

**UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN
TRINITY COLLEGE**

GRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 9a.m. on Thursday 20th February 2014
Boardroom, Provost's House

Present: Professor Aideen Long, Dean of Graduate Studies (*Chair*),

Directors of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) as follows:

Professor Martin Fellenz, School of Business

Professor Graeme Watson, School of Chemistry

Professor Simon Wilson, School of Computer Science and Statistics

Professor Ebrahim Al Awadi, School of Dental Science

Professor Melissa Sihra, School of Drama, Film & Music

Professor Roger West, School of Engineering

Professor Darryl Jones, School of English

Professor Martine Cuypers, School of Histories & Humanities

Professor Anne Fitzpatrick, School of Languages, Literatures and
Cultural Studies

Professor John Stalker, School of Mathematics

Professor Orla Sheils, School of Medicine

Professor Anna Davies, School of Natural Sciences

Professor Anne-Marie Brady, School of Nursing and Midwifery

Professor Lidia Tajber, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical
Sciences

Professor Louise Bradley, School of Physics

Professor David Hevey, School of Psychology

Professor Carlo Aldrovandi, Aspirant School of Religions, Theology and
Ecumenics

Professor Peter Muhlau, School of Social Sciences and Philosophy

The Academic Secretary, Ms Patricia Callaghan, CAPSL
Representative (*Ex officio*)

Ms Lee Mills, Information System Services Representative (*Ex officio*)

Mr Ryan Kenny, Graduate Students' Union President (*Ex officio*)

Ms Sarah Smith, Graduate Students' Union Vice President (*Ex officio*)

Mr Trevor Peare, Keeper of Readers' Services (in attendance *Ex officio*)

Apologies: Directors of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) as follows:

Professor Damian Murchan, School of Education

Professor Christer Gobl, School of Linguistic, Speech and
Communication Sciences

Professor Stephanie Holt, School of Social Work and Social Policy

Professor Vinny Cahill, Dean of Research (*Ex officio*)

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

GS/13-14/18 Minutes of 23rd January 2013

Subject to a few corrections to the list of attendees, the minutes were approved by the Committee as circulated.

GS/13-14/19 Matters Arising

The Dean thanked those who had volunteered to be on the two working groups proposed at the last meeting (Dealing with Plagiarism and Appeals following Post-Graduate Research Examination). She invited any further members of the committee who are interested in joining either of the groups to contact the Graduate Studies Office. The Dean advised the Committee that membership of the working groups was still in the process of being finalised and meetings would be organised soon.

GS/13-14/20 Online Education Initiative

The Dean introduced Professor Tim Savage and invited him to present an update to the Committee regarding the Online Education Initiative.

Professor Savage explained that Online Education is particularly pertinent to postgraduate education and therefore important to keep the Graduate Studies Committee up dated on the progress of this.

Professor Savage informed the Committee that three strands of online education have been identified:

1. Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) – these are free, for public good, short courses but have no accreditation. They were launched in the US and Canada and now Future Learn (a spin out of the Open University in UK) has become the platform provider for this type of course. Trinity is currently committed to delivering two MOOCs and one course has already been developed by the School of History.

2. UG Module Collaboration – this is a small initiative on Trinity's behalf with a consortium of American Universities (Semester On-line). Students can take modules offered by partner and Trinity has itself provided one module (Ireland in Rebellion).

3. Online Postgraduate Courses (Pilot) – the aim of the pilot is to generate student numbers and revenue but there is also a focus on pedagogy and e-learning. Courses offered will be targeted as mid-career, vocational, up-skilling and will be aimed at students who can afford to pay fees but require the option of online education (for example, they may not be based in Ireland).

Professor Savage confirmed that he is in the process of establishing an online education unit to develop policies and procedures.

A call has previously been sent out to all Schools to express interest in delivering online courses and two/three courses were selected to be delivered this year. PG Certificate, Diploma and Masters level courses are all proposed and due to the flexibility of online education these can have different start dates. An emergent

and determined approach is being used; faculty are being asked for suitable existing courses and work is also ongoing with the Global Relations Office, Marketing, etc. to develop courses. The aim is to have three to four courses this year, with an expected 100 students. Next year the expectation is to have 300 students from seven to eight courses.

At present the plan is for a similar approval process for online courses as already exists for face-to-face courses with a couple of differences such as:

- Including enhanced module descriptors. It will be important to define in the course proposal how the course will be delivered. Trying to leverage the best in online education and embed this in the course descriptors.
- Schools will also be required to liaise with Professor Savage and his team prior to and during the course proposal approval and Professor Savage confirmed he will attend the Graduate Studies Committee meetings when these courses are being discussed.
- Having input from the Online Education Advisory Group - individuals with experience in online learning will be available to assist with the development of the course.

