

Incorporating any amendments approved at subsequent Council meetings

The University of Dublin

Trinity College

A meeting of the University Council was held on Wednesday 15 February 2012 at 11.15 am in the Board Room.

<i>Present</i>	Provost, Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer, Registrar, Senior Lecturer, Senior Tutor, Dean of Graduate Studies, Professor E O'Dell, Professor M Ó Siochrú, Professor J Wickham, Professor G Watson, Professor D O'Donovan, Professor J P Labrador, Professor T Connor, Professor D Brennan, Professor S Smith, Professor J Nunn, Ms D Jones, Dr A O'Gara, Professor J Ohlmeyer, Professor A Piesse, Ms R Barry, Mr M McAndrew, Dr D Fitzgerald.
<i>Apologies</i>	Dean of Research, Dean of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, Professor Z Rodgers, Professor A McNabola, Dean of Health Sciences, Dr H Mannan, Ms S Leydon, Mr D Ferrick, Ms L Aljohmani, Mr R J Smith,
<i>In attendance</i>	Librarian, Secretary to the College, Academic Secretary, Chief Operating Officer, Ms O Sheehan.
<i>Observer</i>	Secretary to the Scholars (Mr B Roantree).

SECTION A

- CL/11-12/095 Minutes of the meetings of 18 January 2012 were approved and signed subject to two amendments: (i) Actum CL/11-12/070 to clarify that the proposal relates to the first academic year of undergraduate courses, and not all years of a course, to accommodate the incorporation of transversal skills; (ii) to clarify that Actum CL11-12/077 refers to Academic Appeals for postgraduate students.
- CL/11-12/096 Matters Arising:
- (i) *Promotions - Revision of Procedures for Promotions Process*: Clarification was sought that the process for Clinical Promotions would include all relevant Schools and not just the School of Medicine. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer undertook to inform the Human Resources Committee of this correction.
 - (ii) *Milltown Institute*: The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer confirmed, in response to a query, that an undergraduate course proposal is under development with a potential start date of 2013/14. The proposal will be brought to the usual committees for approval before it is presented to Council.
 - (iii) *National Strategy for Higher Education*: The Provost confirmed that College is developing a response to the proposed implementation of the National

Strategy for Higher Education to 2030. The National Strategy recommends collaboration between third-level institutions and the Provost commented that some discussions have taken place with local institutions on this matter. He noted that the introduction of new technological universities is unlikely to impact on College's activities, but financing these would adversely affect funding for higher education overall. With respect to concerns that the Strategy may affect our institutional autonomy, the Provost commented that the most significant threat in recent times had been the Employment Control Framework. College will continue to make the case that preserving our institutional autonomy is not solely about governance but also enhances value to society as a whole.

CL/11-12/097 Provost's Report

Following on from discussion on the previous item, the Provost reported that College's interaction with the state in the coming months will concentrate on the strategy for the future landscape of higher education and formulating a response to be submitted to the Higher Education Authority (HEA) in July 2012.

CL/11-12/098 Senior Lecturer's Annual Report 2010-2011

The Senior Lecturer introduced the Annual Report by noting it is the sixteenth to be presented to Council, and it provides data on applications and the admission of undergraduate students, and developments in the area of undergraduate studies.

In summary, College had a total of 16,747 registered students in 2010/11. In 2011/12 College admitted 3,548 undergraduate students from a total of 68 different countries. There has been a marked increase (38%) in the number of student cases considered - from 1,477 in 2007/08 to 2,045 in 2010/11. Each decision memoranda usually generates six emails, and the Senior Lecturer acknowledged the extraordinary work of the staff in the Office of the Vice-Provost who have had no increase in resources to manage this increase. A small group, comprising staff in the OVP, the Senior Tutor, the Dean of Students, and the Senior Lecturer, is exploring ways of improving the process and thus easing the burden.

Each year new entrants are asked to rank the importance of factors that influenced their choice of Trinity College. The most significant were the reputation of the course at Trinity/the quality of teaching on offer, alongside Trinity's international reputation. These results reflect what matters to students when making their course choices.

