

Date: Wednesday 21st November, 2018

Chair: Prof. Catherine Barnard (Senior Tutor)

Minutes: Frankie Postles (TCSU Male Welfare Officer)

In attendance: Dr Fairbrother (Finance Secretary); Dr Curran (Fellow); Dr Benjamin Spagnolo (items 1 – 6, Fellow); Dr Pullen, (Acting Junior Bursar); Prof. Kusakawa (Dean of College); Prof Crawford (Steward); Dr Landman (Senior Bursar); Molly O'Brien (TCSU President); Isabel Vallina-Garcia (BA Society President); Anna Dimitriadis (TCSU LGBT+)

Apologies: Kirsty Ross (Chaplain); Rebecca Shepherdson (TCSU Vice-President); Dr Rebecca Fitzgerald (Advisor to Women Students)

1) College investments (TCSU)

TCSU remind the committee that they will be holding an Open Meeting next Wednesday. Issues of Divestment are on the agenda following from articles regarding college investments published in Varsity last week. TCSU points out it has a clear stance on fossil fuel divestment as mandated at the Lent 2018 Open Meeting: students are opposed to direct and indirect investment in fossil fuels. They would like clarification on how college invests in fossil fuel companies.

The Senior Bursar explains that College owns the investments, but through tracker fund where investments are made in all of the companies in the index. Trinity owns the small share of the largest 1500 companies in the world. College policy is to invest in a way that is consistent with aims and values. The Senior Bursar is meeting with various parties including the Trinity Responsible Investment Society to keep the discussion open with investors and the Liaison Committee is open to discussions. TCSU are encouraged to assert to those present at the Open Meeting that the conversations are ongoing.

2) Feedback from Graduate Matriculation Dinner (Prof. Crawford, Steward)

Steward: He points out that the BA proposal reduces to three topics:

1) Dates of dinners: The BA society suggested putting the Matriculation dinner a week later, but that is when the Undergraduate Matriculation Dinner is, so that is logistically impossible. The Steward suggests that next year, the BA Welcome Dinner is moved to the Friday following the BA Matriculation Dinner. The Steward suggested that the BA Society looks over his suggestions regarding dates and then talk to Danielle Smith-Turner.

2) Disparity between BA and Undergraduates: Proposal claims that Undergraduates are getting an extra dinner that is paid for by College. The Steward states this is wrong. There is a Freshers' Formal Hall and only Undergraduate Freshers are invited to this. The Graduates have the equivalent BA Freshers' Dinner, to which all of Side F students are invited, paid for by the college in that it is included in their Freshers' Week Budget. There is also a preceding drinks

reception. The Steward would like noted that he *strongly resists the introduction of what the BA Society requests, which is a third event for Graduate Students.*

3) The issue of spouses and partners. The Steward states has never supported a blanket introduction of spouses and partners being invited to Matriculation Dinner. His suggestion for this year, stated on the 13th June, was that only spouses of the new Side F students would be able to attend. The Steward informed the BA Society that Council may object to the proposal, which they then did. The Steward still in principle supports the inviting of spouses of new Side F students. The Steward notes, however, that this request is unlikely to pass due to the fact that that last year, it was rejected by College Council.

3) Catering queries (TCSU)

Halal food has been discussed at the College Welfare Meeting. From this meeting, Ian Reinhardt is actively looking into solutions which may include people who want Halal food pre-ordering via Google form.

TCSU ask for clarification on the composition of the Kitchen Fixed Charge (KFC). The Junior Bursar clarifies that the KFC is required to maintain the Catering department service throughout the year, as student revenue is on a termly basis. Secondly, there is a philosophical point that Trinity is a collegiate community, and taking meals together encourages sense of community. It is also reminded that cafeteria food is cheaper for undergraduates than graduates as graduates who do not live in college do not pay the KFC. Professor Crawford emphasizes that the KFC does not cover the full cost of the catering service. TCSU ask for a review of opting out for vegans, given that there is now a cheap vegan option for both lunch and dinner.

4) BBQ facilities proposal (BA Society) *see additional documents*

The Junior Bursar asks for clarification on where this would be and who would monitor it. He also points out that public access would be an issue and that this would cause extra workload for the Porters. There would be regulatory concerns and health and safety implications.

The Senior Tutor says she can see why the BA Society would want this. She suggests that having heard the concerns, they discuss the Ian Reinhardt, followed by the Head Porter, and then return to Liaison, where it could be forwarded to the Buildings committee. She emphasizes that following the right stages are the most important part of this procedure.

5) Student Room charges 2019/20 proposal (Dr Pullen, Acting Junior Bursar)

The Junior Bursar reminds the committee that during the last academic year, an agreement was reached within Liaison for a formula for increase in rents going forward. In 2017/18 the level of maintenance expenditure in the college was abnormally low. The formula uses those two variables: costs in College and rent rises in proximity to the College. The formula could (going forward) be applied in one of two ways

- 1) Year on year, which would result in a large fall in rents for 2019/20.
- 2) Over three years, which would result in a very minimal increase in rents.

Due to the lack of spending on maintenance last year, a lot of work will have to be done to catch up in future years, which under the current formula would result in a large increase in rents, which is deemed unfair.

