The University of Dublin
Trinity College

A meeting of the University Council was held on Wednesday 16 May 2012 at 11.15 am in the Board Room.

Present
Provost, Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer, Registrar, Senior Lecturer, Senior Tutor, Dean of Graduate Studies, Dean of Research, Dean of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, Professor E O’Dell, Professor M Ó Siochrú, Professor J Wickham, Professor G Watson, Professor A McNabola, Dean of Health Sciences, Professor T Connor, Professor S Smith, Professor J Nunn, Dr H Mannan, Dr A O’Gara, Professor J Ohlmeyer, Professor A Piesse, Ms R Barry, Mr D Ferrick, Mr M McAndrew.

Apologies
Professor Z Rodgers, Dean of Engineering, Mathematics and Science, Professor D O’Donovan, Professor J P Labrador, Professor D Brennan, Ms D Jones, Ms S Leydon, Ms L Aljohmani, Dr D Fitzgerald, Chief Operating Officer, Secretary to the College, Mr R J Smith (GSU), Secretary to the Scholars (Mr T O’Connor).

In attendance
Librarian, Academic Secretary, Ms O Sheehan.

By invitation
Dr J Scattergood (for CL/11-12/168).

SECTION A

CL/11-12/164 Minutes
Minutes of the meetings of 11 April 2012 and 18 April 2012 were approved and signed.

CL/11-12/165 Matters Arising:
(i) A memorandum from the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer, dated 9 May 2012, was circulated. Since approval of the document Academic Titles in Trinity College Dublin (CL/11-12/117) it has emerged that the academic consultant and registrar titles were categorised incorrectly as clinical titles. These positions are appointed and promoted through the normal academic routes and should therefore be treated as academic titles. Council approved this categorisation and noted that its adoption has no implications for the salaries of the academic staff or for the appointment criteria (CL/10-11/183). Accordingly, the new nomenclature will now apply to the academic consultant and registrar titles.

(ii) A Council member commented that the reported level of research activity of approximately 70% of academic staff is low. He suggested that perhaps the criteria for determining research activity were not well enough publicised and that the full level of research activity was not being full captured in the Research Support System (RSS). The Dean of Research responded that he does
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2010/11 the policy that applications from non-EU students be considered on a rolling basis with a two-week turnaround on decision-making was approved. The purpose of the policy is to ensure quick communication with international applicants and thus increase the number of non-EU students, in line with the College’s strategic priorities. Implementation of the policy has varied from area to area; the Dean of Graduate Studies noted the success of the MPhil in Peace Studies in recruitment of non-EU students. The Vice-Provost for Global Relations emphasised the importance of quick decision-making for retaining high-quality applicants and urged Schools to act quickly in this regard. It was, however, noted that some courses with an interview as part of the selection process would have difficulty in completing admissions within a fortnight, especially where applicants require visas. In 2010/11, approximately 25% of postgraduate students were from outside Ireland.

The data in the Report for 2011/12 admissions is based on January 2012 numbers. The Dean of Graduate Studies informed Council of the numbers as returned to the HEA in March 2012 for the current year: postgraduate taught student 2,567 (-103 from 2010/2011); research students 2,296, on which 542 are in year 1 (+63 on 2010/2011); giving a reduction overall in 40 students from 2010/2011. She noted that the majority of research students are within the funding timeframe (years 1-2 for Masters; years 1-4 for PhDs) and that the proportion outside this timescale has been progressively declining since 2009. It was further noted that this may well provide a more significant increase in the number of research students funded through the RGAM.

Academic quality is an important function of the Dean of Graduate Studies role, and at the time of preparation of the Annual Report, 69% of reports from postgraduate taught course external examiners for 2010/2011 had been received, and this proportion increases throughout the year. The average examination period for research theses is six-nine months. The quality of our research students is demonstrated by the fact that 74% of theses are approved subject to minor corrections. The Dean of Graduate Studies committed to providing more information in future reports on the outcome of student evaluation of postgraduate taught courses.

