

Date: 07/03/2018

Chair: Prof. Barnard, Senior Tutor

Minutes: Rebecca Shepherdson, TCSU Vice-President

Apologies: Rebecca Fitzgerald (Advisor to Women students), Rory Landman

1) LGBT+ matters (Senior Tutor)

Senior Tutor notes the story of the LGBT flag being removed from a student's window which is currently unfolding in Varsity. She has looked into case and emphasises how seriously the incident has been taken. The Head Porter has looked into the allegation and found no evidence of anyone tearing down a flag and refutes the allegation of the specific comments reported in Varsity. The Senior Tutor notes that College acknowledges it is out of line with other colleges with regard to flying the rainbow flag and this has exacerbated the situation. The key argument from the College Council, supported by the Master, is that greater unity is shown by flying the Trinity flag, celebrating the whole college under one emblem. The Senior Tutor appreciates the arguments both for and against and has spoken to the TCSU LGBT+ officer about the subject.

She notes that it is worthwhile raising this issue again with College Council. It is noted that the issue wasn't raised by the 2017/8 TCSU. The Senior Tutor reiterates that this message would be more powerful coming from the student body. She also states that this is a long-term aim, and campaigning needs to begin soon with the view to next year. In the meantime, college has been looking into other things to do. One idea, which has garnered support in Council, has been the planting of the bank in front of Wren Library with crocuses in the LGBT rainbow, which will re-flower every year. The Head of Gardens has been very supportive, and there was no dissent within council. Another suggestion is to change the lights in Neville's Court with the rainbow colours. Senior Tutor asks that students apply collective creativity to the matter. She also reminds the committee that there will be a piece on front page of the College website with TCSU LGBT+ officer and the BA LGBT+ officer. The Junior Bursar expresses his support for the ideas presented.

TCSU President notes that among the student body, the flag will be a key sticking issue. The Senior Tutor acknowledges this and points out that this has been especially damaging in relation to the Varsity story. The Senior Tutor has been working with other colleges to explore their policies for the future specifically, in relation to displays in windows. TCSU President notes that the issue was indeed an infringement of general college rules and notes the complexity of the situation. The Senior Tutor agrees, noting that the key dispute revolves around what was said to the student. She stresses that this was not an incident driven by homophobia, or the marginalisation of LGBT people in the college. She notes that the same rule had been applied to a Fellow. The Junior Bursar expresses his strong support for keeping the rule intact. The BA president notes that from his experience, students don't have a problem with this rule, rather notes lack of college response as being the key point of contention. He notes it would have been useful to have had statement from College and clarification of the situation. In relation to communicating with students, Dr Cullen asks that if arguments against the flag prevail, Council could make its reasoning clear to the college as

a whole. Without a clear statement, the lack of flag might portray the college as exclusionary.

Senior Tutor agrees with both points and notes that there was a reason that the College did not respond to the Varsity article. As it looked like the story was going to be picked up by mass media, the college needed to exercise caution, not wanting to fan flames of story that was not true. She also notes the concern of the college for the individuals involved. She relays that the Porters had felt personally attacked. The Porters do not think of themselves as homophobic and personal upset was caused by story. However, she accepts that the lack of response now looks as if the College could be homophobic. The Senior Tutor also mentions that when students have complicated the situation in the media, the college is very reluctant to retaliate, keeping the student's welfare in mind.

The TCSU Vice-President raises the symbolic importance of the act of flag flying within the undergraduate LGBT+ community in college and reminds the committee that careful wording will be needed for any statement on the subject from College Council. This is especially important regarding anything that could be seen as being an excuse for not addressing LGBT+ inclusivity. She asks that the BA society and TCSU are consulted. The Senior Tutor agrees and reminds the committee that Council receives three new members every year and the last decision on the matter was taken two years ago. She suggests that until the Council profile has changed, it would be prudent to look at alternatives, with the flag as a long-term aim. She notes that it is not the LGBT+ flag in itself, but the suggestion this would lead to pressure from other interest groups. Dr Curran raises the possibility of having two flags flown at the same time. The BA president agrees, pointing out that other colleges, such as St John's and Emmanuel use alternative locations to fly the flag. The Dean questions that once a precedent has been set, how will this be stopped from growing? He feels this is a clear argument.

