XX = Board relevance

**Trinity College Dublin
The University of Dublin**

A meeting of the University Council was held on 20th November 2024 at 11.15am in the Trinity Board Room, Trinity Business School.

Present   Provost, Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer, Registrar, Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies, Dean of Graduate Studies, Senior Tutor, Vice-President for Global Engagement, Dean Research, Dean of Students, Dean of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, Dean of Health Sciences, Dean of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, Professor D. Geary, Professor V. Colasanti, Professor C. Kenny, Professor G. Watson, Professor B. Fitzgerald, Professor B. Daly, Professor AM. Malone, Professor L. O'Driscoll, Ms D. Alexander, Mr E. Gilroy, Ms G. Villa, Mr R. Sualnier, Dr N. O'Dwyer, Mr S. Sardina, Mr R. Riley Dargan.

Apologies   Professor K. Neenan, Professor P. O'Grady, Mr M. McAndrew.

In attendance   Academic Secretary, Chief Innovation and Enterprise Officer, Chief Operating Officer, Secretary to the College/Director of Governance, Librarian and College Archivist, Assistant Academic Secretary, Heads of Schools representative.

Observers   Ms R. Chen

SECTION A.1: Policy Matters

The Provost welcomed everyone to Council and requested that Council members declare any potential conflicts of interest relating to the agenda. The Secretary to the College/Director of Governance noted that the Academic Secretary has a conflict of interest for item A.19 "Trinity Career and Development Progress Report" and that the Academic Secretary and the Assistant Academic Secretary have a conflict of interest for item A.20 "Academic Affairs Progress Report". The Secretary to the College/Director of Governance recommended that they remain in the meeting for these items.

The Secretary to the College/Director of Governance advised that item C.27 'Council Membership' be considered first as it related to representation on University Council.

CL/24-25/040   Council membership

> **Decision CL/24-25/040.2:**
> The Council noted Dr Neill O'Dwyer as elected Research Staff representative.

> **Decision CL/24-25/040.2:**
> The Council noted and approved Mr Seathrún Sardina and Mr Robert Riley Dargan as Postgraduate Student representatives.

Dr N. O'Dwyer, Mr S. Sardina, and Mr R. Riley Dargan joined the meeting.

CL/24-25/041   Declarations
New members: Research representative Dr N. O'Dwyer, Postgraduate Student representatives Mr S. Sardina and Mr R. Riley Dargan as new members of Council made the required statutory declarations.

In response to a statement from a Council member regarding communicating through Irish at Council, the Provost advised that while members can choose to speak Irish, not everyone on Council might understand and that any points raised, or discussions might not be minuted. The Secretary to the College/Director of Governance added that the College does not have a legal obligation to provide translation.

CL/24-25/042   Minutes

Corrections and clarifications 16th October 2024 Council minutes:
(i)   In relation to Council minute CL/24-25/006 "Task Force Terms of Reference," the Provost requested a change to the wording concerning the timetable of the Task Force to be amended to read *"Additionally, it was confirmed that there is no defined timeline yet for the operation of the Task Force; this will be developed after the Board approval.''*
(ii)   In relation to Council minute CL/24-25/ Provost Report, item on the Budget, the Provost requested that a clarifying note be added to state that the Budget 2025 does not address the annual €370 million funding gap.

Decision CL/24-25/042: The minutes of the meeting of Council on 16th October 2024 were approved including the corrections above.

CL/24-25/043   Matters Arising from the Minutes

CL/24-25/008 – The Provost reported that the working group's proposal on the Remits of Council and Board was discussed at the meeting of Board, 6th November 2024, and further clarification was sought on the proposal.   The Registrar is addressing the issues raised for further consideration and approval by Board.

CL/24-25/044   Nomenclature of Science Degrees

The Registrar gave an overview of the memorandum regarding the Nomenclature of Science Degrees, which had been circulated to Council. He sought approval to change the award title for five science programmes from a Bachelor of Arts (Level 8) to a Bachelor of Science (Level 8), commencing with the 2026-27 academic year entrants.

The Registrar explained that this request originated from several Schools within the Faculty of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics, and thanked the Schools, the Associate Dean of Undergraduate Science Education, the Academic Affairs team, and the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies for their efforts in advancing this matter through the School, Programme, and Academic Committees. He emphasised that the proposed change in nomenclature would accurately reflect the subjects taught, align with practices at other universities, and positively impact our graduates' employability. The Registrar further noted that students who do not complete their final year or choose to exit after three years will receive a Bachelor of Arts Ordinary (Level 7) degree, consistent with existing practice for all undergraduate programmes in the College.