The Senior Lecturer commented on the need to set targets for future performance. He drew Council's attention to the number of first preference applications to universities (Table A3, p. 44) and suggested that Trinity should aspire to becoming the most popular university in the country. This would only require a small increase of approximately 100 in first preference applications (7,770 in 2011). Figure A2 (p.43) reports the total number of CAO applicants to all universities; the Senior Lecturer suggested that a target to increase the current proportion (27% in 2011) of those applying to TCD is feasible. The aim should be to assert ourselves as Ireland's university on the national stage as well as Ireland's university on the world stage.

Tables A17- A18 (pp. 69-72) and Table B1 (p. 76) show the geographical distribution of new entrants and the student body. From these it is clear that Trinity has a wide appeal over the twenty-six counties. The number of students from Northern Ireland has been in decline and the Senior Lecturer undertook to explore the reasons and to address them where possible. In the following discussion it was suggested that our admissions policy may discourage students from Northern Ireland from applying to Trinity. For example, not all schools offer the opportunity for students to take four GCE (Advanced Level) subjects. The Senior Lecturer suggested that College should aim to increase our intake from Northern Ireland, and proposed to explore measures such as extending school visits to Northern Ireland and developing a separate website focussing on school-leavers from Northern Ireland.

The Senior Lecturer would like to see the Annual Report provide a greater sense of current discussions taking place around the area of undergraduate courses. For example, he suggested reporting on measures adopted in the area of student retention and new innovations in teaching. He suggested that the Undergraduate Studies Committee return to assess progress on the recommendations of the Policy on the Broad Curriculum (approved by Council in 1999), the Final Report of the Working Party on Teaching and Learning (approved by Council in 2003), and the Report on Retention (approved by Council in 2009), especially in the light of external pressure to ensure students are provided with generic skills. He concluded his comments by stressing that he saw the Annual Report as a means to the end of furthering our ambition to be Ireland's university on the national and world stages.

Council queried whether there was information on where high achieving students study that do not take a place on a Trinity course. Of the 1,140 Leaving Certificate students that applied to the CAO and achieved 560 points in 2011, 423 accepted a place at Trinity. The Academic Secretary confirmed that it is only possible to identify where these students study if they took up a place in an institution within the CAO system.

The Provost drew Council's attention to the numbers obtaining Scholarship (Figure 12, p.29) and the changes within Faculties over the three years 2009, 2010, 2011. It was suggested that the increasing number of Junior Sophister students sitting Scholarship has influenced the number of Scholarships awarded and a query was raised as to whether it is still an appropriate examination for Junior Sophister students. It was suggested that since the new arrangements have been in place for two years it may be an appropriate time to review the criteria. This review may also be able to address why so many students register for Scholarship but do not ultimately sit the examinations. It was suggested that the timing of the examination so soon after Christmas could be an influencing factor.

Council noted the response rate of external examiners' reports for undergraduate courses (Table D3, p.88) and suggested that measures to improve this should be developed, especially given the importance of external examiners in quality assurance. It requested that the Senior Lecturer report back following consultation with Heads of School and Course Directors.

The Annual Report shows that there are considerable differences in the distribution of grades across Schools (Table D6, p. 91). The Senior Lecturer reported that an analysis of Entrance Exhibitioners had shown some correlation with the final degree classification. Similarly recipients of Gold Medals in 2011 had, in general, entered

Incorporating any amendments approved at subsequent Council meetings

with high points but this was not uniform. It was noted that an upper second class honors is now perceived as the normal exit degree and it was suggested that the issue of bunching at the II.1 level be dealt with by considering whether the full spread of marks is being utilised. However it may well be that, with a high quality of student and the benefits of four-year undergraduate courses, an upper second class honors degree should be the norm. The Senior Lecturer commented that work being done on the harmonisation of academic assessment regulations may help with this issue, and noted that the matter was considered by the Working Group on Grade Point Average (Actum CL09-10/209) in 2011.

The Provost concluded this item by thanking the Senior Lecturer and the staff of the Office of the Vice-Provost for the comprehensive report.

