

**UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN
TRINITY COLLEGE**

GRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 9.00 a.m. on Thursday 22nd April 2010
Boardroom, Provost's House

Present: Professor Carol O'Sullivan, Dean of Graduate Studies (*Chair*),
Directors of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) as follows:
Dr Derek Nolan, School of Biochemistry and Immunology
Dr Martin Fellenz, School of Business
Dr Siobhan Clarke, School of Computer Science and Statistics
Dr Claire Healy, School of Dental Science
Professor Brian Broderick, School of Engineering
Dr Sam Slote, School of English
Professor Moray McGowan, School of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies
Dr Jeffrey Kallen, School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences
Dr Paula Murphy, School of Natural Sciences
Dr Fintan Sheerin, School of Nursing and Midwifery
Dr Gillian Wylie, Aspirant School of Religions, Theology and Ecumenics
Dr Jim Levine, School of Social Sciences and Philosophy
Mr Ronan Hodson, Graduate Students' Union President (*Ex officio*)
Ms Alexandra Murphy, Graduate Students' Union Vice-President (*Ex officio*)
Mr Trevor Peare, Keeper of Readers' Services (in attendance *Ex officio*)
Dr Patrick Geoghegan, Associate Dean of Research (in attendance *Ex officio*)

Apologies: Directors of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) as follows:
Dr Stephen Connon, School of Chemistry
Dr Ruth Barton, School of Drama, Film & Music
Dr Carmel O'Sullivan, School of Education
Professor Seamus Martin, School of Genetics and Microbiology
Dr Hazel Dodge, School of Histories & Humanities
Dr Stefan Sint, School of Mathematics
Dr Thomas Connor, School of Medicine
Dr Andrew Harkin, School of Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences
Dr Eoin O'Sullivan, School of Social Work and Social Policy

In attendance: Ms Jennifer Hill, Graduate Studies Office, Secretary to the meeting (*Ex officio*)
Ms Helen Thornbury, Graduate Studies Office

GS/09-10/033 Minutes of 18th March 2010

The minutes of the meeting of 18th March 2010 were approved by the Committee as circulated; noting that on Page 2 under AOB, the date 1011 should read 2010/2011.

GS/09-10/034 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

GS/09-10/035 M.Sc. in Disability Studies

The Dean welcomed Dr Joan Murphy and invited her to speak to the circulated document. Dr Murphy explained that Disability Studies is an emerging interdisciplinary field that examines disability as a central aspect of human experience in social, political, cultural and economic contexts. Staff from several Schools within Trinity have collaborated with the National Institute for Intellectual Disability (NIID) to develop this programme.

There will be a one-year full-time and a two-year part-time option available. Students will focus on policy, disability theory and research; preparing them to take on leadership positions in the development of disability theory, policy, research, management and activism.

Due to the lateness of the proposal being submitted, the Dean asked whether it would still be possible to have an intake this September and Dr Murphy confirmed there had already been considerable interest in the course.

It was also confirmed that the extra position that is required for this course is being funded externally through an Atlantic Philanthropies' grant.

The proposal currently states a maximum student intake as 15; however this could be increased as there is no reason to keep the number so low. There are three elective modules for students to take within the course and this could lead to small class sizes. Although students on certain courses in the School of Nursing and Midwifery can also take these modules, it was advised that students should be made aware that modules may not run if there are low numbers.

As Dr Eoin O'Sullivan, Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) for the School of Social Work and Social Policy was not in attendance, Dr Fintan Sheerin spoke on his behalf and confirmed that the School of Nursing and Midwifery are very much in support of this truly inter-disciplinary course. It does cross disciplines and is moving the subject area from medical to social. Where there is teaching within different Schools this has already been agreed upon.

The committee approved the course for submission to the University Council subject to any additional amendments that may be required following the assessor's report.

GS/09-10/036 Dean of Graduate Studies Annual Report

The Dean explained that the Annual Report was being presented to both the Graduate Studies Committee and Council concurrently and had been discussed at Council the previous day.

The Dean spoke about several items of the Annual Report that were of particular interest, including:

- There was a total of 5,206 registered postgraduate students in 2008/2009;
- Figure 2 on page 12 of the report should be considered as we move forward in the rationalization of existing courses. Between 2002 and 2009 there was a 22% increase in the number of taught masters and postgraduate diploma courses offered but only a 14% increase in registered students indicating that a much more stable set of courses is needed. In addition, Table 7 on page 13 shows a worrying number of courses with very small numbers and courses that do not run at all.
- The examination period for research degrees is still high and this needs ongoing monitoring and improvement.
- The SIF II funding referred to on page 18 of the report enabled the development of advanced disciplinary modules which have been very successful.
- The numbers of research applications have remained consistent, in particular in the Schools of Engineering and Computer Science and Statistics; however we are aware that these are likely to decrease in the current climate.
- The numbers of registered Masters students in Year 3 and upwards and Ph.D. students in Year 5 and upwards are going down.

A discussion was held regarding the change in structure of the Postgraduate Studentship (1252) College award which has been made to accommodate the structured Ph.D. being four years but the 1252 award being three years. The new structure allows for one year of funding to be given to a 4th year student, for example. In addition, Schools should also be able to match the funding. Funding such as the Innovation Bursaries has also been provided in a clear strategic goal to actively target Ph.D. studentships. It was queried whether fee remission could be offered to a non-EU student, as a form of funding similar to those provided in the USA. However, College has a very strict rule that there is no such thing as a fee waiver as only a reduced state grant is received for non-EU students. The difference between EU and non-EU fees has to be paid from somewhere, be it from school, faculty or College funds. It was confirmed that College Awards do cover non-EU fees.

GS/09-10/037 Provision for Internships on College Awards

The Dean spoke to this item and explained that the upper limit of income for a recipient of a College Award is €18,000. Students who are offered an internship, which are often well-paid, can then find themselves over the income limit. As internships should be encouraged as a positive experience during a student's PhD, it is proposed that a case can be made to the Dean of Graduate Studies, with support from the Supervisor, confirming that the internship is relevant to the research and should be undertaken. If this is approved, the College Award will be frozen for the period of the internship; however the student will not get the time, or money, back. The Committee agreed to this proposal.

GS/09-10/038 AOB

The President of the Graduate Student's Union requested to note that the Postgraduate Advisory Service which was established a year ago may not continue and asked for support, where possible, in allowing it to do so.

Section B for noting and approval

- a) The Committee noted and approved the School of English *Calendar Part 2* change re: module in Graduate Research Methods.
- b) The Committee noted and approved the Claude and Vincenette Pichois research award *Calendar Part 2* change.

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 10.03am.

Prof. Carol O'Sullivan

Date: 10th May 2010