A meeting of the University Council was held on Wednesday 2 June 2021 at 10.15am remotely and hosted from the Provost’s Library.

Present

Provost, Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer, Registrar, Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies, Senior Tutor, Dean of Graduate Studies, , Vice-President for Global Relations, Dean of Students, Dean of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, Dean of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, Dean of Health Sciences, Professor D. Murchan, Professor S. Alyn Stacey, Professor D. Shepherd, Professor C. Kelly, Professor M. Lyons, Professor A. O’Connor, Professor M. Monaghan, Professor M. Ruffini, Professor L. O’Driscoll, Professor B. O’Connell, Professor C. Donnellan, Professor AM. Malone, Professor C. Donnellan, Dr. O. Gobbo, Professor A. Long, Ms. M. O’Connor, Ms J. Whelan, Mr D. O’Reilly, Ms. A. Bhattacharjee, Ms. J. Wall.

Apologies

Ms. D. Kelleher, Mr. J. Noctor.

In attendance

Secretary to the College, Academic Secretary, Librarian and College Archivist, Associate Dean of Research, Director of Student Services, Assistant Academic Secretary, Ms. A. Crawford.

Observers


SECTION A

The Provost welcomed everyone to the meeting and requested that Council members declare any potential conflicts of interest in relation to the agenda. The Secretary to the College advised that Professor D. Murchan had declared a conflict of interest in respect of item 9 iv ‘PG Cert. in Diversity and Inclusion’, however, following discussion with the Dean of Graduate Studies and Professor Murchan he did not believe there to be a conflict of interest and recommended that Professor Murchan remain in the meeting and take a full part in any discussion on the item.

Professor O’ Driscoll joined the meeting.

CL/20-21/227 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of Council on 24 May 2021 were approved and signed.

An amendment was proposed to the minutes of the meeting of 31 March 2021 under CL/20-21/173: Head of Discipline as follows: replace text ‘...for a two-year term from 1 June 2021 to 31 May 2023’ with ‘for a three-year term from 1 June 2021 to 31 May 2024’.

The minutes of the meeting of 31 March 2021 with the amended wording were approved.

The Dean of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) joined the meeting.
CL/20-21/228 Matters Arising from the Minutes

(i) CL/20-21/214 Degree Parchments

Referring to Council’s decision on the CHARM-EU degree parchment and a satisfactory explanation for the inclusion of ‘nationality’ and ‘birth name’ on the degree parchment, the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer reported that the convention in Spain is for ‘nationality’ to be included on degree parchments, however, following Trinity’s concern on this it was agreed that to remove ‘nationality’ from the parchment. On the inclusion of ‘birth name’ on the parchment, he advised that as this is a legal requirement in Hungary ‘birth name’ will need to be retained on the parchment and that Trinity students due to graduate from the programme will need to be advised that their birth name is required.

(ii) CL/20-21/215 Senior Lecturer’s Annual Report 2019/20

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies advised that he had been provided with a breakdown of grades awarded across Schools and that grade inflation in the Health Sciences was largely driven by Nursing programmes. He explained that nursing students were given a derogation regarding the completion of one component of their reflective practice assessment due to Covid-19 and as a consequence were awarded 100% with respect to this component, which inflated the overall final grade awarded. He advised that this mechanism will not be in place for this academic year.

The postgraduate student (STEM) observer and the Director of Student Services joined the meeting.

CL/20-21/229 Provost’s Report

The Provost highlighted that funding had been received from Ryanair for a new Ryanair Sustainable Aviation Research Centre, the first of its kind in Ireland, which will see multi-disciplinary teams of Scientists and Engineers in Trinity tackle important questions relating to climate change. Postdoctoral posts and PhD students will be funded through the initiative.

Referring to the Trinity St. James’s Cancer Institute, the Provost reported that the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with St James’ will be signed on 3 June 2021 and due to the strategic and national importance of the Institute the signing will be witnessed by the Taoiseach.

Reporting on E3, the Provost highlighted that the financing for the E3 Learning Foundry was approved by Board and that work on E3 is progressing well. He invited the Dean of STEM, as project sponsor to update Council on developments. The Dean of STEM advised that the E3 Learning Foundry is due for completion by 2023. Referring to the Kinsella Challenge-based E3 Multi-disciplinary Project Awards, she highlighted that 21 applications had been received from Principal Investigators (PIs). The applications were reviewed by six external reviewers and she thanked the Dean of Graduate Studies and the Dean of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (AHSS) for their support with the review. The three successful research teams will be announced on 14 June 2021 and she thanked the Provost for his leadership on the initiative. The Provost noted the importance of the Challenge-based grants and he advised that work on the E3 Research Institute is progressing well, which is being driven by the Provost Elect, Professor Linda Doyle.

Providing an update on the Trinity East Project the Provost advised that the Early Activation Hub had been named as ‘The Portal’. The largest ever philanthropic donation for the E3 Research Institute and new Trinity East campus had been received from Eric and Barbara Kinsel.

Referring to Trinity Development & Alumni (TDA) he reported that a business case is going to Board for the continued investment in TDA for the five-year period 2021-2026.

The Provost’s Council, which brings together leading alumni and friends, will meet on the 25 June 2021, the Provost advised, noting that this would be the last meeting under his Provostship.

Updating Council on the legislative proposals on the governance of Irish Higher Education

Incorporating any amendments approved at subsequent Council meetings
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Institutions (HEIs), the Provost advised that the Department for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science has invited submissions on the proposals by the end of June 2021, which will then be considered by the Oireachtas Committee. Responding to a query raised relating to the proposal, the Provost advised that the proposed legislation includes a footnote recognising Trinity’s governance structure.

The SU Education Officer joined the meeting.

