

The University of Dublin

Trinity College

A meeting of the University Council was held on Wednesday 11 February 2009 at 11.15 am in the Board Room.

<i>Present</i>	Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer, Registrar, Senior Lecturer, Senior Tutor, Dean of Graduate Studies, Dean of Research, Dean of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, Dr C Laudet, Dr C Morris, Professor J Wickham, Dean of Engineering, Mathematics and Science, Professor J Fitzpatrick, Dr V Kelly, Dr M Lyons, Dr D O'Sullivan, Dean of Health Sciences, Dr D Brennan, Professor M McCarron, Professor M Radomski, Dr A O'Gara, Ms D Flynn, Professor G Whyte, Mr H Sullivan, Ms C Ní Dhubhda, Ms A Murphy, Mr D Kavanagh.
<i>Apologies</i>	Provost, Dr C MacMaolain, Dr K Johnson, Mr F Hughes, Mr D Walsh, Ms A McGowan.
<i>In attendance</i>	Librarian, Acting Secretary, Academic Secretary, Chief Operating Officer.
<i>Observer</i>	Secretary to the Scholars (Ms N Cleary).
<i>By invitation</i>	Chair, Statutes Review Working Party (for CL/08-09/090).

SECTION A

- CL/08-09/086 Minutes of the meeting of the 14<sup>th</sup> January 2009 were approved subject to two corrections to Actum CL/08-09/071: (i) to note that Dr O'Gara is the President of the Marino Institute of Education, and (ii) to correct a typing error in the reference to the Anti-Bullying Centre.
- CL/08-09/087 **Matters Arising** referring to Actum CL/08-09/073, the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences informed Council that because of resource limitations, the B.A. in Music Technology approved by Council in June 2007 was not offered in 2007/08 or 2008/09. The School of Drama, Film and Music has assessed options and now wishes to withdraw the B.A. in Music Technology and proposes instead to introduce a new technology stream into the existing B.A. in Music. In response to a query, he noted that the B.A. in Music Technology was approved under the former governance structure, and the procedures for approving new programmes have since been amended. In the future the Faculty Dean will assess the resource implications of delivering new programmes and approval will, among other things, be conditional on requisite resources being available.
- CL/08-09/088 **Dean of Graduate Studies Annual Report - 2007/08** with Postgraduate Admissions Data for 2008/09 was circulated with papers for the meeting. The Dean of Graduate Studies introduced this item drawing Council's attention to developments in 2007-08.

These included a tutorial system for graduate students; changes to the PhD structure, and the introduction of Professional Doctorate level descriptors; review of the College Statutes; IUA (Irish Universities Association) Key Performance Indicators; Chinese Scholarship Council; Open Day 2008; and sectoral activity.

Referring to the statistical data on registered postgraduate student numbers, she informed Council that as of January 2009, a total of 2,017 research students were registered which exceeds the target set for this cohort of students. In 2007-08 there were 5,036 postgraduate students registered, of which 38.6% were research students. Overall there was a slight increase in the number of North American students and a decrease in the number of EU students. Commenting on the gender balance, she noted that 41% of the postgraduate population were male. The Dean drew Council's attention to the increase in the provision of taught postgraduate courses, noting that 22 new courses were launched since 2004-05 of which nine were approved in 2007-08. The increase in the postgraduate provision needs to be monitored. This growth and the corresponding increase in the numbers of research theses being submitted is putting considerable strain on the Graduate Studies Office as there are inadequate systems in place to manage these increases efficiently. In conclusion, the Dean informed Council that Research Open Day 2009 was held on the 5<sup>th</sup> February 2009. There was a significant increase in the numbers attending compared to attendance at the 2008 Open Day, and there has been a noticeable increase in the number of research applications which may in part be attributable to these events.

