



Incorporating any amendments approved at subsequent Council meetings

**XX = Board relevance**

**Trinity College Dublin  
The University of Dublin**

**A meeting of the University Council was held on 18 January 2023 at 11.15am in the Trinity Board Room, Trinity Business School.**

*Present* Provost, Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer, Registrar, Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies, Dean of Graduate Studies, Dean of Research, Vice-President for Global Engagement, Dean of Students, Senior Tutor, Dean of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (AHSS), Dean of Health Sciences, Professor L. Carson, Professor P. O’Grady, Professor D. Romelli, Professor G. Watson, Professor B. Fitzgerald, Professor J. Wyse, Professor L. O’Driscoll, Professor AM. Malone, Dr. O. Gobbo, Ms. D. Alexander, Mr. M. McAndrew, Ms Z. Cummins, Mr E. Gilroy.

*Apologies* Professor J. Coleman, Professor K. Neenan, Dean of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), Professor B. Daly, Professor P. O’Grady, Ms. E. Sweeney, Mr S. Lysaght.

*In attendance* Chief Operating Officer, Secretary to the College, Librarian and College Archivist, Academic Secretary, Assistant Academic Secretary.

*Observers* Mr. O. Horgan.

**SECTION A.1: Policy Matters**

The Provost welcomed everyone to Council and requested that Council members declare any potential conflicts of interest relating to the agenda. The Secretary to the College noted that no conflicts of interests were reported.

The Secretary to the College informed Council that Professor A. Bray had resigned from Council for personal reasons and that a Faculty election will take place shortly, with a new representative expected to be in place for the March 2023 meeting. The Provost extended her thanks to Professor Bray for her contribution to Council.

**CL/22-23/083 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of Council on 30 November 2022 were approved and signed.

**CL/22-23/084 Matters Arising from the Minutes**

The Academic Secretary referred Council to minute CL/22-23/065, noting that in response to the recommendations in the ‘Report on the Quality Review of the LIR Academy Programmes’ a working group had been established to examine academic governance relating to Trinity.

Speaking to minute CL/22-23/067 ‘Institutional Quality Review’, she advised that an implementation plan to respond to the Review recommendations will be submitted to Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) by the end of March 2023.

**CL/22-23/085 National Student Survey Report (UG &PGT) 2021/22**

The Provost informed Council that the National Student Survey is a national initiative that Trinity participates in each year.

The Dean of Students presented the findings of the survey that was undertaken over a three-week period in February/March 2022. The survey which was administered to first year and final year undergraduate students, and postgraduate taught students, relates to their experiences of Trinity. She advised that the report was presented to the Quality Committee on 20 October 2022 and that Council is now invited to consider the report.

The Provost thanked the Dean of Students for her presentation and invited questions and comments.

Responding to a question raised by the Vice Provost/Chief Academic Officer on actions taken by Trinity to respond to the findings, which appear to be essentially similar each year, the Dean of Students explained that prior to Covid it had been agreed that Schools would develop action plans to address the findings, however, she noted that due to the pandemic that this was not progressed. Schools are now asked to identify areas of significance in their annual quality reports and to report to the Quality Committee how they might address these.

A discussion on the robustness of the survey and the limitations of the descriptive statistics which feature in the report took place. Members emphasised the need for additional statistical analyses to be undertaken and for the survey to include targeted questions that may yield more meaningful responses. Student representatives highlighted the length of the survey as problematic and queried the quality and accuracy of the responses due to the high number of questions asked. There was a consensus that focusing on questions and themes of relevance to Trinity would yield more meaningful data.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies drew attention to an initiative introduced to USC in 2022/23, which is continuing in 2023/24, whereby DUTLs are invited to share their practices on 'collaborative learning' and 'effective teaching practices', which he reported as working well. The Provost noting the importance of knowledge exchange highlighted the need for Trinity to consider and implement initiatives relating to good practice in areas such as student feedback and she referred to work being done in the University of Helsinki on feedback, recently discussed at a LERU meeting.

