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UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN   **ITEM 1**
TRINITY COLLEGE

GRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE
Minutes of the meeting held at 9am on Thursday 23rd April 2015
Boardroom, Provost's House

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

Directors of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) as follows:
Professor Dónall Mac Dónaill, School of Chemistry
Professor Lucy Hederman, School of Computer Science and Statistics
Professor Michael O'Sullivan, School of Dental Science
Professor Damian Murchan, School of Education
Professor Roger West, School of Engineering
Professor David O'Shaughnessy, School of English
Professor Kevin Devine, School of Genetics and Microbiology
Professor Martine Cuypers, School of Histories & Humanities
Professor John Stalker, School of Mathematics
Professor Orla Sheils, School of Medicine
Professor Joan Lalor, School of Nursing and Midwifery
Professor John Gilmer, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences
Professor Louise Bradley, School of Physics
Professor David Hevey, School of Psychology
Professor Benjamin Wold, Confederal School of Religions, Peace Studies and Theology
Professor William Phelan, School of Social Sciences and Philosophy
Professor Stephanie Holt, School of Social Work and Social Policy

Mr Adam Hanna, Graduate Students' Union Vice President (*Ex officio*)
The Academic Secretary, Ms Patricia Callaghan, CAPSL Representative   (*Ex officio*)
Ms Helen O'Hara, Information System Services Representative   (in attendance *Ex officio*)

Apologies: Directors of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) as follows:
Professor Amir Khan, School of Biochemistry and Immunology
Professor Frank Barry, School of Business
Professor Melissa Sihra, School of Drama, Film and Music
Professor Anne Fitzpatrick, School of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies
Professor Alex Schuster, School of Law
Professor Christer Gobl, School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences
Professor Patrick Wyse Jackson, School of Natural Sciences

Professor Vinny Cahill, Dean of Research   (*Ex officio*)
Ms Megan Lee, Graduate Students' Union President   (*Ex officio*)
Mr Trevor Peare, Keeper of Readers' Services (in attendance *Ex officio*)

***In attendance*:** Mr Dimitrios Paraskevas, Trinity Teaching and Learning,
Secretary to the meeting   (*Ex officio*)
Ms Helen Thornbury, Graduate Studies Office   (*Ex officio*)

Ms Leona Coady (AR), Mr Pat Millar (AR) and Mr Colm Baldwin (AR) for item GS/14-15/32
Dr Ciara O'Farrell (CAPSL) and Ms Theresa Logan-Phelan (On Line Education/CAPSL) for item GS/14-15/33
Dr Daniel Rogers and Dr Barry McMahon for item GS/14-15/34

GS/14-15/30   Minutes of 26th March 2015

The minutes were approved by the Committee as circulated.

GS/14-15/31   Matters Arising

Following the last Committee meeting of 26th March 2015, the Dean provided an update on certain items that had been discussed. Specifically:

- GS/14-15/27, following a query in relation to section 5L of the protocol for the validation of new strands within existing postgraduate courses, where members stated that it was not always possible for a new strand to have the same level of EU and non-EU fees as the existing parent course, the Committee was advised that such strands will have to be coded as a separate course in SITS.

- GS/14-15/29, following the Committee's discussion in relation to providing remote supervision to potential Ph.D. students living outside Ireland and not being able to relocate, the Dean informed members that the Vice-Provost of Global Relations was also keen to address this issue, and that a working group was being planned for early 2015/16. Staff interested in getting involved in the relevant discussions were asked to let the Dean know by emailing the Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies.

GS/14-15/32   Academic Registry Enhancement Programme, and PG application and admission process improvement of services

Following related Committee discussions (GS/14-15/29, 26th March 2015 and GS/14-15/7, 4th December 2014), the Head of the Academic Registry (AR), Ms Leona Coady, Mr Pat Millar (the Programme Director) and Mr Colm Baldwin (Business Analyst) presented to members an update on developments in relation to the Academic Registry Enhancement Programme as well as on the analysis of the PG application and admission processes.