Returning to the alternative ideas, Prof. Crawford makes clear that the Head Gardener is very keen on the planting of flowers, noting the duration and longevity of the plan. He emphasises that this is not just a gesture but will take considerable amounts of work and expense. Alongside Paul Brakefield, he notes that this has his full Head Gardener, for his gracious and considerate manner. She also notes this is not a case of "either/or", rather a way of Trinity thinking laterally, as she cannot guarantee change will come quickly at the level of College Council. She notes her thanks to Andrew and Paul Brakefield and to Tom (Head Gardener). Dr Curran adds his thanks to the maturity of the JCR and MCR in their handling of the issue and also to the garden staff. He notes that there are voices speaking on the subject at different levels of college and emphasises that the concerns of the student and LGBT+ communities are being heard. Both the TCSU and BA presidents thank him for his kind words and fully endorse and appreciate the efforts of the College.

The Senior Tutor raises some practical suggestions concerning the lighting of college; the presence of e-Illuminate, the company responsible for lighting King's College and the Guildhall. She suggests the LGBT+ representatives work with them and ask about using e-Illuminate resources. The Junior Bursar elaborates on this, informing the committee that this

year the theme was colour. An idea which came to college too late to enact this year, was to project a beam of white light across bridge split light into colours. He suggests the same pattern would also work as an LGBT+ symbolic statement.

2) Communications with Students (Senior Tutor)

The Senior Tutor expresses her considerable frustration in trying to effectively communicate with students. She does not want to constantly email, as students will not open them and so has a policy of reserving mass emails for very important issues. However, this leaves a gap where certain issues need to be more effectively communicated. Social media has been tried but found to be ineffective or inappropriate. Most recently, an electric board in bar has been suggested, with rotating information. This could be used to convey internships and opportunities. She notes this is on the website but there are no trigger mechanisms to alert students to changes. However, as not every student frequents the bar, this would miss large swathes of college. She states the ideal location for this would be in corridor outside buttry to capture the most students, which would serve a dual purpose for food related information. The Prof. Crawford asks if the Works Department have been consulted about the viability of the plan. The Senior Tutor replies that they have, but they reported that this would require removing part of the ceiling to achieve.

TCSU President suggests that a combination of boards in the bar and library would capture the most students. She suggests that an ideal location would be where bags are left. Dr Cullen notes this is already in place at the University Library in the library lobby and locker room. He expresses support for the idea.

The Senior Tutor mentions the new physical newsletter for staff, but notes it is currently only run by one communications officer and is resource intensive. Asks whether College should be pushing for communication support to make the same idea for students, or if anyone has any other ideas.

TCSU President suggests that notes in pigeon holes would not be an efficient use of resources as many students would not read it and would be a waste of paper. She notes that the Computing and Publicity officer sends out weekly bulletin on Sunday night with society events for the next week. She also informs the committee that TCSU also have a policy of not publishing internships. She questions whether these could be included at the end of the bulletin. BA President notes that the BA society run a similar scheme, which includes work experience and research opportunities. He also comments that in his experience, people don't read more than 100 words. He notes that in this regard, the Senior Tutor's email policy is effective.

The Senior Tutor notes the importance of communication regarding the ongoing LGBT+ flag issue. As this begins to settle, she suggests information will be sent as an email and a notice will be placed on the college website.

3) TCSU Noticeboards: reconfiguration and renewing the boards (Senior Tutor; Rebecca Shepherdson, TCSU VP)

The TCSU Vice-President notes her intention to refresh the notice boards around college. She explains this would be two in the corridor outside the dining hall and four in the entrance to Whewell's Court from Trinity Street. The two would be a TCSU profile, and the other four would be assigned to the liberations roles (BME, LGBT, Women's and Access). The Senior Tutor expresses her support, especially supporting the Murrery Edwards style the Vice-President had previously sent. She expresses her desire to see happy, engaged, young faces visible around college. She notes she does not want the college to appear off putting and stuffy to prospective students. The Senior Tutor will look into the regulation of the Proctoral notices which are currently displayed in three locations.

The Senior Tutor has to leave at this point to attend a University meeting, Dr Spagnolo is selected as Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

4) Rent changes and calculation (Mr Bourne, Junior Bursar)

The Junior Bursar explains the mechanism that has been developed for raising rents. Following consultation with TCSU and BA presidents, he has approached College Council for approval. This discussion has revolved around two central issues; timing of the ballot and price calculations, and the mechanisms for raising rent prices. In regard to timing, balloting now takes place in the Lent term, and rents will be decided in Michaelmas. This year, this will be back dated, but rents for 2019/20 will be settled in Michaelmas 2018.

