

**UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN
TRINITY COLLEGE**

GRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 9.00 am on Thursday 17th November, 2005
Boardroom, Provost's House

Present: Prof. Patrick Prendergast, Dean of Graduate Studies (*chair*),
Prof. Henry Rice, Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate), School of Engineering
Prof. Vincent Cahill, School of Computer Science and Statistics
Dr Ken Irvine, Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate), School of Natural Sciences
Dr Stefano Sanvito, Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate), School of Physics
Prof. John Kelly, Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate), School of Chemistry
Dr Tim Mantle, Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate), School of Biochemistry and Immunology
Dr Andrew Loxley, Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate), Vice Deanery, Faculty of Social & Human Sciences
Dr Cormac Ó Cuilleaináin, Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate), Vice Deanery, Faculty of Arts & Humanities
Dr Kevin Tierney, Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate), School of Psychology
Prof. J Saeed, Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate), School of Linguistic, Speech & Communication Sciences
Prof. Kenneth Benoit, Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate), School of Social Sciences and Philosophy
Dr Richard Timoney, Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate), School of Mathematics
Dr Helen Buckley, Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate), School of Social Work and Social Policy
Mr Trevor Peare, Keeper of Readers' Services (in attendance *Ex officio*)
Mr Ryan Sheridan, Graduate Students' Union President (*Ex officio*)
Mr Charles Larkin, Graduate Students' Union Vice-President (*Ex officio*)

Apologies: Prof. Ian Robertson, Dean of Research
Prof. Eunan O'Halpin, Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate), School of Histories and Humanities
Prof. June Nunn, Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate), School of Dental Science
Prof. Paul Coughlan, Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate), School of Business
Mr Gerard Tobin, Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate), School of Nursing and Midwifery
Mr John Lawlor, MIS Manager

In attendance: Ms Ewa Sadowska

The Dean welcomed four new members to the Committee and invited each member to introduce themselves.

190.0 Minutes of 20 October 2005

The minutes of the meeting of 16th June 2005 were approved with two amendments. It was agreed to amend 2nd sentence in 189.2 to read "Regarding membership, it was agreed that it would be discussed that the membership of graduate students had been reduced from three to two (i.e. the President and Vice-President of the GSU)." It was agreed to insert a new sentence to the same paragraph (189.2) to say that "The Committee underlined the importance of transferring resources to Schools to enable them to cope with new academic and administrative responsibilities."

190.1 Matters arising

- a) The Dean noted that the Directors of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) in the Vice Deanery of Genetics and Microbiology, School of Medicine and School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences await appointment by the University Council.
- b) The Dean drew the Committee's attention to the IUA document circulated for information as Item C1. A brief discussion followed. The Dean clarified that the document represented a sectoral consensus amongst the Irish universities with regards to the issues raised but, as had been stated at Council, documents of this nature are not to be seen as binding.
- c) The Dean notified the Committee that the Higher Doctorates Sub-committee had met and established the *prima facie* case for the one candidate who had applied and invited the candidate to proceed to registration.
- d) The Dean notified the Committee that a presentation of an on-line postgraduate applications system would take place shortly.

190.2 Strategic planning in the context of graduate education

The Dean welcomed Vice Provost Prof. Ruth Byrne who spoke to the document circulated as item 3. The Vice Provost clarified to the Committee the role of a strategic planning process by College and by its Schools. Strategic planning is a requirement under the terms of the 1997 Education Act. The strategic plan (2003-2008) is currently being updated to reflect, among other things, the new academic and administrative roles for Schools and their devolved budgets, and to reflect the changes in funding environment where research and philanthropic funding continue to gain in significance. The Vice Provost emphasized that College is firmly committed to the principle of excellence in teaching and research at the postgraduate level. The Vice Provost referred to the fact that the Dean of Graduate Studies would chair the operations of one of the working parties to review the graduate education strategy at the Schools' level. She invited all the Directors of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) to significantly contribute to this process of consultation in terms of reflecting on the current postgraduate portfolio in their School and its anticipated development in the future, and also in terms of collaborating with Directors of Research within the School regarding the strategic interaction between graduate studies and research. She also referred to the issue of Graduate Schools as a way forward for establishing high quality postgraduate education in College in the context of national and international academic linkage.

