

UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN
TRINITY COLLEGE

GRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 9.00 am on Thursday 22 March, 2007
Boardroom, Provost's House

Present: Prof. Patrick Prendergast, Dean of Graduate Studies (*Chair*),
Directors of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) as follows:
Dr Richard Porter, School of Biochemistry & Immunology
Prof. Paul Coughlan, School of Business
Mr Brendan Tangney, School of Computer Science & Statistics
Dr Matthew Causey, School of Drama, Film & Music
Dr Philip Matthews, School of Education
Prof. Nicholas Grene, School of English
Prof. Cormac Ó Cuilleain, School of Languages, Literatures & Cultural Studies
Prof. John Saeed, School of Linguistic, Speech & Communication Sciences
Dr Richard Timoney, School of Mathematics
Dr Kenneth Irvine, School of Natural Sciences
Dr John Clancy, School of Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences
Prof. Stefano Sanvito, School of Physics
Dr Kevin Tierney, School of Psychology
Dr Helen Buckley, School of Social Work & Social Policy
Prof. Henry Rice, School of Engineering
Prof. Eunan O'Halpin, School of Histories & Humanities
Dr Neville Cox, School of Law
Prof. Mark Lawler, School of Medicine
Dr Damien Brennan, School of Nursing & Midwifery
Mr Trevor Peare, Keeper of Readers' Services (*Ex officio*)
Mr Paul Laird, Graduate Students' Union Vice-President (*Ex officio*)

Apologies: Prof. Ian Robertson, Dean of Research (*Ex officio*)
Mr John Lawlor, MIS Manager (*Ex officio*)
Ms Ruth Palileo, Graduate Students' Union President (*Ex officio*)
Directors of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) as follows:
Prof. John Kelly, School of Chemistry
Prof. June Nunn, School of Dental Science
Prof. Robert Holton, School of Social Sciences & Philosophy
Prof. Seamus Martin, Vice Deanery of Genetics & Microbiology

In attendance: Ms Ewa Sadowska, Graduate Studies Office, Secretary to the meeting (*Ex officio*)
Ms Helen Thornbury, Graduate Studies Office

The Dean welcomed two new Directors of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) in the Schools of Law and Education, Dr Neville Cox and Dr Philip Matthews (respectively) who attended the meeting for the first time this academic year.

199.0 Minutes of 22 February 2007

The minutes of the meeting of 22 February 2007 were approved by the Committee as circulated subject to noting Dr R. Porter's apologies.

199.1 Matters arising

a) *Re. 198.6:* The Dean noted that the M.Sc/P.Grad.Dip (exit only) in Physical Sciences in Medicine had been approved by the University Council.

b) *Re 198.4* M.Sc in Clinical Supervision and *198.7* M.Phil Literatures of the Americas: The Dean noted that positive reports had been submitted by external reviewers and the final versions of the course proposals were being prepared for submission to the University Council on 11 April 2007.

199.2 M.Sc./P.Grad.Dip. (exit only) in Biomedical Sciences (2 yr p-t)

The Dean reminded the Committee that the issue had been discussed before (*Re. 195.5*) and welcomed Dr Aideen Long (the proposed course director) to speak to the circulated proposal. Dr Long explained that the medical curriculum at TCD is undergoing significant reform with a shift from a 6-year to a 5-year curriculum. The current arrangements for substantial experience of research within the medical curriculum at TCD are limited to the intercalated B.A. (Mod) in, for

example Biochemistry or Physiology. Uptake of the B.A. (Mod) by medical students has been in decline for some years. There is therefore a need for a new and innovatively structured approach to increase the exposure to research of medical students, particularly with the need to bridge the gap between scientific discovery and clinical application. Within UK universities, a substantial number of students take intercalated/integrated degrees at both MSc and PhD level. The School of Medicine now proposes the development of a new model of intercalated degree, namely to provide students with the option of taking an M.Sc. after Year 3 of the undergraduate degree. The aim of the new course proposal is to admit medical students, following the completion of the 3rd medical year to a Masters course on a two-year part-time basis. In the first year of the intercalated course the students will follow taught components of one of the following Masters tracks (i) the MSc in Molecular Medicine, (ii) the MSc in Neuroscience, or (iii) the MSc in Bioengineering. The modules taken from these specialist tracks will yield a total value of 45 ECTS. In addition, each student will take a core "Research Skills" module provided by the School of Medicine which will have a value of 15 ECTS. The second year of the intercalated course will be taken at the same time as the 4th year of the MB programme. During this second year the students will complete their dissertation in biomedical science (30 ECTS) with supervision based in the School of Medicine. It is proposed that the intercalated Masters should also be conferred at this point at the end of the MB course when the students are being conferred with their medical degrees.