Council welcomed the Dean of Graduate Studies Annual Report 2007-08 and commended the work of the Dean and staff in the Graduate Studies Office. Responding to a query on the numbers of students completing their degree programme within the two and four year timescale, the Dean confirmed that approximately 83% completed within the timescale in 2007-08, and noted that College does not receive Higher Education Authority (HEA) funding for the 17% outside the two and four year timescale for Masters and PhD respectively. She further noted a marked improvement on completion rates within the timescale in 2007-08 due in part to a greater awareness of the new structures and policy on transfers from the Masters to the PhD register in place. Council commented on the relatively small number (459) of Trinity recent graduates pursuing postgraduate studies at Trinity. The Dean responded that, in general, Trinity undergraduate students are encouraged to pursue postgraduate studies in other universities and, if possible, outside of Ireland in order to gain new experience and diversity in their career. In response to a query on the changes to the PhD structure, the Dean confirmed that the Calendar entry on the structure of the PhD is generic, and that local variations should be published in the relevant course handbooks.

In closing discussions on this item, the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer thanked the Dean of Graduate Studies and noted that postgraduate activity is a vibrant and growing area in College.

**CL/08-09/089** Trinity PhD a paper from the Dean of Graduate Studies on the Trinity PhD dated 4<sup>th</sup> February 2009 was circulated. The Dean of Graduate Studies spoke to this item providing some background information. The University of Dublin currently awards the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) and the Professional Doctorate. All regulations governing the award of postgraduate degrees are published in the Calendar, Part 2[4]. In recent years more defined structures have been put in place in Trinity to support PhD students, and now all new entrants to the research register are considered to be on a structured PhD Programme of which the degree of structure varies between, or even within, Schools. In Trinity, a structured PhD is defined as one within which:

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- (i) A student is registered for a period of four years maximum (or six years in the case of a part-time candidate);
- (ii) A student is required to undergo a rigorous transfer or confirmation examination within their first 18 months (extended by one year if part-time);
- (iii) A student can avail of skills training and advanced disciplinary modules during the course of their degree, up to a specified limit (currently 30 ECTS in total prior to transfer/confirmation).

The Dean detailed the level of structure provided to support all research students centrally. All new research students enter by default on the conditional PhD register from October 2008 and they must undergo a rigorous transfer or confirmation examination during the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of their research degree. Students can avail themselves of transferable skills training courses, and workshops and summer schools are available for all research students, both at a local and inter-institutional level. Advanced disciplinary modules are being developed both locally and across the Dublin institutions to support structured programmes, and a framework for inter-institutional PhD programmes is being put in place, in collaboration with the Deans of Graduate Studies in the other Irish institutions. The Dean noted the three levels of structure for PhDs that are currently in place in Trinity.

Some of the future challenges for College include providing support for non-traditional students; addressing what constitutes PhD research versus professional doctorates; addressing issues relating to the nature of the thesis itself - for example, should publications be integrated?; considering the format of the *viva voce* examination; and finally, considering how the quality and excellence of PhD outputs are measured.

Council discussed this item at length and debated the traditional values of the classical PhD model. It was felt that Trinity College should not dilute the requirement for original research and contribution to knowledge as the primary element of a PhD thesis. The Trinity PhD needs to be a composite and integrated piece of work and should not include published work. There was some discussion about holding the *viva voce* in a jury format. The Dean of Graduate Studies, in a response to a query, confirmed that the taught elements of the PhD should not exceed 30 ECTS. It was suggested that the introduction of a grading system for the PhD thesis would safeguard quality, but it was felt that grading might also give rise to grade inflation.

Closing discussions on this item, the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer invited the Dean to revise the document taking on board the comments of Council and recommended that the discussion paper on the Trinity PhD be circulated to Schools for discussion.

