A meeting of the Undergraduate Studies Committee was held on 13 April 2021 at 2.00 pm via Zoom.

Present:
Professor Kevin Mitchell, Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies (*Chair*)
Ms Patricia Callaghan, Academic Secretary
Professor Catherine McCabe, Dean of Students
Professor Aidan Seery, Senior Tutor
Professor Áine Kelly, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Science Education
Professor Graeme Murdock, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Common Architecture
Professor Norah Campbell, Trinity Business School
Professor Jennifer O'Meara, School of Creative Arts
Professor Andrew Loxley, School of Education
Professor Brendan O'Connell, School of English
Professor Robert Armstrong, School of Histories and Humanities
Professor Neville Cox, School of Law
Professor Breffni O'Rourke, School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences
Professor Elizabeth Nixon, School of Psychology
Professor Michael Wycherley, School of Social Sciences and Philosophy
Professor Stan Houston, School of Social Work and Social Policy
Professor Jacob Erickson, School of Religion
Professor Clair Gardiner, School of Biochemistry and Immunology
Professor Eoin Scanlan, School of Chemistry
Professor Jonathan Dukes, School of Computer Science and Statistics
Professor Nicola Marchetti, School of Engineering
Professor Juan Pablo Labrador, School of Genetics & Microbiology
Professor John Stalker, School of Mathematics
Professor Carlos Rocha, School of Natural Sciences
Professor David O'Regan, School of Physics
Professor Derek Sullivan, School of Dental Science
Professor Joe Harbison, School of Medicine
Professor Damien Brennan, School of Nursing & Midwifery
Professor Astrid Sasse, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences
Professor Jake Byrne, Academic Director of Tangent
Ms Megan O'Connor, Education Officer, Students' Union
Mr Sameer Shaikh, Student Representative

Apologies:
Professor Rachel Hoare, School of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies

In attendance: Ms Lucy Shah, Academic Affairs, Trinity Teaching & Learning; Ms Sorcha De Brunner, Academic Affairs, Trinity Teaching & Learning; Ms Linda Darbey, Assistant Academic Secretary, Trinity Teaching & Learning; Dr Ciara O'Farrell, Head of Academic Practice; Ms Siobhán Dunne, Library Representative; Ms Roisin Smith, Quality Officer; Ms Breda Walls, Director of Student Services; Prof. Zuleika Rodgers, Course Director, Middle Eastern and European Languages and Cultures; Ms Jean Cronin, Senior Project Manager, Digital Trinity 2 (for item USC/20-21/075); Ms Mary McMahon, Manager, Central Timetable Unit (for item USC/20-21/078).

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies requested permission for the meeting to be recorded for minute taking purposes. He advised that the recording would be deleted once the minutes had been written. There were no objections.

USC/20-21/071　Minutes of the meeting of 23 March 2021
　　　　　The minutes of the meeting of 23 March 2021 were approved.

USC/20-21/072   **Matters arising**

USC/20-21/062   The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies reported that Council noted and approved the Trinity Elective descriptor 'The Psychology of the Climate Crisis' as an appendix to the USC minutes.

USC/20-21/064   The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies advised that Council approved the mitigation measures for semester two Assessments, and noted that an email had been sent to staff and students on this.

USC/20-21/064   The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies noted that options for teaching activities for 2021-22 were discussed at Council and that feedback and comments will feed into future planning. He advised that he had given Council feedback from USC members on teaching activities under Option B.

USC/20-21/066   The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies reported that Council approved the extension of the Trinity Admissions Feasibility Study (TAFS) and the Feasibility Study in A-level Admissions Northern Ireland (NI) for a further two years to cover admissions to Trinity up to and including September 2023, and to set a minimum CAO points of 330 for applicants submitted under the TAFS. He noted that concerns had come from a USC member on the status of fees for NI/UK students post-Brexit, and advised that this was being looked into.

USC/20-21/067   The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies advised that Council approved the changes to the entry requirements for Music (Single Honours and Joint Honours).

USC/20-21/070   The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies noted that Council approved the cessation of the programmes in Information Systems offered by the School of Computer Science and Statistics leading to a Diploma in Information Systems and a BSc in Information Systems.

USC/20-21/070   The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies noted that Council noted and approved the Approval of Additional Degree Destinations for Trinity International Foundation Programme as an appendix to the USC minutes.

USC/20-21/073   **Proposal for a Trinity Elective**

A memorandum from Professor Áine Kelly, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Science Education (ADUSE), dated 7 April 2021, was circulated, and the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies invited her to speak to it.

