



A meeting of the Undergraduate Studies Committee was held on 22 March 2022 at 2.00 pm, online.

Present: Professor David Shepherd, Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies (*Chair*)
Ms Patricia Callaghan, Academic Secretary
Professor Catherine McCabe, Dean of Students
Professor Gerry Wright, Acting Senior Tutor
Professor Graeme Murdock, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Common Architecture (ADUCA)
Professor Áine Kelly, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Science Education (ADUSE)
Professor Norah Campbell, Trinity Business School
Professor Jennifer O'Meara, School of Creative Arts
Professor Andrew Loxley, School of Education
Professor Mark Sweetnam, School of English
Professor Robert Armstrong, School of Histories and Humanities
Professor David Kenny, School of Law
Professor Martin Worthington, School of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies
Professor Margaret Walshe, School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences
Professor Clare Kelly, School of Psychology
Professor Michelle D'Arcy, School of Social Sciences and Philosophy
Professor Julie Byrne, School of Social Work and Social Policy
Professor Jacob Erickson, School of Religion
Professor Iouri Gounko, School of Chemistry
Professor David O'Regan, School of Physics
Professor Jonathan Dukes, School of Computer Science and Statistics
Professor Kevin Kelly, School of Engineering
Professor Juan Pablo Labrador, School of Genetics and Microbiology
Professor John Stalker, School of Mathematics
Professor Carlos Rocha, School of Natural Sciences
Professor Heather Reilly, School of Dental Science
Professor Damien Brennan, School of Nursing and Midwifery
Professor Astrid Sasse, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences
Professor Jake Byrne, Academic Director of Tangent
Ms Bev Genockey, Education Officer, Students' Union
Mr Yannick Gloster, Student Representative

Apologies: Professor Vincent Kelly, School of Biochemistry and Immunology
Professor Joe Harbison, School of Medicine

In attendance: Ms Sorcha De Brunner, Academic Affairs; Ms Siobhán Dunne, Library Representative; Dr Ciara O'Farrell, Director of Academic Practice; Ms Roisin Smith, Quality Officer; Ms Ciara Conlon, Academic Affairs; Professor Evangelia Rigaki (for item USC/21-22/050); Professor Conor McGuckin and Mr Leo McNamee (for item USC/21-22/051ii); Professor Yvonne Lynch (for item USC/21-22/053i); Dr Pauline Rooney (for item USC/21-22/053ii).

USC/21-22/047 Minutes of the meeting of 22 February 2022

The minutes of the meeting of 22 February 2022 were approved.

USC/21-22/048 Matters arising

USC/21-22/046: The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies noted that the new Trinity Joint Honours combinations of History of Art and Architecture and Drama Studies, and Economics and Computer Science were approved by Council.

USC/21-22/049 Senior Lecturer's Updates

- i. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies advised that the Working Group on Academic Integrity had begun its work and will shortly be drafting a statement of principles.
- ii. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies commented that he had met with representatives from schools which have concerns about online module enrolment for the coming year. He advised that issues should be notified to ome@tcd.ie and if they are not resolved, they may be escalated to the Director of the Academic Registry.
- iii. Speaking about the invasion of Ukraine, he advised that a Global Incident Response Unit had been established in Trinity Global and that he and the Dean of Graduate Studies are co-chairing a group to consider options for students and new entrants affected by the conflict. Responding to a question about whether Trinity will accept Ukrainian refugee students in September 2022, the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies noted that this is currently under discussion. He confirmed that schools should forward copies of queries received to global.response@tcd.ie so that there is a centralised understanding of the types of queries received.

USC/21-22/050 Review of Music Curriculum

A proposal concerning revisions to the undergraduate Music curriculum, for single- and joint-subject entry, dated 15 March 2022, was circulated. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies welcomed Professor Evangelia Rigaki, Head of the Department of Music, to the meeting.