Financial support is available to postgraduate students through postgraduate studentships, Ussher awards, the Benefaction Fund and the Trinity Trust. The number of postgraduate studentships and Ussher awards available for allocation has remained static. Surprisingly, the number of applications has fallen indicating that there is a need to market them more robustly. Graduate students may also be funded through School resources, local authority grants, IRCHSS scholarships. Approximately one-third of postgraduate taught students are in receipt of local authority higher education grants and it remains to be seen what effect the changes to their funding will have on admissions.

The Innovation Academy is a collaborative venture in graduate education between UCD and TCD. In 2010/2011 it offered core modules for the Graduate Certificate in Innovation in Entrepreneurship for the first time.

The Dean of Graduate Studies concluded by reminding Council that the MSc in Computer Science (Networks and Distributed Systems) won the 2011 PostGrad Ireland Course of the Year in the IT category.

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In discussion of the Report a Council member suggested that regulations should be developed about the contribution of research fellows to teaching, supervision and marking on postgraduate taught courses. Although their contribution to research supervision is articulated, the position vis-à-vis postgraduate taught courses is less clear. Council agreed that such a policy should be formulated. In response to queries, the Dean of Graduate Studies reported that other universities have also had a dip in postgraduate numbers and that a fall in our numbers cannot be clearly linked to fee structure. It was suggested that in Health Sciences a fall in student numbers is a consequence of the Employment Control Framework which means that because they cannot be replaced, practitioners are not being released to attend courses. This exacerbates the effect of employers not paying course fees as readily as they have in the past. Council noted that although there was a small decrease of the number of postgraduate taught courses on offer in 2010/11, there are still substantially more than ten years ago. A Council member noted that the decline in postgraduate research students would make it difficult to achieve the Strategic Plan target to increase postgraduate research numbers, which is also a strategic priority at the national level.

The Provost thanked the Dean of Graduate Studies and all those responsible for producing this comprehensive report.


CL/11-12/168 Harmonisation of Assessment and Progression Regulations

Dr J Scattergood attended for this item. At its meeting on 18 January 2012 Council strongly supported the rationale for the harmonisation of academic assessment and progression regulations (CL/11-12/075). The Senior Lecturer introduced the document ‘Harmonisation of Assessment and Progression Regulations’, 8 May 2012, circulated. An earlier draft had been discussed at the Undergraduate Studies Committee (UGC) on 20 March 2012. Following comments made at that meeting a further draft was sent to Schools and their comments incorporated into a draft considered again by the UGC on 17 April 2012. This document to Council is thus the result of thorough discussion at the Undergraduate Studies Committee and at School-level and represents a consensus view. The Senior Lecturer noted that issues had arisen during the consultation process which were not part of the harmonisation exercise and will have to be dealt with in the next academic year; such as a proposal from the Two Subject Moderatorship (TSM) Committee to introduce supplementals in the Junior Sophister year for Pattern B students, a policy change that would also affect single honor courses. The Senior Lecturer invited Dr J Scattergood, Chairperson of the Harmonisation of Assessment and Progression Regulations Advisory Group to bring Council through the salient points of the document.

The aim of the Group was to formulate proposals that would provide greater transparency and equity of treatment of students and to devise regulations that are consistent, simple and practical. Dr Scattergood advised that the regulations are based around a compensation and aggregation system. A single model is proposed for Freshman courses which, in the provision made for compensation arrangements, has two strands - one for common entry or single-subject courses and one for two subject courses. The TSM Committee has expressed its concern about the regulation which may permit a student to proceed having passed modules amounting to only 20 ECTS credits out of 30 ECTS credits. Amending these regulations as suggested by TSM
Incorporating any amendments approved at subsequent Council meetings would be inequitable to students on other courses. Two approaches to compensation in the Sophister year are put forward – one identical to the Freshman years and the other an aggregation model which satisfies the demands for courses which traditionally use the full marking scale. A change in practice for some courses is that students are only required to resit examinations or resubmit coursework that has been failed. The principle of capping marks for supplementals was contentious during discussions and was resolved by treating supplementals that do not count towards an award differently to those that do. A range of possible weighting between the Junior Sophister and Senior Sophister year is proposed and courses should fit into one of these patterns. The UGC did not accept that there should be an algorithm for grade profiling but the Group recommends that if a level of permissiveness is to be permitted at local level there must be oversight and control by the Senior Lecturer to guarantee equity.

