

The University of Dublin

Trinity College

A meeting of the University Council was held on Wednesday 16 December 2009 at 11.15 am in the Board Room.

<i>Present</i>	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, Dr C Laudet, Dr E O'Dell, Dr M Ó Siochrú, Dr V Kelly, Dr M Lyons, Dean of Health Sciences, Dr D Brennan, Dr H Mannan, Professor G Whyte, Mr N Timmon.
<i>Apologies</i>	Dr J Wickham, Dean of Engineering, Mathematics and Science, Professor J Fitzpatrick, Dr D O'Sullivan, Professor M McCarron, Professor M Radomski, Dr A O'Gara, Ms D Flynn, Mr A Cooke, Mr F Hughes, Mr A O'Callaghan, Ms M Furlong, Ms A Murphy, Librarian, Interim Chief Operating Officer.
<i>In attendance</i>	Secretary to the College, Academic Secretary.
<i>Observer</i>	Secretary to the Scholars (Mr B Devlin).

SECTION A

- CL/09-10/067 **Minutes** The Minutes of the meeting of 25th November 2009 were approved and signed.
- CL/09-10/068 **Matters Arising from the Minutes** There were no matters arising from the Minutes.
- CL/09-10/069 **Provost's Report** The Provost informed Council that a range of cuts in staffing and other non-pay efficiencies in higher education as well as salary cuts across the public sector were announced in the 2010 Budget. The Staff Office is currently assessing the implications of the legislation given effect to the reduction in public sector pay effective from the 1st January 2010. It is expected that payroll adjustments may be phased over a number of months. It is still not clear whether research staff members are affected by the public sector pay cuts. The Provost noted that a four percent reduction is likely in the university's core grant in addition to a further three percent reduction in staffing costs in 2010. Funding for PRTL (Programme for Research in Third Level Institutions) phase 5 appears to be secure, but it is unclear when these funds will be made available. He noted the recent decision by Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) to withdraw financial support from e-journals on the basis that SFI support was always intended for a fixed period of time. The Provost noted that College was in a strong financial position, entering 2010 with no accumulated deficit. He informed Council of the launch of The Ireland Academy of Dramatic Arts on the 2nd December 2009 and of the launch of College's Strategic Plan 2009-14 on the 25th November 2009. The Provost and Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer presented

College's Strategic Plan to the Minister for Education and Science, and the Minister commended Trinity's achievements and performance to-date. The Minister also commented on the absence of any plans to increase part-time undergraduate provision in the College's wider strategy, and was informed of Trinity's expansive provision of part-time opportunities at postgraduate level.

Council queried the advantages of financial prudence when other Irish universities were carrying significant deficits. The Provost, in response, remarked that there is no sympathy at government levels for such deficits in the university or other public sector institutions. Responding to a query on the position of research staff paid from non-exchequer funds, the Dean of Research noted the Irish Universities Association (IUA) is in discussion with research funders on this matter. Council felt that the decision of the SFI to discontinue funding e-journals was significant as without access to this service, staff in the Faculties of Health Sciences and Engineering, Mathematics and Science would be seriously disadvantaged in their efforts to apply for national and European grants. The Provost commented on the likelihood that funds for e-journals will be top-sliced from the core grant provision to higher education institutions. Council stressed the importance of sector-wide engagement in reaching a satisfactory conclusion to the continuation of dedicated funds for e-journals.

Council, referring to the Minister's comments on College's Strategic Plan, noted that the uptake of part-time undergraduate provision was dependent on the availability of fee remission for part-time students. Council also proposed that the provision of part-time undergraduate programmes should be managed across the sector, and especially in Dublin, in order to ensure the best use of scarce resources.

CL/09-10/070 Senior Lecturer's Annual Report The Senior Lecturer's Annual Report 2008-09 with Undergraduate Admissions Data for 2009-10 was circulated with papers for the meeting. The Senior Lecturer introduced this item noting that this is the first Senior Lecturer's Report to reflect the administrative structures put in place in July 2008. The Report provides statistical information on admission, progress, examination and commencement of undergraduate students, as well as being a resource for academic planning. The Senior Lecturer drew Council's attention to key developments. In 2009-10 a total of 3,553 new entrants registered with Trinity College, an increase of 6.8% on the 2008-09 figures. The highest increase was to courses in the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. There was a fall in applications from mature dispensation students and from international fee-paying students. Trinity College continues to attract a high percentage of first preference applications. Data on course preferences of registered new entrants were included in the Senior Lecturer's Report for the first time, and the Senior Lecturer noted that 55% of new entrants were registered to their first preference CAO course choice, but that 22% were registered to their fourth or lower preference course choice. Studies on retention at third level show a correlation between attrition and registration on low preference courses. The Senior Lecturer referring to the data on alternative admission routes, noted the high number of students who do not disclose their disability until registered. Non-disclosure can have implications for the provision of services and resources for both students and staff. The drop in applications from and registration of mature dispensation students may reflect the uncertainty with regards to the reintroduction of third level fee and the poor economic climate.