Dr Cormac Doran, Assistant Academic Secretary, Graduate Education joined the meeting.

CL/20-21/230 XX Proposal for the Initiation of Stage 1 of the Postgraduate Renewal Project

The Provost welcomed the Assistant Academic Secretary: Graduate Education to the meeting.

Speaking to the item the Dean of Graduate Studies outlined the Strategic Objectives of the Trinity Strategic Plan 2020-2025 relating to the renewal of postgraduate education, which include:

- Fundamentally re-evaluate the student experience for both postgraduate taught and postgraduate research students and ensure that their bespoke needs are met (2.3).
- Meet the changing student profile, within the lifetime of this Strategic Plan, by instituting a major and systemic renewal of all facets of postgraduate education (3.4).
- Institute a major and systemic renewal of all aspects of doctoral education in Trinity to ensure the distinctive character of that education as a holistic concept in which doctoral students receive a diversity of cutting-edge skills training to complement their research (4.5).

She highlighted that the work to-date has involved a series of desk-based reviews, preliminary focus group discussions, and consultations with DTLPs, LERU, GSU, GSC, Heads of School, the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer and the Provost and a presentation to the Executive Officers’ Group (EOG). This work has informed the proposed renewal project objectives which are as follows:

- An integrated, enhanced student-centred experience...from application to alumnus.
- A flexible, agile framework for postgraduate education accommodating diverse structures and pathways.
- A suite of new taught programmes linked to pioneering research activities, enabling an increase in postgraduate student recruitment to achieve the target set in the Strategic Plan, 2020-25.
- An enriched Structured PhD Framework, facilitating mobility, intersectoral engagement and interdisciplinary collaboration, delivering...researchers prepared for a knowledge-based society.
- Flexible supports and processes to enable Schools to achieve their objectives in postgraduate teaching and research and deliver on the College Strategic Plan 2020-2025 and beyond.
- An adaptive digital infrastructure delivering next-generation teaching and learning in all aspects of postgraduate education and responsive to the emerging opportunities of short courses, micro-credentials and continuing professional development.

The Dean of Graduate Studies highlighted that the Triple I (I³) Components, ‘Interdisciplinary’, ‘Intersectoral’, and ‘International’ emerged from the desktop research and discussions with European partners, explaining that these focus on building the required transversal skills. The Triple I (I³) Components and project objectives have informed six proposed Work Packages (WP), two of which are cross-...
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cutting – WP 1 postgraduate taught renewal, WP 2 postgraduate research renewal, WP 3 systems and processes, WP 4 relationships, and the cross-cutting work packages 5 ‘student experience’ and 6 ‘staff experience’.

Speaking to the proposed reporting structure, the Dean of Graduate Studies advised that a steering committee will be established with the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer as Chair, the Dean of Graduate Studies as Project Sponsor, and the Assistant Academic Secretary: Graduate Education as the Project Manager. Each work package will comprise a Chair and a Lead.

The Assistant Academic Secretary: Graduate Education outlined the proposed four project stages and the timeline for each as follows:

2. Implementation Design – February 2022–March 2022–October 2022 (9 months).

Concluding, the Dean of Graduate Studies stated that approval is sought from Council to proceed to Stage 1: Consultation and Stage 2: Implementation Design, with a view to returning to Council in March 2022 to seek further approval for a detailed project plan.

The Provost thanked the Dean of Graduate Studies and the Assistant Academic Secretary: Graduate Education and invited questions and comments.

The Registrar, Professor Sarah Alyn Stacey, Professor David Shepherd joined the meeting.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer commended the Dean of Graduate Studies and the Assistant Academic Secretary: Graduate Education on the excellent proposal noting that the document circulated provides the detail on the ambitions of the project and details of the consultation phase. Responding to a comment from the Senior Tutor to consider the inclusion of widening participation in postgraduate renewal, the Dean of Graduate Studies commented that diversity is created through programme pathways and while Trinity’s current structure is programme focused the HCI Pillar 3 initiative has introduced shorter units of learning, micro-credentials and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), all of which will contribute to greater diversity in the student population. She advised that WP 5 ‘student experience’ will consider and implement actions which contribute to student success.

A member welcomed the initiative and urged for biodiversity and global challenges to feature strongly in the postgraduate renewal. She remarked that such a focus will align with Goal 5 of the Trinity Strategic Plan 2020-2025 ‘…achieving a sustainable and healthy planet’. Greater prominence should be given to a transdisciplinary education model with new programmes focusing exclusively on biodiversity, the climate crisis, renewal of planetary resources and social justice. Members articulated their support for the project and proposals, and highlighted the need to consider the learning from the Trinity Education Project (TEP) and to involve Schools in the process from the inception of the project to ensure that implementation considerations are taken into account at an early stage; that proper funding mechanisms are put in place to support the Structured PhD programme; there is a requirement to consider financial underpinnings and structures and how income is generated at School level, with a designated Financial person being brought on board.

The Dean of Graduate Studies thanked members for their comments advising that there will be an interdisciplinary focus and that the consultation phase will lead to a greater visibility of the issues. She noted that a challenge arising from the consultation will be on establishing the priority areas for renewal, formulating project objectives and
considering the cost implications. She highlighted the good practice and innovation taking place in Schools and on programmes, which was evident from the discussions held with DTLPs, and explained there is a need to disseminate this more widely across College. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer drew attention to inter-dependencies with other College initiatives and projects such as CHARM-EU, the Digital Learning Strategy, and HCI Pillar 3.

**Decision:**
**CL/20-21/230.1:** Council noted the Postgraduate Renewal Project report and approved the project proceeding to Stage 1: Consultation and Stage 2: Implementation Design.

Dr Cormac Doran, Assistant Academic Secretary, Graduate Education left the meeting.