CL/11-12/099 Graduate Studies Course Proposals

(i) MSc in Translational Oncology

A course proposal from the School of Medicine leading to an award of Master in Science in Translational Oncology was circulated. The Dean of Graduate Studies introduced the course proposal, which considers the causes and treatment of cancer, an identified research area in the School of Medicine, bolstered by the appointment of an Ussher lecturer with a brief to contribute to postgraduate training in this area. The course curriculum was developed following consultation with scientists and clinicians. It will be the only postgraduate course of this type in the country and will be available on both a full-time and part-time basis.

The taught component of the course comprises eight core and four optional modules. Leading researchers outside Trinity will provide supervision of research projects in cooperation with Trinity staff. The course proposal has received a very positive external review. The Dean of Graduate Studies sees this course as offering advanced training which will benefit patient care, and expects that demand for the course will be high.

In response to a query, she confirmed that the entry criteria of an upper second class honors is the standard entry requirement but noted the alternative entry requirements for medical graduates. She undertook to discuss with the Course Director the possibility of the course being offered as an intercalated option.

Council approved the course proposal leading to an award of Master in Science in Translational Oncology with a postgraduate diploma exit option, for admission in the academic year 2012/13.

(ii) MSc in Biological Psychiatry

A revised course proposal from the School of Medicine leading to the award of a Master in Science in Biological Psychiatry was circulated. Council at its meeting of January 2012 requested clarification on a number of issues arising from the course proposal. The Dean of Graduate Studies addressed Council's concern through discussions with the Dean of the Faculty, the Head of School, and the Course Director. The revised proposal clarified concerns raised in respect of staffing, teaching terms, ECTS, and the rationale for the course. Biological Psychiatry is a research focus of the course proposers and is an area

Incorporating any amendments approved at subsequent Council meetings

in which postgraduate training is required. The Dean of Graduate Studies noted that she was confident that the course can be delivered to a satisfactory standard.

Council noted the revised course proposal from the School of Medicine leading to the award of a Master in Science in Biological Psychiatry with a postgraduate diploma exit option, for admission in the academic year 2012/13.

CL/11-12/100 Working Group on Admissions and Curriculum

A discussion paper, dated 7th February 2012, was circulated with papers for the meeting. The Senior Lecturer introduced this item, noting that at a time of public debate about a strategy for higher education and admissions and curriculum, it was appropriate that College should develop its own position on these issues. The Working Group on Admissions and Curriculum did not make recommendations because the paper is intended to engender debate and exchange of ideas.

The Senior Lecturer explained the contents of each section of the paper, noting that Section A opens a discussion about what criteria might be used for admission and suggests the categories of academic achievement, potential, motivation and suitability for course, all underpinned by College's commitment to diversity. While academic achievement is central, the Senior Lecturer queried whether a prospective student's potential to achieve in the future could be factored into the decision making process for admission to undergraduate courses. The challenge is to identify what the real problems of a single measure of admission are and how they might be overcome. The resource implications for different approaches would also have to be addressed. Section B of the paper, supported by the Undergraduate Studies Committee, suggests some high level principles that should underline any fair admissions policy. Section C recommends continuing renewal of the curriculum and notes that Trinity already has in place a broad curriculum including an emphasis on developing generic skills. College is in a good position to respond to any external pressures on curriculum reform. Section D suggests how to progress the debate, including the hosting of a national conference, which is provisionally scheduled to take place in May 2012.

Council welcomed the opportunity to discuss this important issue, and congratulated the Working Group for producing a challenging and thought-provoking report. During the discussion the following points were made:

- Any changes to the admissions criteria should not adversely affect the recruitment of students from diverse backgrounds.
- The CAO is owned by the Universities and was a clearing house for applications. It is within the gift of the Universities to change the system, but it was essential that Trinity College did not make unilateral decisions on the CAO, instead we should seek sectoral consensus on changes to the current admissions system.
- The use of H-PAT for entry to medicine in Irish universities attempts to address the issue of assessing applicants by means of points only, but it was noted that significant resources are required to administer this system.
- There is a strong link between admission criteria for entry to a course and retention. By international comparison the Irish universities enjoy high retention rates, and this should be examined closely.

Incorporating any amendments approved at subsequent Council meetings

- When considering curriculum review, it was suggested that College should examine the possibility of admitting students to a Faculty rather than to distinct single subject courses, in line with the Scottish system.
- There is scope for an analysis of how degree programmes provide transferable skills.