The Council-approved policy on the qualifying points level for the award of an entrance exhibition from 545 to 560 points was introduced in 2009. Four hundred and forty one (441) students were awarded an entrance exhibition, representing 16% of the EU Junior Freshman class for 2009-10. Of those who applied through the CAO for

places in third level institutions, 1,691 achieved 545+ points and 26% of this smaller more restricted pool of very high achievers accepted a place at Trinity.

There was a steady increase in the number of court of first appeals, academic appeals and special examination sittings over the period 2006 to 2008. The percentage of first class degrees awarded increased from 14.8% in 2007-08 to 17.8% in 2008-09. In the same period, the number of gold medals awarded increased from 65 to 85 and the number of foundation and non-foundation scholarships awarded increased from 71 to 83. The Senior Lecturer commented that there may be a need to consider whether the bar for scholarship is sufficiently high.

The Academic Secretary drew Council's attention to some of the other key developments in respect of the 2009-10 admissions, noting in particular the difference between eligible first preference applications after examination results are considered (ratio of 1.7:1) and applications before examinations results are considered (ratio of 2.6:1). The late release of A Level Examination results meant that some courses did not fill their quota until the middle of October. All eight new courses filled their quota, and the CAO points for these courses were high. Despite the increase in quotas and the introduction of new undergraduate courses, points for Science and BESS remained high. Demand for engineering, however, fell and the points for this course dropped from 445 in 2008 to 405 in 2009. The Engineering School was actively involved in promoting engineering at this year's undergraduate Open Day. The new selection criteria to medicine which included the HPAT - Ireland (Health Professions Admission Test - Ireland) was implemented for the 2009-10 admissions season, and there was considerable media and public interest in the outcome. The CAO points for admission to medicine in Trinity in 2009-10 ranged from 535 to 600. Sixty nine percent (69%) of all registered new entrants to courses in Trinity achieved 475+ points in their second level examinations, and 37% achieved 525+.

Council welcomed the Senior Lecturer's Report. In the discussion that followed, the Senior Lecturer clarified a number of points in respect of different activities. Referring to the increase in the number of academic appeals, she noted a need for greater awareness of examination regulations as not all cases before a Court of First Appeals, for example, constitute an appeal. It was suggested that Schools should be encouraged to provide full information on individual student cases at the Court of Examiners, and the Senior Lecturer commented that the complexity of some cases, involving several individuals, means that the information may not be available in time. It was further suggested that College should consider the establishment of a 'Mitigating Circumstances Committee', but it was felt that the establishment of such a Committee would merely widen grounds for appeal and thereby increase further the number of appeals. It was noted that a large number of academic appeals were for non-EU students. Referring to the decline in the number of applications from non-EU students, Council heard that there is a downturn in international fee-paying applications across the third level sector both nationally and globally.

Council noted that the introduction of the HPAT-Ireland as part of the selection criteria for entry to medicine raised concerns that medical schools were manipulating the entry criteria to redress the gender imbalance in medicine, and it was restated that the introduction of the HPAT-Ireland was not a university initiative but a government directive.

Council noted the Senior Lecturer's Annual Report 2008-09 with Admissions Data for 2009-10.

CL/09-10/071 Graduate Studies - Course Proposals Course proposals leading to the award of an M.Sc. in Cognitive Psychotherapy and an award of M.Phil/PGradDip in Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation were circulated.

- (i) *M.Sc. in Cognitive Psychotherapy:* the Dean of Graduate Studies introduced this course proposal noting that the proposal arose from a review of a former Masters/P. Grad Diploma programme in Cognitive Psychotherapy which was discontinued in 2005. The former diploma programme did not sufficiently prepare graduates with the necessary clinical experience to successfully engage in a research project in the field. This new programme in Cognitive Psychotherapy addresses this shortcoming. The Dean referred Council to the admissions requirements and the programme duration. She noted that a collaboration has been formed between the discipline of psychiatry within the School of Medicine, representatives from the Health Service Executive and St. Patrick's Hospital to consolidate the financial structure of the course and to provide protected time for key clinical and research staff teaching on the course. The course will provide access for students to clinical experience which will enable them to critically evaluate the research literature in this field and generate relevant research projects. The course proposal was positively reviewed by an external assessor, and the Dean of Graduate Studies recommended it to Council.

