

The University of Dublin

Trinity College

A meeting of the University Council was held on Wednesday 5 March 2008 at 11.15 am in the Board Room.

<i>Present</i>	Provost, Vice-Provost, Senior Lecturer, Registrar, Senior Tutor, Dean of Graduate Studies, Dean of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, Professor B M Lucey, Dr H Gibbons, Dean of Health Sciences, Dr V A Campbell, Ms F M Haffey, Dr A O'Gara, Mr B Rock, Mr C Hallworth, Mr H Sullivan, Mr G Magee.
<i>Apologies</i>	Dr M H Adams, Dr J P Gormley, Dr P Coleman, Mr D L Parris, Dean of Engineering, Mathematics and Science, Dr M E G Lyons, Mr D Walsh, Professor N M Claffey.
<i>In attendance</i>	Librarian, Secretary, Academic Secretary.
<i>Observers</i>	Dr M L Brennan, Dr G Biehler, Professor D B Murray, Dr M J F Brown.
<i>Student observers</i>	Ms C Ní Dhubhda, Mr C Reilly, Ms E Keaveney.

SECTION A

CL/07-08/112 **Minutes** The Minutes of the meeting of 13 February 2008 were approved and signed.

CL/07-08/113 **Matters Arising:**

It was noted by one Council member that consultation with IFUT has not taken place in respect of the introduction of modularisation.

The Senior Lecturer, referring to Actum CL/07-08/099, noted that Board had approved a revised electorate for the Head of School in line with the electorate for the Dean of Faculty and for election to the Board. A memorandum was tabled defining the electorate for Head of School as follows:

*The electorate for Head of School shall be:*

- *academic staff, part-time and full-time, who shall be on the monthly or weekly payroll and who shall have a contract of employment with the College of at least twelve months' duration or have completed continuous employment with the College of twelve months' duration or have recognised academic status in the College due to decisions made through the College's appointments and/or promotions procedures, while not necessarily being in receipt of remuneration from College,*
- *undergraduate and postgraduate student representatives,*
- *research staff, part-time and full-time, who shall be on the monthly or weekly payroll and who shall have a contract of employment with the College of at least twelve months' duration or have completed continuous employment with the College of twelve months' duration,*

- *support staff, part-time and full-time, who shall be on the monthly or weekly payroll and who shall have a contract of employment with the College of at least twelve months' duration or have completed continuous employment with the College of twelve months' duration.*

The Senior Lecturer informed Council that election procedures are available on the webpage at <http://www.tcd.ie/local/structures/govappointheadschooll.php>.

**CL/07-08/114 Provost's Report:** the Provost informed Council that the Forum established to review the needs of undergraduate actor training in Ireland is expected to report on its findings shortly.

**CL/07-08/115 Restructuring:** three draft documents from the Restructuring Implementation Overview Group dated March 2008 were circulated with papers for the meeting.

- (i) **Annual Officers:** the Provost provided a brief overview of the document on Annual Officers, noting that the working group, chaired by the Provost, strongly supported the recommendations before Council. He stressed the importance of reaching a decision on the role of Annual Officers in good time to allow for the process of appointing new Officers to commence as soon as possible. He drew Council's attention to the proposal that the Chief Academic Officer carry the title Vice Provost, noting that this was more akin to the situation in other Irish universities. It is important to achieve alignment with the sector and to consider external relations. The title Senior Lecturer specifically refers to an academic post below that of Associate Professor and it is not a title that confers the status of Chief Academic Officer. The Provost noted his support for the proposal adding that the recommendations imply that the Provost will delegate the duties of the Office of Vice Provost as Chief Academic Officer.

The Senior Lecturer took the Council through the proposal, noting that the RIOG in considering the recommendations of the Annual Officers Review Group, also considered a number of other options. He noted that the proposal clearly distinguishes between the statutory role and the customary and/or current functions of each Annual Officer. He stressed the importance of appropriate senior administrative support for the new Office of Vice Provost and the other Annual Officers. Referring to recommendation 3.4 (vi), the Senior Lecturer noted the inadvertent omissions of the Registrar and the Dean of Students from the Academic Management Group.