The ADUSE advised that approval was being sought from USC for the addition of a new Trinity Elective 'Black Studies', co-ordinated by Dr. Phil Mullen of the School of Social Sciences and Philosophy, to be rolled out in 2021/22. She noted that, if approved, this would bring the total number of Trinity Electives to 41. She added that in contrast to the other Trinity Electives which came from the module co-ordinators, this Trinity Elective had been created as a result of a student petition. She noted that the Provost had committed to providing this Trinity Elective and that a post had been created and filled by Dr. Phil Mullen, in order to provide the appropriate expertise to co-ordinate the module. She noted that the proposed Trinity Elective had been created with input from various schools and external expertise, and that it had gained approval at the Trinity Electives Sub-Committee. She added that the proposal was an excellent addition to the Trinity Electives, and that it was positive to be able to respond to students wishes, and further the promotion of diversity and inclusion in College.

Responding to a query from a member on whether there is a mechanism that could be implemented for students to feedback ideas for Trinity Electives , the ADUSE explained that students could be formally surveyed, or that student representatives could more informally feedback ideas. Commenting on the mechanism for exiting a Trinity Elective, she advised that Trinity Electives run for three years, and that it is a function of the Trinity Electives Sub-Committee

to survey the Trinity Electives, carry out quality control, and track student numbers. A member queried whether the number of Trinity Electives to be developed is near capacity, and the ADUSE responded that there are adequate numbers of Trinity Electives to ensure that students can receive a place on their top choice. She noted that it is important to have extra capacity of Trinity Electives for this reason. She added that more students will be eligible to take Trinity Electives in the coming years. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate commented that it is important to balance the extra capacity of Trinity Electives with student numbers, as it will be difficult to run Trinity Electives with too few students on them. Responding to a query on how the proposed Trinity Elective is connected with the Trinity Colonial Legacies project, the ADUSE noted that Dr. Phil Mullen is on the advisory board for that project.

xx **Decision/Action USC/20-21/073:** USC approved the proposed module 'Black Studies' as a Trinity Elective and recommended it to Council.

USC/20-21/074 **Proposal for a Bespoke Open Module from the School of Computer Science and Statistics**
A memorandum from the Undergraduate Common Architecture Governance Committee (UCAGC), dated 8 April 2021, was circulated. Professor Jonathan Dukes, the Director of Undergraduate Teaching and Learning (DUTL) from the School of Computer Science and Statistics (SCSS), spoke to the proposal, giving USC an overview of the two five ECTs bespoke open modules 'Introduction to Programming with Data Science Applications I and II'. He advised that positive feedback had been received from UCAGC, while feedback from Academic Practice specifically praised the group project element of the modules. He advised that approval is being sought from USC.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies commended the proposals and commented that it fills a gap for students. He queried whether the modules would be made available to Science students, and the DUTL from SCSS responded that while timetabling makes this difficult, these types of students are welcome on the modules.

Decision/Action USC/20-21/074: USC approved the proposed Bespoke Open Modules 'Introduction to Programming with Data Science Applications I and II' from the School of Computer Science and Statistics.

USC/20-21/075 **Pathway Choices and Open Module Enrolment for 2021/22**
The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies welcomed Jean Cronin, Senior Project Manager, Digital Trinity 2 (DT2), to the meeting and gave a brief background to Pathway Choices and Open Module Enrolment (OME) for 2021/22. He explained that the flexibility that students are being provided with is underpinned by systems that manage the process by which they can make their choices and how places are allocated, taking into account the limiting resources and capacity of modules across New Minor Subject (NMS), Open Modules, and Trinity Electives. He advised that there are three different allocation mechanisms: allocation for NMS is a based on a grades competition, Trinity Electives is by listed preference system, and Open Modules is on a first come first served basis, and that this raises a lot of complexities. He noted that the system needs to keep track of all offerings, making sure they are current, that the late changes have been updated, as well as tracking which modules are approved by which courses, are available by timetable for which students, and whether students need to prerequisites to take the modules. He reported that there were teething problems in 2020/21 when the system was introduced which comprised of issues with the alignment of data in the systems, which was affected by late changes from schools. He noted that for the system to work there must be good communication between the schools and whoever is setting up the data in system, as the process for inputting data into the system is very manual and labour intensive, with any conflicts or inaccuracies in data causing problems. He reported that DT2 had spent this year identifying and resolving the problems that had arisen previously, as well as extending the system to Junior Sophister (JS) modules for rising students.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies then invited the Senior Project Manager to provide an update to USC. The Senior Project Manager invited members attention to her presentation. She explained that in the previous year OME was introduced for Junior Freshmen (JF) and Senior Freshmen (SF), and that this year it would be expanded to include JS. She advised that DT2 are currently preparing for OME by carrying out data gathering and data set-up activities. She noted that that the data gathering is going well, with all data received by 16 March for JF and SF, and 100% of all JF amendments completed with 92% of SF complete. She explained that the next step is to validate this data, using the OME validation report. She reported that engagement with schools has been very strong, and positive feedback has been received. She advised that a collaborative approach had been taken whereby DT2 had worked with the Undergraduate Common Architecture Office and the Central Timetabling Unit (CTU) in order to collect the data they all needed. She reported that they had provided two presentations to schools and followed this up with six drop-in clinics in March where schools could be assisted in the process. She advised that data gathering for JS is underway, with 11 out 14 schools having returned the data by the deadline of the 25 March.