Specific to the Enhancement Programme, the Committee was briefed on the Programme's objective (to stabilise the AR and ensure that it can meet the demands and challenges of the services it provides to College), its phasing (members were informed that Phase 1 is nearing completion), its configuration (the configuration streams identified were Change, Process, Systems, Service, Data, Modularisation and Communications), and where Schools' assistance was required (in order to establish processes that serve College well). In relation to the proposed postgraduate application and admissions process changes, members were informed that the key themes of this task were Knowledge, Process, Policy, Quality and Systems, with non-systems issues being identified having a higher impact than systems ones. The Committee was informed that to address the Knowledge issues, and in response to discussions with Schools, three types of user guides were being prepared (for assessors, other staff, and applicants), which when complete would be published on the web for easy access. Members welcomed this development adding that specific guidelines for DTLs should also be included in the user guides. In addition, the Committee heard that the AR's intention was to be able to provide transparent and useful information to all applicants in a timely manner (e.g. whether applications for a course were being assessed on a rolling or block basis, implications of submitting incomplete applications, etc.), and also to work with the SITS User Group and ISS to resolve systems issues, particularly in relation to performance and reporting. The AR representatives concluded the presentation by informing members that a service level agreement needed to be defined on application and admission processes and turnaround times, asking the Schools' assistance on this task.

In the discussion that ensued, members argued that more than one user per School needed primary assessor access (i.e. at least two) to improve turnaround times, with AR representatives citing potential issues but agreeing to look into this request. Furthermore, members provided justifications regarding the time required for the academic assessment of an application, explaining that concessions in that area would compromise the integrity of the process, and that sometimes delays were due to external factors e.g. delays in applicants obtaining the necessary references. Moreover, members raised the matter of systems complications in relation to setting up strands and stand-alone modules (and their related finances), and of the fact that there was no visibility in the issues' resolution process. Finally, the Committee argued in favour of Schools maintaining control in the applications' review process (particularly where subject specialist knowledge was required), and in maintaining the option of reviewing applications in block, especially in courses where filling of places was not an issue (in order to ensure that the best possible candidates were admitted). The AR representatives agreed to take the Committee's views on board and further informed members that in order to facilitate assessors they were looking to increase the number of statuses an application could have on the system while in process.

In response to a comment that guidelines on acceptable turnaround times were needed for all processes and not just for applications and admissions, the AR

representatives explained that the Programme was aiming to put a structure on all related processes in an integrated manner. Also addressing a relevant question, the AR explained that they were looking to address the issue of resources by breaking down the programme components, backfilling positions and moving resources around.

The discussion concluded with all parties agreeing to continue investigating ways of reducing turnaround time where possible (e.g. by informing clearly weak applicants that they were unsuccessful as soon as possible), and that although the process was complex, achieving this goal would make a significant difference to both staff and applicants' experience.

GS/14-15/33   National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education – Professional Development Framework

The Dean invited Dr Ciara O'Farrell and Ms Theresa Logan-Phelan to present this item. Dr O'Farrell briefed members on the National Forum's consultation process for the establishment and management of a professional development framework for those who teach in Irish higher education and explained that relevant feedback was being sought from academics in order to inform College's response. She further explained that this framework would include all related professional development undertaken by members of staff, whether credit-bearing or not (e.g. CAPSL's eLearning professional development programme and the Research Supervisor Development Programme (which had been discussed at GSC on 22/1/2015, minute GS/14-15/18)), and whether School-specific or not (e.g. training courses for discipline specific teaching systems). Members welcomed this development and agreed that the framework would be useful in recognising/rewarding staff for their upskilling and professional development efforts. However, they pointed out that further and considerable discussion should take place and expressed concern that it would result in certain professional development courses becoming mandatory or necessary for professional accreditation, arguing that such a change could potentially result in professional development becoming an administrative task and deterring highly qualified international academics from taking posts in Irish universities because of the unnecessary additional workload they would have to undertake.

Related to the National Forum's work, Ms Logan-Phelan explained that, in line with its document on Mapping Digital Capacity in Higher Education, College's aim was to foster a culture that fully embraces digital learning and digital innovation in teaching and learning and included for information details of the eLearning professional programme and numbers attending in 2014/15. Furthermore, she advised members that Schools intending to host an initiative on eLearning professional development or looking to increase integration of technology into teaching practice could contact her for further particulars.

GS/14-15/34   Postgraduate Certificate in Creative Thinking, Innovation and Entrepreneurship

The Dean invited Dr Daniel Rogers and Dr Barry McMahon to present this item. The Committee heard that this proposal was an amendment to the existing P.Grad.Cert. in Innovation and Entrepreneurship, run jointly with UCD and QUB. Members were informed that the amendment consisted of a title change and the addition of two new modules, the purpose of it being to address a skills gap identified by the industry partners, to expand the student intake base (current course is only open to existing Ph.D. students, the proposed new course could admit prospective students with a Level 8 qualification in any discipline), and to allow TCD to offer this course independently of the other two institutions. In addition, Dr Rogers and Dr McMahon explained that this development was not compromising the existing course, which is always heavily subscribed but not generating any additional income (as Ph.D. students are not charged an additional fee), nor it was in breach of the agreement with the other partner institutions (which could also develop similar variations of the joint course as per the agreement's terms and conditions).

