

# TCD Student's Union 2022/23

22 November 2022

Stanley Quek Theatre, TBSI

**Chair:** Emma Gallagher  
**Secretary:** Maggie Larson  
**Minutes:** Maggie Larson, Secretary to Council  
Members of the Oversight Commission

*As quorum for the third Council meeting was not met, no business could be conducted and a townhall discussion was held on the contents of the agenda.*

## 1. Minutes

No matters were raised relating to the minutes of Council 2, 1/11/22.

## 2. Matters arising

## 3. Presentation from the USI VP for Academic Affairs

The VP delivered an update on their work in USI.

## 4. Sabbatical Officers Reports & Questions

### a. President

- i. Laszlo Molnárfi, SSP Convenor, asked, regarding '2021/22-20: Motion on Students' Union adoption of the Living Wage', whether the wage paid by TCDSU to employees would track the living wage. The President confirmed that it would, and clarified that some positions had been advertised at the 2021/22 rate but would be paid the 2022/23 rate.
- ii. The President was asked if there was a reason relating to internal college matters that the Union's accounts could not be shown. The President said they could not discuss these internal college matters for legal reasons.

### b. Education

- i. Bev Genockey, former Education Officer, asked about the system for selecting postgraduate representatives to college committees and asked if it was in line with what had been discussed at the PG townhall meetings. The Education Officer said that the system was up for discussion, and that postgrads had had the opportunity to speak at the townhall if they wanted to. The GSU was not perfect either.
- ii. Bev asked about the logic behind allowing only postgrad class reps to run for committee positions rather than any postgrad. The Education Officer responded that it was a matter of convenience and that a lower number of postgraduate reps might be easier to coordinate.
- iii. The Education Officer was asked what voting system would be used in the sabbatical elections. Zoe responded that, as per the motion passed at last council, the decision would be made with the Chair and Secretary of Council and would have to be brought to Union Forum.
- iv. When asked, the Education Officer further clarified that no commitment to Eviabi or another voting service provider had been made for sabbatical

elections and so no payment for this had yet been made. Zoe was asked what had been paid for class rep elections and said that no money had yet been paid as postgrad elections had been prioritised.

- v. The Education Officer was asked about the cost of class rep training. She responded that she did not have the final figures as they were waiting for some people to pay. She said that she would provide the breakdown of costs at the next meeting.
  - vi. A member of Council asked if the library opening hours would be changed in light of some exams taking place after Christmas. The Education Officer responded that college would reopen on January 3<sup>rd</sup> and that the library opening hours would be looked into.
  - vii. Bev asked what had been spent on the voting software for class rep elections for undergrads, postgrads and Council elections. Zoe said that the quoted amount was €3500, and that the contract over two years cost €17000 total in 4 instalments. She claimed that alternatives were twice the price of Eviabi and that in person elections would have cost a similar amount. Bev asked whether the Eviabi quote included labour costs, as the in-person elections estimate did. Zoe said that a rough estimate of the labour cost was included, but that exact figures could be gathered for next Council.
- c. Welfare & Equality: The Welfare & Equality Officer gave a shout out to the LGBTQIA+ PTO for their work on Rainbow Week, Pink Training and the opening of the T-Fund which all took place in 1 week. Disability Week is coming up next week. The T-Fund had just closed for this term, and will reopen next term. The W&E Officer said they were still working on the international fund. They gave an update on the free period products initiative; they had been in touch with Simon Harris' office about a free period product scheme and College was not willing to fund this if it was possible it would receive external funding soon. The facilities team has agreed to restock period products for now.
- i. The W&E Officer was asked about the number of applicants for the SU Café. The number was 729 (to cheers).
  - ii. The W&E Officer was asked if they enjoyed the karaoke at Pink Training; they did.
- d. Comms: The Comms Officer gave a brief report, saying that they would shortly be sending out a survey on the communication strategy.
- e. Ents: The Ents Officer said that they had been working mainly on internal Ents matters and on the ticketing system for T-Ball.

## 5. Items for Noting

### a. Schedule 3

*Discussion on Schedule 3:*

Q. What is the plan for Schedule 3, given that it has to be brought to Council in 1<sup>st</sup> term?

A. The Chair hopes that an extraordinary meeting of Council will be held to approve it.

Q. There is a provision for altering Schedule 3 under "extenuating circumstances", but Covid-19 is explicitly mentioned elsewhere; what type of circumstances would this apply to?

A. Nobody could have predicted Covid, as such this would allow for if something else happened.

Q. As candidates can't engage with societies, how would that be enforced?

A. No mandate over societies. Previously certain candidates had associations with societies. Some societies are a lot bigger. We would encourage candidates to not use societies to level the playing field.