The SU (STEM) representative joined the meeting.

Ms Fedelma McNamara, Director of Internationalisation and Ms Niamh Burke, Associate Director – Partnerships, joined the meeting.

**CL/20-21/231 Global Relations Annual Report 2020/21**

The Vice-President for Global Relations outlined the areas addressed in the Global Relations Annual Report 2020/21. Referring to overall student numbers she reported that non-EU students account for 2,509 of the 18,871 registered students with 24% of registered students coming from 118 countries. Trinity is the 8th most international university in the World (THE Ranking, 2021) with the majority of students from Ireland, the USA, UK, China, India, France and Germany. She highlighted that 23.87% of registered students are from outside of Ireland. Referring to overall EU and domestic students, the Vice-President for Global Relations drew attention to the ambition of the Global Relations Strategy (GRS) 3 to increase the number of EU students and commented that despite the challenges presented by Covid-19 the number of EU students almost met the GRS 3 target with a steady growth in EU student numbers across faculties.

Speaking to non-EU student trends, the Vice-President for Global Relations advised that there had been a significant drop in the number of non-EU registered students in 2020/21 due to Covid-19 with the largest decreases occurring in the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences and Multi-Faculty, which was attributed mainly to the fall in numbers of visiting students.

Highlighting student recruitment activities that took place in 2020/21, the Vice-President for Global Relations advised that these consisted of approximately 1,500 recruitment events, managing relationships with 130 education agents based in 31 countries, and ‘Unibuddy’, a ‘Talk to our Students’ online platform that facilitates peer-to-peer conversations between potential students and current student ambassadors. Turning to marketing and promotion for student recruitment, she stated that all of GRO’s activity was completed online consisting of virtual open days, email campaigns, campus tours and website activities.

The Vice-President for Global Relations explained that undergraduate mobility was severely impacted by Covid-19 with 304 Junior Sophister students participating in mobility opportunities in 2020/21 compared to 1,101 in 2019/20. She highlighted the challenges presented by Covid-19 for prospective and current student outreach and support in 2020/21. GRO led a large university project focusing on the safe arrivals of international students to Trinity and student events and activities were moved online.

Concluding, the Vice-President for Global Relations reported that the activities of GRO were impacted in early 2020 by Covid-19 and this will continue for the foreseeable future. Some of the measures, activities and initiatives that GRO has taken in response to Covid-19 are the establishment of an Admissions Group that has recommended initiatives to mitigate against the impact of the pandemic on student capacity to sit examinations and provide documentation supporting their application, the student arrivals project that focused on the safe arrivals of international students in Trinity in Semester 1 and 2, which welcomed 1,865 students at Dublin Airport. She drew attention to the continued financial risk arising from the uncertainty surrounding the Covid-19 pandemic which has had a significant impact on recruitment activity.

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and the willingness of students to travel for study in 2020/21. Mitigating the impact requires continued agility to respond to the changing environment and close collaboration with AR, academic departments and the wider higher education sector.

The Provost thanked the Vice-President for Global Relations for the report and invited questions and comments.

Professor Long and the Secretary to the Scholars joined the meeting.

Members thanked the Vice-President for Global Relations for a comprehensive and well produced report and for GRO’s work behind the scenes to support the student experience. The Dean of Graduate Studies commended GRO on the Admissions Group initiative and the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies highlighted the need to balance non-EU and EU student quotas. Responding to the recommendation that the student arrivals’ project be expanded and continued, the Director of Internationalisation explained that this had been funded by Government and that the intention is to continue the project post-Covid as it enhances the student experience prior to and during students’ arrival in Ireland.

Responding to a query from the Provost on the decrease in non-EU student growth and if this was attributed to a decline in numbers from Trinity partnerships or to visiting students, the Associate Director - Partnerships advised that while partnership numbers were down they were making a good recovery for the coming academic year. She noted the challenges presented by Covid in developing new partnership agreements and highlighted new partnership agreements in Africa as one of the successes.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer congratulated Global for its sterling work and the strengthened coordination between GRO and Schools. Responding to the Senior-Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies’ point on the need to achieve a balance in EU and non-EU student numbers, he confirmed that this was already the case and he highlighted that work is underway in the Academic Services Division (ASD), AR and GRO on a process to engage with Schools on this.

**Decision:**

**CL/20-21/231.1:** Council approved the Global Relations Third Annual Report, 2020-2021.

**CL/20-21/232  Mobility and Partnerships Report 2020/21**

The Associate Director – Partnerships highlighted progress towards achieving the GRS 3 Strategic Plan ambition that by 2025, 40-45% of the graduating cohort will have undertaken an international mobility experience as part of their programme. She highlighted the impact of Covid-19 on the number of students participating in an international mobility experience in 2020/21, which saw the percentage decrease from 39% in 2019/20 to just 10% in 2020/21. Two-hundred and fifty-three (253) Trinity students participated in an EU Erasmus+ exchange in 2020/21 compared to 469 students in 2019/20, and 14 students participated in an international exchange (college-wide) programme in 2020/21 compared to 211 in 2019/20, five of whom were from the School of Law.

Referring to inbound Erasmus+ and the international exchange programme, the Associate Director – Partnerships reported that 381 students attended Trinity through the Erasmus+ programme in 2020/21 compared to 595 in 2019/20 and 15 students attended through the international exchange programme in 2020/21 compared to 230 in 2019/20. The decrease in the number of inbound and outbound exchanges is partially attributed to international institutions not sending or receiving students, such as Australia which had cancelled all exchange programmes. She highlighted that the applications for exchanges in 2021/22 have increased significantly.
The Provost thanked the Associate Director – Partnerships for her report.

Ms. Bochenek joined the meeting.