Professor Rigaki outlined the combined factors which led to the review of the Music curriculum, which included the quality review of the School of Creative Arts, the loss of staff in the department due to retirements and resignations, and student feedback requesting an increase in practical elements within the curriculum. Under the proposal, the formal structural specialisms of musicology, composition and music technology are removed, however, students would still be able to pick modules from across these thematic areas. In addition, modules related to a broader range of music are to be introduced, including those on pop music, heavy-metal and non-Western genres, which should help to strengthen student numbers.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies queried the changes that had been made to the curriculum proposal, following the external review by Professor Christopher Fox and input from Dr Ciara O'Farrell. Professor Rigaki noted the usefulness of the comments from Professor Fox, as well as those from the Director of Academic Practice and Ms Sorcha De Brunner, and confirmed that the resulting changes generally led to a reduction in assessments. The Senior Lecturer noted the importance of the careful management of the implementation of the new curriculum and the need to take time to reflect on successes and any issues that might arise. Professor Rigaki confirmed that, if approved, the new curriculum would be phased-in on a year-by-year basis, however, some of the new options would be offered early, where possible.

The Director of Teaching and Learning (Undergraduate) (DUTL) from the School of Creative Arts commented on the current strictures placed on schools arising from the Baseline Budgeting Model (BBM). Another member requested that information be presented to USC on the BBM. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies commented that the model is currently being reviewed but would consider this as an item if there is useful information to share.

A suggestion from a member on the number of recommended texts to be indicated in the module descriptor led to a tangential discussion about the need to capture consistent types

of information about modules across Trinity; this would allow for an analysis of information on aspects such as contact hours and student workload across College. Module information should be easily accessed from the website, and it was noted that Trinity is lagging behind other institutions in this regard.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies thanked Professor Rigaki for speaking to the revised Music Curriculum and reiterated the importance of quality assuring the implementation over the coming years.

Action/Decision

XX 050.01: USC supported the revised Music curriculum, noting that it will be implemented on a year-by-year basis, starting in 2022/23, and recommended it to Council.

Professor Rigaki withdrew from the meeting.

USC/21-22/051 Modules

i. Trinity Electives

A memorandum, from the ADUSE, dated 8 March 2022, was circulated with proposals for two new Trinity Electives. The ADUSE, as Chair of the Trinity Elective Sub-committee (TESC), spoke to the proposals.

She noted that both modules are related to music, the first of which, 'Music Making, the Arts and Society', has been developed by the Royal Irish Academy of Music (RIAM). She advised that whilst RIAM would deliver the Trinity Elective, the School of Education would act as the host school for the module. This represents a similar arrangement to that agreed with the National College of Art and Design (NCAD) for the delivery of their module 'Contemporary Art Angles', however, RIAM has a pre-existing relationship with Trinity. As with the NCAD agreement, Trinity will offer a reciprocal number of places on other Trinity Electives to students of RIAM. She advised that USC is being asked to consider the academic merits of the proposal as the agreement, which is in development, will be presented to Board and Council.

She noted that the second module 'Creativity and Technology', has been proposed by the School of Engineering. Responding to a question on the high number of teaching staff and the management of assessment components, the ADUSE advised that proposed Trinity Electives which appear to be series of unrelated lectures, do not gain the support of the Trinity Elective Sub-Committee; there must be a clear narrative thread. She added that it was not confirmed which staff members would be involved in each assessment component.

Action/Decision

XX 051.01: USC supported the proposals for two new Trinity Electives, 'Music Making, the Arts and Society' and 'Creativity and Technology', and recommended these to Council.
051.02: USC noted that the agreement being developed between RIAM and Trinity in relation to the delivery of the 'Music Making, the Arts and Society' would be submitted to Council and Board for approval.

ii. Bespoke Open Module

A descriptor for a new Bespoke Open Module, dated 16 March 2022, from the School of Education was circulated. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies welcomed Professor Conor McGuckin, from the School of Education, and Mr Leo McNamee, from Trinity Global, to the meeting.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies noted that new bespoke open modules are normally submitted to USC from the ADUCA following support at the Undergraduate Common Architecture Governance Committee (UCAGC). In this case, it

returned to the School of Education after consideration at the UCAGC, to enable the clarification of the in-person mobility element. He also noted that there is an intention to make this module available to external applicants, however, the required information for this aspect is not ready and, therefore, the module will have to return to USC at a later date; the circulation to the current meeting is to meet the approval deadline for bespoke open modules.