The Provost, commenting on the proposal, noted, the significance of nomenclature and titles in contexts where AI tools are employed for initial applicant screenings in the recruitment process.

Decision:
CL/24-25/044.1: Council approved the memorandum on the Nomenclature of Science Degrees.

Action:
CL/24-25/044.2: The Registrar will bring this matter to the Senate for approval.

CL/24-25/045   Learning Innovation and Research Hub

The Academic Secretary presented a proposal titled 'Towards a Learning Innovation and Research Hub.' She advised that In November 2023 the University Council approved a proposal "to establish an advisory group, chaired by the Academic Secretary, with representation from a maximum of 10-12 academic and professional staff across the College, to scope out how the existing resources might align to establish a Learning Lab model for Trinity and, if the model is approved, to recommend how the Trinity Learning Lab might be operationalised."
A Learning Lab Advisory Group was established comprising 12 members from across the academic and professional communities and following consultation with academic and professional staff and students and informed by previous research a case for a Learning Innovation & Research Hub was developed. The proposal was considered and endorsed by the Undergraduate Studies Committee on the 1st of October 2024, by the Graduate Studies Committee on the 17th of October 2024.

The Academic Secretary explained the strategic background and context for developing a learning lab model for the College and provided an overview of the advisory group's work as well as the consultation process. She highlighted key findings from the SUMS consultancy report, "Towards the Development of a Centre for Pedagogical Excellence" and the evolution of a potential title for the hub. She identified areas within the College that would contribute to the proposed hub model and provided a practical example of how the Learning Innovation and Research Hub could play a key role in, for example, integrating Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) competencies into the undergraduate curriculum.

The Academic Secretary explained that the Learning Innovation & Research Hub is envisaged as a space where academics can draw on existing Trinity College resources to collaborate with subject and professional experts and services, conduct pedagogic research in their subject area, and experiment with the application of current and/or known technologies in a supported environment. Recognising the limitations of existing resources, the Advisory Group recommended the establishment of a Learning Innovation & Research Hub as a feasibility study that tests the viability of this concept as a first step in the creation of a fully operationalised Learning Innovation & Research Hub at Trinity College.

She invited Council to consider and approved the eight recommendations, listed below:
1.   Approve the establishment of a Learning Innovation and Research Hub feasibility project.
2.   Appoint the Senior Lecturer, Professor Wade, as the senior academic with expertise in pedagogical innovation to provide academic oversight.
3.   Establish a Teaching and Learning Advisory Group, chaired by the Senior Lecturer and with undergraduate and postgraduate student, academic and professional staff representation, to establish the remit, define specific needs, resources, and risks, and to oversee the set-up and operations of the Learning Innovation & Research Hub including the identification of appropriate space and core technologies.
4.   Appoint an academic to provide leadership in the coordination of the Lab's remit.
5.   Commence discussions on harnessing the expertise of existing teaching and learning services to support the establishment and operations of the Hub and identify capacity and gaps.
6.   Assign Trinity Teaching and Learning staff to support the work of the Advisory Group and to project manage the initiative.
7.   Assign Strategic Alignment of Teaching and Learning Enhancement (SATLE) funding to seed fund projects and core additional staffing resources in research, pedagogy, and digital expertise.
8.   Evaluate the initiative after two years of operations to determine the future direction of a Learning Innovation & Research Hub at Trinity College Dublin.

The Vice Provost/Chief Academic Officer thanked the Academic Secretary for her efforts in advancing the proposal and welcomed the Working Group's recommendations. She acknowledged that while utilising SATLE funding was a prudent choice for the project, she

informed Council that this funding has been reduced, which will adversely impact strategic teaching and learning initiatives across the College.

In response to a query from a Council member regarding the management of several innovative ideas, the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies confirmed that regular calls for proposals would be issued. Submitted proposals would be evaluated and ranked based on criteria such as diversity, quality, strategic alignment, and potential for mainstreaming. The Council noted that innovation within disciplines and Schools would continue. Addressing another question about measuring the success of the feasibility project, the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies stated that metrics would be developed for each project, focusing on impact, student numbers, outputs, and mainstream potential. The Council noted that the Hub's advisory group would establish the selection and evaluation criteria for learning, innovation, and research projects.

