

Meeting

Thursday 13th August, 2020 at 10.15a.m.

In attendance:

Dr. Sheila Flanagan	Ms. Linda Murphy	Ms. Sinead Dunne
Mr. Taidgh Kavanagh	Mr. Christopher O'Neill	

The Registrar opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and outlining the hard work of Student Services and CELT since March, 2020 and their commitment to ensuring the best possible experience for students whilst still working within the guidelines.

It is widely acknowledged the new Academic year will be tough and a very different experience from normal. But each area, including Student Services, Academic Administration, Admissions and CELT are very focused on the needs of Students.

The Students Union presented a series of questions and concerns to the Group: -

1. Will you commit to ensuring that students have access to sanitary products such as hand sanitisers, anti-bacterial wipes etc. when they are on campus?

Arrangements are already at an advanced stage and a significant amount of additional shifts for cleaners have been put in place as well as hand sanitisers stations.

In practical areas such as Kitchens and Labs it will be the student's responsibility to wipe down the area before they commence and finish. The Institute will provide the necessary sanitiser.

2. Will you commit to giving students who do not have reliable access to the internet and other digital resources, greater access to the campus?

It is acknowledged that students who for personal domestic reasons may need to be on campus for lectures will be facilitated.

3. With Simon Harris recently announcing funding will be given to colleges in order to buy devices such as laptops, tablets etc., will you commit to ring fencing 15-20 percent of said funding for connectivity/internet issues?

The Institute has received a grant of €257,000. They have already placed an order as part of a HEA bulk buy scheme for €200,000 to buy digital resources (laptops) for students. Students will be able to apply for the remaining funding for various issues. This will be means tested.

This funding will be managed similar to the SAF funding which will also be available this year.

4. Will you commit to mandating that all visitors to the campus wear face covering particularly in situations where social distancing is not possible?

It was agreed that most Students by the end of September will have their own masks as they are now required by law in all public places.

In addition, it was agreed to request that the College Campus Shop stock mask for sale.

It was also suggested that Student's Union could contact some sponsors to see if they will donate or sponsor masks as part of Fresher Week packs.

This matter to be revisited.

5. Will you commit to working with transport companies to ensure that students can arrive on campus safely?

It was noted that Student's Union have the authority to contact the Transport Companies to ensure they are compiling with the latest Government guidelines.

6. Will you commit to a clear plan to ensure that the reduced class time, reduced contact time with academic staff, reduced access to the library and labs will be considered when assigning a student, a final grade?

The Academic Contingency Planning Group which was set up in March 2020 will continue to operate throughout the new year. The Students Union has agreed that the new Student's Union President Mr. Taidgh Kavanagh will sit on this committee. This Committee also consist of Heads of School, The Registrar, Head of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance as well as members from both Student Services and Examinations.

This Group worked extremely hard last semester to put measures in place to not disadvantage any student.

Student's Union welcomed the invite to join the group.

7. Will you commit to providing extra cleaning facilities on campus during the day, to give students peace of mind as they move from class to class?

Details of the enhanced cleaning protocol is available of part of operational plan. The Communications and Marketing Department are also working on a user-friendly online version of the plan which will be available over the next week or so for both staff and students.

8. Will you commit to conducting a review of course outlines to make sure they reflect the new realities of online learning?

This is part of the Academic Contingency Planning Group remit which the Student's Union President has agreed to be part off.

Dr. Moira Maguire, Head of Learning and Teaching and Dr. Brendan Ryder, Head of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance have led a working group to ensure that the

original learning outcomes are fit for purpose and created a template which examines each programme as part of an evaluation process.

9. Will you commit to offering security to those students who have work placements as part of their assessment, but can no longer attend due to COVID-19?

All High Risk Students will be identified as part of the registration process for the new Academic year.

Once identified, the Health Unit will initially liaise with the student and examine their individual needs they will then refer them to their relevant HOD in relation to ongoing academic requirements.

10. Will you commit to working consistently with the Student Union throughout the year to decide on policy and strategy as events change?

Yes. Student's Union will have representation on the Academic Contingency Planning Group and Academic Council.

11. Will you commit to timetabling students in a way to allow students to use their time on campus in an efficient way? In addition, will you commit to releasing the timetables within the coming weeks so students know what actions they need to take for the semester ahead?

Timetables are the responsibility of each School and Academic Staff are due back on the 1st September.

Larger Lectures will be online and it is envisaged that students will be on campus approx. 30% -35% of their time for tutorials and practical classes.

Staff are very mindful of student's travel and accommodation needs and will try to cluster practical's and labs together to avoid unnecessary journeys.

12. Will you commit to hosting graduation on campus?

Dr. Brendan Ryder is currently examining numbers and possible alternatives to see if it is possible to hold Graduation on Campus this year.

The Registrar would also prefer to have it on campus but the guidelines must be strictly adhered to which will result in more ceremonies over 3 days and no guests within the Conferring Hall.

Students Union and The Registrar's Office to meet to discuss further.

13. Will you commit to issuing an update on the status of DKIT pursuing TU status?

The Institute is now on a path to achieving TU status with the assistance of the HEA. Full details can be found in the Strategic Plan which was released in June 2020.

DKIT's Strategic Plan 2020-2022 articulates the Institute's strategic direction in the context of Technological University status.

14. Will you commit to ensuring the DkIT's pursuit of TU status is not delayed any further due to COVID-19?

COVID-19 has not delayed DkIT's pursuit of TU status.

15. Will you commit to scraping repeat and deferral fees for the next academic year as well as for the second semester of 2019/20?

This cannot be done for the Autumn Examinations at this stage. It was noted that there are no fees for deferrals.

It was agreed to re-visit the conversation for the coming semesters.

16. Will you commit to providing resources such as floor signs, PPE, masks where students require them?

The Estates Office are currently working on resources including floor signage. The COVID-19 Committee meet once a week to discuss all aspects of the latest requirements.

The Institute is committed to ensuring a safe environment for both Students and Staff.

17. Will you commit to more regular public updates on the status of the college so as to allow students to prepare for what is to come?

The weekly Student update will commence again in September from the COVID-19 Group.

A.O.B.

The Student's Union have been contacted by some Nursing Students who have had to leave their part-time paid employment in the caring section to go on placement due to cross-contamination.

The Student's Union President agreed to forward details to the Group.

It was noted that these students may be eligible to apply for the SAF Funding,