In a discussion which followed a number of issues were raised including

- clarification that the HEA had provided funding of €30,000 towards the programme costs in addition to a bequest, together these funds will cover a number of student bursaries;
- that the course would run on a part-time basis in the first year on account of its only requiring an input from the students to 60 ECTS and the students would be returning to their MB course in September;
- that in the unlikely event of the medical student not being awarded an MB degree they are still entitled to be awarded the MSc provided they passed the course;
- that given the high academic calibre of the students targeted for this course it is not anticipated that they would find the workload in year 2 excessive;
- that registration for two courses in the same academic year is allowed, subject to approval of the Dean of Graduate Studies;

After further more general discussion the Committee approved the proposal subject to any additional amendments that may be required following the assessor's report.

199.3 ISA Office – its role in promotion of postgraduate education overseas

The Dean referred to the invitation to Mr John McPartland, Director of the ISA Office (*Re. 197.2*) to appear before the Committee to talk about how the ISA Office supports postgraduate courses in terms of international promotion. Mr McPartland spoke to the circulated document and explained that the ISA Office operates within the parameters set up by the Strategic Plan for 2003-08 which aims to position TCD among the highest ranked research-led universities in the world. He explained the aims of the ISA Office and the best ways to achieve them and indicated that the ISA Office would be keen to further enhance its links with the postgraduate community in College by for example providing market information and feedback to Schools which can be used for new course development, assisting in benchmarking fees against competitors, identifying potential partner institutions with which Trinity may wish to collaborate, building relationships with institutions overseas, and running joint marketing and student recruitment campaigns.

In a discussion which followed a number of issues were raised including the fact that the ISA Office sees as its priority promotion of postgraduate taught courses rather than recruitment to the research register which may be more effectively carried out by direct academic involvement. There was a general consensus that successful promotion in a competitive global market needs to be adequately funded, and that adequate funding also needs to cover promotion within Ireland and the UK, where strong presence of overseas applicants is visible and should be tapped into by effective promotion of College at postgraduate fairs. The quality of undergraduate and postgraduate Prospectus publications must be enhanced to be effective as a promotional tool. Mr McPartland concluded that he would be happy to be contacted directly to provide feedback on promotion opportunities for any new course proposals. The Dean thanked Mr McPartland for his presentation.

199.4 Postgraduate Diploma in Statistics – new charging basis for internal students

The Dean invited Mr Brendan Tangney, Director of Teaching & Learning (Postgraduate) in the School of Computer Science and Statistics to speak to the circulated document. Mr Tangney explained that since its inception, the Postgraduate Diploma in Statistics has been available to all postgraduate students and staff in College at a nominal fee. However, under the ARAM, the School incurs a deficit of approximately €1,400 per annum per internal student because of the charge per student is only partially offset by ARAM income. The Committee approved a charge of €150, exclusive of examination fees and any application fee, for internal students taking the Postgraduate Diploma in Statistics in 2007-08, noting that this charge may be reviewed in 2008-09.

199.5 Graduate Research Education Programme (GREP) proposals: preliminary approval

The Dean briefly reiterated (*Re. 198.8*) that a call from the IRCSET and IRCHSS Research Councils for GREP proposals is expected to be announced in April and that successful proposals would need to be assessed in full in June for approval

by the University Council or under vacation procedures to permit an October intake. The Dean thanked all who had submitted an outline proposal for approval in advance of the June deadline. 15 drafts have been submitted, with further 10 due to be submitted to the next Committee, which indicates the extensive level of activity regarding graduate education currently ongoing in College. The Dean invited the Directors to speak briefly on each graduate programme proposed for their School, and to raise any significant issues for the Committee's attention.