Council discussed the proposal and sought clarification on a number of points including the role of the Vice Provost in promotions and staffing issues. It was felt that the promotions process should be retained as a central function as staff are employed by the College and not by a Faculty. Consistency in the application of employment standards across the Faculties and administration was stressed. Some concern was expressed that the proposal may be introducing another layer of administration which could undermine collegiality and give rise to additional costs. The importance of efficient administrative support for Annual Officers was stressed.

The Senior Lecturer informed Council that the three proposals on restructuring under discussion would be posted to the web as part of wider

consultation. The Provost in concluding discussions on this item, noted Council's broad support for the proposal on Annual Officers.

- (ii) **Devolution of Strategic Staff Recruitment:** The Senior Lecturer introduced this proposal, drawing Council's attention to the current practice in place for strategic staff recruitment and the detail of the process for devolution to the Faculties and the Administrative and Support Areas. The Vice Provost noted that the proposal was discussed by the Strategic Planning Devolution Working Group but did not emanate from that Group - it was prepared by the Vice Provost and the Staff Secretary. She further noted that the RIOG requested the development of policy and procedural documents to support the proposed process of devolution of strategic staff recruitment.

In discussing the proposal, one Council member queried College policy in respect of issuing contracts of indefinite duration and in respect of contract staff. The Provost reminded Council that the proposal before it related to process and not to policy. There was a lengthy discussion on the requirement in recommendation (iii) which states that candidates for academic positions are as a norm expected to have a PhD level qualification and post-doctoral experience. It was felt that this policy may be too inflexible and difficult to implement across all disciplines, especially in the professional fields such as Law and Medicine. Accepting that some flexibility was required, it was nonetheless stressed that a research intensive university should require as a minimum candidates to have a PhD. It was suggested that the requirement for post-doctoral experience may present a significant handicap in the recruitment process, especially for positions at entry level, and that this should be reviewed.

In considering the rewording in recommendation (iv) in respect of staffing requests arising from unexpected resignations, Council requested a change to the wording to note that the Faculty Executive Committee should decide, and not consider, applications for replacement of posts. There was some discussion about recommendation (v) which deals with strategic staff recruitment in respect of administrative and support areas. It was felt that there is a disconnection between academic and administrative activities, and there was a need for greater integration. The Vice Provost pointed out that the Executive Officers Group, the Faculty Executive Committees and the Administrative Management Group would play a key role in overseeing strategic recruitment.

In concluding discussions on this item, the Provost noted Council's support, subject to minor changes, for the proposal on the devolution of strategic staff recruitment.

- (iii) **Revised Committee Structures:** The Senior Lecturer introduced this proposal, noting the key principles relating to speedy decision making, reduction in bureaucracy, greater efficiency, achieving accountability, and achieving a distinction between management functions and policy development. He noted that the RIOG recommends that each of the eight Principal Committees review their remit and the remits and functions of their sub-committees and make recommendations to the RIOG on a future structure and terms of reference of the Principal Committee and, if appropriate, the associated committees.

He further noted that the composition of principal committees and management groups is still under consideration, and will be addressed following receipt of reports from the Principal Committees.

In discussing this proposal, Council noted the difficulty that some committees experience in separating policy from management. It was held that principal committees are instruments of Board and Council, and that the RIOG should take into account the recommendations of the Working Group of the Audit Committee on Governance, approved by Board in July 2004.

The view was expressed that effective representation on Principal Committees was vital, and that members of committees should represent College as a whole and not individual constituencies or issues. It was commented that the use of the term 'campus' in the proposed 'Student and Campus' and 'Campus and Building' Committees should be replaced with 'College'.

The Provost thanked Council for its input into the three proposals and noted that these would be brought before Council for decision and approval in due course.