Responding to a query from the Provost relating to outbound Erasmus+ students and numbers improving for 2021/22, the Associate Director – Partnerships confirmed that GRO is seeing progress already with the numbers and it is expected that the target will be reached for 2021/22. She clarified for a member that the percentage of Junior Sophister undergraduate students undertaking an international mobility experience as part of their programme is a percentage of the total number of undergraduate Junior Sophister students.

A member drew attention to the potential conflict in increasing student mobility and Trinity’s commitment in the Trinity Strategic Plan 2020-2025 to climate change and sustainability noting that the environmental impact had not been considered in the report. She emphasised the need for Trinity to consider its initiatives and the impact of these on the environment. Environmental goals need to be embedded in all Trinity initiatives and activities if Trinity is to become a climate first university. In responding to the member the Director of Internationalisation stated that GRO has begun this work and is holding a planning day on sustainability and climate change shortly, which will consider in-country recruitment activities also. Grants are available to students who take more sustainable forms of transport when participating in an exchange.

Decision:

Ms Fedelma McNamara, Director of Internationalisation and Ms Niamh Burke, Associate Director – Partnerships, left the meeting.


(i) Continuity of Teaching

The Vice Provost/Chief Academic Officer outlined the options for teaching arrangements in 2021/22 that were approved by Council on 31 March 2021 as follows:

- Best case scenario A: comprehensive return to face-to-face teaching without social distancing but other mitigations in place.
- Middle case scenario B: return to as much face-to-face teaching under social distancing (with room capacity the limiting factor).
- Worst case scenario C: only limited essential face-to-face teaching with the majority of teaching and learning online.

He explained that there have been ongoing talks at national level to agree a pact between the sector and Government with the Irish Universities Association (IUA), The Technological Higher Education Association (THEA) and the Further Education Sector participating. Planning for maintaining significant on-site further and higher education, and research is taking place for the academic year 2021/22 with a draft document agreed and consultation taking place with other stakeholders. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer highlighted that the Pact commits the sector to an expanded discretionary framework with,

- More expansive definition of necessary on-site activities.
- Maximum levels of on-site provision under prevailing public health guidelines.
- Comprehensive planning and contingency planning for different scenarios in line with Council decisions of 31 March 2021 and a similar approach taken by all IUA universities.

Key elements of the proposed Pact are significantly on-site, promoting public health, dealing with outbreaks, vigilance, managing and monitoring, and communicating. He outlined the proposed minimum activities within the discretionary framework as follows:
- Laboratory teaching and learning.
- Classroom based teaching and learning.
- Tutorials.
- Workshops.
- Smaller lectures (relevant to agreed room capacity).
- Research.
- Work-spaces.
- Libraries.
- Canteens – operational in accordance with public health advice on work-place canteens.
- Sport facilities – operational in accordance with public health advice.
- Clubs and societies – operational in accordance with public health advice.
- Bars – operational in accordance with public health advice.

Speaking to the timeline for the public health guidelines, the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer highlighted that there is a commitment to publish the guidelines by 15 July 2021, as this will facilitate comprehensive and contingency planning over the summer. He outlined the planning approach for the summer taking all three scenarios into account as follows:

- Timetabling dataset to be released to Schools on 21 June but without room allocation.
- Room allocation to be added after 15 July, depending on confirmed public health guidelines.
- Big lectures (number to be defined) should remain online to maximise campus capacity.
- Asynchronous delivery of large online lectures to be encouraged to maximise campus capacity.
- Guidelines on recording of lectures to remain in place for the duration of Covid-related restrictions.
- IT upgrade for 72 rooms for blended learning over the summer.
- No expectation to deliver hyflex teaching under Scenario B.

Concluding, he asked Council to delegate authority for making necessary decisions over the summer on teaching, learning and student activity for the academic year 2021-22, within the three options approved by Council on 31 March 2021, to the Provost, the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer, the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies, and the Dean of Graduate Studies.

The Provost thanked the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer and invited questions and comments.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies referred to the proposed minimum activities within the discretionary framework noting that clinical placements, field work, and creative arts performances are also included.

The Dean of Health Sciences emphasised the importance of Trinity influencing public health policy and for a sliding scale of mitigations to be established. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer confirmed that the mitigating factors are called out in the document. The Senior Tutor raised the need to resource the ‘managing and monitoring’ element of the Pact, as this could be labour intensive and involve considerable reporting. Responding to a query raised by a member on the possible rotation of large lectures on campus, the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer stated that this can only happen once Trinity knows what the public health guidelines are. He added that the IUA is recommending that 250 students are not considered as a large lecture, and that Trinity’s commitment is that every student on every programme should have face-to-face opportunities. A member highlighted the importance of guidance being issued on what constitutes large lectures and asked if the advice is that large lectures should be asynchronous. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer highlighted students’ preference for recorded synchronous lectures, which would need to be timetabled. The SU Education Officer emphasised the need for a greater number of tutorials, especially for first and second-year students enrolled on large courses, to ensure their social and personal wellbeing. She highlighted the need for students to have access to recorded lectures and urged College to develop a recording policy. It was agreed to continue the discussion offline.
The Registrar raised the importance of holding in-person conferring ceremonies and inquired if this was being examined by the IUA. He emphasised the importance of the ceremonies for the student experience. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer stated that conferring ceremonies, while an important part of the student experience, were not being considered by the IUA. The Provost requested that this be raised with the IUA and factored into the planning.

The importance of well-ventilated laboratories was raised and the need for a derogation to be sought on the 1 hour 45 minutes restriction for in-person laboratory work, as this was not feasible.

