

University Board

Manifesto: Matt Murtagh-White

The postgraduate community currently faces a range of issues that the University Board must address as a matter of urgency. Postgraduates in Trinity are currently without a GSU during a time of declining student-to-teacher ratios and face limited access to funding and accommodation. Non-EU students and PhD researchers face continuous discrimination in terms of tuition fees and unfair visa and residency practices. The college has a duty to ensure that all postgraduate students receive an education that is up to the standard that the world expects of Trinity, and the college board must be the entity that ensures that this happens. We need better accountability mechanisms to ensure that the restored GSU does not enter a sustained period of crisis again.

Campaigning for better rights for postgraduates is nothing new to me. As the current Data Officer for the Postgraduate Collective Action Union (PCAU), I have been advocating for overdue structural reform of the PhD funding model in Ireland. I believe that the current funding arrangement for postgraduates is unsustainable, and is not only having negative effects on the welfare of postgraduate researchers but is also steadily eroding the quality of education and research that Trinity can provide to both undergraduates and postgraduates.

Undergraduates and Postgraduates in Trinity deserve teaching assistants and demonstrators that do not have to make compromising decisions on the quality of their teaching, and PhD and postgraduate researchers require the basic respect of the rights afforded to every other working sphere of Irish society to attract top talent and keep the sector viable. As a member of the PCAU, I will be advocating for reform consistent with the Fair Postgraduate Researcher Agreement (FRA, <https://tinyurl.com/mry3v246>), a document that I helped draft and send to more than 800 stakeholders across academia and policymaking, and that outlines a sustainable and fair vision for the postgraduate community of Trinity and Ireland.

I ask the postgraduate community of Trinity College Dublin to support my nomination to the college board so that we can work together to create a better future for the college community.