**CL/07-08/116 Commencements:** A memorandum dated the 26<sup>th</sup> February 2008 from the Registrar proposing reform of existing procedures in respect of commencements was circulated with papers for the meeting. The Registrar in introducing this item, expressed his thanks to the Senior Lecturer, Ms Leona Coady, and the Academic Secretary for their assistance in developing the proposal before Council. He provided a brief background to the three recommendations, noting the importance of streamlining processes and improving the student experience. He explained that the Registrar is required to sign all degree and diploma parchment. The Senior Lecturer signs all BA (Mod) parchments, and Regis Professors or the Dean of Faculty sign professional degree parchments. This practice has evolved over time, and is not expressly governed by College policy or the Statutes. The Registrar noted that he has consulted with the relevant signatories and there is support for the recommendation that, with the exception of honorary degrees, the Registrar should be the sole signatory to all degree parchments. The Registrar noted that the Chancellor of other Irish and international universities is normally signatory to degree parchments, and it might be appropriate to invite the Chancellor of the University of Dublin to sign degree parchments.

The Registrar noted that the coordination of in excess of 4,000 degree parchments, many of which are signed by two and three individuals, is very resource intensive. An examination of the practice of all other Irish universities, and leading institutions in the UK and USA has revealed universal use of electronic signatures on degree parchments. The Registrar explained the existing practices of scheduling degree ceremonies, and recommended a number of procedural changes. In order to provide a better service to candidates, and to improve the use of resources in the Proctors' Office, he proposed that all candidates to specific ceremonies be scheduled on a course by course basis, and/or subject where appropriate. Subsequently, candidates would be issued a letter of invitation to attend the commencement ceremony to which they have been assigned. Candidates unable to attend the ceremony would be offered an alternate date. This would remove the need for candidates to make application - which many perceive as unwarranted. The Registrar also proposed that the commencement fee be collected at some point during the student registration process.

In discussing the proposal for reform of procedures relating to commencements, the Student Union representatives noted their opposition to a commencement fee, and argued that streamlining the processes should result in reduced costs. The Registrar commented that the costs did not exclusively relate to administration, and stressed that universities are under-funded and there is no chance of recouping commencement costs through the state grant. In response to a question, the Academic Secretary confirmed that the process for collecting the commencement fee should be addressed by the Student Service Committee and the Finance Committee.

Council welcomed and approved the following proposals to reform procedures as recommended by the Registrar:

- a. *The Registrar, as officer of the College and University, should be the sole signatory to all degree parchments (other than honorary degrees).*
- b. *Trinity College should introduce electronic signatures on degree and other award parchments (other than honorary degrees) as soon as it is technically feasible to do so.*
- c. *All candidates should be automatically scheduled for conferral thus negating the need to apply for conferral. It is recommended that this proposal be implemented as soon as systems allow including the collection of the commencement fee at some point during the student registration process.*

**CL/07-08/117 Graduate Studies - Course Proposal** A proposal dated February 2008 to establish a new course leading to the award of Master in Philosophy in Classics was circulated with papers for the meeting. The Dean of Graduate Studies introduced this item, noting the course is a one year full-time course with a postgraduate diploma exit. The rationale for the course is to provide students with an essential grounding in postgraduate research and learning. The M.Phil will ensure that high-performing students who complete the programme will have the training necessary to allow them progress to the research register. The minimum number of students is nine, with a maximum of 25. The course complies with College's policy on ECTS. The Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences noted his approval for the course, and drew Council's attention to the fragmented and resource intensive process in place to approve courses. As many as six committees have to approve the course before it reaches Council.

Council queried the need for a postgraduate diploma exit route, and was informed that many postgraduate courses are designed with such an exit route. Some students complete the taught elements of a Masters programme and for varying reasons are not in a position to complete a dissertation or thesis. In such cases it is important to be able to award the student a diploma. In response to an admissions query, the Dean of Graduate Studies confirmed that knowledge of Latin and Greek was not a prerequisite for a taught postgraduate programme, however, if students wish to progress to a research Masters then knowledge of these languages would be necessary.