**CL/08-09/090 Statutes Review - Draft Chapters on Officers and Committees** Dr Eoin O'Dell attended Council for this item. Speaking to the circulated papers on the proposed changes in respect of Committees and Officers, Dr O'Dell provided a brief background on the work of the Statutes Review Group to-date. He brought the meeting through the draft proposed changes on Committees and Officers. Referring to draft changes on Officers, he explained that this draft is close to completion. The aim of the Review Group is to achieve wording that would not constrain Officers in carrying out their functions. Many functions carried out by Officers are not defined in the Statutes but are assumed by custom and practice, and it could be argued that this is an invalid exercise of power. With the exception of the Vice-Provost, there is no provision for a

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Pro-Officer in respect of the other annual Officers. Neither the Dean of Students nor the Dean of Research currently appears in the Statutes. Referring to Committees, Dr O'Dell informed Council that there is no power to have committees in the Statutes, only the Finance Committee and the Deans' Committee are explicitly mentioned, and the latter is no longer in existence. The revised provision accepts that the Finance Committee is a principal committee of Board, and also gives power to Board and Council to establish committees.

Council discussed the draft Statutes and sought clarification on a number of areas. Dr O'Dell clarified that the Senior Lecturer with responsibility in respect of undergraduate education is included in the Statutes, and the intention is to group like Officers with like. He noted that while the duties of the Registrar of Chambers may appear limited, matters of current practice are allowed for in Section 13 under functions and obligations. Council considered the issues raised by Dr O'Dell in respect of the Officers and recommended that (a) the Dean of Research and the Dean of Graduate Studies should be included in the Statutes and that these Officers should be Fellows of Trinity College; (b) the Dean of Students should be included as an Officer in the Statutes but it was not necessary that this Officer be a Fellow.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer thanked Dr O'Dell for presenting this item and commended his work to-date on revising the Statutes.

#### CL/08-09/091 Academic Year Structure

- (i) **Trinity Week, Foundation Scholarship Examination, and Course Workload** A memorandum from the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer dated 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2009 was circulated. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer drew Council's attention to the recommendations of the Undergraduate Studies Committee arising from its meeting of the 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2009. Council considered the recommendations and approved the following:
  - (a) Trinity Week 2010 will be held on the week beginning 12<sup>th</sup> April, i.e. the first week of Trinity Term 2010;
  - (b) subject to the number of separate examinations, the Foundation Scholarship Examinations will take place on the week beginning 11<sup>th</sup> January 2010;
  - (c) Senior Freshman students should be offered the opportunity to sit the Foundation Scholarship Examination and there should be no Senior Freshman lectures, fieldtrips, placements or other student related activity scheduled in calendar weeks 19 and 20;
  - (d) the 60 ECTS requirement for each year of the undergraduate degree course should be distributed evenly across the two teaching semesters, i.e. 30 ECTS in each semester.
- (ii) **Reading/Study Weeks** A memorandum from the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer dated 3<sup>rd</sup> February was tabled. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer noted that Council at its meeting of the 7<sup>th</sup> May 2008 recommended in respect of the new academic year structure that "Reading Weeks should be coordinated at Faculty-level and, if possible, held at the same time within the teaching terms" (Actum CL/07-08/155). The Undergraduate Studies Committee at its meeting of the 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2009 also recommended that reading weeks be held at the same time within the two teaching terms. The Faculty Deans had sought consensus within their respective Faculty to hold reading weeks in either week 6 or 7 in both teaching semesters. A meeting of

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the Faculty Deans, the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Office, the Senior Lecturer and the Academic Secretary considered the various issues involved and the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer drew Council's attention to the recommendations of this meeting.

Council discussed the recommendations and heard the concerns of staff involved in the delivery of TR071, the common entry Science programme. The Science programme had been totally revised to allow for the delivery of modules and laboratory work within the two semesters and to accommodate several electives for students from other degree programmes. This was achieved by placing a break in week 6 allowing students to consolidate their learning. In noting these concerns, Council felt that if there are strong academic arguments for holding reading/study week in week 6, then these should be made to the next meeting of Council. It was noted that the vast majority of other undergraduate programmes preferred week 7, and the importance to students of achieving uniformity across College was stressed.

Referring to the nomenclature, the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer commented that the term 'study weeks' might be more appropriate to express the range of activities that might take place during these weeks. In the Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences the nomenclature of 'reading weeks' may appropriately reflect the non-teaching activity whereas in the Science, Engineering and Health Sciences disciplines the break from teaching may be for study and/or project work.

