

**UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN  
TRINITY COLLEGE**

**GRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE**

DRAFT Minutes of the meeting held at 9.00 am on Thursday 15th December, 2005  
Boardroom, Provost's House

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**Present:** Prof. Patrick Prendergast, Dean of Graduate Studies (*chair*),  
Prof. Eunan O'Halpin, Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate), School of Histories and Humanities  
Prof. June Nunn, Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate), School of Dental Science  
Prof. Vincent Cahill, School of Computer Science and Statistics  
Dr Stefano Sanvito, Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate), School of Physics  
Dr Richard K. Porter, Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate), School of Biochemistry and Immunology  
Dr Cormac Ó Cuilleanáin, Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate), Vice Deanery, Faculty of Arts & Humanities  
Dr Kevin Tierney, Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate), School of Psychology  
Prof. J Saeed, Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate), School of Linguistic, Speech & Communication Sciences  
Prof. Paul Coughlan, Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate), School of Business  
Dr Helen Buckley, Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate), School of Social Work and Social Policy  
Mr Trevor Peare, Keeper of Readers' Services (in attendance *Ex officio*)  
Mr Ryan Sheridan, Graduate Students' Union President (*Ex officio*)  
Mr John Lawlor, Information Systems Services (MIS Manager)

**Apologies:** Prof. Ian Robertson, Dean of Research  
Prof. Henry Rice, Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate), School of Engineering  
Dr Andrew Loxley, Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate), Vice Deanery, Faculty of Social & Human Sciences  
Mr Gerard Tobin, Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate), School of Nursing and Midwifery  
Dr John Clancy, Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate), School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences  
Dr Richard Timoney, Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate), School of Mathematics  
Dr Kenneth Irvine, Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate), School of Natural Sciences  
Prof. John Kelly, Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate), School of Chemistry  
Prof. Seamus Martin, Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate), Vice Deanery of Genetics and Microbiology  
Prof. Kenneth Benoit, Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate), School of Social Sciences and Philosophy  
Mr Charles Larkin, Graduate Students' Union Vice-President (*Ex officio*)

**In attendance:** Ms Ewa Sadowska

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The Dean welcomed Mr John Lawlor, the MIS Manager, and Dr Richard Porter as new members of the Committee.

**191.0 Minutes of 17 November 2005**

The minutes of the meeting of 17th November 2005 were approved.

**191.1 Matters arising**

- a) The Dean noted that Prof. Seamus Martin and Dr John Clancy were appointed as Directors of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) in the Vice Deanery of Genetics and Microbiology, and the School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences respectively and confirmed that there is still a vacancy in the School of Medicine. The Dean welcomed Dr Richard Porter as Dr Tim Mantle's replacement on the Committee.
- b) **Re 190.1 b)** The Dean noted that a call for proposals is expected to be issued to the Universities in early 2006 by the Department of Education and Science under the Strategic Innovation Fund (SIF), and that it would be important that the Postgraduate Directors be aware of this. Also, it is expected that there will be funding made available later in the year under the National Research Plan and that Trinity should prepare to make a substantial bid for it. The Committee strongly felt that there should be parity of funding under the 4<sup>th</sup> level Government funding initiatives for both the Science and Arts and Humanities disciplines so that the latter should not be disadvantaged and its academic development hindered.

c) **Re 190.3 Teaching Course for Graduate Students:** The Dean noted that he had been advised by Prof. John Panter, Acting Director of CAPSL that a teaching course advertised recently for teaching assistants had generated a huge interest from over 200 postgraduates who wished to sign up for it.