The current student view is that accommodation is very good value for money. The College sets a target of sitting at the top of the bottom third of University College rents. If the formula was applied as it currently stands, Trinity would become an outlier, that the Committee deems would result in a worsening of inter-college relations.

The Junior Bursar proposes that a figure is agreed for this year (with reference to other data). The incoming Junior Bursar will do assessment on applying the formula over two years. The decision was to increase rents this year higher than the formula would suggest and next year lower than the formula would suggest, so as to smooth the rent increase over the coming two years. The Junior Bursar suggests 3% increase this year would be a conservative yet sensible figure, which was agreed by the Liaison Committee.

6) TCSU Overspend:

TCSU had predicted that 110 people would show up to the BBQ event in Freshers' Week, but the event was more popular than predicted and so more tickets were sold. The TCSU Junior Steward has been in contact with the company in question. TCSU had agreed an extra charge for the plates and cutlery at a rate of 40p per extra person. However, the company claim there was a verbal agreement to pay more for food per person. The contract is with TCSU.

The Senior Tutor points out that the burden on proof is on the company to show change in agreement. TCSU are told to not cave in straight away.

The Junior Bursar makes two points:

- 1) What TCSU are contractually obliged to pay they still need to pay
- 2) However, with a verbal agreement with no proof and no recording this is now a matter for negotiation. He reminds the committee that Freshers' Week expenditure is done by collecting invoices and then reimbursing TCSU. Any additional overspends may have to be paid out of the TCSU reserves. He suggests the same company should not be used next year.

7) LGBT survey and proposal (TCSU)

The TCSU LGBT+ Officer outlines the survey sent to all students in college regarding pride flag, supplemented by a proposal.

Dr Curran thanks Anna for her work. He raises the fact that there were two optional questions at the end of the questionnaire and wants to know broadly speaking the proportion of negative responses to the form and the selection criteria for presentation on the proposal document.

- The LGBT+ Officer points out that 35 respondents answered the question, of which fewer than 5 answered negatively.

The LGBT+ Officer raises the possibility of flying the flag above the Wren or New Court as an alternative to the main flagpole.

- On the issue of wanting to maintain position of political neutrality by not flying the flag at all, she points out that now Trinity is one of seven colleges not to fly the flag and one of two colleges not to show it anywhere. Therefore, it is not a neutral statement to refrain from flying the flag. She points out that the media perception and general perception from the students is negative. On StudentRoom, not flying the flag is listed as a negative of the College.
- It is also a logistical point. She thanks the committee for the work with the planting of flowers which she appreciates represents an investment of College funds and time. She points out that free flag from CUSU LGBT Campaign would be sustainable and would ensure continuity.
- Dr Curran seconds this, pointing out to the committee that the context under which previous requests to Council has shifted, with Trinity now being one of only two Colleges not choosing to fly the flag. The college will be looked at in advance of February to see if the college position has shifted. Dr Fairbrother agrees that main problem is not flying the flag, as now perceived as more of a political statement than flying it.

The Senior Tutor states she recognizes there are clearly lots of socio-political and welfare issues around this issue of flag flying in general. She recognizes that the proposal itself is extremely clear in addressing these. TCSU and the BA Society agree that flying the flag would be good message for college to send. Moving forward, the BA Society should also send out the survey.

Regarding the proposal, the Junior Bursar points out that the named individuals on the proposal are problematic for reasons of GDPR. He enquires about the possibility of CRSid certification mechanism and that TCSU should anonymise the responses going forward to council.

The Dean makes it known she cannot support this. Her view is that if any flag is to be flown, it should only be the Trinity flag which unites all members of college. This applies to any location of the flag being flown.

The Junior Bursar states he has deliberately not expressed opinion because he is not an acting member of the fellowship and will not be here when the issue will come up next. However, he is opposed to 'gesture politics'.

- Dr Curran states he truly does understand those arguments and he is grateful to members of the committee for sharing their concerns. In response, he agrees with the proposal point 2.8 regarding the concern about representation in the College not being as good as it should be. He raises the concern that is that it is not merely a political problem, but the consequences come with practical consequences for students and serious welfare concerns.

8) BA Society request to re-summarise their arguments regarding the Graduate Matriculation Dinner:

The BA summarise that they key issue is that traditionally there is one Matriculation Dinner for all students on the Saturday after Freshers' Week. Overcrowding issues have meant this year

they were separated into two dinners. In 2018, the BA Society Matriculation and Freshers' Dinner were combined into one. There is concern from BAs that their welcome to college is not as resounding for undergraduates. They argue the BAs have effectively lost their Welcome Dinner.

- The Senior Tutor and Dean point out no possibility extra dinner as the first two weeks is very difficult for the Catering Department. They suggest that in the 2019 Freshers' Week proposal that the BA Society ask if College willing to fund a cheaper alternative, for example a BBQ or a Garden Party in Fellow's Garden. There is room to think about creative solutions.

9) Announcements from the Junior Bursar

The Junior Bursar apologizes to TCSU for the Welfare Room, but that the issue is now resolved and should be available soon.

The Junior Bursar reminds the committee that this will be his final meeting. The Committee thanks him for all his work and contributions.