

Minutes of the Capitation Committee

29 November 2023

At 14.00 in the Elizabethan Room

Present: Senior Dean – Eoin O’Sullivan, Secretary – Aidan Marsh, FSD – Aine Mulcahy, Dean of Students – Richard Porter, CSC – Samuel Isijola, CSC – Ronan Hodson, , CSC – Adam Ó Ceallaigh, TSU – Fergus O’Brien, TSU – Donnchda Carroll, TSU – Michelle O’Dwyer, Pubs – Shane Donnellan, SU – László Molnárfi, SU – Aoife Bennett, SU – Catherine Arnold

Apologies: CSC – Grace Gollogley, TSU – Jane Prendergast

In Attendance: CSC – Noelle Joyce, TSU – Niamh Digby Batton, Pubs – Lara Mellett, SU – Simon Evans, SU – Olivia Orr, SU - Pádraig Mac Brádaigh

The Chair opened the meeting welcoming all present

CC/23-24/010 Minutes of the Last Meeting of 12 September 2023

The minutes of 12th September 2023 were approved.

CC/23-24/011 Matters Arising

While it had been hoped to have the accounts for the Trinity Ball of 2023 ready for presentation at the meeting, the audit of the accounts has not yet been completed. It was noted that the Committee should not anticipate a surplus arising from the Ball.

CC/23-24/012 Trinity Ball Update

A meeting of the Trinity Ball Committee is required to address several matters, including reviewing the membership of the Committee. The Chair will call a meeting.

Ronan Hodson has volunteered to act as the new Secretary to the Ball Committee. This will be proposed to the Ball Committee, then brought to the Capitation Committee for verification.

The 2024 Trinity Ball will take place on 12th April 2024 and will be similar in size and scope to the 2023 Ball with a footprint consisting of Front Square, Fellows Square, and Botany Bay

CC/23-24/013 Presentation of Accounts

Central Societies’ Committee

The CSC had an unprecedented overspend of €180,000 in 2022-23. This resulted primarily from two redundancies in the period which led to redundancy payments of approximately €150,000k. Additionally, there was extensive external consultation around organisational strategy and development.

Societies emerging from a period of relative dormancy over the pandemic period led to a slight overcorrection in terms of expenses for activities organised, however most increases in expenditures in this area relate to core society activities.

Finally, 2022-23 also saw the introduction of a stipend for CSC officers.

The CSC still have healthy reserves and are continuing to keep them that way. They would like to commend and thank their new bookkeeper, Noelle Joyce, who took over from Lucy O’Connell who had been unable to provide much handover due to personal circumstances. It was recognised that the new bookkeeper is doing an excellent job and is working on meanwhile is redesigning the CSC’s financial systems and how they manage their accounts.

The increase in overall costs for the Society of the Year awards was queried and it was explained that this was due to not all tickets being sold.

Sports Union

The Pavilion Bar remains operating poorly on a financial level. The cost of running for the bar has gone up significantly with rising administration expenses, a need for agency staff due to staff retention issues, post-COVID additional cleaning costs, increased credit card charges, and staff disputes requiring HR consultancies all contributing. It was also noted that the Bank of Ireland sponsorships for the bar have ceased. The Pavilion currently holds €142,000 in its reserves which amounts to approximately 91 days of running costs.

Regarding the TSU's accounts relating to its own operations, it was noted that sports clubs are getting less funding per capita as the cost of running TSU has increased. To work towards alleviating this, there is ongoing discussion with College to seek an increased contribution from College towards those job roles in Sport which are part-paid by TSU and part-paid by College. TSU are also trying to get clubs to increase membership fees to help compensate for the decreased funding per capita but finding the appropriate balance is difficult.

Students Union

No queries were raised with regards to the SU Accounts

Publications

No queries were raised with regards to the Publications Accounts

The Chair recognized that the accounts for all Capitated Bodies had been submitted and signed off in good time. Some observations were made that, going forward, if the Capitated Bodies aim for the end of October as the deadline to have accounts signed off for then it smooths out the processes. There was a brief discussion that the Capitation Bodies should investigate changing auditors as part of standard industry practice, and it was raised that they might consider a single unified auditor.

