XX = Council relevance

**UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN
TRINITY COLLEGE**

Undergraduate Studies Committee

A meeting of Undergraduate Studies Committee was held on **13th January 2015** at 2.15pm in the Board Room.

Present: Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer, Professor Gillian Martin (*Chair*)
Ms Katie Byrne, Education Officer, Students' Union
Dean of Students, Professor Kevin O'Kelly
Senior Tutor, Professor Claire Laudet
Professor Gloria Kirwan, School of Social Work and Social Policy
Professor Jarlath Killeen, School of English
Professor Fáinche Ryan, Confederal School of Religions, Theology and Ecumenics
Professor Mary-Lee Rhodes, School of Business
Professor James Hanrahan, School of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies
Professor Rachel Moss, School of Histories and Humanities
Professor Derek O'Sullivan, School of Dental Science
Professor David Wilkins, School of Mathematics
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 Howard Smith, School of Psychology
Professor Stephen Connon, School of Chemistry
Professor Mark Hennessy, School of Natural Sciences
Professor Sharon O'Donnell, School of Nursing and Midwifery
Professor Martina Hennessy, School of Medicine
Professor Astrid Sasse, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences
Professor Sarah Smyth, Director of TSM
Mr Trevor Peare, Library Representative
Ms Ciara Coughlan, Student Representative

Apologies: Academic Secretary, Ms Patricia Callaghan
Professor Michael Shevlin, School of Education
Professor Des Ryan, School of Law
Professor Ken Mok, School of Biochemistry and Immunology
Professor Mike Brady, School of Computer Science and Statistics
Professor Ciaran Simms, School of Engineering
Professor Charles Patterson, School of Physics
Professor Jane Farrar, School of Genetics and Microbiology
Dr Ciara O'Farrell, Senior Academic Developer
Ms Cliona Hannon, Director, Trinity Access Programmes

In attendance: Ms Elaine Egan; Professor Anna Chahoud, Department of Classics, for item USC/14-15/033; Mr John Murphy, Director of ISS, and Mr Pat Millar, Programme Manager, Academic Registry Change Initiative, for item USC/14-15/034; Professor Carmel O'Sullivan, Head of School of Education for item USC/14-15/035

USC/14-15/030   Minutes
The minutes of the meeting of 25th November 2014 were approved subject to a minor amendment in item USC/14-15/026.

USC/14-15/031   Matters arising
USC/14-15/003 The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer and Dean of Graduate Studies had circulated an email to all academic staff outlining the parameters of the policy on the return of coursework. The email provided some

examples of course work and referred colleagues to the paragraph on course work/assessment of course work in the 14-15 Calendar, Part II (Academic Progress, 24) and Part III (1.27).

USC/14-15/022 The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer confirmed that the Prospectus 2016 would include a brief note of the changes for registering with the Teaching Council.

USC/14-15/026 The proposal for a direct entry course leading to the award of Bachelor in Business Studies had received positive feedback from the external reviewer and would proceed to Council on the following day. It was clarified that both direct entry students and students who specialise in Business through the BESS course would be eligible for the award of Bachelor in Business Studies (BBS).

USC/14-15/032 Scholarship – General Paper
A spreadsheet containing up-to-date details of Scholarship papers to be taken in 2015/16 had been circulated. The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer will follow up with relevant Directors in a very small number of courses where there are still some outstanding issues around the weighting allocated to general questions. All other programmes now have a minimum weighting of 25% allocated to a general paper or general sections on papers.

The scholarship details will be circulated for discussion and approval at a meeting of the Central Scholarship Committee (CSC) on 29th January. If the model is approved by this Committee, the proposal will then be taken to Council and Board. Following the CSC meeting, the Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer will send an email to USC members to clarify the outstanding issue relating to grade profiling.

USC/14-15/033 Proposals for Revision of Language Courses in Classics
A document outlining the proposals for revising the language courses in Classics, dated 25/11/14, had been circulated. The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer welcomed Professor Anna Chahoud to the meeting. Professor Chahoud introduced the proposals which had been discussed at Departmental and School levels, and with the Director of TSM.

A summary of the proposals is as follows:
1. It is proposed to break up beginners Greek and Latin modules into smaller units, to introduce a 'taster' elective module available to wider groups of students, to introduce an e-learning element,
2. Streams within Latin and Greek will be created; moving away from Latin/Greek A and B,
3. A new stream in Single Honors Classics will be introduced, where students may take up either language *ab initio*.

The proposals are designed to introduce flexibility, add innovation and an element of e-learning, and make it easier to share teaching with other courses. USC welcomed and approved the proposals.

The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer thanked Professor Chahoud for attending the meeting.

USC/14-15/034 SITS – issues with functionality and business processes
Mr John Murphy, Director of ISS, and Mr Pat Millar, Programme Manager, Academic Registry Change Initiative, joined the meeting for this item and made a presentation to the Committee.