**Decision:**

**CL/22-23/085.1:** Council noted the National Student Survey Report (UG & PGT) 2021/22.

**CL/22-23/086 Trends in Internationalisation in Higher Education**

The Vice-President for Global Engagement provided Council with an overview of trends in internationalisation in higher education, remarking that development over the past 50 years had been organic in nature and not planned. She noted that there is a need for greater planning across the sector to address fragmentation and a better alignment of activities to support achievement of internationalisation in higher education. Outlining the core principles and values informing internationalisation over the past 50 years, the Vice-President for Global Engagement highlighted that there had been a move from an institutional focus to one involving a partnership approach that is reflected in terminology such as, 'co-operation', 'partnership', and 'mutual benefit'.

The Vice-President for Global engagement highlighted recent geopolitical tensions such as the war in Ukraine, climate action and change, emerging policy at multiple levels, and the cost of

**Incorporating any amendments approved at subsequent Council meetings**

living and spoke to their potential impact on internationalisation. A national strategy is currently being developed which will inform Trinity's approach to internationalisation and the next Global Engagement Strategy.

The Vice-President for Global Engagement highlighted that she is undertaking work to re-think Trinity's model of internationalisation. The revised model will consider how it is embedded in curricula, take account of sustainability and climate action, and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI). She also spoke to a consultation being undertaken with Schools on 'what does success look like for a globally connected university', the findings of which will also inform College's next strategy on Global Engagement.

The Provost thanked the Vice-President for Global Engagement for her presentation and invited questions and comments.

Responding to a question from the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer on her views on the establishment of an overseas Education Hub, the Vice-President for Global Engagement reported that she did not see the viability of a Trinity campus overseas, and on the matter of a Transnational Education Hub she highlighted the need for more research on this to inform decision-making.

The Vice-President for Global Engagement responding to a comment from the Provost on the diversity of international students in Trinity, advised that a significant number of international students attending Trinity are from three countries, China, India, and the US. More work needs to be undertaken by Global Engagement to distil the available recruitment and admissions data and link this with regional approaches to recruitment.

Responding to a question from the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer on knowledge-security and foreign interference, the Vice-President for Global Engagement acknowledged the impact on international students studying in Ireland, in particular their fears about participating in protests or activities that may present difficulties for their families back home. She acknowledged the conversations that are taking place in the research arena, and highlighted the need for an integrated approach to internationalisation, as this spans across Trinity's academic mission.

Commenting on the challenges presented by the accommodation crisis, and the impact on Trinity's attractiveness as a place to study, the Vice-President for Global Engagement reported that the Netherlands and Denmark had limited their international student numbers to address similar challenges. She referred also to the French embassy's warning on the difficulties in sourcing accommodation to students relocating from France to Ireland and advised that accommodation constraints are taken into consideration when marketing Trinity offerings to international students. She observed that while Trinity needed to be mindful of the trends, a response was required from government on this.

Responding to a comment from a member concerning how to capture data on students enrolled on PhD programmes overseas who attend Trinity to undertake research over one or two semesters, the Vice-President for Global Engagement stated that these students are Trinity alumni once they graduate, as they attended Trinity for a period of time.

The Provost thanked the Vice-President for Global Engagement for her presentation.

#### **CL/22-23/087 Degree Classification and Trends**

XX

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer appraised Council on discussions at a recent meeting of IUA Registrars. It concerned a high-level presentation by QQI on a preliminary quantitative analysis of HEA returns for the past decade. Their analysis focused on honours Bachelor Degrees and first-class honours classifications. Over a ten-year period, the proportion of first-class

**Incorporating any amendments approved at subsequent Council meetings**

honours by year for all HEA funded institutions had seen a gradual increase year-on-year, with a notable 8.5% average increase during 2019/2020 and 2020/22. She noted that when considering grade inflation, it is important to distinguish between the awarding of higher degrees than students deserve or would have received in the past, from a progressive increase in the standard of work being presented by students. It is particularly important to understand the myriad factors which may drive a trend towards progressively higher classifications. Further meetings between QQI and the IUA Registrar's Group on trends in degree classification will explore two separate issues, namely, long-term trends and the recent pandemic-related changes.