The Senior Project Manager then brought USC through the OME timelines for 2021/22. She noted that NMS eligibility will open on the 26 April-3 June, where students will be able to see what they are eligible for. She explained then that NMS preferences and Pathway selection will be open from 14-23 June, and that the algorithm for assigning students to their choices will run on 24 June. She noted that Trinity Electives preference selection will run from 5-11 July, with the algorithm running on 12-13 July. She advised that the OME for SF and JS will run from 15-26 July, added that the OME change of mind period will be a two-week period after this, likely just before the start of term, with a possible second window occurring once term starts.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies thanked the Senior Project Manager for her presentation. The DUTL from SCSS queried whether two programmes that had been deemed out of scope for Open Modules would be offered Trinity Electives for their JS year in 2021/22, and the Senior Project Manager advised that she will follow up with him on this after the meeting. The DUTL from the School of Law queried whether students can choose core electives before Open Modules or Trinity Electives, and the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies advised this can be discussed following the meeting with himself and the Senior Project Manager. Responding to a query from a member on when Erasmus/Study Abroad students can submit their choices in the event that the year abroad falls through, the Senior Project Manager said that this issue had come up with other schools, and that the best approach was for students to do their pathway selections online, and then enrolments could be entered manually through the college timetabling system (CMIS) as this offers the necessary flexibility. A member commented that it would be useful if schools could test the system before students had access to it, and that it would be useful for schools to have access to the student view of the system once its live, to aid in troubleshooting. Responding to this, the Senior Project Manager said that schools will have access to the OME validation report which is a replication of what the students sees and which will have live information on it. Regarding the possibility of schools having a student view of the system, she said that this is something that could be examined by DT2.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies then invited the Associate Dean of Undergraduate Common Architecture (ADUCA) to give USC an update on Pathway Choices and Open Module Enrolment. The ADUCA advised that the list of Open Modules for 2021/22 could be found under Section C of the agenda, and that if these are noted and approved, they will then go back to Schools to ascertain which modules they will be offering to students and that this data would then be provided to DT2. He reported that a campaign for students was underway, comprised of information sessions for students, webinars, and emails. He noted that the next stage would be to make sure accurate information was provided to students with only the applicable options being made available to them. The

Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies thanked the ADUCA for his update and gave praise for the range of Open Modules available. He noted that schools should ensure module managers and module descriptors are up to date, as this should function as the one source of truth.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies thanked the Senior Project Manager, and DT2 for their work, and she withdrew from the meeting.

Decision/Action USC/20-21/075(ii): The Senior Project Manager to discuss with DT2 the possibility of creating a student view of the system for schools to use.

USC/20-21/076 **Continuity of Teaching**
The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies gave an update on Plans for Assessments in 2021/22. He advised that a request for information from schools on their preferences for holding exams online or in-person had gone out today from Academic Registry to School Managers, with a deadline for returning this information by the following Monday. He noted that it was hoped that an overview of the situation would be apparent by the end of the following week, after which it would be possible to determine whether an external venue would need to be booked, at which point it would be considered whether it is appropriate to plan for that eventuality.

Responding to a comment from a member, the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies acknowledged that it is a tight turnaround for this information, but that conversations on this should already be occurring in schools, and that it was necessary to have this overview as soon as possible in case an external venue needed to be booked. The Students' Union (SU) Education Officer emphasised that this is an opportunity to move forward with the type of assessments offered. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies agreed with this, noting that the Trinity Education Project (TEP) proposes an expansion and diversification of assessments.