### **191.2 Reviewing the Graduate Education Strategy of Schools**

The Dean spoke to the document circulated as Item 3 and referred to the Vice-Provost Prof. Ruth Byrne's attendance at the last Committee meeting to review the strategic planning process by College and by Schools. The Dean would be chairing the Graduate Strategy Group (consisting of Prof. John Saeed, Prof. Ken Benoit, Prof. June Nunn, and Prof. Henry Rice with Ms Ewa Sadowska as secretary) which will review the School Strategic Plans with a view to providing a summative assessment on the proposed Graduate Education Strategy in College to the Strategic Planning Coordinating Group chaired by the Vice-Provost. The Dean clarified the underlying assumptions of the review process and emphasised that even though outcomes of a Graduate Education Strategy and a Research Strategy are not identical, it is envisaged that the Graduate Strategy Group will collaborate with the Research Strategy Group and will hold a common meeting before a final submission is issued to the Coordinating Group. He would expect to complete this task by the end of Hilary Term. With regard to the proposed Criteria of Assessment of the Graduate Education Strategy after a brief discussion it was agreed that it would be useful if, when relevant, Schools made an attempt to address possible reasons behind all local non-supervision/low-rate supervision areas. It was also confirmed that it might be reasonably expected that the SIF funding might be ear-marked for inter-institution cooperation in terms of graduate schools and it would therefore be prudent to see such structures imbedded in the School strategic plans should such specific funding become available. With regard to the proposed Strategy Development, it was agreed to incorporate under point (d) iii the contribution of the Library in the area of Information Management. With regard to the four research strands: Culture and the creative arts in Ireland and the world, Globalisation, Information society, and Health Sciences identified under the Research Strategy, the Dean noted that he would like to see a parallel prioritisation developed under the Graduate Education Strategy. The Committee approved the circulated document and the Dean undertook to incorporate the suggested changes to the version to be uploaded on the web.

### **191.3 Graduate Programmes and Integrated PhDs in Trinity College**

The Dean spoke to the document circulated as Item 4 and explained that it was put together at a request of the Heads' Committee. He noted that both the SIF and the National Research Plan would most likely have specific funding for the new type PhD incorporating taught and generic courses so that the graduates would acquire a broader skills base to be more employable in the "knowledge" economy. It was noted that the Dean's submission aims to be sufficiently broad to preserve the good features of the Trinity PhD apprentice model and to incorporate the advantages of the new integrated system. The Committee received the submission very well and it was approved after a brief discussion in which it was noted among other things that the integrated PhD would lead to a greater flexibility in terms of registration and would confirm that 4 years is a reasonable completion period and should be funded accordingly. It would be necessary to appoint separate external examiners to the taught courses/modules. It was re-confirmed that examination for the award of the PhD is by thesis alone and that the prior courses are required for progression but do not form part of the assessment for the degree. It was agreed that Schools might wish to make local arrangements for teaching assistantships to be inbuilt into the integrated PhD but all agreed that creating such posts should primarily be justified on academic grounds for the student rather than seen as a source for "cheap academic labour" for the School. The Committee approved the circulated document and the Dean undertook to incorporate the suggested changes to the version for the Heads' Committee. The Dean also clarified that his submission did not address part-time taught courses but that he intends to come back to the issue at a later stage.

### **191.4 AOB**

- a) The Committee approved a change of the degree from MSc in Economics to MSc (Econ) to be noted for approval by the University Council.
- b) To note that the Committee had approved at its meeting on 20 October 2005 a proposal submitted by Prof. Brian Singleton, the Course Director, to change the current name of the M.Phil. course from "M.Phil. in Irish Theatre" to "M.Phil. in Theatre and Performance" as of entry for the academic year 2006/07.

- c) A question was raised with regard to the Graduate School based upon partnership agreement between Trinity College and the Irish Management Institute. The Dean advised that the remit of the Graduate Studies Committee extended to the academic programme of the graduate school and he would expect that in the normal way proposals relating to that programme would come before the Graduate Studies Committee.
- d) The Committee approved with some amendments the two forms circulated under Items C1 and C2.

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 10 am. The next meeting is scheduled for 26 January 2006.

**Prof. Patrick J. Prendergast.**

Date: 23 February 2006