

*Date: 23/01/19; 14:15; New Court M4*

*Chair: Prof. Catherine Barnard, Senior Tutor*

*Minutes: Becky Shepherdson, TCSU Vice President*

*Apologies: None received*

*In attendance: Prof. Sachiko Kusakawa (Dean of College), Dr Andrew Crawford (Steward); Isabel Vallina-Garcia (BA President); Thomas Graff (BA Liaison Officer); Dr Jeremy Fairbrother (Finance secretary, Senior Treasurer TCSU); Dr Sean Curran (Title A Fellow, Ex-officio); Dr Ben Spagnolo (Elected Fellow); Molly O'Brien (TCSU President); Edward Knapp (Junior Bursar).*

Report on Developments in the College Council or in College Committees (College Officers present)

Issues from the Senior Tutor

*None submitted*

Issues from the Dean

*None submitted*

Issues from the Steward

*None submitted*

Issues from the Junior Bursar

*None submitted*

Key issue from BA

**Study space for PhD students. – see additional documents**

The BA Society outline the key issues facing post-graduate students, particularly humanities students, with regards to workspaces. There is a lack of workspaces within faculties in the university where post-graduate students are reliably able to find a quiet space to work, meaning a lot of time and energy that could be spent on studying is used to find a suitable work space. Currently, the options in college are the bar, which is a noisy environment, or the library, which is over-crowded and so is an unreliable place to find a seat. Both spaces have limited opening hours outside of undergraduate term-time. The BA Society wonder whether an appropriate room in college could be found where postgraduates can have guaranteed space to work through-out the year.

The Junior Bursar expresses his support for the plan and raises the practical points of where the room could be found (potentially next to the Winstanley Lecture Theatre, or in Burrell's Field). He also suggests lockers, or a small gyp could be useful.

The Dean raises her concerns that this touches on some principles of academic provisioning at the university. She reminds the committee that the admission of graduates is managed by faculties, and it is their responsibility to facilitate the academic environment for their

graduates. She expresses concern that Trinity should not be usurping the role of faculties or covering the shortcomings of faculties, especially given the huge fees demanded of post-graduate students by faculties. This would also privilege Trinity students over students in the same position at other colleges. There is an app called SpaceFinder developed by the University Library which shows freer spaces. She also points out that College cannot provide space for all of its post-graduate humanities students and so this space may well also become first come, first served. Dr Curran seconds these concerns. He also points out that as a frequent user of the library, he has never struggled to find a space, if one is willing to share a desk.

The issues with the library facilities are discussed, with both the BA and TCSU Presidents informing the committee of the regular lack of space in Easter term, a lack of power-points needed for laptop-based essays, a lack of natural light (due to algae overgrowing skylights), a lack of heating in winter and cooling in summer. There is also a problem with the practicality of enforcing a “quiet” and “silent” area given the layout of the library. Dr Spagnolo seconds this concern of a pressure in study space in college. These issues have been raised by TCSU with the library, but due to the listed nature of the buildings, the library is unable to address some of them. The BA Society suggest that some of the pressure on workspace, and concerns of the BAs could be addressed by extending opening hours of the library.

The BA Society Liaison Officer raises the wider point that the proposed room is not merely a practical solution, but also part of addressing the question of what kind of academic culture Trinity wants to promote amongst its students. A shared space dedicated to working would promote a more collaborative style of work and allow ideas sharing, which could make an positive impact on the work done at Trinity. The TCSU President points out that this is what the undergraduate use of the Junior Parlour also aims to achieve: there is student demand for this kind of working. Dr Curran voices his support for this promotion of collaborative working and suggests that the BA Society look into academic papers coming largely from the US which look into the effects of collaborative workspaces on post- graduate PhD completion rates.

The Senior Tutor acknowledges the validity of the points raised. She would welcome a survey of the exact needs of the postgraduates, including a breakdown by subject and working times.