Commenting on an email query that USC members had circulated regarding final assignments deadlines and the third week of assessments, the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies explained to USC that the third week of assessments is to be used for final assignments that have been converted from examinations. He noted that if modules have historically held their final assignment earlier in the semester then this was acceptable, as long as it does not comprise a large percentage of the final mark. He emphasised that final examinations should not be held outside of the examination period. Responding to a query from a member on whether students who do not have any examinations could be asked to submit assignments before the final week of assessments, he said that deadlines would need to be spread out in this case, and that would require some oversight and responsibility at the programme level. A member commented that in the case of large classes if the deadline is in the third week it would be very difficult to turnaround results from assignments in time for External Examiners Reports. He commented that if students have been informed early in the semester of an earlier deadline than the third week of assessments, then the student should be responsible for managing their time to meet this deadline. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies responded by agreeing that while it is important for students to learn to balance their workloads and meet deadlines, it is also important to acknowledge that some students may be struggling and may have difficulties with this. He suggested that these modules may need to be looked at, with some requiring extension of deadlines. He advised that it is important to be sympathetic to students and acknowledged that there is a need to be mindful of pressures on staff also.

USC/20-21/077 **Request for derogation from 30/70 degree calculation for a period of four years**
A memorandum from Prof. Zuleika Rodgers, Course Director, Middle Eastern and European Languages and Cultures (MEELC), dated 6 April 2021 was circulated and the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies invited her to speak to it. The Course Director gave

USC an overview of the document, explaining that it was being requested that MEELC students entering JS in 2021/22 – 2024/25 would have their degree calculated only on their Senior Sophister (SS) grades and that from 2025/2026, JS students will return to the normal degree calculation of JS 30% /SS 70%, and reported on the rationale for this request. She asked for approval from USC for this derogation.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies commented that it is important to note that if approved, this will be a derogation for four years only, and cannot continue beyond this.

XX   **Decision/Action USC/20-21/077:** USC approved the request for derogation from 30/70 degree calculation for a period of four years for Middle Eastern and European Languages and Cultures (MEELC), to apply to students entering the Junior Sophister year from 2021/22 to 2024/25 only, and recommended it to Council.

USC/20-21/078   **Timetabling Policy**

A memorandum from the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies, dated 7 April 2021, was circulated and he gave a brief background to the documents. He advised USC that the Timetabling Policy and Procedures had been put in place in 2019/20, and that a review of both of these would take place this year. He noted that going forward the policy should become a more fixed document while the procedures would be under review each year.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies then welcomed Mary McMahon, Manager, Central Timetabling Unit and she provided USC with an overview of the item, noting that there is very little change to the policy from the previous year. She advised that there had been an overlap of information between the policy and the procedures and that this duplicated information had now been removed from both documents, resulting in distinct relevant information in both. She explained that the procedures document would undergo an annual review as it is an operational document and includes timelines. Regarding the policy document, she advised that new sections on data and change management had been included. She added that it is hoped that a point will be reached whereby the timetable will be static once published, and that understanding the reasons that changes to the timetable are required post-publication will aid in addressing this. She reported that the timetabling working group has not yet been established as it needs approval to proceed first, and acknowledge a point made by a member that timetablers outside of the block system should be included in the working group. She noted that this working group would report to both USC and the Graduate Studies Committee.

Responding to a query from a member, the CTU Manager advised that it is hoped that the data set for timetables will be released to schools in June 2021. Following a comment from a member, the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies advised that extra modules outside of the block structure need to be highlighted to CTU by the November of the previous year so that they can be scheduled correctly due to the interconnected nature of the curricula. He emphasised that this is most important with regard to the shared curriculum for SF and JS years where there is an interdependency. The CTU Manager advised that the intention is move toward a position whereby a first draft of a timetable can be created by a certain point of the year. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies noted that over time the workload associated with timetabling should decrease. Responding to a comment from the Director of Student Services on the review of the timetable and the role of Academic Registry and Student Services, the CTU Manager advised that she would follow up on this discussion after the meeting. Responding to a query from the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies on Action 6 in the document, she advised that the metrics required for that report could not be captured this year due to the pandemic.

XX   **Decision/Action USC/20-21/078:** USC approved the revised Timetabling Policy and Procedures and recommended them to Council.

USC/20-21/079   **Any other business**
The Library Representative asked DUTLs to promote the Library Survey to staff and students. The SU Education officer asked DUTLs to promote the survey on Student Experience to students also.

USC/20-21/080   **Minutes (Section B)**
USC noted and approved the following set of minutes:
1.   **Undergraduate Common Architecture Governance Committee**
Meeting minutes of 9 February 2021.

USC/20-21/081   **Items for noting (Section C)**
USC noted and approved, where necessary, the following items/documents:
i.   **Open Modules for 2021-22**
Memorandum from the Undergraduate Common Architecture Governance Committee, dated 6 April 2021.

XX   ii.   **AMENDED Approval of Additional Degree Destinations for the Trinity International Foundation Programme**
Memorandum from Ms. Cliodhna Martin, Admissions and Recruitment Manager, International Foundation Programme, dated 6 April 2021.