Decision:
CL/20-21/233.1: Council approved to delegate authority for making necessary decisions over the summer on teaching, learning and student activity for the academic year 2021-22, within the three options approved by Council on 31 March 2021, to the Provost, the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer, the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies and the Dean of Graduate Studies.

Action:
CL/20-21/233.2: The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer to raise the inclusion of in-person conferring ceremonies in the discretionary framework with the IUA.

(ii) Re-assessment Days

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies drew attention to Council’s approval of measures to support students for the Semester 2 assessment session in April 2021 as follows:

- Deferral of Semester 2 Assessments – students have the right to defer Semester 2 examinations with the option of deferring any or all modules to the reassessment session in August 2021.
- Second deferral of Semester 1 Assessments – these assessments are due to take place in a supplementary session starting 24 May 2021 and students may defer some or all of these assessments again to the session in August.
- Re-sits – students in years contributing to their final degree grade will have an opportunity to re-sit passed modules if they wish. Such applications can only be made following the Semester 2 exams and the release of module and overall degree grades to students. Re-sits will be conducted in the August reassessment session.

He highlighted that it is proposed to include three contingency days for the reassessment session in August 2021, from Thursday 26 August to Saturday 28 August 2021. AR will schedule examinations in the contingency week in the order – Day 1 – Friday, 27 August, Day 2 – Thursday, 26 August, Day 3 – Saturday 28 August 2021.

Decision:
CL/20-21/233.2: Council approved the three additional contingency days, 26 August – 28 August, for the August 2021 reassessment session.

CL/20-21/234 XX Direct Undergraduate Admissions Academic Year 2021/22 – Temporary and Interim Measures for COVID-19

Speaking to the item the Vice-President for Global Relations drew Council’s attention to the set of measures approved by Council to address challenges faced by applicants arising from the Covid-19 pandemic whereby in the absence of final grades Council approved an alternative procedure by which firm offers could be issued on the basis of predicted or provisional grades. She outlined the proposed measures for 2021/22 applications as follows:

1. Allow the issuing of firm offers on the basis of predicted or provisional grades, as in 2020.
2. Apply this to all non-EU undergraduate applicants, regardless of examination system.
3. Firm offers be made on the basis of predictive/provisional grades meeting the relevant competitive bands already approved by Council.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies endorsed the proposals.

Decision:
CL/20-21/234.1: Council approved the proposed measures for direct undergraduate admissions for the academic year 2021/22 as outlined above.

**CL/20-21/235  Postgraduate Course Proposals**

(i) **MSc in Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Technology – Online (HCl 3)**

The Dean of Graduate Studies presented the proposal from the School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences for the online course in Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Technology leading to the award of MSc (90 ECTS) with an exit award of Postgraduate Diploma (60 ECTS) in Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Technology at level 9 of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). The online course will be delivered over two-years part-time and may provide in-person manufacturing facility visits to students who can participate.

The Dean of Graduate Studies advised that the programme will be offered to Science, Engineering, Veterinary and Medicine graduates pursuing a career in the pharmaceutical industry who seek to satisfy the educational requirement concerning the Qualified Person under EU law. The course will accommodate a minimum of 35 EU students.

The Dean of Graduate Studies reported that the proposal received a positive external review from Professor Brendan Gilmore, Professor of Pharmaceutical Microbiology, President of the Society for Applied Microbiology, School of Pharmacy, Queen’s University Belfast, Northern Ireland. She recommended the proposal to Council.

Responding to a query from the Provost regarding the existing MSc in Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Technology, the Dean of Graduate Studies confirmed that the programme will be discontinued with the last intake of students in January 2021.

**Decisions:**
CL/20-21/235.1: Council approved the proposal for a two-year part-time online course in Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Technology (HCl P3) leading to an MSc with an exit award of Postgraduate Diploma in Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Technology, offered by the School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences with a first intake in January 2022.
CL/20-21/235.2: Council approved the cessation of the two-year part-time distance learning course in Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Technology leading to an MSc with an exit award of Postgraduate Diploma in Pharmaceutical Technology, with the last intake of students in January 2021.

(ii) **MSc in Smart Medicines (HCl 3)**

Introducing the proposal, the Dean of Graduate Studies highlighted that the proposed course is closely related to the Postgraduate Diploma in Entrepreneurship Biotech & Pharma that received funding under HCl Pillar 1, which was approved by Council on 21 October 2020. The School of Medicine saw the opportunity to build on the benefits of the Postgraduate Diploma and to offer an MSc in Smart Medicines, which will be funded for a period of four years under HCl Pillar 3. The modules developed for the Postgraduate Diploma have provided a strong basis for the Masters and will be utilised in the MSc in Smart Medicines.

The Dean of Graduate Studies presented the proposal from the School of Medicine for the new blended one-year full-time course in Smart Medicines (90 ECTS) leading to the award of MSc with an exit award of Postgraduate Diploma in Smart Medicines at level 9 of the NFQ. She advised that the programme will be offered to entrepreneurs, business sector specialists, venture consultants
and professionals. The course will accommodate a minimum of 10 EU and 10 non-EU students and a maximum of 20 EU and 20 non-EU students.

The Dean of Graduate Studies reported that the proposal received a very positive external review from Professor Kevin Kavanagh, Biological & Biomedical Science Programme Coordinator, Human Health Institute at Maynooth University. She recommended the proposal to Council.

The Provost expressed concern about the course title noting that it does not reflect the focus of the programme, as it is offered to entrepreneurs and business sector specialists. The Dean of Health Sciences highlighted that the course is named to capture the essence of the delivery of smarter medicines and that it aligns with the language evolving in medicine on this. Several members agreed with the concerns raised by the Provost on the course title, noting that prospective applicants may not be clear on the nature of the programme from the title. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer highlighted that a title change will require approval by the Higher Education Authority (HEA) as the course is funded through HCI Pillar 3.