A discussion followed with a number of issues raised. A concern was expressed that some measures (both financial and academic) should be put in place to safe-guard the quality of undergraduate teaching in the context where resources seem to be shifting to the postgraduate teaching. The Vice Provost explained that the IUA document specifically addresses this issue and argues for more resources into both undergraduate and postgraduate education so the two are mutually linked and need to be of the highest caliber in order to turn Ireland into a desirable destination for overseas students. She also clarified that the College is now going through a transition phase and that the strategic planning should be realistically imbedded in the ARAM principles of funding. It was also accepted that it would be very useful to have some understanding as to career destinations of Trinity graduates for any long-term planning.

190.3 Teaching course for Graduate Students

The Dean welcomed Prof. John Panter, Acting Director of CAPSL who spoke to the document circulated as Item 4. Prof. John Panter clarified the reasons why CAPSL is now offering a teaching course for teaching assistants and the Committee approved it as desirable that such a course should be on offer. Prof. John Panter also indicated that the new Manager for Academic Development would liaise directly with Schools to establish discipline-specific training needs for CAPSL to consider in its long-term plans. The Committee approved of such forthcoming initiative. It was noted that the issue of funding for such a course would need to be clarified.

190.4 Bologna desk issues

The Dean welcomed Ms Alex Anderson and Prof. John Scattergood who spoke to the documents circulated as Item 5 explaining the background and the progress made in relation to the learning outcomes and level descriptors against the Bologna process and the allocation of the ECTS to postgraduate courses. Prof. John Scattergood clarified that a lot of effort had gone into the circulated documents and that they are to be treated as drafts pending approval by College. He invited the Committee members to pass on to him comments so that he could incorporate them for a further draft to be presented to the Deans' Committee and then to Council. Once approved by Council this information could go into the University Calendar and Postgraduate Prospectus next year. He also invited any course coordinators who would need help with the ECTS and the division of their courses into modules to contact the Bologna Desk directly. Ms Anderson clarified that the diploma supplement could be available to all Trinity postgraduate graduates as of 2007 when it would be automatically generated by the Student Administration System. The role of the Directors of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) in generating the ECTSs for courses in their Schools was emphasized. It was recommended that the information circulated should be passed on by the Directors of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) to course coordinators in their Schools and Vice Deaneries.

190.5 Administrative arrangements during the transition of functions from Heads of Department to Directors of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate)

The Dean has explained that since not all the Schools were in a position to appoint Directors of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) at the beginning of Michaelmas term, the Graduate Studies Office has been required to operate a transition period with some schools already using the Directors in their new roles and other schools/vice deaneries still using Heads of Departments. He confirmed that forms would be updated at the

beginning of Hilary term when all the Directors should be in place and would be expected to operate the new procedures.

190.6 GSC Work-programme (a review of the M.Sc./Ph.D. transfer process)

A working party was set up to review the Masters to the PhD transfer process College-wide and to report back to the Committee with its recommendations. The following membership was approved: The Dean, Dr A. Loxley, Dr K. Irvine, Dr S. Sanvito and Mr R. Sheridan.

190.7 AOB

(a) Formation of Appeals Sub-committee. The Dean's nominations of Dr A. Loxley and Dr H. Buckley were approved for a Graduate Studies Appeal Committee to hear the case of a postgraduate student in the School of Nursing and Midwifery. The Vice President of the GSU will be a member also.

(b) The Dean has informed the Committee that he had been advised that there would be a transfer of funding from the General Education Expenditure account directly to Schools and Vice Deaneries in respect of fees of Scholars and College award holders to the EU fee level.

(c) It was agreed that in the future Graduate Studies Committee papers would be circulated also electronically

(d) The document tabled by the GSU president under AOB would be considered by the working party on the Masters to the PhD transfer process.

(e) The Committee approved of the closure of the Diploma on Polymer Science and Technology course 642 - as of October'05

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 10.45 am. The next meeting is scheduled for 15 December 2005.



Prof. Patrick J. Prendergast.

Date: 15 December 2005