Professor Savage explained that there are a number of challenges associated with online education including how to exemplify the educational experience, identifying courses, obtaining students, flexible delivery (such as blending online and face-to-face courses), and the financial models.

Following the presentation there were a number of queries including:

- A major challenge to developing online courses is how to free up staff time (administrative and teaching) to deliver the course and it was queried whether there was a plan to assist with this. It was confirmed that this would be dealt with on a case by case basis. Some funding is available for this, in particular to assist with balancing pedagogical outcomes with resources. As an example, the focus might be on video and multi-media which might mean hiring externally or, this may not be necessary and funds can be spent on administrative support which might assist in freeing up academics' time.

- Following a query in relation to whether 40% of the fee would be returned to the Faculty or the School and the lack of incentivisation for the School if the money goes to the Faculty it was agreed that the Vice-Provost should be invited back to a future Graduate Studies Committee meeting to discuss these and other financial issues.

- Concerns were raised regarding the inflexibility of learning in relation to CPD modules, specifically the difficulties of delivering stand-alone modules given the work arounds necessary to set these up on SITS. Professor Savage confirmed that CPD is coming across very strongly in his discussions with Schools about online education and he has held meetings with members of the Tribal development team about the implementation of this and a mid-term plan would be to allow modules to become fee-paying (SITS generates the fees). The Academic Secretary also confirmed that she is putting forward a business plan to the Executive Officers around this issue.

- It was confirmed that further discussion will need to take place regarding to what extent online students will be treated like current students particularly in relation to access of services such as Student Counselling, Careers Advisory, Library and

Student Societies. It is planned that arrangements could be in place for different categories of students.

GS/13-14/21 PhD Training through Horizon 2020 Funding

The Dean introduced Dr Oonagh Kinsman and invited her to present to the Committee. Professor Kinsman thanked the Committee for allowing her this opportunity to make them aware of opportunities for Marie Curie funding.

Dr Kinsman confirmed that anyone can apply through Horizon 2020 (the EU's new programme for research and innovation) and Trinity has already been successful in obtaining funding on such programmes in FP7. There are four main funding calls and Ireland has been successful in Social Sciences and areas that may not typically be thought of as eligible for this type of funding. She confirmed that there is no defined budget for a specific sector within the Marie Curie scheme but that this is determined by the number of applications from specific subject areas in previous calls.

Dr Kinsman spoke of some of the funding initiatives such as:

- Innovative Training Networks which aims to promote mobility (The Fellow funded to work in Ireland must come from outside of Ireland i.e be non-resident in the previous three years).
- European Training Network which would comprise a consortium of organisations (typically 6-10 partners) from different countries and sectors and would, for example, increase non-Irish PhDs, training in non-academic sector and could help to promote the Innovation Academy. Fellows would be well paid and funded for three years but fees would be taken out of the research, training and networks costs of €1,800 per month.
- European Joint Doctorate - a joint PhD with other institutions.
- European Industrial Doctorates which requires Trinity to be the academic institution and have a non-academic partner in another country. There has been very little uptake from TCD on this programme.

Dr Kinsman confirmed the deadlines were 9th April 2014 and 13th January 2015 and requested the Committee to take the information back to their Schools.

Concerns were raised about only three years of funding being provided for PhD students.

In answer to a query, it was confirmed that fellows, recruited from outside of Ireland can be non-EU. However, as the fees are paid from the budget (€1,800 per month) it would be preferable to have EU fellows.

GS/13-14/22 Processing non-EU Postgraduate Taught Applications

The Dean introduced Professor Jane Ohlmeyer, Vice-President for Global Relations, Sinéad Ryan, Director of Internationalisation and Erika Doyle, Global Officer Coordinator and invited them to speak to the Committee.

Professor Ohlmeyer began by congratulating all Schools for the great work this year in the recruitment of non-EU postgraduate students. She noted that the admittedly high targets for PG non-EU numbers had been exceeded by two students.

Professor Ohlmeyer reminded the Committee of the outcomes of the 2010 USC/GSC Taskforce on International Recruitment with specific reference to the commitments within for non-EU PG applications to be prioritised by academic assessors and for these applications to be turned around within two weeks of receipt of completed application file. She explained that whilst the majority of Schools are fully and successfully implementing this policy there have been some concerns that the policy is not fully embedded throughout College. Concerns have been raised with

respect to non-EU applicants not receiving any communication in respect of their application/s for up to three months and Professor Ohlmeyer also raised concerns that some course committees are making their offers to PG applicants very late in the summer which affects the ability of non-EU applicants to secure visas in a timely manner.

