

Dear Board of Trinity College Dublin,

We are writing to you as students to make our voices heard with regards to the mandatory changes to the governing body of our College. The Sword of Damocles, government encroachment on academia has finally fallen, and it is the democratic spirit of our community that it empales. We have opposed its harbinger, the HEA Act 2022, every step of the way in an effort to protect the autonomy, diversity and democracy of our third-level education institutions, to no avail.

It is now time for academia to shed its naive preoccupation with offering moderate opposition within the political system to grievous attacks by government forces. It is crucial to build active resistance. We must forthwith adopt measures to counterweight the undemocratic legislation and mitigate its worst excesses.

- We must strengthen the democratic representation and transparency of various subcommittees, in order that the Board, now-dominated by corporate externals and Ministerial nominees, is weakened in the face of pressure from the ground up.
- We must review the procedures for the election of Provost and extend suffrage to all academic and professional staff while reducing the influence of the bureaucratic Interview Committee.
- We must support the demands of the trade unions and ensure that 5 internal members are elected by staff and therefore allow representation from SIPTU, UNITE and IFUT.
- We must extend suffrage to vote in Board elections to precariously and temporarily-contracted staff, making up around half of all workers.
- We must invite as *ex-officio* the 4th student undergraduate member that would otherwise be lost.
- We must ensure the representation not only of undergraduate students, but masters' and PhD students with their diverse needs, and that they be elected.
- We must push for the external members on Board to be made up of diverse community organisations such as mental health advocates in addition to environmental experts, rather than corporate-leaning individuals.

We would like to conclude our letter with a quote by the Welsh poet Dylan Thomas, outlining why people who hold power should exercise prudence, as their actions have far-reaching consequences.

*The hand that signed the paper felled a city;
Five sovereign fingers taxed the breath,
Doubled the globe of dead and halved a country;
These five kings did a king to death.*

We trust those with influence will bear the ideals of Dylan Thomas close to their hearts as they respond to our concerns and not 'do to death' the unassuming kingdom of democracy, autonomy and freedom, the lifeblood at the heart of Irish academic institutions.

With kindest regards,

László Molnárfi, Chairperson, on behalf of Students4Change.