Council noted and approved the course proposal leading to an M.Sc. in Cognitive Psychotherapy to commence in the academic year 2010-2011.

- (ii) *M.Phil/PGradDip in Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation:* the Dean of Graduate Studies speaking to this course proposal commended the Aspirant School of Religions, Theology and Ecumenics for its innovative approach in developing this new course proposal. This M.Phil/PGrad Dip in Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation replaces the existing M.Phil in Reconciliation Studies and offers two strands of study, i.e. 'Conflict Resolution' and 'Reconciliation Studies' within the same programme. Its modular flexible structure provides opportunities for local and international professionals working in the field to take intensive part-time study. It is proposed to offer the course on a one year full-time, two years part-time, or up to three years part-time professional intensive. The course proposal was positively reviewed by an external assessor, and the Dean of Graduate Studies recommended it to Council.

Council noted and approved the course proposal leading to an M.Phil/PGrad Dip in Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation to commence in the academic year 2010-2011.

CL/09-10/072 Undergraduate Studies A course proposal leading to a Special Purpose Award (Certificate) and a proposal for a Semester in Northern Ireland programme for non-EU visiting students were circulated.

- (i) *Special Purpose Award - Course on Parliamentary and Legislative Studies for Managers in the Houses of the Oireachtas:* the Senior Lecturer introduced this course proposal from the School of Social Sciences and Philosophy. The School successfully tendered to design and deliver a course intended for senior-level managers in the Houses of the Oireachtas with the aim of demonstrating the relevance of the discipline of Political Science to the practice of politics and policymaking. A condition of the contract is that the

course should lead to an award that is recognised under the National Framework of Qualifications (NQF) in Ireland. The award of a Special Purpose Certificate at Level 7 on the NQF is proposed as such awards are designed for purpose-specific achievements. The course is eighteen months in duration and proposes to commence in 2009-10. It has a 20 ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) credit weighting value, arranged in five modules of four credits each. The Senior Lecturer noted that the structure of modules of four ECTS credits was an exception to the Council-approved policy of modules of five, or multiples of five, ECTS credits because the course does not interact with other courses and is outside the HEA recurrent grant allocation funding model.

The Senior Lecturer drew Council's attention to the discussion on this item at the meeting of the Undergraduate Studies Committee [Actum UGS/09-10/014(a)] of the 1st December 2009, and confirmed that the proposal had received a positive review from an external assessor.

In response to a query, the Academic Secretary confirmed that Trinity College awards Level 7 diplomas and certificates, and the University of Dublin awards degrees at Level 8 and above.

Council noted and approved the course on Parliamentary and Legislative Studies leading to a Special Purpose Certificate Award at Level 7 on the NQF.

- (ii) *Semester in Northern Ireland for visiting undergraduate non-EU students;* the Senior Lecturer introduced this semester programme from the Aspirant School of Religions, Theology and Ecumenics. The semester programme will be delivered at the Belfast campus of the Irish School of Ecumenics. The programme is designed for visiting students who are enrolled for an undergraduate degree in North American Colleges and Universities and who are seeking a semester abroad opportunity that combines an immersive experience in a post-conflict context along with rigorous academic standards. The semester programme comprises three NQF Level 8 modules of ten credits each. The modules focus on Conflict and Conflict Resolution; Social and Political Reconciliation; and Lessons from the Peace Process in Northern Ireland.

The Senior Lecturer drew Council's attention to the discussion on this matter at the meeting of the Undergraduate Studies Committee [Actum UGS/09-10/014(b)] of the 1st December 2009, and noted the concerns expressed about the absence of a historical context for the Northern Ireland conflict. She noted that a review by an external assessor was positive and the reviewer was satisfied that the semester programme was adequately contextualised historically.

In discussing the semester programme, one Council member felt that given the significance of history to the conflict and its resolution in Northern Ireland, the proposal was still lacking a historical context. The Provost suggested that the Aspirant School of Religions, Theology and Ecumenics should consider expanding this semester programme at a later stage, and should liaise with the School of Histories and Humanities on the development and delivery of a module on history.

Council noted and approved the Semester in Northern Ireland Programme for visiting undergraduate non-EU students leading to 30 ECTS credit at Level 8 on the NQF Ireland.

