



Trinity College Dublin Students' Union
House 6,
Trinity College Dublin,
Dublin 2.

To whom it may concern, College officials and those responsible for public communication on a College level,

Trinity College Dublin Students' Union are writing this letter to address the systemic lack of communication between College and both current and prospective students as we commence a new teaching term.

With less than six weeks before teaching resumes, students are still waiting on answers regarding a wide range of issues. Many issues that College has answers for. It is important to note that even if something is subject to change, it should still be communicated.

These are uncertain times. A time where our college community needs the most reassurance. A time where Trinity has done very little to reassure anyone that work is being done in their best interest.

Throughout the COVID-19 crisis, College has continuously put the onus on students to track down crucial information themselves. There is an over-reliance on the FAQs section of a website that students simply do not engage with. This is an insufficient means of communication. The information included in the FAQ sections affects every member of the college community and should be universally communicated with regular emails. This would dispel the majority of legitimate fears and confusion around a variety of topics.

This is by no means a student-only issue. Staff members have equally been left in the dark. In the current climate, departmental autonomy has been prioritised over a unified college communication strategy. This disunity leads to situations where tourists have more information about accessing campus than students, something for which Trinity College has deservedly received criticism.

This systemic issue is exemplified by the fact that the first publication of the revised Freshers week date was on Twitter and Instagram at 7pm on a Friday evening. That weekend, student publications and the Students' Union were then left scrambling to reassure the student body and fill the gaps. As of today (Tuesday 18th August), there has still not been any direct, official communication to students around this. It seems to be assumed that social media is an ample form of communication for such a monumental structural change. This is insufficient. When we queried the abrupt change in circumstances with college decision makers, we were told it was a "Friday at 6pm decision" which is simply inappropriate for a college responsible for 18,000 students. The majority of staff received this information at the same time as the students, and were similarly left scrambling to scrap and adjust plans around freshers week without any support from College that weekend.

Wednesday, 19th August, 2020 (19/08/20)



Current students and those beginning their time in Trinity are facing unprecedented times. With a housing crisis, a looming recession and financial instability all alongside the imminent potential of a second lockdown as cases continue to increase. With less than 6 weeks before teaching resumes, it's unacceptable to expect students to navigate the current climate without being informed about their academic futures.

Right now, students and staff alike need a college that communicates, takes the lead on circulating information, and demonstrates a commitment to clarifying legitimate concerns.

We understand that the current situation is unpredictable, but this does not excuse the lack of clear direction from the college.

We also understand that the college is waiting for clarification from the government and the IUA on many issues that will shape our collective college experience this coming year. This does not excuse the lack of communication around issues that the college has answers for.

We understand that the college cannot have the answer to every question.

The COVID-19 crisis is ever changing, but a college that is willing to communicate the current issues and deliver a more transparent communications strategy will be less likely to receive criticism for genuine mistakes or changes in circumstance.

The concerns of the college are the same as those of the students, and the current lack of clarity is only serving to heighten anxiety across the board.

Now more than ever we need leaders, not lists on a website.

Yours sincerely,

Philly Holmes, Communications and Marketing Officer, TCDSU.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Philly Holmes'.

On behalf of the TCDSU Sabbatical team:

Eoin Hand, President

Megan O'Connor, Education Officer

Leah Keogh, Welfare Officer

Hugh McInerney, Ents Officer