Council approved the course leading to the award of Master in Philosophy in Classics with a postgraduate diploma exit.

**CL/07-08/118 Publication of the Annual Examination Timetables:** a memorandum from the Senior Lecturer dated 28<sup>th</sup> February 2008 was circulated. The Senior Lecturer introduced this item, noting that the Student's Union requested that the annual examination timetables be made available to students as early as possible to allow students

manage their study time more efficiently. In order to facilitate this request, the Senior Lecturer proposed that the final version of the annual examination timetables be published centrally by the Examinations Office on the College website only. Currently the practice is to post the timetables on departmental notice boards, and this can result in delays. Having the timetables issued centrally and confined to a College website will speed up the process and make the information more accessible to students. The current *Calendar* entry on examinations states that '*Examination timetables are published in advance of the dates of examinations on faculty, school or department notice boards as appropriate. .... The onus lies on each student to establish the dates, times and venues of examinations by consulting the notice boards (Calendar 2007/8, H6, #27).*

The Senior Lecturer invited Council to consider the recommendation that the final version of the annual examination timetables be published centrally by the Examinations Office on the College website only.

Council discussed and approved the recommendation, noting the importance of making staff and students aware of the changes, and of providing details of the timetables at examination venues where possible. Council agreed to implement this decision with immediate effect thus overturning the existing regulation in the *Calendar*. The Academic Secretary noted that the *Calendar* entry for 2008/09 would be updated to reflect this change of practice, and arrangements would be put in place to ensure that all students and staff are aware of this new procedure.

Council approved the recommendation that the final version of the annual examination timetables be published centrally by the Examinations Office on the College website only.

**CL/07-08/119 Acting Headship of Histopathology and Morbid Anatomy** Under Other Business the Council approved the nomination of Dr O Sheils as acting Head of Histopathology and Morbid Anatomy from 5 March 2008.

#### SECTION B

**CL/07-08/120 Heads of School Committee** The minutes of the Heads' of School Committee of the 26<sup>th</sup> February 2008 were circulated. Referring to item HC/07-08/43, one Council member noted that there is considerable evidence to show that performance indicators were no longer supported as a reliable measure of activity, and stressed the importance of engaging vigorously with HEA on this matter. The Senior Lecturer drew Council's attention to item HC/07-08/44 on space, noting that quality, quantity and contiguous space is now a critical issue for College. The Dean of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences confirmed that the Heads of School in his Faculty stressed the importance of addressing the absence of adequate space in College as it was inhibiting progress.

**CL/07-08/121 Student Services Committee** The Council noted and approved the recommendations as set out in the minutes of the Student Services Committee from its meeting of 12<sup>th</sup> February 2008, which had been circulated.

#### SECTION C

**CL/07-08/122 Higher Degrees—Reports of Examiners - Higher Degrees by Research Alone** The Council noted and approved the reports of examiners on candidates for higher degrees, as circulated, approved by the sub-committee of Board and Council on 29 January 2008 and noted by Board on 27 February 2008.

**PhD** Jane Chadwick, Deirdre Garvey; Aisling Muire Genevieve Heath; Maria Johnston; Darach Lupton; Laure Helene Marignol; Denis McCarthy; Fiona Ní Chearúil; Elizabeth Nixon; Mark Phelan; Deepti Singh; Patrick Anthony Walsh.

**MSc** Lan Chang; Brian Feely; Daire Sean Gibbons; Grainne Patricia McInerney; Siobhan Margaret O’Neill.

**MDentCh** Maher Kemmoona; Fergal Rory Maguire.

**CL/07-08/123 Supplementary List of Teaching Assistants/External Examiners 2007-2008** The Council noted and approved memorandum from the Senior Lecturer, circulated dated 27 February 2008.

**CL/07-08/124 TSM Subject Combinations** The Council noted and approved a memorandum from the Senior Lecturer, circulated dated 18 February 2008.

**SECTION D**

**In compliance with the Data Protection Acts this information is restricted.**

Signed .....

Date .....