Addressing the meeting, the Provost requested if there was any disagreement on the proposals for the harmonisation of academic assessment and progression regulations. The Senior Tutor welcomed the document, which she believed provided clarity and transparency of many of the issues. As she is not a member of the UGC she did not have an opportunity to comment on the proposals. Using her experience preparing cases for Courts of Appeal, she felt that some of the changes proposed, such as some of the rules governing compensation, were stricter than current regulations and wondered whether the working group had taken the likely impact of this into account. She reminded Council that the regulation that it is not permissible to repeat the final examination is not clearly stated anywhere in the Calendar and queried its omission from these proposals. She felt that it would be in the interest of all parties that key principles be clearly set out. Dr Scattergood responded that the proposals had been discussed very extensively with many academic staff across schools and within relevant academic committees. The majority view supports the proposed regulations and there is awareness that in some respects the proposed regulations are stricter and in others they are more lenient. He stressed that it was not possible to produce a report that would provide a perfect solution for all courses. In response to a query from a Council member, Dr Scattergood reported that a proposal for the harmonisation of regulations for postgraduate taught courses will be available at the next meeting of the Council.

The Senior Lecturer regretted that the Senior Tutor had not seen the document before Council, and suggested that it may be appropriate to add the Senior Tutor to the membership of the UGC. The Provost requested that the Senior Tutor’s concerns be brought to the attention of the UGC and the proposal be returned to the next meeting of Council. He thanked Dr Scattergood and the working group for bringing forward the proposals.

(See CL/11-12 Minute on Undergraduate Studies Committee for further discussion on this matter.)

CL/11-12/169 Graduate Studies Course Proposals

(i) MPhil/PGradDip in Music Composition
The Dean of Graduate Studies introduced the proposal for a new course leading to the award of an MPhil/Postgraduate Diploma in Music Composition proposed by the School of Drama, Film and Music, dated 4 May 2012, circulated. The course is made up of theoretical and practical elements and

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teaching will be provided by staff in the School of Music, with contributions from distinguished adjunct professors. The course will further enhance the Music Composition Centre which in turn is part of the flagship Creative Arts, Technologies and Culture stream. The course will last one year and requires 60 ECTS of taught modules and a dissertation of 30 ECTS. It has received a favourable external review. The Faculty Dean confirmed that the financial projections for the course were approved. The Provost enquired whether there were sufficient staff in the department of Music to cover the teaching for this course, and the Dean of Graduate Studies replied that the recent appointment of an Ussher lecturer to the department facilitated the development of this course. The course will also utilise the expertise of adjunct practitioners and instrumental groups. She noted that the School had withdrawn two other postgraduate taught courses so as to concentrate its resources on this new proposal. The Librarian asked Council to note that the Library is unable to make a firm commitment to provide new resources for this, and other new courses, while having to reduce its budget on books and subscriptions. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic officer reported that this difficulty had been recognised and it is intended to ensure that an agreed level of financial support flows from new course activity to the Library as part of the annual budgetary cycle.

Council noted and approved the proposal leading to an MPhil/Postgraduate Diploma in Music Composition for admission in 2012/13.

