

XX = Council relevance

UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN  
TRINITY COLLEGE

Undergraduate Studies Committee

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A meeting of Undergraduate Studies Committee was held on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2013 at 2.15pm in the Board Room.

- Present: Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies, Professor Patrick Geoghegan (*Chair*)  
 Academic Secretary, Ms Patricia Callaghan  
 Senior Tutor, Professor Claire Laudet  
 Dean of Students, Professor Amanda Piesse  
 Professor Jarlath Kileen, School of English  
 Professor Paschalis Karageorgis, School of Mathematics  
 Professor Ciaran Simms, School of Engineering  
 Professor Pádraig de Paor, School of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies  
 Professor Gloria Kirwan, School of Social Work and Social Policy  
 Professor Jane Farrar, School of Genetics and Microbiology  
 Professor Andrew Butterfield, School of Computer Science and Statistics  
 Professor Astrid Sasse, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences  
 Professor Michael Gormley, School of Psychology  
 Professor Graham Harper, School of Physics  
 Professor Mark Hennessy, School of Natural Sciences  
 Professor Oran Doyle, School of Law  
 Professor Stephen Connon, School of Chemistry  
 Professor Fáinche Ryan, Confederal School of Religions, Theology and Ecumenics  
 Professor Christine Poulter, School of Drama, Film and Music  
 Professor Elaine Moriarty, School of Social Sciences and Philosophy  
 Professor Moray McGowan, Director of TSM  
 Dr Ciara O'Farrell, Senior Academic Developer  
 Mr Jack Leahy, Education Officer, Students' Union  
 Ms Clare Donlon, Student Representative
- Apologies: Professor Mary-Lee Rhodes, School of Business  
 Professor Graeme Watson, Director of Science (TR071)  
 Professor Sharon O'Donnell, School of Nursing and Midwifery  
 Professor Jacinta McLoughlin, School of Dental Science  
 Professor Martina Hennessy, School of Medicine  
 Professor Michael Shevlin, School of Education  
 Professor Pauline Sloane, School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences  
 Professor Philip McEvansoneya, School of Histories and Humanities  
 Professor Ken Mok, School of Biochemistry and Immunology  
 Ms Cliona Hannon, Director Trinity Access Programmes
- In attendance: Ms Elaine Egan; Mr Trevor Peare, Library Representative; Ms Beibhinn Coman, Marketing Manager, and Mr Bernard Mallee, Director of Communications and Marketing, for item USC/13-14/014; Ms Sineád MacBride, College Solicitor, for item USC/13-14/017; Mrs Catherine Kane, CAPSL, for item USC/13-14/018; Professor Juliette Hussey, Head of Department of Physiotherapy, for item USC/13-14/020.

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**USC/13-14/012 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 1<sup>st</sup> October 2013 were approved subject to a correction to a line in minute USC/13-14/007 to read: The course would run three times a year and credits would be awarded by Trinity College.

**USC/13-14/013 Matters arising**

USC/13-14/011 (ii) The creation of a local-access online repository on the Undergraduate Studies website had been requested and once it was in place, links to undergraduate course handbooks would be uploaded (<https://www.tcd.ie/undergraduate-studies/course-handbooks>).

USC/13-14/007 (ii) The issues with registration were ongoing. In response to a query, the Academic Secretary advised that registration will not close on 15<sup>th</sup> November and that students will not be made withdrawn. She requested that members remind postgraduate students in their area to register. The Senior Lecturer advised that he had met with the Project Sponsor of SITS and was confident that the issues will not recur in the next academic year.

**USC/13-14/014 Trinity Branding Exercise**

A memorandum from the Senior Lecturer dated 7<sup>th</sup> November 2013 was circulated. The Senior Lecturer welcomed the Marketing Manager and the Director of Communications and Marketing to the meeting. The Senior Lecturer advised the committee that the Trinity brand relates to how Trinity is perceived by the outside world and how, in this information age, institutions try to differentiate themselves by their identity. All of the world's top 100 institutions had been through a similar review.

The Director of Communications and Marketing reported that College had appointed brand partners and research partners to determine the perception of Trinity that existed within and outside of College. The Provost is the Project Sponsor of the branding exercise and it is planned that the project will be complete by September 2014. There is currently no consistent branding throughout Trinity; there are hundreds of discrete logos for separate entities/initiatives in College and these often have no visual link with Trinity. The Marketing Manager assured the committee that consultation with the College community will take place and that the aim is to ensure that each initiative is promoted by, and also promotes, Trinity College. In response to a question on how the exercise would affect student clubs and groups, she advised that a meeting was taking place the following day with the President of the Students' Union. A small number of concerns were raised by members, including whether this project was the best use of the limited resources in Trinity; that 'brand' is not usually associated with education but rather with retail and commerce; that the familiarity associated with some of our current brands would be lost; and that a cost analysis which could provide us with a measured benefit to be achieved had not been carried out. The Marketing Manager noted that the budget for the project was modest but that the advantages from it could be immense, including giving College an edge over competitors and increasing recruitment from international students.

**USC/13-14/015 Update: Module Evaluation**

A memorandum from the Senior Lecturer dated 7<sup>th</sup> November 2013 was circulated. The Quality Committee had discussed the mandatory student evaluation of all modules at its meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2013 and had agreed that Faculty Deans would work with Schools in determining appropriate evaluation methods and would consider the administrative workload involved.

A number of members repeated their concerns regarding the evaluations and the Senior Lecturer asked that Schools follow the process as closely as possible and liaise with Faculty Deans on any difficulties that may arise. Concerns were raised with regard to the question on satisfaction level and a member pointed out that research has shown it is not good practice to directly ask the question 'are you satisfied?'; rather satisfaction level should be determined from answers given to a range of other questions. The Academic Secretary advised that she would bring the concerns regarding this question to the Quality Committee. Module evaluation would be revisited at USC at the end of the academic year.

**USC/13-14/016 Online Education: Modules**

A memorandum from the Senior Lecturer dated 6<sup>th</sup> November 2013 had been circulated. Trinity College, along with the University of Melbourne, had joined the Semester Online consortium, and the first module from Trinity would be offered in January 2014. The module entitled 'Ireland in Rebellion, 1798-1916' involves a range of staff members from the Department of History and Trinity will award the credits for it. It is hoped that from January 2015 Trinity students will be able to take online modules offered by other universities within the consortium, as part of the Broad Curriculum. Details about the consortium, the module handbook, and a video for the module are available online at Semesteronline.org.

A member queried whether any supports would be put in place, where necessary, to support students with disabilities who wish to take an online module. The Senior Lecturer agreed to consider this prior to Trinity students taking any online modules.

Members were asked to agree an appropriate mechanism for how online modules will be approved in future and it was agreed that the following route should be adopted:

Lecturers may submit proposals for online modules to the Associate Dean of Online Education. If selected by College to go forward to the consortium it must be approved by the School Executive, and afterwards go to the Undergraduate Studies Committee for noting.

**USC/13-14/017 Fitness to Practise**

A memorandum from the Dean of Students dated 6<sup>th</sup> November 2013 had been circulated, together with updated Procedural Guidelines for the Implementation of the Trinity College Dublin Fitness to Practise Policy, dated November 2013. The Senior Lecturer welcomed the College Solicitor to the meeting for this item. The Dean of Students had recently met with the Directors of Teaching and Learning (UG) in the Schools of Dental Science; Social Work and Social Policy; Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences; and Pharmacy, and following these meetings had made the appropriate revisions to the implementation guidelines. The Dean brought the meeting through the guidelines, highlighting any revisions made. The Senior Lecturer thanked the Dean for all her work in this area.

In response to a member's concern regarding the role of tutors in supporting students at a Fitness to Practise (FTP) hearing, the College Solicitor advised that tutors are not expected to be legal advocates; rather they are advocates in their pastoral roles. Where a student brings legal representation to a hearing, College will provide representation at a similar level, to both the committee and the complainant. Training for staff in Schools will be arranged and the College Solicitor is available to provide advice to College staff on FTP matters. A review of the implementation of the policy will take place every two years.

USC approved the implementation guidelines which would proceed to the Council meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2014 (appended).

**USC/13-14/018 Academic Integrity and Plagiarism project**

A memorandum from Dr Ciara O'Farrell and Mrs Catherine Kane dated 6<sup>th</sup> November 2013 had been circulated. The Senior Lecturer welcomed Mrs Catherine Kane to the meeting for this item. At its meeting on March 20<sup>th</sup> March 2012, USC had approved a proposal by CAPSL to develop an online resource on plagiarism and academic integrity (UGS/11-12/055). CAPSL had completed the project, which was funded by the National Digital Learning Repository, and presented it to USC for consideration prior to its release to students.

Research carried out by CAPSL had shown that students wanted to be better informed about plagiarism and had difficulty applying their understanding of it to their academic writing. In addition to the plagiarism tool, CAPSL developed an online handbook on academic writing to support students in finding their own academic voice. The resource was generic as the budget had not allowed for the development of discipline-specific resources. Members felt that it was a useful and important resource and that College should ensure it is centrally placed so that all students will benefit from it. CAPSL will consider where it would be best placed and USC will be updated at a future date. The resource is currently available at <http://www.tcd.ie/CAPSL/readysteadywrite/>

#### USC/13-14/019 Blackboard Learn: Information Gathering

A memorandum from the Senior Lecturer dated 7<sup>th</sup> November 2013 had been circulated. Blackboard Learn was used as the College Virtual Learning Environment. This year, three Blackboard enhancement products which provide extra functionality had been purchased: Blackboard Collaboration, Blackboard Mobile, and Blackboard Community Engagement. A review will take place in the following academic year on the effectiveness of Blackboard Learn. The Senior Lecturer asked that Directors of Teaching and Learning and Course Directors would gather information from Schools/Disciplines on how Blackboard Learn is being used and whether it is fit for purpose. Feedback should be emailed to [senior.lecturer@tcd.ie](mailto:senior.lecturer@tcd.ie) by 10<sup>th</sup> December 2013.

#### USC/13-14/020 Proposal for new course in Diagnostic Radiography

A proposal for a joint degree course in Diagnostic Radiography with Singapore Institute of Technology, dated 6<sup>th</sup> November 2013, had been circulated. The Senior Lecturer welcomed the Head of the Department of Physiotherapy to the meeting for this item. The Head of Department updated the meeting on the existing relationship between Trinity and Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT). The one-year honors courses in Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy had run for the first time in 2012/13 and all students had successfully completed the course (except one who went off-books for medical reasons). A one-year honors programme in Radiation Therapy will commence in September 2014.

The proposed one-year course aims to upgrade the diploma in Diagnostic Radiography awarded in Nanyang Polytechnic in Singapore to a degree and would be jointly delivered by Trinity and SIT. The course would bring graduates to an expert level in radiography and open up wider imaging possibilities in Singapore. The course would consist of five modules, delivered mainly in Singapore, with a six-week overseas immersion programme in Trinity. The Ministry for Health in Singapore had had some reservations as Trinity does not currently offer a degree programme in Diagnostic Radiography and the proposed course therefore differs from the others in that a joint degree would be awarded.

The Senior Lecturer advised that the course proposal had received excellent feedback from the external reviewer. In response to a comment, the Head of Department noted that the learning outcomes in the module 'Advances in Radiography Practice' were extensive as it was a large module comprising 15 ECTS credits. In response to a question she advised that the last cohort of students had not had difficulty in finding short-term accommodation in Dublin.

The Undergraduate Studies Committee recommended the proposal to Council.

#### USC/13-14/021 Any other business

- (i) A member informed the meeting that change requests for SITS would not be accepted after 15<sup>th</sup> November 2013 as the project would close out on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2013. Some members considered that closing change requests at this stage was premature as functionality was still being developed and rolled out. The Senior Lecturer advised that the Director of ISS would attend a future meeting of USC to update the committee on SITS and to

address members' concerns. It was noted that supports in SUSU will be in place post project completion and a mechanism for dealing with change requests will be set up.

- (ii) The Trinity Global Graduate Forum had taken place on 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> November 2013 and had attracted over 100 of College's most successful alumni.
- (iii) The Senior Lecturer, along with student ambassadors, had conducted a school visit in Fermanagh which three schools attended. Useful feedback had been received from the pupils regarding barriers to NI students attending Trinity.
- (iv) The Senior Tutor raised a concern regarding the high price of some field trips as they are too expensive for many students. Some financial help is available to students wishing to take field trips but when the cost is extremely high, the number of students that can receive help is very low. Modules should state very clearly where field trips are compulsory and should state the cost and duration of them. It is also not always possible for students in employment to take time off work to attend field trips. The Director of Teaching and Learning from the School of Natural Sciences noted that this issue would be discussed at the next meeting of the School's Undergraduate Teaching and Learning Committee.

**USC/13-14/022 Admissions Forum**

Notes of the meeting of 31<sup>st</sup> October 2013 had been circulated.

**USC/13-14/023 Items for noting**

There were no items for noting.