

TCD Student's Union 3rd Constitution Review Working Group Meeting

12th February 2021

12.00pm

Online Zoom Meeting

Chair: Eoin Hand, President
Secretary: Cian Walsh
Minutes: Cian Walsh, Secretary to Council
Simon Evans, Administrative Officer

Approval of Minutes of previous meeting were held over and will be done later in the meeting in camera.

It was agreed that the meeting would review the various Constitutions of the University's which have been sent out for consideration.

A. St. Andrews University

Yanick felt that we should avoid the St Andrews Constitution structure as ours was better. Liam felt that the SU Constitution on its website was also clearer. Yanick noted that communication on how the SU works could be improved.

B. Cambridge

Yanick felt that the roles were well defined and the SU could look at that. Philly felt that we had most of it covered in our Constitution and also felt that we could do our communication structure better. He also felt that the PTO structure was good and flexible and topic focused. Leah liked the access afforded to the University population and the emphasis on teams. She also commented that we could communicate better and she noted the role of the International student officer as a case in point. Yanick felt we should emphasize comms more, restructure comms around the committee not the individual. Eoin Ford felt that the constitution was ok and workable but needed communication. Megan agreed with Eoin Ford. She felt that the role of the Chair worked, the comms worked but the Union Forum did not work. She also noted that the committee need terms of reference and structure. Yanick noted from an EC standpoint that things run fairly well. The union forum is well laid out structure wise and again the Communication fall down. She also noted an extra ordinary meeting of council is useful to bring focus to any one issue. Leah felt that Yanick's point was good and we need to improve how we communicate our activities to students.

Secretary to council need more support and the PTO's need more structure. Eoin Hand proposed that a town hall style constitution boot camp meeting every year may be useful in explaining our structure to our members. Yanick felt that class rep training does this. Megan noted union forum and class reps are different. Yanick agreed that union forum needs to be better explained and restructure. Union forum needs to discuss different issues and could be more productive. Megan agreed that union forum needs to be revamped and union forum needed to have a role in that process.

C. Oxford University

Yanick noted that Oxford consisted of several essentially independent colleges each of which had their own JCR type organization. Megan and Leah both felt that the access role in the Oxford constitution was well developed.

D. Maynooth SU

Megan felt that the full-time roles were well defined within the Maynooth constitution. She also felt that DCU does it very badly.

E. TUD

TUD has a limited company and the administrative support needs to be looked at. Megan raised the issue of the part-time officers and the pressure on the secretary. It was felt that a role may need to be developed to assist the sabbaticals. Yanick commented that the SU constitution whilst needing amending was still quite good. There was an issue in the lack of continuity in relation to oversight. All of this boils down to a communication issue and generally speaking we operate well on a day to day basis. Liam Kavanagh noted that in the Society's, the Chair of a Society would automatically be an ex-officio member of that Society in the following year. This promoted continuity and was a big help in the institutional knowledge of Societies carried forward from year to year. Yanick felt that we could deal with this in the Constitution. Leah agreed with Liam in relation to the continuity issue and referred to the lack of continuity with the Board of Trustees which had taken place last year. Megan noted that having an ex officio member worked well. Dan Ferrick acted as ex officio member on the Oversight Commission. It was felt that a staff member role or combination of roles may be able to address this. A past president/sab. officer may be the ideal person for filling such a role. Cian Walsh Sec of Council joined the meeting.

F. UCC

Philly commented that UCC roles mirror Trinity's except for the split comms position. Megan felt that we should retain our comms role. She also noted the post grad representation within the SU structure within UCC. Megan then noted the dysfunctional relationship between the SU and the GSU and that the Memo of agreement between the two organisations needs to be reviewed. Yanick felt that the grad student sabbatical officer could be ex officio in the Union forum again. Megan felt that an additional sabbatical role for postgrads would work well. Yanick felt that this was difficult and uncomfortable but that we had to have an agreement with the GSU. He also noted that the GSU were a separate capitation organization and were recognized by the college and that college did not want to get involved in any differences between the GSU and the SU. Dan O'Reilly joined the meeting and apologized for being late. Liam Kavanagh noted this topic was covered in Schedule 8

and the goal of this working group was how to restructure and it needed to be practical. He also felt that grad students must be represented. Leah commented that Liam was right and it was important to note that things had generally speaking worked and she also felt that the GSU don't have oversight structures. She also noted that the welfare and education officers were doing a lot of GSU casework and had been doing that all year. Yanick also felt that this needed a resolution. TCDSU does represent all students. Leah commented that the GSU was established for a reason. Megan felt that Schedule 8 does not really exist and it was agreed to invite comments from Shane Collins, Oisín XXX and Ronan Hodson, all former presidents of GSU for their views.

G. UCD Students Union

Megan felt that the UCD constitution is education focused and Yanick noted that a post grad position existed in the UCDSU.

H. GMIT SU

Dan O Reilly noted the way associated colleges were represented in GMIT. Essentially the off campus affiliated colleges had a kind of conveynor status with one president representing the SU.

Yanick also felt that these smaller colleges may represent themselves over time. Philly felt the conveynor role worked well and the culture was one of One College. Megan noted that T TECH is coming down the line . This would have a signification student population and would be opening between 2026 – 2030.

I. CIT SU

Megan felt their Constitution was very problematic and there was no positive comments about this constitution.

The meeting then concluded and Yanick noted that the OC and the role of OC should be reviewed.