(ii) Certificate in Nursing (Nurse/Midwife Prescribing)
The Dean of Graduate Studies introduced the proposal for a Certificate in Nursing (Nurse/Midwife Prescribing), 8 May 2012, circulated. She informed Council that this is a level 8 qualification and it is somewhat of an anomaly that it is considered by the Graduate Studies Committee but this has been custom and practice for this type of course. The aim of this Certificate, offered by the School of Nursing and Midwifery, is to equip nurses and midwives with the requisite knowledge, skills and competence to prescribe medicinal products safely and effectively and thus reduce the burden on medical staff. It is a one-year part-time course with 30 ECTS and students will be supported by a Health Service Provider and a clinical mentor. The proposal has been amended following comment from an external assessor. The Dean of Graduate Studies pointed to the course as an example of a good partnership between the School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences and the School of Nursing and Midwifery which responds to the professional needs of practitioners. The Dean of Health Sciences confirmed that the HSE has recommended that prescriptive authority should be extended to appropriate nurses and midwives and she anticipates the practitioners will be released to attend this course.

Council approved the proposal leading to a Certificate in Nursing (Nurse/Midwife Prescribing) for admission in 2012/13.
The Senior Lecturer presented the proposal for a new course in Catholic Theological Studies, 9 May 2012, circulated. The proposal is supported by the aspirant School of Religions, Theology and Ecumenics, by the Faculty Dean and has been approved by the Undergraduate Studies Committee. At the UGS meeting there had been some discussion on whether a course of this type should be among Trinity’s offerings. However, it was reassured by the provision of similar courses in Harvard, Yale and Durham. The course proposal had been reviewed by two external assessors - one an expert in catholic theology and one in divinity. Since circulation of documents for this meeting the proposal has received a favourable review from Professor Paul Murray of Durham University. The course director was able to respond to the specific points raised by both reviewers including providing more research techniques for students taking the dissertation. The Senior Lecturer requested that Council approve the proposal for this new course which would then be listed in the CAO handbook.

A member of Council queried whether other prestigious universities with similar courses also have other denominational courses. The Senior Lecturer responded that there is no international norm and there is differing practice in institutions. Council noted the history of the provision of divinity teaching in Trinity as outlined in the course proposal. The Statutes outline the reason as to why the Divinity School ceased to exist and a member of Council raised the propriety of this new course in that context. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer clarified that the key point about this new course is that it is concerned with the academic study of a tradition and not with ministry formation. Similarly, Trinity provides teaching for the academic content of the Masters in Theology but is not involved with preparation for ministry which is provided by the Church of Ireland Theological College. The programme will train students to interrogate all debates within and outside the catholic tradition. An exploration of the bibliography provided for each module confirms that the programme will meet all the requirements of College’s policy on academic freedom.

A Council member requested that Council be provided with sight of the Memorandum of Understanding with the Loyola Institute, with removal of any sensitive material as necessary. The Provost responded that there is nothing in the MoU which affects the academic content of the proposed course. He reiterated again that any appointments to the Loyola Institute will be made in line with College’s recruitment procedures.

The Faculty Dean confirmed that he has approved the financial details for the course. While an annual intake of 15 may be low the programme is expected to recruit successfully for non-EU students. Council recommended that there should be shared teaching across appropriate modules, in particular in Greek, Hebrew and Latin.

Council approved the course proposal leading to a Moderatorship in Catholic Theological Studies with its first intake in 2013/14.

\[(ii)\] Proposal for a new strand in Engineering: Biomedical Engineering

The Senior Lecturer introduced the proposal for a new strand in Engineering: Biomedical Engineering, 8 May 2012, circulated. The strand fits into the five-
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Faculty Offices every second year. At this time a course will be evaluated on two occasions - at the end of the taught component and at the time of submission of the dissertation. On alternate years Schools may use other forms of evaluation at a local level. They will, however, be required to report to the Quality Committee annually on how surveys have been conducted and to confirm that feedback has been provided to students. A Council member pointed out that some modules are shared across different postgraduate taught courses and that this should be borne in mind when conducting evaluation.

Council approved the recommendations for the evaluation of postgraduate taught courses to take effect in 2012/13.

CL/11-12/173 Any Other Urgent Business
There was no other urgent business.