#### Key issue from TCSU

##### **Freshers’ Week Expenditure – to be tabled at meeting**

The TCSU President presents the Freshers’ week expenditure breakdown as prepared by the TCSU Treasurer (*see additional documents*). Overall the Freshers’ Week came in under-budget and the committee have received very positive feedback from freshers.

Overspending tended to be due to committee oversights, but this was balanced by underspending in other areas. The t-shirt and wristband overspending from last year was solved and overall finances were more tightly managed, especially regarding liaising with catering. TCSU also sold all second-hand gowns, which was very positive and will continue next year. All changes and challenges will be reported to the incoming committee. The Dean

congratulates TCSU on their handling of finances especially given the difficulties facing the committee.

The Steward asks for feedback when dealing with the catering department. The TCSU President reports that although it takes a few emails and seeing relevant staff in person, TCSU have generally found it to be a positive relationship. TCSU did also keep their own records at the time of each event to be able to cross check invoices sent by catering.

Dr Spagnolo asks how the invoice issue with the external catering company was resolved. It is reported that TCSU took the Liaison Committee's advice and emailed the company outlining the society's position. TCSU paid the original invoice on the day and have not heard back from the company.

Dr Fairbrother reminds TCSU that they will need to present invoices in order to be reimbursed.

The Senior Tutor expresses her thanks to the TCSU Treasurer for her diligent work and excellent report.

#### Issues from TCSU + BA Society

##### **Wi-Fi provision:**

The TCSU Present outlines how patchy WiFi provision affects both the graduate and undergraduate students. Lack of availability of WiFi across the college is a severe impediment to academic work.

The Senior Tutor notes the importance of the issue and suggest it needs to be taken to the IT committee.

##### **LGBT History month celebrations:**

The Senior Tutor takes this opportunity to report proceedings from College Council, where it was agreed to fly LGBT+ flag from a secondary flagpole in a prominent location. She informs the committee that due to the short time-scale, it will not be possible to erect the flagpole above college this year. She presents a series of alternative locations. The committee agree that the option next Newton's apple tree is the preferred location, followed by the cobbles next to Great Gate. It is felt the option on Brewhouse lawn is too close to the flower display.

The Senior Tutor thanks TCSU and the BA Society for their patience, pragmatism and professionalism in dealing with the matter. She thanks TCSU for taking the trouble of presenting survey in such a compelling way. Dr Curran also gives his thanks to the TCSU LGBT+ Officer. The TCSU President thanks the College Council for their decision and to all the staff who have given their support to the issue. Both societies express their gratitude to College for their stance on the matter and their happiness with the celebrations this year, which have already had a positive reception in the student body.

**Book Grant:**

It is pointed out that the Book Grant of £50 for graduates and undergraduates has not changed in at least 30 years. It is requested that this is adjusted for inflation. The Senior Tutor will look into this.

**Prospective Gym Survey:**

The BA Society and TCSU point out the issue of gym facilities has been raised at past Liaison meetings. They announce their intention to conduct joint survey to look at short and long-term issues and possible solutions.

Other issues from BA Society**Cycling Facilities: Bike Parking for BAs; Cycle Locker Proposal – see additional documents:**

## 1) Bike Parking for BAs

The BA President reports that she has already had reports of three bikes being stolen from college areas. College currently does not provide enclosed bike storage for graduate students in the manner that is provided for undergraduates living on the main site. She suggests that 1) current provisioning could be enclosed and 2) that BAs could be given use of undergraduate storage when the undergraduates are not in residence.

The Dean asks whether the students had taken sufficient precautionary measures to protect their property and if not, raises the question whether this could be a disproportionate response.

Dr Spagnolo expresses that disproportionate provisioning across undergraduates and graduates seems a reasonable issue to address. Dr Crawford points out that in Portugal Street there is a yard area where people currently leave bikes. It would not be unreasonable to ask for a lock on this area. The BA President thanks the Steward for this suggestion, reminding the committee that this an area of particular urgency given the proximity to Jesus Green and pubs in the area which make Portugal Street particularly vulnerable to theft.