**Decisions:**

**CL/20-21/235.3:** Council approved the proposal for a blended one-year full-time course in Smart Medicines (HCI P3) leading to an MSc with an exit award of Postgraduate Diploma in Smart Medicines, offered by the School of Medicine with a first intake in September 2021, subject to the Dean of Graduate Studies’ and the Dean of Health Sciences’ support for the course title.

**Action:**

**CL/20-21/235.4:** The Dean of Graduate Studies and the Dean of Health Sciences to invite the School of Medicine to consider a revision of the course title.

(iii) PG Cert and PG Dip (Top-up) in Immune Therapies (HCI 3)

The Dean of Graduate Studies advised Council that the HEA had approved a request from the School of Biochemistry and Immunology for a deferral of the start date of the programme to September 2022. The deferral was sought due to challenges experienced in recruiting suitably qualified personnel for the programme.

The Dean of Graduate Studies presented the proposal from the School of Biochemistry and Immunology for the blended course in Immune Therapies leading to the awards of Postgraduate Certificate in Immune Therapies, a minor award, and Postgraduate Diploma in Immune Therapies at level 9 of the NFQ. One direct application entry route will apply with students entering the Postgraduate Certificate delivered over one-year part-time with optional progression to the Postgraduate Diploma (one-year part-time in year 2). The delivery of the programme will be supported by contributions from the School of Education and Tangent.

The Dean of Graduate Studies advised that the programme is aimed at employees in the biotech/pharmaceutical sector, who wish to upskill and develop industry-relevant research skills, extend their research experience and acquire advanced knowledge in the area of immunotherapeutics. The course will accommodate a minimum of 10 EU and 5 non-EU students and a maximum of 30 EU and 15 non-EU students.

The Dean of Graduate Studies reported that the proposal received a positive external review from Professor Tracy Hussell, PhD, F.Med.Sci., FRSB, Director of Lydia Becker Institute of Immunology and Inflammation, Director of Manchester Collaborative Centre for Inflammation Research, Professor of Inflammatory Disease, School of Biological Sciences, Faculty of Biology Medicine and Health, Manchester University, UK. She recommended the proposal to Council.

Responding to a comment from the Dean of Health Sciences regarding a greater contribution from the Schools of Medicine and Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences to the programme, the Dean of Graduate Studies advised that this had been raised at the Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) and that it had been clarified that the programme draws from the existing MSc in Immunotherapeutics. It was noted that the programme would benefit from contributions from the Schools of Medicine and Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences in the future.

Incorporating any amendments approved at subsequent Council meetings
**Decision:**
**CL/20-21/235.5:** Council approved the proposal for a blended part-time course in Immune Therapies (HCI P3) leading to (i) a Postgraduate Certificate, a minor award (30 ECTS) in Immune Therapies with optional progression to (ii) a Postgraduate Diploma in Immune Therapies, offered by the School of Biochemistry and Immunology, with a first intake in September 2022.

(iv) PG Cert in Diversity and Inclusion

The Dean of Graduate Studies presented the proposal from the School of Education for the new one-year blended course in Diversity and Inclusion (30 ECTS) to Council leading to the award of Postgraduate Certificate in Diversity and Inclusion, a minor award at level 9 of the NFQ. The course has been developed in partnership with the City of Dublin Education and Training Board (ETB) and responds to the professional learning and development needs of educators in the Further Education and Training (FET) sector. The course will be open to graduates with an NFQ level 8 honours degree at any grade level and in any discipline from a recognised third-level institution. The course will accommodate a minimum of 25 EU and a maximum of 50 EU students.

The Dean of Graduate Studies reported that the proposal received a very positive external review from Professor Richard Rose, Senior Lecturer in Education, Professor of Inclusive Education, University of Northampton, UK. She recommended the proposal to Council.

The Senior Tutor communicated his support for the programme suggesting the inclusion of Further Education and Training in the course title, to which the Dean of Graduate Studies agreed. Responding to a query raised by the Registrar on the involvement of Trinity Access in the delivery of the programme, the Head of School of Education advised that the programme had not been directly discussed with Trinity Access, and that there is interest from the 16 ETBs in the programme with an opportunity for the programme to evolve further.

Responding to a suggestion from the Dean of Students on linking with Campus Engage and providing opportunities for Trinity staff to participate in the programme, the Head of School of Education clarified that the course targets teachers working in the FET sector and is offered out of hours.

**Decision:**
**CL/20-21/235.6:** Council approved the proposal for a one-year part-time blended course in Diversity and Inclusion leading to a Postgraduate Certificate in Diversity and Inclusion, a minor award (30 ECTS), offered by the School of Education, with a first intake in September 2021, with a revision in the course title to Diversity and Inclusion in Further Education and Training.

(v) Strand “Masters in Business Administration (MBA) – Flexible Executive” within MBA 2 Year Part Time

The Dean of Graduate Studies advised Council that the proposed Strand will use the CANVAS Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) in support of its online learning and teaching. Following consultation with IT Services and clarifications from TBS and IT Services on the use of CANVAS for the Flexible Executive MBA (FEMBA), the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer, in the absence and in lieu of an Associate Dean of Online Education, granted an exception from Trinity’s ‘One VLE’ Policy for the use of CANVAS in this instance with the following conditions in place:

- The use of CANVAS is limited to the FEMBA programme only and will not be extended to other TBS programmes.
- The exception is valid only until the next tendering process for the College’s VLE has been completed.
- All extra costs, including the migration to the Trinity VLE in the future, will be borne by TBS.
- Technical supports for students and staff beyond the VLE will be part of the role for the new FEMBA programme manager.
• Students will have to engage with both College systems and services as a registered student and a separate identity on CANVAS for accessing learning materials.