Professor Ohlmeyer agreed that the situation for the 2013/14 intake of applicants may indeed have been compounded by issues with SITS and associated issues with the development of new business processes. She explained that the aim now is to determine how best the Schools can work together with the Global Relations Office, the Dean of Graduate Studies and her team in the Graduate Studies Office and the Academic Registry to further improve and embed the commitments of the USC/GSC Taskforce report. She suggested that, on the basis of feedback received from Schools, the Global Officer Co-ordinator would like to draft a "Crib Sheet" for academic assessors which would help with their review of applications for different countries (e.g. grading systems, identifying good universities, etc.) and would also like to give guidance to Schools on visa applications and timelines. The Committee welcomed this proposal. The Committee then queried the specific services that the Global Office can offer to our international students and it was agreed that this be included in forthcoming documentation from the Global Office

Following further discussion it was confirmed that the VP Global Office would convene a working group to address outstanding issues with the implementation of the College policy on PG International Recruitment and the Committee agreed to fully engage and participate in this initiative,

Professor Ohlmeyer then detailed a number of Scholarships that are available for non-EU PG taught Masters students and she drew attention to the College Indian Scholarships (which provide Indian students with a reduction of €3,000 on their tuition fees); the Government of Ireland International Scholarships (of which College has received 5) and the Brazilian Science Without Borders funding scheme. She also noted that the Russian Government is now starting to fully fund postgraduate research students also and that we are the only Irish institution which is eligible to host these prospective students. The Committee welcomed this Scholarship information.

A robust discussion then ensued in which the following points were raised:

- Schools within the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences strongly objected to the mixed messages that they are receiving with respect to EU and non – EU quotas/targets. The DTLPG's in some of these schools indicated that they had recently been chastised for prioritising non-EU PG students as their EU PG student numbers had simultaneously decreased. Prof Ohlmeyer confirmed that this issue had been raised with her office, that it gave cause for serious concern and she undertook to raise the issue with the Executive Officers Group to seek more information and clarity on same for the Committee members.

- A significant number of Committee members expressed their objections to the model used to reward increased non-EU PG recruitment which was perceived to be weighted in favour of schools which had traditionally underperformed in non-EU recruitment. It was pointed out that that the School baselines were calculated on a 3 year average (which were drawn from years when non-EU student numbers were at their highest) and those Schools who had achieved high non-EU student numbers then felt they were being penalised with high GRS baselines now. Schools which

had not concentrated on non-EU PG recruitment in the past had very low baselines under the Global Relations Strategy and they therefore appeared to benefit disproportionately well under the new funding model when their PG student cohort increases.

- The Committee then sought clarification from Professor Ohlmeyer on whether the incentivised funding for non-EU students over and above school baselines was channelled to the Faculty, the relevant school or the specific course/s in which targets were overachieved. Professor Ohlmeyer undertook to seek clarification on this for the members.

- A very robust discussion ensued in which the majority of Committee members raised objection to the current overall funding model which they felt actively disincentivised taught PG course co-ordinators from increasing their current student numbers and it was noted that even maintaining current PG taught courses and student numbers had now become significantly less attractive and viable within schools budgetary constraints. During this discussion it was noted that a number of PG taught courses will seek not to continue to run again this year and that this was wholly driven by the internal funding situation. Both the Dean of Graduate Studies and the VP Global undertook to highlight this issue with the VP/CAO.

- A number of Committee members expressed frustration with the current college systems and processes which they felt actively hindered their aspirations for new revenue generating educational initiatives. Particular mention was given to the current situation whereby new stand-alone modules for direct entry as part of Continuing Professional Development are not encouraged due to systems limitations, despite their being strong external and internal drivers for same. Many members raised grave concerns that this systems/processes shortfall is actively advantageous to our competitors who are able to offer revenue generating CPD and online modules easily and efficiently.

GS/13-14/23 Innovation Academy Update

This item was deferred to the meeting due to take place on 27th March 2014.

GS/13-14/24 Postgraduate Certificate in Professional Practice

This item was deferred to the meeting due to take place on 27th March 2014.

GS/13-14/25 AOB

A query was raised regarding the fee-paying status of students who initially register as non-EU but their country of origin becomes an EU member state during the time they are registered. Currently, the regulation is that such students remain eligible for non-EU fees but Helen Thornbury agreed to raise this issue with Fees/Treasurer's Office on behalf of the Graduate Studies Committee.

Section B for noting and approval

1. The Committee noted and approved the memo from the School of Psychology requesting that the Higher Diploma in Psychology change name to Psychology Conversion Course.

