XX = Council relevance

**UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN
TRINITY COLLEGE**

Undergraduate Studies Committee

A meeting of Undergraduate Studies Committee was held on **25th March 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 Kevin O'Kelly
	Professor Mark Hennessy, School of Natural Sciences
	Professor Oran Doyle, School of Law
	Professor Pauline Sloane, School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences
	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 Paschalis Karageorgis, School of Mathematics
	Professor Pádraig de Paor, School of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies
	Professor Sharon O'Donnell, School of Nursing and Midwifery
	Professor Stephen Connon, School of Chemistry
	Professor Andrew Butterfield, School of Computer Science and Statistics
	Professor Michael Shevlin, School of Education
	Professor Fáinche Ryan, Confederal School of Religions, Theology and Ecumenics
	Professor Michael Gormley, School of Psychology
	Professor Graham Harper, School of Physics
	Professor Martina Hennessy, School of Medicine
	Professor Philip McEvansoneya, School of Histories and Humanities
	Professor Jacinta McLoughlin, School of Dental Science
	Professor Ken Mok, School of Biochemistry and Immunology
	Dr Ciara O'Farrell, Senior Academic Developer
	Mr Jack Leahy, Education Officer, Students' Union
	Ms Claire Donlon, Student Representative
Apologies:	Professor Jane Farrar, School of Genetics and Microbiology
	Professor Mairead Brady, Director of BESS
	Professor Mary-Lee Rhodes, School of Business
	Professor Moray McGowan, Director of TSM
	Professor Graeme Watson, Director of Science (TR071)
	Ms Cliona Hannon, Director, Trinity Access Programmes
In attendance:	Ms Elaine Egan; Mr Trevor Peare, Library Representative; the Registrar for item USC/13-14/055; Ms Sorcha De Brunner, TTL, for item USC/13-14/061; Ms Katie Byrne, incoming Students' Union Education Officer.

The Senior Lecturer welcomed Ms Katie Byrne, incoming Students' Union Education Officer in 2014/15, to the meeting.

USC/13-14/053 Minutes
> The minutes of the meeting of 18th February 2014 were approved.

USC/13-14/054　**Matters arising**
USC/13-14/049　The Senior Lecturer confirmed that grade profiling had been applied in all areas except one in the recent recommendations for Scholarship and that upon investigation into that area, it was found that the grade profile of the candidate met the criteria. The issue of Scholarship will be further discussed when the list of Scholarships awarded per area is produced.

USC/13-14/055　**Public Engagement and Citizenship.**
A memorandum from the Registrar dated 19ᵗʰ March 2014 had been circulated. The Senior Lecturer welcomed the Registrar to the meeting for this item. A document on experiential learning and volunteering was tabled. The Registrar is chair of a Working Group on Public Engagement and Citizenship and wished to consult with USC on matters relating to students and teaching and learning. The Working Group strongly favoured that every student should have an opportunity for experiential learning during their time in College. Experiential learning should ideally be co-curricular and would require buy-in and support from College staff. The Dean of Students is chair of the Working Group on Student Life and noted that both Working Groups endorsed the idea of giving recognition to students' extra-curricular achievements and learning. The Registrar put forward the idea of having an open curriculum, where some ECTS could be retained for achievements relating to experiential learning. Members thought that experiential learning should be embedded into current curricula where feasible and should not be seen as an extra burden by staff or students.

Members agreed that the academic demands on students often do not leave sufficient time for them to concentrate on volunteering and civic engagement, and in order to see an uptake of students volunteering, College would need to free up some time for them. It was noted that formal recognition can be a motivating factor and that an e-portfolio which would acknowledge the skills that a student is acquiring through their volunteering would help students to articulate these skills to future employers. The Senior Lecturer noted that there is a lot of support for the provision of an extended transcript which would validate co- or extra-curricular activities related to a student's time in Trinity. The Senior Tutor noted that College must be careful not to overload students and that students who cannot volunteer should not feel excluded.

The Senior Lecturer thanked the Registrar for bringing this item to USC.

USC/13-14/056　**International Student Barometer**
A memorandum from the Senior Lecturer dated 19ᵗʰ March 2014, together with a presentation on the results of the International Student Barometer (ISB), had been circulated. The results were based on feedback from international students that had attended Trinity College for a semester, a year, or a full degree. Trinity College had been grouped with four UK colleges and UCD for comparative purposes; College scored well in many metrics and in others it came out in 5ᵗʰ or 6ᵗʰ place. The Senior Lecturer brought the meeting through the results and the issue of performance feedback was discussed in detail as it is an area where College consistently achieves poor results. The Senior Lecturer advised that students should be given a realistic timeframe as to when they will receive feedback and that feedback should be given in a format that can be usefully applied to a student's other assignments. A document from the Senior Academic Developer in CAPSL, 'Good practice in feedback' is available on the College website and members were asked to bring it to the attention of their colleagues (www.tcd.ie/undergraduate-studies/assets/documents/Good practice in feedback for USC.pdf). A member noted that lecturers in Trinity College have contact hours and workloads that are far in excess of those of their UK counterparts and this makes it very difficult to get sufficient time to provide meaningful feedback. It was also noted that much of the grading in the UK is carried out by teaching assistants. The Senior Lecturer

undertook to contact the 4 UK universities in the same group as College in the ISB to enquire about their approaches to performance feedback and assessment.