Professor McGuckin spoke to the content of the proposed module, which is linked to the Sustainable Development Goals and provides a critical introduction to two approaches to education, Universal Design for Learning and Active Digital Education. He advised that the School of Education has linkages with the University of Northampton in relation to these areas and highlighted that the module contains a one-day, voluntary, in-person visit to that University to participate in two workshops. The trip would be self-funded but students would be able to apply to Trinity Global for mobility bursaries. Students who do not travel to the University of Northampton would take online workshops instead; student are not permitted to take both options.

Several members voiced strong dissatisfaction with the one-day visit to the University of Northampton, on environmental grounds given flight emissions, and asked that this element might be reconsidered. Professor McGuckin noted that he would rather explore mobility options which would utilise technology such as virtual or augmented reality, however, the physical visit was a stipulation attached to the funding from the Higher Education Authority (HEA). During the discussion, it was commented that short trips can provide mobility options for students who are unable to commit to a semester or year abroad, however, it was also noted that Trinity needs to give serious consideration to the impact of such options on the environment. It was commented that there is scope to revisit this issue with the HEA, given the strong mandate from USC. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies undertook to engage with the HEA, in consultation with Trinity Global in this regard. Professor McGuckin confirmed that none of the HEA funding to develop the module had been used so far.

Other points raised during the discussion were:

- The title of the module should reflect the content better.
- Requiring students to self-fund travel for module activities limits opportunities for all students to participate fully, given the financial burden.
- Whilst the descriptor speaks about advocating for others, it is not clear how such a skill would be attained through the module.

Action/Decision

051.03: The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies, in consultation with Trinity Global, will engage with the HEA to find an ESG (environmental, social and governance) friendly solution to the in-person mobility requirement for the module.

051.04: Professor McGuckin to reconsider and amend the title of the module.

051.05: USC supported the new bespoke open module, with a strong preference that the mobility requirement be achieved through an appropriate online setting instead.

Professor McGuckin and Mr Leo McNamee withdrew from the meeting.

iii Global Engagement

A module descriptor from the School of Nursing and Midwifery, dated 10 March 2022, was circulated. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies explained that the introduction of an individual module into a programme would not normally require circulation to USC, however, this is a small module, at 5 ECTS credits, with a global element. He noted that there were some similarities with the preceding module.

The DUTL from the School of Nursing and Midwifery, Professor Brennan, spoke to the descriptor, explaining that the module is trying to capture types of learning that are already being undertaken by students and to provide recognition and academic credit for this. The module covers three types of experience, volunteering abroad, engagement in Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) or a research internship with a partner institution. In addition to recognising these learning experiences, the School of Nursing and Midwifery also wants to increase the number of elective modules available to its students, since they are unable to participate in Trinity Electives due to professional placement requirements.

Some concerns were expressed about the module. The effect on the degree calculation of grading the module as Pass/Fail was queried since it may be taken by Junior Sophister students. The provision of academic credit for volunteering was also questioned, since this activity seems to fall into the extra-curricular category; it was suggested that students should undertake such activities for their intrinsic value, rather than for credit. It was suggested that the module title, 'Global Engagement', was very broad and could be better connected to healthcare. Responding to some of the queries, Professor Brennan undertook to look into the grading issue or possibly limiting the module to the second year, so that it would not affect the degree calculation. He also advised that further thought would be given to the title. He commented that the module is similar to an existing module within the school related to volunteering within Ireland, and that any overseas volunteering activities would be vetted and agreed by the module coordinator to ensure the educational value to students. He requested the support of USC and advised that the module would be monitored.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies noted that if approved, the module could be discontinued in the future, if it does not work well.

Action/Decision

051.06: USC supported the introduction of the module, whilst noting some concerns.

USC/21-22/052 Undergraduate Common Architecture Annual Report 2020/21

This item was moved up the agenda.

A memorandum from the ADUCA, dated 15 March 2022, was circulated with the Undergraduate Common Architecture Annual Report 2020/21. Speaking to the annual report, the ADUCA noted that 2020/21 saw the launch of the Undergraduate Common Architecture Office, the Undergraduate Common Architecture Governance Committee (UCAGC) and the role of ADUCA. He noted that the remit of the UCAGC covered decision making in relation to the Two Subject Moderatorship, Trinity Joint Honours and pathways on single subject programmes that lead towards the major/minor award outcome. He advised that the Committee operates by building consensus and during 2020/21, included DUTLs or course directors from schools involved in the common architecture structure as well as representatives from schools which were due to join fully from 2021/22 onwards.