In response to members' questions, Dr Rogers and Dr McMahon explained that the nature of the course did not suit online delivery, and that although Ph.D. and industry based students would share lectures for resource efficiency purposes, provisions were made to place the two cohorts at different strands immediately at enrolment – with Ph.D. students focusing on adding value to their thesis, and other students working on projects related to their interests. The Committee agreed that the proposed mixed but tailored delivery was indeed 'the best of both worlds', and was re-assured that this was feasible as staff were well prepared for it.

The discussion concluded with the Committee suggesting that certain modules could also be offered as stand-alone to interested candidates, with the two Innovation Academy members agreeing to look into that option too in due course.

In its deliberation, the Committee approved the circulated course proposal with the following conditions:

- The student effort hours to complete the given coursework should be specified in the related table on page 5.
- A section on indicative reading material should be added to the proposal/module descriptors.
- References to the 'School of Civil and Structure Engineering' should be amended to 'School of Engineering'.

GS/14-15/35   Postgraduate Certificate, Postgraduate Diploma and M.Sc. in Palliative Care

Professor Lalor presented this proposal to the Committee informing members that this new, joint with UCD, course had been developed to address the issue of the two universities offering very similar PG courses in Palliative care. She further explained that the new course was expected to attract applicants from a wider pool of healthcare professionals, and to offer increased research and clinical opportunities

in specialist settings. In the discussion that followed, members identified a number of areas of concern with the proposal, specifically:

- The document presented to GSC was not identical to the one reviewed by UCD as the TCD/UCD Framework for collaborative taught programmes/courses obliges. This also meant that the Committee was not in a position to establish the exact details of what had been approved by UCD.
- Financial details were not included in the proposal as they were not yet available, however UCD had already fully approved the new course. Prof. Lalor explained that UCD's processes are quite different and their approval must have been subject to finances.
- Concerns were expressed regarding the proposed marking conversion scheme, with a member advising that it should be further reviewed.
- Set-up in SITS would not be straightforward and perhaps there would not be enough time to resolve systems issues.
- The committee recommended that at this late stage the School should proceed with offering the TCD version of the course for the 2015-16 academic year.

In conclusion, the Committee decided that the proposal could not be approved in its present form and recommended that the School either submits a joint document with UCD when ready (which could potentially require additional approval by UCD) or submit the already approved UCD document instead for consideration by GSC.

GS/14-15/36   AOB

There was no other business.

Section B for noting and approval

B1.   Amendment to current Higher Diploma in Midwifery course structure – item postponed for the May 21st meeting.

B2.   Calendar Part III changes

(i) The Committee noted and approved the proposed School of Social Sciences and Philosophy Calendar Part III changes for 2015/16.

(ii) The Committee noted and approved the proposed School of Medicine Calendar Part III changes for 2015/16, with the exception of the M.Sc. in Biomedical Sciences (Intercalated) Immunology strand entry where the overall credit weighting of compulsory modules needs to be reduced by 5 credits. Furthermore, the Committee noted the removal of the part-time option for the M.Sc./P.Grad.Dip. in Translational Oncology.

(iii) The Committee noted and approved the proposed School of Engineering Calendar Part III changes for 2015/16.

(iv) The Committee noted and approved the proposed School of English Calendar Part III changes for 2015/16, with the exception of the M.Phil./P.Grad.Dip

in Digital Humanities and Culture entry which needs to be resubmitted with its proposed changes tracked.

      (v) The Committee noted and approved the proposed School of Education Calendar Part III changes for 2015/16, provided that a reference is added to specify that P.Grad.Cert. 21st Century STEM/CS Teaching and Learning holding applicants have to rescind the P.Grad.Cert. following completion of the M.Ed. requirements. Furthermore, the Committee noted the addition of two new strands to the M.Ed./P.Grad.Dip. in Educational Studies – namely Early Intervention, and Music in Education – and the re-introduction of two pre-existing strands, in Aggression Studies and in Science Education.

      (vi) School of Social Work and Social Policy – item postponed for the May 21st meeting.

      (vii) School of Drama, Film and Music – item postponed for the May 21st meeting.

      (viii) School of Business – item postponed for the May 21st meeting.

      (ix) School of Nursing and Midwifery – item postponed for the May 21st meeting.

Prof. Aideen Long   Date: 1st May 2015