USC/13-14/057   **Consultation on the Strategic Planning Process**

A memorandum from the Senior Lecturer dated 19th March 2014 had been circulated. The Senior Lecturer and the Dean of Graduate Studies are co-chairs on a Working Group for the education section of the Strategic Plan 2014-19 and the Senior Lecturer invited feedback from members about the kind of undergraduate education that College should offer in the next five years. He advised that the aims of the Strategic Plan should be measurable targets that can be assessed each year. A member commented that College should focus on the student that it wishes to produce at the end of their degree, and embed the necessary skills to achieve this into curricula. The report on 'Improving the Quality of Teaching and Learning in Europe's Higher Education Institutions' which had been circulated for the previous meeting of USC, was noted as having excellent recommendations on how to balance teaching with research. Whilst research publication is easier to measure than excellence in teaching, the Senior Lecturer noted that it is vital to recognise and incentivise good teaching. Other comments from members included the need for more global emphasis in their curriculum, and that school reviews could be more focused on either research or teaching and perhaps there should be a different cycle for each of these two elements. The Senior Lecturer informed the Committee that some institutions use external 'verifiers' that assess all course curricula each year to verify how closely they align to College policies and aims.

In response to a query on the T-shaped Education, the Senior Lecturer advised that there had been sufficient input from undergraduate students, from Alumni and from USC, but that further input from the wider academic community would be beneficial. He will send a survey to invite feedback from academic staff and report the results at the next meeting of USC.

USC/13-14/058   **The Future of Academic Development**

A memorandum from the Senior Lecturer dated 19th March 2014 was circulated. The memorandum outlined the shortage of resources in Academic Development in College as against the other Irish universities. CAPSL currently has 0.7 of an Academic Developer which is significantly lower than all our competitors, and impacts on CAPSL's stated aim of providing 'a strong and integrated framework for supporting best academic practice and the highest quality of student learning'. The situation has deteriorated considerably from 2007/08 when there were 3.5 Academic Developers in College. It was noted that best practice would dictate having discipline-specific academic developers that could fully support academic staff.

USC/13-14/059   **The Future of Lectures**

A discussion paper from Professor Oran Doyle dated 7th March 2014 was circulated. It was noted that on a recent questionnaire on the issue of planning space in the Arts Building, staff had been asked whether College needed lectures. A discussion ensued with members agreeing that lectures were essential to College and provided the only forum for face-to-face contact with all students. Lectures are not merely a forum for writing notes but should be dynamic, interactive and innovative. The Senior Lecturer welcomed the discussion and noted that lectures played a vital role in inspiring students in an area – if they were done correctly – and that it was impossible to have a genuinely research-inspired curriculum if lectures were recorded at some point in the past and never updated. A member noted that even when a lecture is excellent, the amount that students actually learn from them can be very poor. Schools should articulate to students how to get the most out of a lecture, and it is expected that lectures for Freshman students would differ from those for Sophister students.

A member commented that the quality of lecture space in the Arts Building is very poor and in order to fully compete and attract international students, the lecture rooms should be upgraded. In response to the original questionnaire, lectures had been endorsed by both staff and students.

USC/13-14/060 **Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies' update**
A discussion paper on the reduction of TSM course codes had been discussed at Council on 12th March 2014. There would follow further consultation with the TSM office as much work still needed to be done before a workable model was developed. The ongoing work in the area would be brought to USC before proceeding to Council.

USC/13-14/061 **Calendar Changes 2014/15**
Calendar changes for course entries in the three faculties and in the Two-Subject Moderatorship had been circulated. The Senior Lecturer welcomed Ms Sorcha De Brunner to the meeting for this item. Ms De Brunner advised that there had been some duplication of amendments being sent from some Schools and Course Offices involved in certain multidiscipline courses which had caused additional cross-checking work and suggests that amendments to these courses are not being considered together. She noted that some course amendments
were possibly missing and may be brought to USC at a later date; as would changes in the General Regulations section of the Calendar. She brought the meeting through particular amendments and advised that she would follow up directly with course owners to seek clarification where necessary.

USC/13-14/062 **Any other business**
There was no other business.

USC/13-14/063 **Items for noting**

USC noted the following items:

(i) Information from Science Gallery on the Mediator Programme
(ii) Broad Curriculum Cross-Faculty Courses 13/14 – updated assessment regulations
(iii) Skills4Study Campus - memorandum from the Disability Service, dated 13th March 2014
(iv) Provost's Teaching Awards – review panel