It was clarified that although this is a Level 8 course it is overseen at a Postgraduate level because a student must have an undergraduate degree in order to apply.

Section C for noting

1. The Committee noted the memo from the Dean of Graduate Studies regarding the Trinity Teaching Award for Postgraduate Students. The Dean noted that this award is funded by a small pot of money and the sustainability of this needs to be looked into.

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 10.59am.

Prof. Aideen Long

Date: 24th February 2014



24th March 2014

Dear Dean,

Having read the draft Minutes of the Graduate Studies Committee of 20th February I can see that there continues to be concern amongst DTLPG about the financial model adopted in 2010/11 that treats income and expenditure from all educational programmes - undergraduate, postgraduate taught and postgraduate research - in the same way. The change to this consolidated model was occasioned by the collapse in state funding for undergraduate programmes and the recognition that the total income generated by each School was needed to cover the College's non-discretionary costs, including all full time staffing costs (academic and support) and other non-discretionary costs both in Schools and centrally, costs such as energy, information systems, library and other essential services. As it now stands, all of our income no longer covers all of our non-discretionary costs. Many Schools that previously generated surpluses and therefore enjoyed a significant amount of discretionary non-pay income no longer do so because our income from the state has declined to such an extent that our existing level of activity no longer covers our costs. In managing this difficult situation the Faculty Deans have been given the discretion to reallocate resources to Schools proportionately, on the basis of the proportionate financial contribution that Schools make through their teaching programmes, and taking account of the staff-student ratio in each School. In addition to the reallocation of resources, the College's strategy has been focused on investment in areas of growth, particularly internationalisation and philanthropy (GRS) and online programmes. Each has a built-in additional contribution going to Schools, through the various incentivisation schemes.

Since I last spoke with GSC in 2012 the situation has become even more difficult for the university. Notwithstanding this and in response to that discussion at GSC in 2012, Planning Group developed a number of proposals which were subsequently accepted by Board to try to ensure that as much income as possible goes directly to the Schools that generate it. Specifically we introduced a New and Incremental Activity programme to stimulate new activity in Schools. This allows all new costs to be covered and sees a proportion of the incremental income flow back directly to the School. The new Online Initiative (which from the Minutes, seems to be controversial), is another response to the GSC expressed concerns. Thirdly as a result of the GSC discussion the Business School is being treated differently, recognising that Business Schools operate in a different context to other academic departments. As a result the College is facilitating a situation that for the next 25 years all of the income generated by the Business School will go into the 'growth plan' for the Business School, including new physical infrastructure and @ 25 new staff.

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In terms of some of the specific issues raised in the draft minutes, I appreciate that there is considerable disquiet about the 'incentivisation' associated with the GRS and Online initiatives, and for different reasons. It is important to note that the only role that Planning Group has in this regard is ensuring that the strategy (as agreed by Board) is being implemented and that the agreed targets are being met. The details of the strategy, including the levels of 'incentivisation' were developed by the officers responsible, and approved by Board. However, as you will be aware, the Global Relations Strategy is currently being revised, to draw on the considerable learnings of the last 2 years, and to build on its success to date. I have asked the group that is revising the strategy to look again at the issue of the base-line, to ensure that Schools that already enjoy high-levels of non-EU students are not unduly disadvantaged in the revised strategy. Regarding the Online initiative the level of income going back to the School has already been determined by the strategy. However I understand that, on foot of the discussion at GSC, the Treasurer's Office is developing a proposal to revise the incentive. Any such revision would need to be agreed by Board since it is a central component of the business plan supporting the investment in the online initiative.

I am aware that Directors of Teaching and Learning PG play a central role in each School, and have a particular importance in ensuring the sustainability of the School through postgraduate programmes. For that reason I have asked each Head of School to ensure that Directors of Teaching and Learning PG attend the School's Annual Budgetary Cycle meeting so that you can better understand the budgetary situation for your respective Schools and understand how important postgraduate recruitment is in the context of the School's viability in the medium-term. These meetings will have begun by the time the next Graduate Studies Committee meets. I hope that they will be helpful in clarifying how the internal budgetary process works and why postgraduate recruitment (EU and non-EU) is a cornerstone of our strategy to secure the university's future. A briefing document on the College's financial position and our strategy for addressing the collapse in state funding is also in preparation and will be circulated to all academic staff soon. I look forward to the opportunity to meet with Graduate Studies Committee next month to discuss a variety of items, including how Schools can be supported in their academic planning and in the development and delivery of their programmes.

Yours sincerely,



Professor Linda Hogan
Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer