XX = Council relevance

UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN
TRINITY COLLEGE

Undergraduate Studies Committee

A meeting of Undergraduate Studies Committee was held on **21st January 2014** 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 Mary-Lee Rhodes, School of Business
	Professor Jane Farrar, School of Genetics and Microbiology
	Professor Michael Gormley, School of Psychology
	Professor Graeme Watson, Director of Science (TR071)
	Professor Mark Hennessy, School of Natural Sciences
	Professor Oran Doyle, School of Law
	Professor Pauline Sloane, School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences
	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 Gloria Kirwan, School of Social Work and Social Policy
	Professor Astrid Sasse, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences
	Professor Ciaran Simms, School of Engineering
	Professor Jarlath Kileen, School of English
	Professor Graham Harper, School of Physics
	Professor Andrew Butterfield, School of Computer Science and Statistics
	Professor Pádraig de Paor, School of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies
	Professor Sharon O'Donnell, School of Nursing and Midwifery
	Professor Jacinta McLoughlin, School of Dental Science
	Professor Ken Mok, School of Biochemistry and Immunology
	Ms Cliona Hannon, Director, Trinity Access Programmes
	Dr Ciara O'Farrell, Senior Academic Developer
	Mr Jack Leahy, Education Officer, Students' Union
Apologies:	Professor Mairead Brady, Director of BESS
	Professor Martina Hennessy, School of Medicine
	Professor Moray McGowan, Director of TSM
	Professor Michael Shevlin, School of Education
	Professor Paschalis Karageorgis, School of Mathematics
	Professor Philip McEvansoneya, School of Histories and Humanities
	Ms Clare Donlon, Student Representative
In attendance:	Ms Elaine Egan; Mr Trevor Peare, Library Representative; Mr Loughlin Deegan and Professor Brian Singleton, The Lir Academy, for item USC/13-14/035a; Professor Darius Sagheri, School of Dental Science, for item USC/13/14/035b; Ms Susan Kirwin and Ms Caroline Forsyth, Student Learning Development, Student Counselling Services, for item USC/13-14/036; Mr John Murphy and Mr Michael Hughes, ISS, for item USC/13-14/037; Ms Sorcha De Brunner, Trinity Teaching and Learning, for item USC/13-14/039.

USC/13-14/033 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 10th December 2013 were approved subject to the following corrections:

USC/13-14/027: 'Admissions Officer' should be corrected to Admissions Liaison Officer.

USC/13-14/032: 'new' should be deleted from the last sentence.

USC/13-14/034 Matters arising
USC/13-14/013   Undergraduate course handbooks, or links where available, should be sent to clooneye@tcd.ie for uploading to the online repository. In response to a query, members agreed that access to the repository should remain at a local level.

USC/13-14/025 The Academic Secretary advised that the Quality Committee, at its meeting of 12th December 2013, had agreed that Faculties and Schools would select the method of module evaluation that would best suit the particular module. There is no longer a requirement to include a question on overall satisfaction level.

USC/13-14/027 ii The Chair of the IUA Admissions Group had advised the Senior Lecturer that he supported College in the challenge of reducing TSM course codes. The Academic Secretary noted that the HEA, at its briefing session on the Strategic Dialogue, had again emphasised the need for College to reduce these course codes.

USC/13-14/035 Course Proposals
a) Proposal for a Diploma in Acting and Theatre, School of Drama, Film and Music, in association with The Lir Academy

XX   The Senior Lecturer welcomed the Director and Academic Director of The Lir Academy to the meeting. The proposed Diploma is a level 7 course with a credit volume of 60 ECTS, would take place full-time for one year and admit 16 students. The Director provided some background on the Academy which currently runs a Bachelor in Acting, a professional Diploma, three Masters courses, and a number of short courses. The Bachelor in Acting receives approximately 300 applications each year and only 16 students are admitted. Approximately 50 students each year have the requisite talent to join the programme but would not be properly prepared for the requirements of the selection process and the demands of the training. The course would have pedagogical value in its own right and would also provide exceptional students with a better chance of gaining access to an acting degree at The Lir or elsewhere. The course would be particularly attractive to non-EU students who may be eligible to get a student visa. Students would be recruited by audition, rather than through the CAO process.

Similar courses are on offer in the UK and are extremely popular, with most students admitted having an A-Level in Theatre Studies. A module was created to provide students with a context of theatre and to prepare students for the audition process involved in acting. The modules were designed to prevent overlap with the first year of the Bachelor programme and there is no automatic entry to this programme upon completion of the Diploma.

As a level 7 Diploma, students would not be eligible for student grants. The Director of The Lir will collaborate with TAP and other areas in College to investigate opportunities to secure funding for scholarships for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The Director of The Lir will liaise with the Senior Tutor to ensure that students on the course would have a College Tutor.

The committee recommended that the proposal should proceed to external review and to Council.

b)   Proposal for a Professional Diploma in Orthodontic Therapy, School of Dental Science

XX   The Senior Lecturer welcomed Professor Darius Sagheri, School of Dental Science, to the meeting. The Director for Undergraduate Teaching and Learning in the School of Dental Science introduced the course proposal. The course would be a level 8 Professional Diploma that would be accredited by the Dental Council of Ireland who had endorsed the proposal. The course would admit between 6-8 students, take place over 12 months, and include training in the workplace, the Dental School and the Dublin Dental Hospital. Students would already be qualified as dental nurses or

dental hygienists and following successful completion of this course they would practice under the direct supervision of a specialist or consultant orthodontist at all times. Non-EU students could take the course but the workplace inspections would dictate that they should be resident in Ireland. Professor Sagheri outlined that there has already been a keen interest shown in the proposal with a high number of queries received. The course proposers will consult with the Senior Tutor on whether or not there is a requirement for the students to have a tutor. The proposal will be revised to more clearly outline that both Irish citizens and non-Irish citizens resident in Ireland would be subject to garda vetting.

USC recommended the proposal for proceeding to external review and to Council.

USC/13-14/036   Academic Skills for Successful Learning
The Senior Lecturer welcomed Ms Susan Kirwin and Ms Caroline Forsyth from Student Learning Development, Student Counselling Services, to the meeting. Student Learning Development (SLD) offer a range of academic supports to students in College including workshops, one-to-one appointments, and a drop-in service. The team had created a Blackboard module, 'Academic Skills for Successful Learning', to which all students have access. The module is designed to support students in becoming effective independent learners and should reduce time lecturers spend in instructing students on how to complete assignments. The module is grouped with a student's core modules in Blackboard. Student feedback was sought at the development stage and used to improve the module.

Ms Forsyth gave a demonstration on the module which includes:
resources on note taking, reading, memory and understanding, time management and organisation, concentration, stress management, motivation, referencing and plagiarism, presentation skills, exam skills and study groups. The resources are in different formats including pdf, word documents, video and audio, to suit individual students' preferences and access methods. The resources are generally accessible to all students with transcripts provided on the videos and audio accompanying the documents. The SLD team noted that there is great scope for developing the module and they would like to work further with individual schools to create more discipline-specific resources. SLD can monitor student usage and extract statistical data and will carry out surveys to obtain feedback.

Members of USC agreed that the module would be very useful for students and should be particularly promoted to first year and international students. Members gave a number of suggestions on how the module could be further developed, including: providing a module on group work, creating further resources on presentation skills, and the inclusion of further resources on self-reflection. It was agreed that all academic staff members should be enrolled on the module.

A member suggested the possibility of allowing students to take the module for credit under the Broad Curriculum scheme. The idea of encouraging first year students to take the module during Study Week was also discussed. Finally it was queried whether students could take the module for additional credits which could be recorded on their CV. There was no consensus on whether students should get credit for taking the module.

The Senior Lecturer asked members to review the module before the next meeting of USC on 18ᵗʰ February. The SLD staff will inform the committee when all academic staff have been enrolled on the module and they asked that members promote the module to students. The Senior Lecturer thanked the SLD staff for their work on the module.

USC/13-14/037   Report from Director of ISS
The Senior Lecturer welcomed the Director of ISS (the GeneSIS Project Sponsor) and the GeneSIS Project Manager to the meeting. A paper titled 'Information note on Operational and Systems support arrangements for the SITS system on completion of

the GeneSIS (G1) Project' was tabled. The Student Administration System User Support Unit (SUSU) had transferred from the Office of the Vice Provost to IS Services and a budget had been approved to recruit additional staff to support SITS when the first phase of GeneSIS, G1, was completed. The Academic Registry provides services in respect of admissions, student and graduate records, student finance, examinations and timetabling. A SITS User Group, chaired by Professor Graeme Watson, had also been set up.   The tabled document outlined the current status of the project, the key issues, details on services and support for specific activities, details of system support and training, the role of the SITS User Group, and the next steps in concluding G1. It is expected that the first phase of the project will be finished in mid-February. Work is ongoing to ensure that there is a successful transfer of functionality, documentation and skills to the Academic Registry.

In response to a query, the Director noted that the project was behind schedule by approximately 6-8 weeks but had remained within budget. A number of members expressed their concerns that SITS would not be ready for the input of results for Erasmus students on 7ᵗʰ February. The GeneSIS project manager stated that the system was ready for this but that knowledge transfer to the Academic Registry was still ongoing. Another member expressed a belief that the system is not ready for inputting marks as mark sheets in SITS had not yet been finalised.   A member acknowledged the difficulty of keeping the project within budget and thanked the project team for their hard work to date and suggested that USC should be used as a bridge between GeneSIS and Schools. She also thanked the administrative staff in Schools who had developed many 'work-arounds' for processes when the required functionality was not available in SITS. The Project Manager advised that staff should bring any issues with the system to the attention of the project team. A member commented that their experience with the support team to date had been extremely poor and urged that more emphasis should be put on user support.

The Senior Lecturer thanked the GeneSIS Project Sponsor and Project Manager for attending the meeting.

USC/13-14/038 **Orientation**
A draft Orientation Review document, dated January 2014, had been circulated. The objective of the orientation review was to produce a strategy and implementation plan which provides a student-centred orientation process for new entrants to College. The Dean of Students spoke to the report. Orientation is a vital, ongoing process to assist in the transition from second level to third level. Students' requirements for orientation are as diverse as the student body with different categories of students having very different needs. A high standard of orientation is essential in assisting with retention. The orientation process should be student-centred with diverse provision for students coming through various entry routes and with different start dates.

Many improvements had been made to the orientation programme in 2013 including the extension of the process to three weeks duration, a redesigned orientation website, an orientation Twitter account, the 'Here to Help' initiative with student helpers on campus for the three weeks, and the pilot of a Refreshers' week.

The Dean of Students noted that orientation involves the coordination of many large groups across College and she highlighted that the most important recommendation arising from the review is the urgent need to recruit a First Year Experience Officer on a full-time basis to coordinate and oversee the process.
Other recommendations for Orientation 2014 were:
-    a Steering Group, chaired by the Dean of Students and including key College personnel, to meet regularly throughout the year
-    to improve the timetable and coordination of events
-    to produce a welcome booklet for students
-    to run the Provost's address at least twice during Freshers' week

- the Dean of Students' Office to launch an Orientation Facebook page
- to provide extra resources for the academic registry during the orientation period.

The Dean of Students thanked the College community for their goodwill and hard work on orientation and in assisting with the review. USC endorsed the document and supported the proposal for a First Year Experience Officer. The Senior Lecturer thanked the Dean of Students for her work on orientation.

USC/13-14/039 Harmonised Capping Regulation

The Senior Lecturer welcomed Ms Sorcha De Brunner, Trinity Teaching and Learning, to the meeting for this item. An issue had been raised about the possibility of students gaining an advantage by supplementing under the current capping regulation and it was discovered that the existing regulation was being applied and interpreted inconsistently across courses for which it was relevant. A circulated memorandum from the Senior Lecturer, dated 16th January 2014, proposed the regulation be changed to the following:

XX   'Where assessments count towards an award, any assessment component in which a student supplements will be capped at 40%.'

The regulation only applies in cases where a student supplements due to failure in degree years. The implications of revising the regulation are:
- The module mark which feeds into the end-of-year result would be the same as the module mark used to calculate the degree classification.
- The assessment component mark rather than the entire module mark is capped.
- Since the assessment component mark would be capped before the calculation of the module mark and before the calculation of the end of year average mark, the operation of compensation/aggregation rules would be affected in certain circumstances.
- This may also prevent progression to subsequent years of courses where progression thresholds are greater than 40% (III), however, limiting capping to the assessment component should limit the severity of the effects of capping where there are several components contributing to a module mark.

USC supported the revised regulation.

USC/13-14/040 Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies' update

This item was deferred due to insufficient time.

USC/13-14/041 Any other business
i)   The Senior Lecturer advised that Professor Moray McGowan will continue as TSM Course Director until 27th June 2014.
ii)   The Dean of Students advised that the Irish Survey of Student Engagement is due for a full roll out on 17th February to 7th March. She urged members to encourage students to participate.
iii)   The Dean of Students will shortly step down from that role and the Senior Lecturer thanked her for her dedicated work and noted some of her many achievements in the position including setting up a group to review medical student cases, her work on orientation, revising the implementation guidelines on fitness to practice, and the Dean of Students' honour roll.
iv)   Notes of the meeting of the Admissions Forum on 16th January were tabled. Committee members are invited to attend an Admissions Feasibility Study event which will take place on 13th August 2014.

USC/13-14/042 Items for noting

There were no items for noting.