Council noted and approved the following recommendations in respect of Study Weeks and semesters:

- (a) Reading weeks should be expressed as 'Study Weeks' in order to capture the variety of practices across different disciplines in College.
  - (b) Unless courses are restricted by professional accreditation requirements, all courses are required to integrate Study Weeks into their curriculum. There is no general 'opt out' for Study Weeks.
  - (c) Week 7 in both semesters should be used as the Study Week in all Faculties.
  - (d) Study Weeks should not be used to administer College examinations. However current practices of continuous assessment and the assessment of project work may take place in Study Weeks.
  - (e) To minimize formal engagements for students and to maximize the reflective learning opportunities afforded by Study Weeks, there should be, where possible, no meetings of College committees scheduled to take place during Study Weeks.
  - (f) Week 12 is a teaching week.
- (iii) **Courses outside the two semesters in the new Academic Year Structure** Papers for this item were circulated for the meeting. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer noted that both Board and Council when approving the new academic year structure in 2008 (Acta CL/07-08/155 and BD/07-08/275) required that "All teaching should be confined to the two-twelve week terms, and university examinations should normally be confined to the University

annual and supplemental examinations periods as published in the Almanack. Any deviation from these regulations will require Council approval." In January 2009 Schools were asked to identify any teaching and/or examination that cannot be accommodated within the agreed timeframe for teaching and examinations in the new academic year. Fourteen Schools are seeking approval to deliver teaching outside the two semester structure and in some instances to conduct annual examinations outside the approved annual examination period. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer drew Council's attention to the relevant documentation and noted that requests to deliver postgraduate taught programmes outside the two teaching semesters relate to professional requirements and/or the need for flexibility to cater to the demands of students who are normally professionals working full-time. Concerning undergraduate programmes, the majority of requests relate to professional requirements in respect of placement and/or the requirement of professional accrediting bodies for the course to deliver a minimum number of teaching hours. The Academic Secretary highlighted those requests to hold Senior Freshman lectures, fieldtrips or placements during the first two weeks of Hilary term, noting that these weeks are reserved for the Foundation Scholarship Examination. She also pointed out other issues for Council's consideration.

Council noted the requests for derogation from Council-approved policy on the academic year structure and approved the following:

- (a) *Postgraduate*: all requests received to teach and/or hold examinations outside the two semesters were approved.
- (b) *Undergraduate*: all requests received to teach and/or hold examinations outside the two semesters were approved, with the exception of those listed below:
  - *Bachelor in Education, Bachelor in Dental Science, Bachelor in Dental Technology, B.Sc. Occupational Therapy, and B.Sc. in Midwifery* - Senior Freshman students in all of these degree programmes must be free from course commitments to take the Foundation Scholarship Examination in weeks 19 and 20.
  - *TR071 - B.A. Mod Botany (Natural Sciences) Module BO3108 - Junior Sophister- Field Work and B.A. Mod Geology (Natural Sciences) Module GL3310 - Junior Sophister - Fieldwork* can be delivered in weeks 33 and 34 (revision weeks) but, if this occurs, the annual examination of these students must be scheduled for weeks 37 and 38.

**CL/08-09/092 Quality Implementation Plans** Quality Implementation Plans for the Schools of Computer Science and Statistics; Chemistry; Mathematics; Social Work and Social Policy; and English were circulated with papers for the meeting. The Dean of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (AHSS) reported that it was too early to comment on the implementation of the recommendations but that a timeline for implementation has been established for each recommendation. There are some recommendations, however, that may not be implemented because of the lack of resources. The Dean of Engineering, Mathematics and Science concurred with the views expressed by the Dean of AHSS and added that the absence of contiguous and suitable space was a real obstacle to implementing some recommendations.

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Referring to recommendation 3.3 in respect of the School of Computer Science and Statistics, the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer noted for the record that it is College policy not to hold examinations at the end of semesters and that this recommendation of the review panel cannot be implemented.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer confirmed, in response to a query, that Council will require a progress report from each School in twelve months time.