CC/23-24/014 Presentation of Annual Reports

The Annual Reports of the Capitated Bodies were approved.

CC/23-24/015 Discussion of GSU Allocation

Lease of GSU Allocation to TCDSU

The SU proposed that the allocation which had previously been assigned for use by the Graduate Students' Union be released to the SU in full. A paper was submitted based on expenses already incurred and estimations for future expenditures.

The proposal that €20,000 would be used as funding for two part-time Postgraduate officers was queried as being significantly higher than expected. Said officers would assist the Education and Welfare Officers in the work that those roles are already undertaking in assisting postgraduate students. Exact costs and salaries were still to be finalized, along with details of the role.

A concern was raised that there had been insufficient consultation with College and with the other Capitated Bodies, all of whom have a stake in postgraduate affairs, and who have all been impacted by the derecognition of the GSU.

The SU stated that they have heard from several postgraduate students who had concerns about what might be done with the GSU allocation, and who wished for certainty that the money was being utilised for services benefitting postgraduates.

It was noted that in a vote held by the SU the previous year those postgraduates who participated desired separate representation for postgraduate workers and for Masters students, and queried how the SU envisaged their new postgraduate representation being reconciled with this. The SU responded there has been no momentum to establish such bodies, and that due to economies of scale, it would not be possible for a functional body to be established representing postgraduates. The SU would instead work with existing organisations such as the Postgraduate Workers Organisation to improve engagement and support, and that while there had been a controversy with the PWO, it has since been smoothed over.

The Committee felt that it was not able to progress this matter further as there were still several issues that needed further discussion.

CC/23-24/016 Request for New SU Irish Language Sabbatical Officer

The SU's Oifig na Gaeilge gave a presentation to the Committee on a proposed levy to fund their role being made a full-time position within the SU. The role has an extremely wide remit within the SU, and it is becoming common practice in other Irish student unions for it to be a full-time position. A motion to send the change to the role to referendum was presented to the SU Council, which passed the motion unanimously, and if the Levy is approved a referendum would take place in early 2024.

The SU President gave their support to the proposal and presented it as a motion to the Committee.

Concerns were raised that a new levy to fund one officer in one capitated body would be unwieldy and could set a problematic precedent every time a Capitated Body requires a new Sabbatical Officer. The amount proposed was also considered unnecessarily high for the funding of a single position.

The Committee felt that, rather than a levy for a single sabbatical position for a single body, it would be more appropriate to create a levy with the purpose of promoting the use of the Irish language by the Capitated Bodies. It was decided that a working group would be established to determine the wording of the Levy, and that the Capitation Committee would meet in early January to finalise the wording and approve the motion so that the SU may put it to referendum.

CC/23-24/017 Terms of Reference Review

A review of the Terms of Reference was presented to the Committee with several changes proposed (Appendix 1). All changes were approved.

CC/23-24/018 Any Other Business

There was no other business.

Appendix 1: Revisions to Capitation Committee Terms of Reference

THE UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN TRINITY COLLEGE CAPITATION COMMITTEE Terms of Reference – 07 March 2021

Amendments Proposed 17 May 2022 + New Amendments Proposed 2023

1 Objectives

1.1 The Capitation Committee is a sub-committee of the Student Life Committee. Its role is: i) to apportion the capitation fund, committed to it on the basis of the historically approved allocation procedure¹ by Board, to the Capitated Bodies; and ii) to have responsibility for the formulation of the recommendation which is presented to Board by the Student Life Committee in respect of the possible introduction and implementation of levies relating to capital projects and their subsequent recurrent costs; and of levies funding the internal operation of the Capitated Bodies and their dependent organisations²; iii) to ensure the observance of all regulations pertaining to the Capitated Bodies and their dependent organisations, as published in the College Calendar; iv) to develop and bring forward joint proposals for the promotion of the wellbeing and advancement of the capitated bodies and to progress their shared interests; v) to provide a forum for enabling good relations and collaboration between the capitated bodies; and, vi) carry out such other functions as may from time to time be delegated to it by the Student Life Committee.

1.2 The Capitation Committee is guided by the following values in its work and decision-making:

Collaboration

Collaboration is about strong independent bodies working together and cooperation. It involves achieving synergy but not necessarily unity.

Accountability

Accountability is about integrity in the management of resources. It involves holding each other to account.

Transparency

Transparency is about openness in relation to the work and decision-making of the Committee, with particular regard to its role in financial management and finances.

Representation

¹ Minute 2003/89 – Finance Committee, 28th May 2003.

² Protocol governing this Objective adopted by Capitation Committee on February 2nd 2010 and submitted to Student Life Committee with these Terms of Reference.

Appendix 1: Revisions to Capitation Committee Terms of Reference

Representation is about being student led and directed. It involves representing the interests of students and giving voice to these interests.

Fulfilment

Fulfilment is about challenge and personal growth, education and learning, wellbeing and welfare, and dignity and respect. It involves maximising the student experience and enabling student satisfaction.

2 Membership

2.1 The Committee shall comprise:

Senior Dean (casting vote)
College Deans' Executive Officer (non-voting)
Financial Services Division representative (non-voting)
Principal Committee representative
Trinity Sport Union (4 representatives)
CSC (4 representatives)
Students' Union (3 representatives)
Trinity Publications representative (2 representatives)

Each Capitated Bodies may appoint one supernumerary representative to attend meetings of the Committee, such supernumerary representatives shall have no voting rights, nor shall such supernumerary representatives exercise voting rights in the absence of the duly appointed members of the Committee.

The Capitation Committee works by consensus, with the possibility to take a vote, by simple majority, where it is found that consensus cannot be reached.

Each capitated body, and other entities represented, may decide internally who their representatives will be, governed by their own constitutional obligations/democratic process.

2.2 The Chairperson of the Committee shall be the Senior Dean.

The role of the chairperson includes to:

- Ensure the effective running of the Capitation Committee, particularly in the build-up to its meetings.
- Enable effective and productive meetings of the Capitation Committee.
- Foster good relations between members of the Capitation Committee.

Where the chair is deemed by the Capitation committee to be mishandling or not adequately performing their role, the matter will be referred to the Provost with a view to appointing a replacement.

2.3 The College Deans' Secretary shall act as Secretary to the Committee.

The role of the secretary includes to:

Appendix 1: Revisions to Capitation Committee Terms of Reference

- Take and circulate minutes of meetings of the Capitation Committee.
- Organise and convene meetings of the Capitation Committee when best suits all members.
- Seek the necessary inputs for meetings of the Capitation Committee, including financial reports of the capitated bodies at the start of the academic year.
- Hold the archives of the Capitation Committee.

3 Meetings and Quorum

3.1 The agenda for Capitation Committee meetings shall address the following strands:

- Accountability Strand: considering annual accounts and reports from the capitated bodies and addressing issues of accountability as they arise, and considering reports from all subgroups.
- Collaboration Strand: considering opportunities for collaboration between capitated bodies, such as around Fresher's Week, and considering updates from the capitated bodies to inform this work.
- Joint Proposal Strand: considering issues for the development of joint proposals and their promotion, and considering updates from the capitated bodies to inform this work.
- Review Strand: considering the work of the Capitation Committee and reflecting on its impact and functioning.
- Any Other Business Strand: considering other issues of relevance to the objectives of the Capitation Committee.

The agenda for each meeting will be prepared by the chairperson, allowing for input from members

3.2 The Committee shall meet three times as necessary per semester, with the first meeting of the year being convened prior to Fresher's Week, and with additional meetings to be convened by the Chairperson as required for the Committee to fulfil its duties. Where there is insufficient business any scheduled meeting may be cancelled and, conversely, additional meetings may be held where sufficient business warrants it.

3.3 The quorum for meetings shall be 50% of the voting membership plus one (9 members.)

3.4 The Chairperson may invite other persons to attend meetings for specific agenda items.

3.5 The draft minutes of a Capitation Committee meeting will be forwarded for circulation to the next meeting of the Student Life Committee.

3.6 In order to aid its operation the Capitation Committee may from time to time arrange for subgroups to consider specialist issues. Subgroups report to each meeting of the Capitation Committee, under the accountability strand, and may, as part of this, bring forward recommendations to the Capitation Committee.

3.7 The Capitation Committee's approved meeting minutes and agendas shall be made publicly available, with due regard to agreed confidentiality.

4 Duties

Appendix 1: Revisions to Capitation Committee Terms of Reference

The specific duties of the Capitation Committee shall be to:

- 4.1 Be responsible to the Student Life Committee for all matters relating to the allocation and audited accounting of the said funds by the capitated bodies in accordance with guidelines approved by the Student Life Committee and Board.
- 4.2 Be responsible for an annual review of the audited accounts and major activities of the capitated bodies.
- 4.3 Prepare an annual report of its activities, to include a review of Committee effectiveness, for submission to the Student Life Committee not later than the end of Michaelmas term of each year.
- 4.4 Be responsible for the formulation of the recommendation which is presented to Board by the Student Life Committee in respect of the possible introduction and implementation of levies relating to capital projects and their subsequent recurrent costs; and of levies funding the internal operation of the Capitated Bodies and their dependent organisations³.
- 4.5 Be responsible for dealing, in a timely fashion, with complaints brought to the Capitation Committee against capitated bodies and/or their dependent organisations. In the case of a complaint against a dependent organisation, the Capitation Committee will require that the capitated body deal with the complaint internally to ensure adherence to the relevant regulation(s). If the capitated body's internal procedures are deemed to have dealt with a complaint unsatisfactorily or in the case of a complaint against a capitated body, the Capitation Committee will ensure compliance with the regulation(s) and to this end retains the authority to withhold funding from any of the Capitated Bodies.
- 4.6 Ensure that all Capitated Bodies and their dependent organisations are fully and properly informed of the legal obligations pertaining to the publication of any and all material. Whilst acknowledging the variety and range of material published under its general auspices and the aegis of its dependent organisations, the Capitation Committee shall take measures to ensure that the relevant personnel in clubs and in societies, and the respective editors of publications and their contributors, will receive proper and pertinent training and advice on the legal context and guides to best practice, (and where applicable the College regulations), in which each type of publication, including but not limited to books, newspapers, journals, brochures, leaflets and posters, is produced.

Further, the Capitation Committee shall require that all titles and publications which may reasonably be considered within the potential compass of the Press Council of Ireland but particularly those titles and publications which are officially recognised by the Dublin University Publications Committee; and those titles and publications which would seek such recognition; and the news sheets of the Trinity College Dublin Students' Union; and the non-academic publications of the Trinity College Dublin Graduate Students' Union are members of the Press Council of Ireland.

In the context of the legal framework governing publication in general, the Capitation Committee is aware that the Senior Dean may withdraw any publication where, in the Senior Dean's opinion as informed by legal or medical advice, such immediate action is necessary to avert obvious and immediate risk of violence to person or damage to property.

³ As determined by the approved Protocol governing Objective 1.1.ii

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The Capitation Committee is aware such action will only occur in extreme circumstances and the Senior Dean's exercising of such powers will be subject to review at the earliest opportunity by the Capitation Committee.

The exercise of such powers on the part of the Senior Dean will not in any way diminish or negate the right or capacity of the Capitation Committee to require full information regarding the circumstances prompting the exercise of the said Decanal powers; neither will it diminish nor negate the right or capacity of the Capitation Committee to pursue its own investigation of the nature of the alleged offence. On foot of the Senior Dean exercising such powers the Capitation Committee shall meet at the earliest opportunity to investigate the nature of the alleged offence.

- 4.7 Be responsible for identifying relevant issues and aspirations of shared concern in the work and interests of the capitated bodies, establishing shared positions on these, identifying and pursuing the most effective arrangements to bring forward these shared positions as joint proposals, and bringing the collective weight of the capitated bodies to bear behind the joint proposals developed.
- 4.8 Be responsible for enabling exchange and discussion at Capitation Committee meetings to advance shared understanding of the work of and issues for the capitated bodies, encouraging the capitated bodies to engage formally with each other for similar exchanges outside of Capitation Committee meetings, and promoting the shared values of collaboration, accountability, representation, and fulfilment in the work of the Capitation Committee.