Commenting on the data and emerging trends, members highlighted measures and supports in place in Trinity to support student success that may be leading to better outcomes in terms of higher grades, these included, the use of a variety of modes of assessment, such as continuous assessment; provision of feedback to students on assessments; proactive measures taken by Schools to address changes in performance; semesterisation; and the undergraduate tutor system.

The Provost thanked the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer stressing the importance of reflecting on the trends to establish the way forward.

Professor Jane Stout, the Vice-President for Biodiversity and Climate Action, joined the meeting.

#### **CL/22-23/088 Sustainability and the Climate Crisis**

Professor Stout delivered a presentation to Council on 'Trinity Sustainability: Biodiversity and Climate Strategy and Action Plan' highlighting the first step towards achieving Goal 5 'We will shape our organisation and focus research around the challenge of achieving a sustainable and healthy planet', of the Trinity Strategic Plan, 2020-2025, as '... strong ethical leadership in all that we do, from research to staff development and throughout the activities of our entire university community'. She outlined progress made on developing Trinity's Biodiversity and Climate Strategy and Action Plan advising that it is expected that a draft will be available by Spring 2023. Concluding her presentation, she highlighted next steps for Trinity, which include the establishment of a working group on sustainability in undergraduate education and establishing Fellows for Education in Sustainability in each of the Faculties to enable development and implementation.

Responding to a question from the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer on what is needed from College to support the process, Professor Stout highlighted the need for resources across College to support implementation of the Strategy and action plan. Reflecting on the findings of the audit of the Trinity undergraduate curriculum on sustainability and climate action and actions undertaken by comparator institutions, members noted that Trinity has more to do in this area. Attention was drawn to the benefits of aligning research in sustainability with Science Foundation Ireland funding calls. It was acknowledged that Ireland as an island nation faces greater challenges are faced in reconciling internationalisation with climate action goals, and that creative solutions were required on this.

The Provost thanked Professor Stout for her presentation.

Professor Jane Stout left the meeting.

#### **CL/22-23/089 Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer's Report**

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer referred to a recent invitation issued to the College community to join an institutional conversation on the Admissions Strategy 'What should our student body look like, and how do we make it happen'? She emphasised the importance of hearing as many views as possible on Trinity's ambitions on the composition of the student body and the Admissions Strategy.

**Incorporating any amendments approved at subsequent Council meetings**

Speaking to Senior Academic Promotions, the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer informed Council that a review of the process is underway and that an email to Heads of School will follow this week inviting them to nominate four members of academic staff representing different grades to participate in a series of facilitated discussions to decide what metrics ought to be measured in the areas of teaching, research and administration and how they should be measured.

Referring to the issuing of Leaving Certificate results, the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer expressed her disappointment that there will be a delay in the issuing of Leaving Certificate results again this year by the Department of Education. It is likely that results will be delayed for the next three years. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer acknowledged the impact of this delay on the commencement of the academic year and will engage with heads of school to agree a start date and structure for the coming academic year, cognisant that the date has wide-ranging implications for all incoming students and staff.

Concluding her report to Council, the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer advised that the results of a discussion on assessment will be presented to Council in this term. She noted staff and students' preferences for onsite examinations and the need for Trinity to reflect on how students are assessed, to realise this ambition.

#### **CL/22-23/090 Provost's Report**

The Provost invited the Secretary to the College to provide an update on changes to College governance.

The Secretary to the College noted that discussion on College governance had taken place at Council on 5 November 2022 and that some changes were proposed following a review of the Board governance structures, the Higher Education Authority Act, 2022, and the new Supplemental Charter. He outlined changes that had been introduced to the Council agenda to address governance, such as a greater strategic focus to Council meetings, and the introduction of Section A.2. to the agenda whereby items considered by academic committees of Council are not discussed by Council. He noted that the majority of changes impact Board and its principal committees. Any changes to the academic committees of Council will be brought to Council for consideration once proposals have been developed.

The Provost thanked the Secretary to the College acknowledging the time being taken this academic year on College governance.

Reporting on progress made in relation to the Science Gallery, the Provost highlighted that following a tendering process a contract had been awarded to a vendor and that an announcement will be made shortly.