The Junior Bursar then outlines the new procedure as follows:

A series of factors have been identified that could be used to calculate rent increases. College Council asked to retain the power to attenuate any figure that arises from this calculation.

- The factors that Council wish to consider are the personnel costs (housekeeping, maintenance, works department, the Porters) and market rents. This is also tempered with a long-term desire to establish where the College wants to sit in centralised rankings.
- Trinity currently is seventh from bottom, but a long-term aim could be to move towards the middle of these rankings, as there is a concern that as a wealthy college, Trinity could be suppressing rents for poorer colleges who rely on rent for income. The rumour that Trinity wants to sit at the top of the bottom third remains heresy.
- The increase in maintenance loans was also considered to be an important factor as this is students' attributable income to pay rent.

It has been decided to look at the average of personnel cost increase and market rent increase. It is then questioned whether this would be applied against single year, or multiple. It is suggested a three-year period is reasonable as this is the duration of most undergraduate degrees.

- Single year figures for this year is 4.6%. The Junior Bursar reminds the committee that this is rounded up or down to nearest 0.5%. He notes that this figure is significantly above the increase to maintenance loans.
- Looking over a three-year period shows that staff costs were particularly high in 2017 as college applied minimum hourly wage in line with the living wage for the

most poorly paid staff members in college. This had a disproportionate effect on bedders and the house-keeping department. By averaging the cost over three years, this softens the effect of price spikes. This figure is more modest in relation to maintenance loan.

The Junior Bursar reports that Council likes this new methodology. They have also asked to be presented each year with the one and three-year options, which will then apply to all rents and charges in college. This year, Council have elected for the three-year (3%) option.

The BA Society President asks if this also applies to Biddwell's managed properties. The Junior Bursar confirms that this will be achieved by working with the companies; if rent increases are over 3% the college will look at subsidies.

The TCSU Vice-President raises question of capping any increase in relation to the maintenance loan. The Junior Bursar agrees to feed back this idea to College Council. The BA President asks if this could be in relation to average graduate income. The Junior Bursar points out that as this is not a fixed number, this is difficult.

5) TCSU Freshers' Week budgeting (Dr Fairbrother, Senior Treasurer TCSU)

The Senior Treasurer wishes to express his concerns regarding the financing of the TCSU Freshers' week

- The Senior Treasurer points out that the **cost of Fresher's Week is born by college**. As a consequence, TCSU has no incentive to be economic.
- He also notes the **mode of operation** could be improved. In 2017, there was a lack of clear product control and accounting. He also questions the cost of gowns and asks if there is a second-hand market. The TCSU President notes this has been discussed and it was agreed in TCSU that this would encourage discrimination at the start of Freshers' week. The Senior Treasurer acknowledges the problem of asking freshers to pay at all. Dr Spagnolo raises that if the market had a substantial number of second hand gowns this could reduce the problem. The TCSU President reminds the committee that many students keep their gowns for sentimental reasons and so questions how many would be injected.
- The Senior Tutor also raises the issue of **over-ordering of products**, noting that he cost was born by college. Specifically, this related to wristbands and t-shirts. The TCSU President informs the committee that the wristbands are not organised by the College, but is a product offered by an external company to all colleges. Not selling them would differentiate Trinity. She also points out that this year's order has been reduced from 175 to 100. Regarding the t-shirts, TCSU President agrees these were not well designed last year and going forward will not have the Matriculation year on them, to be able to re-sell them the next year.

The Senior Treasurer emphasises that stock control is the key issue, when TCSU records do not match with those of the Catering Office. Various proposals are suggested to monitor this, including ensuring there is a TCSU member at the desk recording all sales and creating an invoice as soon as possible to be agreed with catering. The Senior Tutor emphasises that

he wants to develop a reasonable culture around Freshers' Week which does not cost the College more than it needs to. This also means not relying on the Catering Department, requiring TCSU to play an active role. Discrepancies are also difficult to rectify over time, as he has had to deal with this year.

6) Condom machines (Mr Bourne, Junior Bursar)

The Junior Bursar informs the committee that the Clerk of works has conducted a survey of vending machines around college which include a wide variety of products; condoms, sanitary items etc. He has found five machines around college, in varying states of management which needs to be brought together to sell these items at a reasonable rate. The Clerk of Works will consult TCSU and BA society on this topic.

7) Any other business

The Dean reminds the committee of the continuing problems arising from social media and asks TCSU to remind college of the importance of what is published online. The TCSU President agree this should be included in the Freshers' Week welcome talks.