In 2013, the Genesis project had been split into two phases: G1, stability and core, and G2, improvement and value. All of the software in G1 has been delivered within the budget approved by the College Board. The next steps for completion of G1 include finalising the transfer of software functionality to the Academic Registry and continuing to address data transfer and cleansing issues.

The Director of ISS acknowledged that there was considerable dissatisfaction with SITS in the College community. An Academic Registry stabilisation plan, to be implemented over one year and which aims to improve processes and systems will shortly be launched. The systems stream of the stabilisation plan involves a continuous improvement plan for SITS. Process and system changes relating to SITS will take place following consultation with Schools and a SITS Service Desk will be established to assist users.

A budget of €250,000 each year for two years has been put in place to effect improvements to enhance the system and benefit users. The SITS User Group will be re-established and will be responsible for identifying the areas most in need of improvement in order to prioritise spending. This will be communicated widely in College so that SITS users can submit their systems needs to the Group.

Members were invited to comment and they reiterated the very serious problems they were experiencing with SITS and the gravity of the situation in Schools where basic functions cannot be carried out and parallel systems have to be maintained. They sought feedback on the specific SITS issues which had been presented to ISS in December 2014 and asked that if these issues are not to be addressed, that members are informed as a matter of urgency. Decisions would have to be taken before the SITS User Group was reinstated. The Director of ISS advised that a response to each individual issue will soon be provided and that he would return to a future meeting of USC to update the committee on progress to date.

The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer thanked Mr Murphy and Mr Millar for addressing the committee.

The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer also informed Directors that she had attended a meeting on 16 December with the Dean of Graduate Studies and colleagues from the Academic Registry and SUSU and had begun to work through the issues raised in the document collated by USC. She was due to meet again with this group on 14 January. The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer stressed the importance of Directors of Undergraduate Teaching and Learning and Directors of Postgraduate Teaching and Learning being well represented in the reinstated SITS User Group. They would then be in a position to liaise between the Committees and the User Group.

USC/14-15/035 Teaching Council – changes to registration
The Senior Lecturer welcomed the Head of the School of Education to the meeting.

The Professional Masters in Education (PME) is a required qualification for persons wishing to work as post-primary school teachers. The PME programme in Trinity College is a two-year, fulltime programme with a strong research element. The Teaching Council has modified its registration requirements for persons registering after 1 January 2017: the new criteria will stipulate a minimum number of ECTS in specific areas of study that students wishing to teach must have.

Applicants to the PME should ideally have the requisite number of ECTS in the relevant subjects; however, the Head of School advised that a student can register on the PME without the required subject credits and can acquire these in parallel to the Masters programme. The School of Education will allow a student to take up required modules where they are modules taught within that School, and the Head of School suggested that College could investigate methods of opening up all required modules to students on the PME.

Directors of Teaching and Learning and Course Directors should make themselves familiar with the exact requirements in their area which can be found on the following web page: http://www.teachingcouncil.ie/applying-to-register/applying-for-a-place-on-a-professional-master-of-education-pme.6345.html

A member suggested that the new requirements were overly specific and burdensome to students and that this should be communicated to the Teaching Council.

The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer thanked Professor O'Sullivan for updating the meeting on the changes. She also undertook to investigate the possibility of seeking representation on the Teaching Council.

USC/14-15/036 **Proposed A-Level Recalibration Model (C2)**
This item was deferred to a later meeting of USC.

USC/14-15/037 **Plagiarism**
A memorandum from the Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer dated 8th January 2015 was circulated. A Working Group will be set up to consider College's existing regulations, procedures and information resources for plagiarism to ensure they are sufficiently robust to deal appropriately with plagiarism when it occurs.

The memorandum contained a number of questions which Directors were asked to discuss with their Schools and a full discussion of the issues will take place at the next meeting of the Undergraduate Studies Committee. The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer invited initial comments from members. Two types of plagiarism were mentioned: deliberate and naïve, and it was agreed that deliberate plagiarism was rare. There is no requirement for students to reference work in 2nd level which can lead to inadvertent plagiarism by Junior Freshmen. The committee agreed that Junior Freshmen, in particular, should be given a lot of guidance on study skills and how to avoid plagiarism. Specific challenges in the context of group projects were discussed, recognising that this type of collaborative work is being undertaken increasingly across College.

It was noted that Turnitin had been successful in helping students to avoid plagiarising as it provides them with a mechanism to check their own work prior to submission.

Directors welcomed the review of plagiarism and the opportunity to bring feedback from Schools to USC.

USC/14-15/038 **Any other business**
The Dean of Students advised that the Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE) for 2015 will open for responses in HT weeks 5, 6, and 7 and asked that academic members allow class reps time at the beginning of lectures to inform students.

USC/14-15/039 **Items for noting**
USC noted the following document which had been circulated for information:

1. Irish Survey of Student Engagement 2014 – Undergraduate Report