Speaking to Trinity East, the Provost advised that due to the implications of the refurbishment for research and education a proposal will be brought to a meeting of Council for consideration this academic year.

#### **CL/22-23/091 Any Other Urgent Business**

There was no any other urgent business.

**SECTION A.2: Policy Matters which have already been considered by  
Committees**

**CL/22-23/092 Revisions to English Language Entry Requirements (UG & PG)**

**Decision:**

**CL/22-23/092.1:** Council approved the revisions to English Language Entry Requirements (UG & PG) related to minimum required scores and sub-scores in Duolingo English Test for 2022/23 admissions.

**SECTION B**

**CL/22-23/093 Graduate Studies Committee**

The Dean of Graduate Studies drew attention to minutes GS/22-23/062 and GS/22-23/063 advising that the MSc in Clinical Supervision will be ceased from 2023/24 and that GSC had agreed to change English language requirements for the MPhil courses in the Centre for Language and Communication Studies from 2023/24.

The draft minutes of 8 December 2022 were noted and approved.

**Decisions:**

**CL/22-23/093.1:** Council approved the cessation of the MSc in Clinical Supervision from 2023/24.

**CL/22-23/093.2:** Council approved the change in the English language requirements from an overall score of 6.5 in IELTS (or equivalent) to an overall score of 7 in IELTS (and equivalent) in the MPhil courses in the Centre for Language and Communication Studies from 2023/24, with no minimum band score under 6.5 (or equivalent).

**CL/22-23/094 Research Committee**

The Dean of Research informed Council that Ms Doris Alexander, Associate Director for European Engagement, had presented on the reform of researcher assessment at the meeting on 8 November 2022, which was followed by a lengthy discussion on the agreement. The Provost noted that reform of researcher assessment will be an item under A2 of the Council agenda in February 2023.

The minutes of 8 November 2022 were noted and approved

**CL/22-23/095 Student Life Committee**

The minutes of 1 November 2022 and the draft minutes of 6 December 2022 were noted and approved.

**CL/22-23/096 Undergraduate Studies Committee**

The draft minutes of 5 December 2022 were noted and approved.

**SECTION C****CL/22-23/097 Higher Degrees – Reports of Examiners**

The Council noted and approved the reports of examiners on candidates for higher degrees (Higher Degrees List) dated 18 January 2023.

**(i) Professional Higher Degrees by Research Alone**

**M.D.** Catherine Anne O’Gorman

**(ii) Higher Degrees by Research Alone**

**Ph.D.** Nedal Issa Mohammad Alfasfos; Adnan Ali Afridi; Ola Ahmed; Bruno Ariano; Johannes Bengt Arne Aspman; Giulia Bonaldi; Nina Bresnihan; Glenn Hans Mark Calvert; Anton Feeney-Johansson; Elias Raphael Furrer; Jingran Gao; Samuel Alexander Thomas Johnston; Aitkazy Kaisha; Deirdre Siobhán Kearney; Michaela Kearney; Caroline Ann Lloyd; Helene Bikorimana Mihigo; Gráinne Maedhbh Nic Lochlainn; James Michael Nolan; Fionn Ó Marcaigh; Christian Oswald; Joshua Tobin; Natalie Walsh; Yizhi Wang; Éadaoin Whelan; Sijia Zhao.

**D. Mus. Perf.** Pedro López López

**CL/22-23/098 Head of Discipline**

The Council noted and approved the nomination of Professor Owen Conlan as the Head of the Discipline of Artificial Intelligence, in the School of Computer Science and Statistics, from 6 December 2022 to 5 December 2025.

**CL/22-23/099 School Director**

The Council noted and approved that Dr Tara Mitchell resumed her term as Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate), in the School of Social Sciences and Philosophy, on 15 December 2022, continuing to 31 May 2024.

**CL/22-23/100 Fitness to Practise**

XX

The Council noted and approved the circulated memorandum from the Assistant Secretary and the Project Manager, Secretary’s Office, dated 5 December.

**SECTION D**

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

Incorporating any amendments approved at subsequent Council meetings

Signed .....

Date .....