The Provost thanked the Senior Lecturer and members of the Working Group for the thought-provoking discussion paper. Council agreed that it would be appropriate to debate admissions policy and undergraduate curriculum at the Undergraduate Studies Committee and other relevant *fora*. The Senior Lecturer should bring forward recommendations to a special meeting of Council for consideration.

CL/11-12/101 Open Day 2012

A memorandum from the Senior Lecturer dated 7th February 2012 was circulated with papers for the meeting. The Senior Lecturer, introducing this item, invited Council to consider a proposal that Open Day should be held over one day on a Saturday in December.

In 2012 Open Day was held on two consecutive days, a Friday and Saturday. Feedback from lecturers and students suggested that that a two-day event is a poor use of resources. A number of areas reported that there were fewer attendees on the Friday and that those who did attend on a Saturday were more focussed. It is necessary to cancel teaching if Open Day is held on a weekday. Members of the College community argue that it is inappropriate for core activity to be cancelled, and that cancellation could be interpreted as undervaluing teaching. For these reasons the Senior Lecturer asked Council to agree to the proposal circulated.

In discussing the proposal, Council recommended that other methods in addition to the Open Day be explored to provide information to those who may have difficulties in attending on a Saturday, because of geographical distances or lack of second-level school support. Suggestions included a virtual Open Day, which would also be an advantage in recruiting international students, as well as discipline specific open days.

Council approved the proposal that undergraduate Open Day be held on a Saturday in December, commencing 2012.

SECTION B

CL/11-12/102 Graduate Studies Committee

The draft minutes of the meeting of 2 February 2012 were noted and approved by Council. The Dean of Graduate Studies drew Council's attention to Actum GS/11-12/029, in respect of the review of Doctoral Education by the HEA and undertook to keep Council informed.

CL /11-12/103 Undergraduate Studies Committee

The minutes of the meeting of 31 January 2012 were noted and approved by Council. The Senior Lecturer drew Council attention to Acta UGS /11-12/039 and UGS

Incorporating any amendments approved at subsequent Council meetings

11/12/040 on course year nomenclature and the requirement to retain examination scripts and other assessments for thirteen months. The Academic Secretary reported that clarification had not yet been received from the Department of Education and Science on the fee status of the five year programmes in Engineering and Computer Science. She noted that it was unlikely that students in the fifth year of these programmes will receive fee remission.

SECTION C

CL/11-12/104 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 18 January 2012 and noted by Board on 1 February 2012.

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

MD Joseph Browne.

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

PhD Mohammed Hassan Abdulrahim; Simone Alborghetti; Avril Behan; Laura Cornelsen; James Cross; Laura Delaney; Priyanka Dutta; Damaris Fernandez Donoso; Deirdre Finn; Muriel Gallagher; Dania Movia; Owen Naughton; Shunichiro Oda; Kunal Patel; Timothy Reeves; Jing Su; Ruggero Verre.

MSc Reshma Doodnath; Francesca Mesiti in Tsoureka.

CL/11-12/105 Honorary Professorship - Title

The Council noted and approved that the Honorary Professorship approved for Dr J K Vij should be entitled 'Honorary Professor of Electronic Materials'.

CL/11-12/106 School of Business - Director of Teaching and Learning (Undergraduate)

The Council noted and approved the nomination of Professor D Coghlan until the end of the academic year 2012.

CL/11-12/107 College Fitness to Practice Committee

The Council approved the recommendations of the College Fitness to Practice Committee in respect of a student whose appeal against the findings of a School Fitness to Practice Committee was upheld, Section 3 of the Fitness to Practice Policy refers (approved by Council on 18 May 2011, Actum CL/10-11/160).

CL/11-12/108 Supplementary List of Teaching Assistants

The Council noted and approved a memorandum from the Senior Lecturer, circulated, dated 6 February 2012.

CL/11-12/109 Proposal to change the structure of Dental Science Year One and Two from 2012-2013

The Council noted and approved a memorandum from the Head of the School of Dental Science, circulated, dated 8 February 2012.

SECTION D

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