Q. Is the fact that the EC must be included in candidate group chats not in conflict with the provision that the EC won't interfere in any campaign?

A. On the group chat only to have a concrete list of who is in each candidate's campaign team at each time, so we know who is acting for who.

Q. What would be considered extenuating circumstances?

A. Only the most dramatic changes in circumstance – the EC has no intention of changing Schedule 3, but learned from last year when there were unexpected events during the election period – would include another pandemic, a national emergency, etc.

Q, What is an implicit endorsement and who would be punished; the candidate or the society?

A. Schedule 3 will impact the candidate. Line included that if you have a preexisting role in a society, you should inform the EC and then we will make a decision. Will be a case by case basis. If a PRO for a society continues to make graphics there is no conflict. It is based on the role and whether someone else can fill in. No intention to make people resign their society positions. Wouldn't be punished for going to an event, but if at an event one candidate was favoured or only one candidate was invited, that would be considered an implicit endorsement. Can't mandate societies.

Bev suggests that the CSC be involved in a discussion about this between now and ratifying Schedule 3.

EC would be in group chat to have a concrete list of who is in a candidate's campaign team at any given time - would reduce workload for candidates compared to candidates having to maintain a list of who is in their campaign team

Could we not just ask candidates if someone is a bad faith actor or part of a campaign team?

Emma agrees that the EC want to take an approach of trusting candidates

Laszlo asks about the appeals process - schedule 3 gives option of calling an emergency council, but constitutionally this takes 3 days and would not be possible in the last 3 days of a campaign

Laszlo states that it's very important that SU elections are fair and democratic, and that the restrictions on students' activities in terms of campaigning is not the norm in other universities

The decision about the appeals process was made on the basis that an EC ruling can only be overturned via a motion H at a meeting of council.

**b. Union Forum Minutes**

There were no comments or questions.

**c. STEM Faculty Convenor Report**

The report was taken as read.

**d. PTO Reports**

There were no questions.

The Access Officer mentioned some of the upcoming College Awareness Week events.

## **6. Motions**

Motions were not discussed as the meeting could not conduct business.

## **7. Discussion items**

- a. Open Fora Report**  
No comments
- b. Welfare Annual Report**  
No comments
- c. The Case Against Proctorio – Laszlo Molnarfi**
  - i. Laszlo presented a report which argued that online proctoring services are ableist, racist and invade students' privacy. It does not work for students in shared accommodation, who are responsible for childcare, or who have poor internet connection. It was estimated to cost over 1 million euro. Laszlo argued that we should not want to be associated with this company as they allegedly sue their critics.
  - ii. The Education Officer noted that proctoring services are required for some professionally accredited exams such as in medicine, but agreed that they are an invasion of privacy and that preferably these exams would be held in person.
  - iii. A member of Council remarked that we should have trust in students and proctoring should be used only when absolutely necessary.
  - iv. Laszlo stated that we should push for open book exams.
- d. Providing water/ tea/ coffee for trinity open day volunteers – Patrick Keegan**
  - i. Patrick Keegan presented the discussion item, saying that no water was provided at the Trinity Open Day for volunteers and asking that this be changed for next year.
  - ii. Other members of Council remarked that this seemed to vary by school, as the schools would be responsible for this.
- e. Trinity Gates being closed at night – Patrick Keegan**
  - i. Patrick Keegan also presented this discussion item, highlighting that although the library is open 24 hours it is not accessible when the gates are closed after midnight.
  - ii. The Education and W&E Officers stated that the gates are closed for security and welfare reasons. The W&E Officer said they would follow up on the Pearse St gate being deadbolted rather than closed with TCard swip access. The Education Officer advised students to avoid studying overnight.
  - iii. Emma sympathised, noting that she tried to get Domino's delivered last week and had to have her pizza slid sideways through the gate.
- f. Report on lecture recording – Laszlo Molnarfi**
  - i. Laszlo made members of Council aware that documents and surveys on lecture recordings are available in this document.
- g. Education Tips and Tricks – Laszlo Molnarfi**
  - i. Laszlo explained that this consists of a set of documents with guides on templates on getting lectures recorded, and downloading books, how things work on campus, etc.
- h. Decolonizing the curriculum – Laszlo Molnarfi**

- i. Laszlo presented a report, including the results of a survey which found that about 70% of those surveyed in AHSS found their course too western centric.
- ii. The Education Officer noted that this issue exists across all faculties

The townhall meeting ended at 8.45pm.