He identified key functions of the ADUCA and the UCAO which included the provision of support and information to students about the new structures and pathway options, the identification of policy gaps, and the consequent development of policies and procedures, communicating transparently with schools involved in the governance structure, and developing procedures related to open modules and new minor subjects.

He acknowledged the collaborative effort and support received from across College, which included academic staff, professional staff, student representatives and Student Services. A member commended the UCAO Manager, Ms Marie McPeak.

Responding to a query about the organisation of capstones projects in different schools, the ADUCA commented that there are a variety of approaches to this in Trinity.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies thanked the ADUCA for speaking to the Annual Report for 2020/21 and noted the significant work undertaken to manage the new structures.

USC/21-22/053 Strategic Alignment of Teaching and Learning Enhancement presentations

This item was moved up the agenda.

i. Co-designing a blended model of practice education

A presentation dated, November 2021, was circulated to the meeting. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies welcomed Professor Lynch to the meeting.

Professor Lynch brought the meeting through the context for the project, which was to help students develop clinical skills during the recent periods of lockdown. This led to the development of technology-supported learning experiences which have proved beneficial in the post-lockdown context. She advised that a digital learning toolkit is in the final stages of development and testing, and when finalised, it will be made available for other schools to explore and use.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies thanked Professor Lynch for attending USC to speak to her project.

Professor Lynch withdrew from the meeting.

ii. Digital by Design: Building Capacity for Digital Education at Trinity

A presentation dated, March 2022, was circulated. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies welcomed Dr Rooney to the meeting.

Dr Rooney outlined the main aim of the project which was to build on what Trinity has learned from recent pandemic experiences of digital learning and to mainstream evidence-based digital education practices. She brought the meeting through the project deliverables, progress to-date and the next steps.

In the discussion that followed, a query was raised about where the responsibility lies for making blended learning decisions which affect the undergraduate curriculum; it was suggested that time should be given to a discussion on this matter. In relation to increasing engagement in the workshops delivered by Academic Practice, it was suggested that e-mails should target a wider group of recipients than just heads of schools and school administrative managers.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies thanked Dr Rooney for attending USC to speak to her project. He noted that in the post-lockdown context, it will be important to find the optimal balance between online and in-person delivery and noted that consideration would be given to further discussions on this matter.

Dr Rooney withdrew from the meeting.

USC/21-22/054 Progression and Award Regulation Derogation

This item was moved down the agenda during the meeting.

A memorandum from the DUTL in the School of Physics, dated 12 March 2022, was circulated. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies commented that the derogation requested was minor and related to setting minimum marks at the component level within specific laboratory modules in Physics in order to pass the module.

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Action/Decision

054.03: USC supported the derogation requested and recommended it to Council.

USC/21-22/055 Any other business

- i. Responding to a query from a member, the ADUCA noted that procedures related to capstones and pathway changes had been discussed at the UCAGC. The procedure related to pathway changes will be sent to the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies. He noted that these represent Trinity Joint Honours policy.
- ii. The Quality Officer highlighted that the National Student Survey was due to close shortly and requested that DUTLs publicise this within their schools.
- iii. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies advised that he hoped to hold an in-person meeting of USC before the end of the academic year, if possible. He advised that advance notice would be given.

USC/21-22/056 Minutes (Section B)

USC noted and approved, where necessary, the following sets of minutes.

- i. **Undergraduate Common Architecture Governance Committee**
Minutes of the meeting of 8 February 2022.
- ii. **MIE Associated College Degrees Committee**
Minutes of the meeting of 18 November 2021.
Minutes of the meeting of 28 February 2022.

USC/21-22/057 Items for noting (Section C)

USC noted and approved, where necessary, the following item:

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- i. **Return of Coursework Policy (Revised)**
Memorandum from Ms Ewa Sadowska, dated 14 March 2022, with attached revised policy document.
- ii. **Open Modules for 2022/23**
Memorandum from the Undergraduate Common Architecture Governance Committee dated 5 March 2022.