In response to concerns about potential duplication of efforts among the proposed Hub and the units and divisions mentioned in the proposal, the Academic Secretary clarified that a role of the Learning Innovation and Research Hub is to coordinate input from the various units, thus eliminating duplication.

The Council noted that a two-year timeframe is relatively short for assessing the feasibility of the project. However, it was noted that, the core concept of the Learning Innovation and Research Hub as a coordinating unit would be tested within this timeframe, and that existing projects like Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) could help measure impact and success. Finally, the Provost suggested that a more specific title for the recommended advisory group be considered and that addressing long-term budgetary needs be included in the advisory group's terms of reference.

Decision:
CL/24-25/045.1: Council approved the recommendations for a Learning Innovation and Research Hub.

CL/24-25/046   Statement on Artificial Intelligence and Generative AI

The Senior Lecturer/ Dean of Undergraduate Studies provided an overview of the College Statement on Artificial Intelligence and Generative AI. He explained the rapidly evolving nature of the technology, emphasising that the statement would remain a dynamic, "living" document. This was created in the context of 60%-80% of students already using Generative AI and the impending EU AI Act regulations. The statement incorporated input from various stakeholders and was refined through committee discussions. The Senior Lecturer/ Dean of Undergraduate Studies highlighted the FAQ section of the statement for staff and students, the resources available for staff via the Generative AI hub, and the need for course handbooks to include information for students about the use of Generative AI. He further noted that work on supporting policies and resources would be ongoing and stressed the necessity for AI guidance in administrative and professional areas.

In response to a query from a Council member, the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies noted that the statement is a living document and confirmed that it provides general direction rather than being a policy document. He noted that additional resources, including relevant policies, would be developed as part of ongoing work to support embedding of the statement, and confirmed that the Centre for Academic Practice can assist Schools by providing general templates/texts to customise as needed for inclusion in student handbooks.

The Council noted that Schools could develop guidelines on the use of Generative AI tailored to their specific programmes, modules, or accreditation requirements and noted that some Schools have advanced this work already. In response to a query from a Council member, the Senior Lecturer/ Dean of Undergraduate Studies explained that such guidelines might include

Incorporating any amendments approved at subsequent Council meetings.

detailed expectations for referencing practices to safeguard academic integrity. The Provost emphasised that, given the College's devolved structure, there is no intention to enforce uniformity of practice across the Schools. Instead, the aim is to raise awareness of evolving technologies, educate staff about the opportunities and risks, and support informed decision-making.

In response to another query regarding regulatory obligations under the EU AI Act, the Senior Lecturer/ Dean of Undergraduate Studies confirmed that the current statement on Generative AI focuses on teaching, learning, and research. However, it is recognised that a broader approach would be required to address regulatory obligations across other areas and functions of the University.

A member commented on the importance of educating staff and students about the safe use of AI tools. These tools may pose challenges related to privacy, IT security, and the handling of digital data on institutional devices. Members highlighted the need to balance critical skills education and creative practices with technology training, emphasising the importance of overall graduate skillset building. The Council noted that the rollout of GDPR regulations was cited as a valuable precedent for developing a comprehensive AI educational and implementation strategy.

Decision:
CL/24-25/046.1: Council approved the College's Statement on Artificial Intelligence and Generative AI.

Action:
CL/24-25/046.2: Student handbooks to provide information on the use of AI at programme-specific, module-specific, or discipline-specific levels. The Senior Lecturer/ Dean of Undergraduate Studies, and the Centre for Academic Practice to provide sample/template text for Schools to customise as needed.

CL/24-25/047   Vice-Provost/ Chief Academic Officer's Report

The Vice-Provost / Chief Academic Officer reported that the Performance Agreement 2024–2028 between the HEA and Trinity College Dublin has been finalised and will be published on both the HEA and College websites. This agreement replaces the previous Compact and serves as the new framework for measuring institutional performance under the updated Higher Education legislation. The Vice-Provost and Chief Academic Officer thanked all contributors involved in its development and noted that the HEA will be publishing the performance targets agreed with each higher education institution.