#### CL/08-09/093 Any Other Business

- (i) **Graduate Studies Matter** The Acting Secretary advised Council that a postgraduate student has lodged an appeal regarding his result to the Dean of Graduate Studies, who, having considered this under the relevant regulation [*Calendar* Part 2, 1.23] decided there was not case to be referred to the Academic Appeals Committee for Graduate Students. The Council upheld the Dean's decision.
- (ii) **Chair of Medical Physics** The Council noted a tabled memorandum from the Vice-Provost for Medical Affairs and Head of the School of Medicine, dated 5 February 2009 and approved:
  - (a) Change in title of the Chair to 'Chair of Medical Physics/Molecular Imaging';
  - (b) Search Committee:
    - Provost
    - Dean of Health Sciences
    - Head of the School of Medicine
    - Professor D Hollywood
    - Professor L E Doyle
    - Professor D Coakley (St James's Hospital)
    - Dr T N Mitchell (St James's Hospital)
    - Dr J Meaney (observer, in attendance)
    - External Assessors (2)
- (iii) **Student Case** The Council approved the request of the Senior Lecturer, tabled dated 30 January 2009 to permit a named student to repeat a year of course as a third attempt in the academic year 2008-2009.

#### SECTION B

CL/08-09/094 **Graduate Studies Committee** The Council noted and approved the recommendations as set out in the minutes of the Graduate Studies Committee from its meetings of 27 November 2008 and 22 January 2009, which had been circulated.

CL/08-09/095 **Student Services Committee** The Council noted and approved the recommendations as set out in the minutes of the Student Services Committee from its meetings of 25 November 2008 and 20 January 2009, which had been circulated.

- CL/08-09/096 **Information Policy Committee** The Council noted and approved the recommendations as set out in the minutes of the Information Policy Committee from its meeting of 2 December 2008, which had been circulated.
- CL/08-09/097 **Research Committee** The Council noted and approved the recommendations as set out in the minutes of the Research Committee from its meeting of 29 January 2009, which had been circulated.

**SECTION C**

CL/08-09/098 **Higher Degrees—Reports of Examiners** The Council noted and approved the reports of examiners on candidates for higher degrees, approved by the sub-committee of Board and Council on 14 January 2009 and noted by Board on 28 January 2009, as circulated.

(i) **Professional Higher Degrees by Research Alone**

- MD Marlese Dempsey; Martin James MacGuill.
- MCh Michael John Flynn.
- DChDent Thomas Gregory Canning; Maurice Edward Fitzgerald.

(ii) **Higher Degrees by Research Alone**

- PhD Hounaida Abi Haidar; Agustin Santiago Benetrix; Ian Campbell; David Hoey; Inga Jende; Derek Kitson; Lorna Lees; Marion Fiona Lombard; Sergio Lopez Fernandez; Helen Miajlovic; Suzanne Miller; Brianne Mulvihill; Ruaidhri Sean Power; Mary Olivia Rogan; Damien Tully.
- MSc Deirdre Lee; Paul Michael McDonald; Eilish Michelle Thornton.
- MLitt Mary Collins.

CL/08-09/099 **Repetition of Year - Calendar Regulation §54 H12** The Council noted and approved the Senior Lecturer’s request that a Senior Freshman student (05544904) may repeat a year of a course as a third attempt in the academic year 2008-2009.

CL/08-09/100 **School of Religions and Theology - Director of Teaching and Learning (Undergraduate)** The Council noted that Dr Z Rodgers will replace Dr A Fitzpatrick (to 12 July 2010).

CL/08-09/101 **Consolidated List of Teaching Assistants/Assistant Examiners 2008/2009** The Council noted and approved a memorandum from the Senior Lecturer, circulated dated 4 February 2009.

**SECTION D**

**In compliance with the Data Protection Acts this information is restricted.**

Signed .....

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Date .....