 C.1 Financial Assistance Committee minutes

ACTION: Student life Committee noted and approved the minutes dated 12 March 2024

SLC/23-24/45 C.2 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
23 April	30 April
14 May	21 May

Venue: Trinity Boardroom, Trinity Business School

Meeting times: 11am – 1pm