The Vice-Provost/ Chief Academic Officer provided a report on a recent meeting with the Department of Education, the State Examinations Commission, and the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science to discuss the timing of release of Leaving Certificate results and to outline initial steps for a gradual return to pre-COVID Leaving Certificate grades. She informed Council that the practice of post-marking adjustment is expected to continue until such time as the uplift to grades has been removed, resulting in delayed publication of results for a further 3–4 years.

The Vice-Provost/ Chief Academic Officer reported on the discussions around proposed initial steps towards a gradual return to pre-COVID grades for the Leaving Certificate, starting in 2025, following a Ministerial announcement that the uplift would be reduced from 7% to 5.5% in 2025.

The objective of the meeting was to explore ways of working together to eliminate any negative impacts as much as possible, i.e., any adjustments to result in 'no detriment'.
Key Discussion Points were:

1. Current Grade Inflation
2. Impact on Students
3. To Consider Possible solutions

The next steps would be to collate a sectoral response via IUA and then on to Depts of Education and Higher Education, Research, Innovation & Science. The Vice-Provost/ Chief Academic Officer also reported on discussions that questioned whether the current Leaving Certificate system remains fit for purpose. She concluded by emphasising the sector's call for an assessment that has integrity, reliability, and reproducibility, and underlined the importance of aligning the timing of results publication with other state examinations across Europe.

Finally, in response to a query from the Vice-President for Global Engagement about the consequences of delayed results on Northern Ireland students, the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer confirmed that the timing issue between Ireland and Northern Ireland examination results had been discussed but has not been addressed in the proposed staged reversal of the post marking uplift.

The Provost thanked the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer her report and her attention to this matter.

CL/24-25/048   Provost's Report

The Provost reported that there was a concentrated effort across the University sector ahead of the announcement of the general election to promote university issues onto the electoral agenda using three slogans agreed by the IUA: "Back students"; "Fund the future"; "Invest in research". She noted that the details regarding higher education in the political parties' manifestos vary significantly and encouraged both staff and students to engage politicians on higher education during their canvassing efforts.

The Provost discussed the work of the League of European Research Universities (LERU) network , focusing on the emerging strategic issue of knowledge security. The Council noted the observations shared regarding the development of this topic in the EU and Ireland, and that Ireland has much work to do in some very important related areas which could, if not addressed appropriately, impact international collaborations in research and other domains. The Provost noted that Trinity would be looking at this important area in a much deeper way and both the Dean of Research and the Chief Innovation & Enterprise Officer will be working with colleagues across the university on related initiatives.

The Provost also highlighted that the current geopolitical situation is likely to further impact the research funding landscape, having noted the uncertainty about what form the future EU research funding programme (FP10) will take. She specifically noted the increased focus on strategic autonomy at the EU level, as well as the move towards a European Competitiveness agenda, as two important factors that are having a considerable impact on this.

The Provost addressed the emerging national and EU-level discussions surrounding skills development, highlighting the importance of Universities' work and agility in   preparing graduates with the necessary skills for their future careers. Finally, the Provost referred to the role of European Universities Alliances in advancing this, noting that our own CHARM-EU Alliance could be used more strategically to progress this objective.

CL/24-25/049   Any Other Urgent Business

There was no other urgent business.

Incorporating any amendments approved at subsequent Council meetings.

SECTION A.2: Policy Matters which have already been considered by Committees

CL/24-25/050   Postgraduate Course Proposal to revise the Master in Business Administration Programme.

Decision:
CL/24-25/050.1: Council Approved the Postgraduate Course Proposal to revise the Master in Business Administration Programme.

CL/24-25/051   Proposed Changes to TR081 BESS Entry Requirements.

Decision:
CL/24-25/051.1: Council approved the proposed changes to TR081 BESS Entry Requirements.

CL/24-25/052   Proposed Changes to TR080 Global Business Entry Requirements.

Decision:
CL/24-25/052.1: Council approved the proposed changes to TR080 Global Business Entry Requirements.

CL/24-25/053   Revised Fitness to Practice Policy.

Decision:
CL/24-25/053.1: Council approved the Revised Fitness to Practice Policy.

CL/24-25/054   Revised Policy Template.

Decision:
CL/24-25/054.1: Council approved the Revised Policy Template.

CL/24-25/055   Revised Recognition of Prior Learning Policy.

Decision:
CL/24-25/055.1: Council approved the Revised Recognition of Prior Learning Policy.

CL/24-25/056   Revised Student Mental Health Policy.

Decision:
CL/24-25/056.1: Council approved the Revised Student Mental Health Policy.