CL/09-10/073 Dean of Students' Annual Report 2008-09 The Dean of Students' Annual Report 2008-09 was circulated. The Dean of Students highlighted some of the main activities of the academic year 2008-09, and in particular drew Council's attention to commitments in the Strategic Plan 2009-14 to the student experience, to the establishment of a student centre, and to promoting civic engagement. A Civic Engagement Officer was appointed for a two-year period to promote the ethos and practice of volunteering in Trinity by both students and staff. A College 'Fitness to Practice' policy was approved by Council and Board in 2008-09, and a draft proposal on 'learning outside the classroom' was considered by the Undergraduate Studies Committee. It is expected that a formal proposal will be brought to Council for consideration later this academic year. A Mental Health Advisory Group was established to, among other things, develop appropriate procedures and practices for the implementation of College's Student Mental Health Policy and Guidelines. The Dean of Students also noted that three students were granted intermission of their studies in 2008-09, and the appointment of a manager for the Day Nursery. Priority actions for the Dean of Students in 2009-10 include the implementation of strategic objectives in respect of the student experience.

The Provost thanked the Dean of Students for his report and commended his efforts in improving the student experience. Referring to the 'learning outside the classroom' initiative, he questioned the feasibility of formally recognising all student activity, and cautioned against establishing a structure that would require on-going administrative support. The Dean responded that it is proposed to establish a committee to assess applications. Council felt that it was important to recognise that students are involved in many local activities unrelated to College and cautioned against the introduction of an award system that might inhibit such activity. The initiative to better integrate into the student experience those students who are not based on the main campus was welcomed. Despite their close proximity to the main campus, it was recommended that this initiative should include dental science and nursing students. The Dean of Students, in response to a query, commented that the integration initiative would also include postgraduate students not on the main campus.

Council noted the Dean of Students' Annual Report 2008-09.

CL/09-10/074 Any other business

Responding to a query, the Dean of Research confirmed that an annual report on research activity would be presented to a meeting of Council in Hilary term 2010.

Council heard that matters in respect of academic promotions should be first considered by Council in line with Chapter XIII, Section 2 of the Statutes. The Provost, in response, noted that matters of financial decision are for the consideration of the College Board, but confirmed that promotions would be an item on the agenda of a future meeting of Council.

SECTION B

- CL/09-10/075 Undergraduate Studies Committee** The Council noted and approved the recommendations as set out in the minutes of the Undergraduate Studies Committee from its meeting of the 1st December 2009, which had been circulated.
- CL/09-10/076 International Committee** The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer, referring to Actum IC/09-10/005, confirmed that the proposed working party to establish criteria for international agreements will be instituted in Hilary term 2010. The Council noted and approved the recommendations as set out in the minutes of the International Committee from its meeting of the 3rd November 2009, which had been circulated.
- CL/09-10/077 Research Committee** Referring to a query on research quality metrics (Actum RS/09-10/15), the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer informed Council that the working group established by Board to devise new research quality metrics for use in the allocation of 30% of funds to Schools will report to Board in Hilary term 2010. He referred Council to the proposed criteria and noted that a list of staff active in research was sourced from the Research Support System (RSS) and each School has been asked to verify the data. While the RSS will be updated to reflect any changes arising from this verification exercise, the information to-date shows that 67% of academic staff members are research active. The Vice-Provost noted that a meeting of the Directors of Research to discuss the proposed quality metrics criteria was scheduled for later today.

The Council noted and approved the recommendations as set out in the minutes of the Research Committee from its meeting of the 1st December 2009, which had been circulated.

SECTION C

- CL/09-10/078 Higher Degrees—Reports of Examiners** The Council noted and approved the reports of examiners on candidates for higher degrees, approved by the sub-committee of Board and Council on 25th November 2009 and noted by Board on 8th December 2009, as circulated.
- (i) **Professional Higher Degrees by Research Alone**
MD Colm Bergin; Awad Abdalla Ahmed Mohamed.
 - (ii) **Higher Degrees by Research Alone**
 - PhD Mohamed Salem Alhag; Catherine Boothman; Jason Horan; Elizabeth Yin-Ling Lin; Preston Marshall; Geraldine Mooney Simmie; Helen Jane O’Sullivan; Gloria Roberts; Guo Song; Nathaniel Edward Stern; Haiyan Wang.
 - MSc Savas Ulucan.
 - MLitt Barbara Ann Byrne.
- CL/09-10/079 School of Physics/Dublin Institute of Advanced Studies School of Cosmic Physics - Draft Memorandum of Understanding** The Council noted and approved a memorandum from the Registrar, circulated, dated 9th December 2009.

CL/09-10/080 Provost's Teaching Awards: proposed amendments The Council noted and approved a memorandum from the Director, CAPSL, circulated, dated 14th December 2009.

SECTION D

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

Signed

Date