In a discussion which followed a number of issues were addressed such as access to facilities in College for students on inter-institutional programmes registered outside TCD. With respect to their format of delivery some GREPs seem to be envisaged as specific courses of study like an integrated PhD while others propose a looser arrangement of offering a range of taught modules to enhance generic skills within a particular discipline. The Committee noted that no proposal envisaged departing from the approved arrangements for supervision and transfer procedures as laid out in University of Dublin, Trinity College Calendar Part 2 (Graduate Studies and Higher Degrees), though some proposals aim to supplement the procedures with new approaches, e.g. theses committees. In general, the Committee endorsed the view that students who are registered in TCD must have a primary supervisor in Trinity but (a) co-supervisor(s) can be appointed from partner institution(s); alternatively when a student's primary supervisor is based in the partner institution the student should move its registration to that institution.

The Committee approved all the submitted outline proposals with the exception of one (agenda item 6.c) i.e. "Nanoscience and Nanoscale Technologies" pending the programme's consideration by the Schools of Chemistry and Physics and its subsequent resubmission to the Committee if appropriate.

Therefore the approved courses that will go for noting at the next meeting of the University Council are:

- (i) Protein Interactions in Health and Disease (School of Biochemistry and Immunology)
- (ii) Environment and Sustainability (School of Natural Sciences)
- (iii) Visualisation, Graphics and Vision (School of Computer Science and Statistics)
- (iv) Biomedical Engineering and Medical Device Technologies (School of Engineering)
- (v) Systems Microbiology (Vice-Deanery of Genetics and Microbiology)
- (vi) Neurogenetics (Vice-Deanery of Genetics and Microbiology)
- (vii) Genetics and Functional Genomics (Vice-Deanery of Genetics and Microbiology)
- (viii) The Irish National Postgraduate Health Professional School (INPHPS) (School of Nursing and Midwifery)
- (ix) Positive Approaches to Ageing: Optimizing Care and Quality of Life (School of Nursing and Midwifery)
- (x) Experimental Cancer Medicine (School of Medicine)
- (xi) MolMed (School of Medicine)
- (xii) Molecular Medicine PhD programme for Clinicians ((School of Medicine)
- (xiii) Speech and Language Technology (School of Computer Science and Statistics, and the School of School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences)
- (xiv) Dublin Chemistry Graduate Programme (School of Chemistry)

199.6 Calendar Part 2 changes for 2007/08

The Committee noted and approved the Calendar Part 2 changes for 2007/08 as circulated under Item B1 a-g.

199.7 School of Natural Sciences: Closure of M.Sc./P.Grad.Dip. in Water Science and Technology

The Committee noted and approved the closure of M.Sc./P.Grad.Dip. in Water Science and Technology (code 610) in the School of Natural Sciences on the grounds that the School intends to develop a new Masters programme focusing on water sciences in the future which will be entirely different from the existing one in structure, content and teaching methods.

199.8 MEngSc in Biopharmaceutical Engineering (School of Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences)

The Dean invited Dr John Clancy, Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) in the School of Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences to speak to the circulated document. Dr Clancy explained that his School wished to seek approval from the Graduate Studies Committee for its planned involvement in the postgraduate Masters course in Biopharmaceutical Engineering jointly taught by UCD and DCU. The Committee considered and gave its approval for the School's planned involvement in the postgraduate Masters course in Biopharmaceutical Engineering, noting that it is a jointly-awarded degree of University College Dublin and Dublin City University, and that, although TCD contributes to the teaching, the University of Dublin is not party to the joint degree.

The Committee appreciated that the development of a strategy for biotechnology training and research is part of the Government overall strategy for industry development in the pharmaceutical sector. The approval was given for TCD's contribution to two modules as described in the circulated document. Should there be a further initiative to link the University of Dublin to award a joint degree with UCD and DCU a full course proposal would need to be presented to the Graduate Studies Committee for consideration.

199.9 AOB

The Dean confirmed that the agenda item on the role of Directors of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) will be moved to the next Committee meeting for lack of time.

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 10.40 am. The next meeting is scheduled for 26 April 2007.



Prof. Patrick J. Prendergast.

Date: 22 March 2007