Drawing Council’s attention to the two external reviews of the programme, the Dean of Graduate Studies explained that this was due to delays encountered with receiving the review report from the first external reviewer.

The Dean of Graduate Studies presented the proposal from the Trinity Business School for the new two-year part-time blended strand in Business Administration – Flexible Executive of the award of Masters in Business Administration with the exit award of Postgraduate Diploma in Business Administration at level 9 of the NFQ.

The Dean of Graduate Studies highlighted that entry to the course requires a degree, professional qualification or track record of business achievement, with a minimum of 3-5 years professional or managerial work experience. The strand will accommodate a minimum of 18 EU and 18 non-EU students and a maximum of 54 EU and 54 non-EU students.

The Dean of Graduate Studies reported that the proposal received a very positive external review from Dr. Sarah Grant, Associate Director and Head of Operations at the Edtech Lab at Imperial College Business School in London, and from Professor Bart Rienties, Professor of Learning Analytics, Institute of Educational Technology at The Open University in Milton Keynes, UK. She recommended the proposal to Council.

Decision:
CL/20-21/235.7: Council approved the proposal for a two-year part-time blended Strand in Business Administration – Flexible Education leading to a Masters in Business Administration with an exit award of Postgraduate Diploma in Business Administration, offered by the Trinity Business School, with a first intake in September 2021.

Professor O’ Driscoll left the meeting.

CL/20-21/236 Report of the Widening Participation Group

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies introduced the report of the Widening Participation Group (WPG) and extended his thanks to the Assistant Academic Secretary, Academic Affairs, for her work on the report and to the Academic Registry (AR), Trinity Access, the Disability Service and the Director of Student Services for their work on reporting on and ensuring the integrity of the data. Providing the background to the establishment of the WPG he outlined that it was established in 2017 as a subcommittee of the Undergraduate Studies Committee (USC), subsuming the Trinity Access Steering Committee, with the remit to:

• Assist the university in creating a diverse and inclusive undergraduate student body and college community.
• Advocate for and oversee progress in widening participation for under-representative groups.
• Oversee and monitor data on access, participation and retention for widening participation cohorts.

Membership of the WPG comprised, the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies as Chair, and representatives from Trinity Access, the Disability Service, AR, Academic Affairs, TT&L, Director of Student Services, the Senior Tutor, student representatives, and academic/faculty representatives.

Referring to the work programme completed by the WPG to-date, the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies highlighted that this included, the collection and reconciliation of data, tracking various cohorts of students from entry to graduation, discussions with under-representative groups – mature students, students with disabilities, and students from the Traveller community, and direct engagement with Further Education (FE) providers.
Presenting the data in the report, the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies reported that 20% of new entrants are through access routes – DARE, HEAR, ex-foundation programmes, Mature Student entry, and Further Education & Training (FET) entry routes. Students who enter through standard entry and subsequently register with the Disability Service are not included in this data and the number of students is increasing each year. The students present with a range of disabilities including mental health, specific learning difficulties, significant ongoing illness, attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder/attention deficit disorder and autism spectrum disorder.

Referring to gender, the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies commented that a greater number of females enter through alternative entry routes than through standard entry with 64% entering through an alternative entry route in 2019/20 compared to 57% through standard entry, with less males (36%) entering through an alternative entry route compared to standard entry (43%). He highlighted that the disparity needs to be examined further.

Speaking to progression rates for all years of degree, the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies highlighted that 95% of students entering through alternative entry routes progress compared to 97% of students entering through standard entry. Progression rates are at their lowest for year 1 and 2 of the student lifecycle. Referring to overall graduation rates he reported that for 2019/20, 95% of students entering through alternative entry routes passed compared to 98% of students entering through standard entry. Of these, 13% of students entering through alternative entry routes were awarded a first-class honours degree compared to 26% of students entering through standard entry in 2019/20. However, he noted that a greater number of 2.1 degrees were awarded to students entering through alternative entry routes than those entering through standard entry.

Concluding, the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies remarked that the 25% target set out in the Trinity Strategic Plan 2020-25 for under-representative groups was met when students registering with the Disability Service subsequent to enrolment were taken into account. There is scope for growth for students entering Trinity through FET entry routes, and that clean datasets are essential for monitoring overall rates and student progression within the system.

The Provost thanked the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies and invited questions and comments.

Responding to a query from the Dean of Students on the inclusion of students in Direct Provision availing of the Asylum Seekers Access Provision (ASAP) scholarship, the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies clarified that while he did not include these students in the data presented due to the small number of students, these students were included in the tables in the report. The SU Education Officer drew attention to the challenges faced by students in Direct Provision with commuting to Trinity and emphasised the need for Trinity to provide accommodation to these students. A member commended the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies on the report and asked if funding is in place to support the students during their time in Trinity. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies advised that services and supports are provided to the students through Trinity Access, the Disability Service, student services and through funding provided by the Higher Education Authority (HEA).

Responding to a suggestion that he link with the Associate Provost for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies responded that he is meeting Professor Brook on 3 June 2021 to discuss the submission to the National Access Plan, and that the WPG will need to be considered in light of the Admissions Strategy cited in the Trinity Strategic Plan 2020-2025.

The Provost highlighted that the bar charts would benefit from the inclusion of error-bars and the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies agreed that error-bars should be in place. A member drew attention to some inconsistencies in the presentation of data in the graphs and the relevant tables of the report. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate stated that there is a need in future reports to examine the graduation rates of students who enter through alternative entry routes.
Responding to a comment from the SU Education Officer on the need to define what is meant by the disadvantaged student, the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies advised that while the definitions are set at national level there is an opportunity for this to be raised as part of the consultation process on the next National Access Plan.