CL/24-25/057   Royal Irish Academy of Music – Institutional Review Report.

Decision:
CL/24-25/057.1: Council approved the Institutional Review Report of the Royal Irish Academy of Music.

CL/24-25/058   Thematic Review of Student Mental Health Services – Progress Report.

Decision:
CL/24-25/058.1: Council approved the Progress Report of the Thematic Review of Student Mental Health Services.

CL/24-25/059   International Accreditation of Counselling Services – Accreditation Report

Decision:
CL/24-25/059.1: Council noted the Accreditation Report of the Counselling Services.

Incorporating any amendments approved at subsequent Council meetings.

CL/24-25/060   **Trinity Careers and Development – Progress Report.**

    Decision:
    CL/24-25/060.1: Council approved the Progress Report of Trinity Careers and Development.

CL/24-25/061   **Academic Affairs – Progress Report.**

    Decision:
    CL/24-25/061.1: Council approved the Progress Report of the Academic Affairs.

CL/24-25/062   **Marino Institute of Education Attendance Policy and Procedure.**

    Decision:
    CL/24-25/062.1: Council approved the Marino Institute of Education Attendance Policy and Procedure.

SECTION B

CL/24-25/063   **Global Engagement Committee**

    Decisions:
    CL/24-25/064.1: The minutes of 6th November 2024 were noted and approved.

CL/24-25/064   **Graduate Studies Committee**

    Decision:
    CL/24-25/064.1: The minutes of 17th October 2024 were noted and approved.
    CL/24-25/064.2: The minutes of 14th November 2024 were noted and approved.

CL/24-25/065   **Quality Committee**

    Decision:
    CL/24-25/065.1: The minutes of 7th November 2024 were noted and approved.

CL/24-25/066   **Research Committee**

    Decision:
    CL/24-25/066.1: The minutes of 10th September 2024 were noted and approved.
    CL/24-25/066.2: The minutes of 8th October 2024 were noted and approved.

CL/24-25/067   **Undergraduate Studies Committee**

    Decision:
    CL/24-25/067.1: The minutes of 5th November 2024 were noted and approved.

SECTION C

CL/24-25/068   **Membership of Committees of Council**

    The Council noted and approved the circulated memorandum from the Registrar dated 12 November 2024.

CL/24-25/069   **Higher Degrees – Reports of Examiners**

    The Council noted and approved the reports of examiners on candidates for higher degrees (Higher Degrees List) dated 20 November 2024.

Incorporating any amendments approved at subsequent Council meetings.

M.D.   Aoife Margaret Fallon; Maeve Mairead Doyle; Tim Dukelow.

Ph.D.   Albandari Lafi A Almutairi; Reham Alnajjar; Hadel Mosfer Aljaeed; Andrea Bergantino; Feifan Chen; Jonah Thomas Clegg; Hugh Jonathan Delaney; Marko Duranović; Javier Gutierrez Gonzalez; Salah Haddad; Joshua Hovsha; Nicole Kavanagh; John Nicholas Marshall; Vincent Alain Olivier Monchal; Andrea Muñoz Zamora; Colm O Fearghail; Caitríona Quinn; Seamus Ryan; Elena Saskia Schaa; Niall Patrick Williams; Yushi Yin.

M.Sc.   Patricia Bernadette Flynn; Amy Kinsella.

CL/24-25/070   Head of School

The Council noted that Board has approved the nomination of Professor Damien Brennan as Head of the School of Nursing and Midwifery from 7 November 2024 to the end of Trinity Term 2029.

CL/24-25/071   Heads of Discipline

The Council noted and approved the following nominations:

(i)   Professor Dennis Barry as Head of Discipline of Anatomy, School of Medicine, from 1 August 2024 to the 30 June 2027.

XX   (ii)   Professor Johannes Wagener as Head of Discipline of Clinical Microbiology, School of Medicine, as the incoming Joseph W. Bigger Professor of Clinical Microbiology (2003), from 4 November 2024 for a three-year term to 3 November 2027, renewable for a further three years.

CL/24-25/072   School Director

The Council noted and approved the nomination of Professor Roisin A. Costello as acting Director of Global Engagement, School of Law, from 2 January 2025 to 31 August 2025.

SECTION D

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

Signed   ....

Date   ....

Incorporating any amendments approved at subsequent Council meetings.