SECTION B

CL/11-12/174 Graduate Studies Committee
The draft Minutes of the meeting of the Graduate Studies Committee of 3 May 2012 were noted. Council noted that the Graduate Studies Committee had approved the governance arrangement for the joint TCD-UCD Postgraduate Certificate in Innovation and Entrepreneurship. The modules contributing to the joint certificate are already on offer to students from both institutions and are delivered by staff from both institutions.

CL/11-12/175 Undergraduate Studies Committee
The draft Minutes of the meeting of 17 April 2012 were noted. The Senior Lecturer urged Council to reconsider its decision made earlier in the meeting to defer a final decision on the Harmonisation of Assessment and Progression Regulations pending further consultation. He pointed out the proposals contained in the circulated document were the result of extensive consultation with Schools and discussion on two occasions at the Undergraduate Studies Committee. He is confident that the Undergraduate Studies Committee would not approve any further changes to the principles contained in the proposals. The Senior Lecturer noted concerns about the lack of clarity regarding the regulations about repeating the final year and proposed that they be dealt with as a separate issue. A delay in approving the proposals for Harmonisation of Assessment and Progression Regulations would create difficulties in ensuring the required Calendar entries are prepared in time and would also delay the implementation of aspects of the GeneSIS. The Senior Tutor noted she did not object to the proposals, but merely wished to point out issues that were of concern to her in her role as Senior Tutor. The Provost commented that Council’s role is to consider issues of principle and policy at a broad level and should not be concerned with the details of implementation, which are considered by academic committees of Council. Council thus approved the proposals on the harmonisation of assessment and progression regulations, 8 May 2012, circulated.

CL/11-12/176 International Committee
The draft Minutes of the meeting of 1 May 2012 were noted.
CL11-12/177 Quality Committee
The draft Minutes of the meeting of 1 May 2012 were noted.

CL11-12/178 Research Committee
The draft Minutes of the meeting of 17 April 2012 were noted. The Dean of Research noted that the Research Committee had had a wide ranging discussion on the necessity for metrics for assessing research and on what these metrics might be, regardless of whether they are included in a resource allocation model. The Research Committee agreed to set up a focus group to expand the functionality of the Research Support System. Following Council's decision that the proposal for a Provost's Award for Research should be reformulated (CL/11-12/116), the Research Committee recommended that any further proposal should take account of the full range of existing awards. The Dean of Research informed Council that he has asked School Directors of Research to provide him with the highlights of research achievements during 2010/2011 which could be incorporated into the Annual Report.

SECTION C

CL/11-12/179 Deanship of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences 2012-2014
The Council noted that Professor J Wickham had been elected as Dean of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences.

CL/11-12/180 Higher Degrees—Reports of Examiners
The Council noted and approved the circulated reports of examiners on candidates for higher degrees, approved by the sub-committee of Board and Council on 28 March and 18 April 2012 and noted by Board on 2 May 2012.

(i) 28 March 2012 - Higher Degrees by Research Alone

PhD Colin Boyle; Kathryn Cassidy; David Crampton; Karen Galvin; Paul Dylan Hynds; Shane Maloney; Ian McKeogh; Colm Daniel Moore; Maria Helen Morrison; Juan Pablo Osorio Salas; Alessandro Piccinini; Robert Pluta; Yvonne Salley; Melissa Kay Shaddix.

MSc Waqas Ahmed.

(ii) 18 April 2012 - Higher Degrees by Research Alone

PhD Barbara Ewa Bidzinska; Anne Booker; David Bradley; Orla Collins; Carmen Dregger; Andrea Droghetti; Anastasia Dukova; Atef Hashem; Daniel Ingmar Isemann; Ronan Joseph Kelly; David Gerard McNamara; Niamh Roisin Nic Ghabhann; Sean O'Heigeartaigh; Ciara O'Dwyer; Heather Reilly; Stephen Samuel; Michael Samuel Spence.

MSc Kyle Ballantine; Leanne Moore.
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