**Decision:**

**CL/20-21/236.1:** Council approved the Report of the Widening Participation Group.

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**CL/20-21/237**  
**AOB (this item followed Section D)**

The Provost noted that this was his last Council meeting as Provost remarking that he had first joined Council as a member in 2003. He thanked Council members for their contributions and acknowledged the contributions of the Academic Officers who had completed their terms of office and of the student representatives.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer invited the Dean of Health Sciences to pay tribute on behalf of Council to the Provost.

The Dean of Health Sciences acknowledged the enormous contribution that the Provost made to Trinity and to Council during his term of office. She drew attention to the Provost’s student-centred focus and his role in strengthening Trinity’s reputation internationally and globally. Undergraduate education had undergone significant reform during the Provost’s term of office, and this was a testament to the Provost’s vision and was a reform that had required significant planning and foresight. She attributed Trinity’s success in generating increased funding through philanthropic campaigns to the Provost’s vision, noting that more recently the Provost had secured the transformational gift from the Kinsella’s towards the E3 Research Institute. She highlighted that during the Provost’s term Trinity had joined LERU in 2016 and is the only university in Ireland with membership.

Concluding, the Dean of Health Sciences commended the Provost’s attention to detail and his scrutiny of Council papers. She thanked the Provost for his leadership adding that he was an inspiration to all and she invited Council members to express their thanks to the Provost through applause.

The Provost thanked the Dean of Health Sciences and Council stating that he had enjoyed the collaborations over the years and he wished the new Officers well with continuing the work in the coming academic year and beyond.

Some Council members were unable to be present for this item, which was taken following Section D and after a short break. Professor O’Driscoll returned to the meeting for this item.

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**SECTION B**

**CL/20-21/238**  
**Global Relations Committee**

The Vice-President for Global Relations referred Council to minute GS/20-21/43 ‘Mandatory Year Abroad’ stating that the guidelines regarding the mandatory year abroad observed during the academic year 2020/21 would apply for the academic year 2021/22.

**Decision:**

**CL/20-21/238.1:** Council approved the minutes of 17 May 2021 with Appendix ‘Mandatory Year Abroad’.

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Incorporating any amendments approved at subsequent Council meetings
Incorporating any amendments approved at subsequent Council meetings
Proposal to Amend Admission Requirements for the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE)

The Council noted and approved the circulated Memorandum from the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies dated 24 March 2021.

Membership of the University Council

The Council noted that the following have been elected (i) – (ii):

(i) **Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (2021-2024)**
- Senior Constituency – Head of School: Professor Lorna Carson
- Senior Constituency – Professor Paul O’Grady
- Junior Constituency – Professor Aibhin Bray
- Junior Constituency – Professor Davide Romelli

(ii) **Secretary to the Scholars**
- Ms Camilla Persello (observer, 2021-2022)

(iii) **Representative of Senate**
- The Council noted and approved that Ms Deborah Kelleher (Senate representative 2019-2021) would continue as a member of Council until the Senate would elect its 2021-2023 representative.

Review of Scholarship – Terms of Reference

The Council noted the circulated Memorandum from the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies dated 27 May 2021.

School Directors

The Council noted and approved the following nominations:

(i) Professor Alison Dougall as Head of Division I (Child and Public Dental Health), School of Dental Sciences, from 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2024;
(ii) Professor Brett Duane as Director of Global Relations, School of Dental Sciences, from 2 September 2021 to 30 June 2023;
(iii) Professor Sarah McCormack as Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate), School of Engineering, for a two-year term from 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2023;
(iv) Professor Kevin Kelly as Director of Teaching and Learning (Undergraduate), School of Engineering, for a two-year term from 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2023;
(v) Professor Brian Broderick as Director of Global Relations, School of Engineering, for a one-year term to 30 June 2022;
(vi) Professor Mark Sweetnam as Director of Teaching and Learning (Undergraduate), School of English, for a two-year term from 1 August 2021 to 31 July 2023;
(vii) Professor Isabella Jackson as Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate), School of Histories and Humanities, for a two-year term from 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2023;
(viii) Professor Daniel Geary to continue as Director of Research, School of Histories and Humanities, for a two-year term to 30 June 2023;
(ix) Professor Ciara O’Hagan as Director of Teaching and Learning (Undergraduate), School of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies, for a two-year term from 1 June 2021 to 31 May 2023;
Incorporating any amendments approved at subsequent Council meetings.

CL/20-21/248  Heads of Discipline

The Council noted and approved the following nominations:

(i) Professor Brian Caulfield as Head of Discipline of Civil, Structural and Environmental Engineering, School of Engineering, for a three-year term from 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2024;
(ii) Professor Gillian Martin as Head of Discipline of Germanic Studies, School of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies, for a one-year term from 1 June 2021 to 31 May 2022;
(iii) Professor Denis Barry as Head of Discipline of Anatomy, School of Medicine, for a three-year term from 7 June 2021 to 30 June 2024;
(iv) Professor Stephen Smith as Head of Discipline of Clinical Microbiology, School of Medicine, for a three-year term from 17 May 2021 to 30 June 2024;
(v) Professor Noel McCarthy as Head of Discipline of Public Health and Primary Care, School of Medicine, for a three-year term from 7 June 2021 to 30 June 2024.

CL/20-21/249  Administrative Procedures in the Summer Session

The Council noted and approved that items of routine College business relating to Council would be dealt with by the Provost or Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer between the last Council meeting of 2020/21 (2 June 2021) and the first Council meeting of 2021/22 (22 September 2021), and a report would be made to Council at its meeting of 22 September 2021.
SECTION D

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

Signed ...................................................

Date ......................................................

Incorporating any amendments approved at subsequent Council meetings