## 2) Storage

BAs would appreciate an area for storing items such as bike helmets when they come into college. They ask if it would possible to have lockers or storage in college, perhaps in the stairwell next to the bar which leads to the common rooms. The Junior Bursar will look into this.

**Green bins – see additional documents**

The BA President asks if green bins in graduate accommodation could be brought back (having been removed due to misuse in the past). This would be accompanied with appropriate labelling, a talk in Freshers' Week and having a representative in each house to monitor use – none of which occurred with the past iteration of the green bins. She suggests this could be run as a pilot in one house.

Dr Crawford reminds the committee that green bins are monitored by the council and it only takes one mis-step to make the landlord responsible. In multi-occupied property, rules

are difficult to enforce. Dr Fairbrother adds that the council have also started only collecting green bins once a month, which could lead to a bad smell if these are used for food waste.

Dr Fairbrother suggests that any proposal needs to emphasise exactly what would be different this time and come with a very specific suggestion.

#### Other issues from TCSU

##### **Room booking – Blue Boar JCR**

The TCSU President points out that there are currently four undergraduate common rooms, none of which are bookable. Currently this is frustrating as rooms become *de facto* booked as large groups or societies use the space for specific events or evenings. Whilst technically not making the room inaccessible, students don't feel comfortable using them at the same time as a large group. There is student support to make one of the common rooms bookable.

The Dean asks if this is not way of circumventing current room booking rules. It is pointed out this would not be for hosting formal events or speakers but instead for more informal gatherings, such as Trinity society meet ups or small events, rehearsals, or collaborative work. This would also be accompanied by a strict set of terms and conditions.

The Dean expresses her support for a trial to be run in Blue Boar Common Room. This will be arranged by the Dean. The Senior Tutor agrees that the rules in the White Book may be overruled for this period.

##### **Use of the Junior Parlour Easter term as a study space**

The Senior Tutor reports this is underway.

##### **Burrell's Field Pool table**

The issue of the location of the second pool table is raised. Although financing has been agreed, the space is still an issue.

Dr Fairbrother expresses his frustration that this is still not resolved and recommends that this is a matter for the Field Club captain to personally take up with housekeeping. He recommends the Field Club captain to go in person to see the relevant heads of department. It is only a problem to bring to Liaison if there is no suitable space.

#### Any other business

##### **Brexit**

The Senior Tutor wants to pass on to students that both the college and the University are thinking seriously about the implications of Brexit on its students. The most immediate problem of the £65 fee for settled status has now been waived by the government. However, the issues are national and political which makes them uncertain. She wishes to reassure students that pro-active measures are being taken to mitigate disruption to students.

### **Notes on the running of Liaison**

The TCSU Vice-President reminds the committee that this will be the last Liaison meeting for the current TCSU committee. In light of this she outlines changes to be implemented or suggested going forward.

- 1) Agenda: in response to problems raised by the last meeting, the agenda will follow the format used at this meeting as agreed between the BA Society and TCSU. It is felt this allows a more equal way to make sure all voices and concerns are heard. The order of the TCSU/BA items will alternate. The TCSU and BA Society representatives will meet to finalise the agenda prior to the agenda being sent.
- 2) Printing: as most of the Liaison committee already bring a laptop or tablet to the meeting, it seems to be an un-environmentally friendly waste of paper to also print all agendas and additional documents. Going forwards, it is suggested that the TCSU Vice-President will print three copies of the agenda and any supporting documents, and any additional copies may be requested. All documents will then also be sent in accessible electronic format to all members of the committee to access electronically.

### **Ending of the TCSU 2018/19 term in office**

The Senior Tutor takes this time to thank the TCSU committee for their very upbeat and cooperative manner and interactions with college. She thanks them for their hard-work this year on a range of issues.

The TCSU President thanks all the committee for making it very easy to make changes in what can be a traditional place. She expresses that it would not be able to do that without the wonderful support of the committee and the staff of college more widely.

*The meeting closes at 14:20*

*The next meeting will be held Wednesday, March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2:15 M4 New Court*