School of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies
School Committee

Wednesday 17th October 2018

11am – 12.30pm, Room 2026

Minutes

Attendance

Present:
Jürgen Uhlich (HoS / Chair), Eoin Mac Cárthaigh, Katerina Garcia, Brian Brewer, Susana Bayó, Anne Fitzpatrick, Clodagh Brook, Peter Arnds, Igor Candido, Ciara O’Hagan, Alex Lukes, Hannes Opelz, Justin Doherty, Sarah Smyth, Edward Arnold, Louise Kari Mereau (PGR), Elisabetta Leopardi (PGR), Jennifer Edmond, Mary Cosgrove, Silvia Bertoni, Balázs Apor, James Hadley, John Murray, Eithne Bowen, Rachel Hoare, Giuliana Adamo.

In attendance:
Rima Fitzpatrick (SAM), Sinead Doran, Caoimhe Ni Bhraonain, Tracy Corbett

Apologies:
Sarah Alyn Stacey, Clemens Ruthner, Pádraig de Paor, James Hanrahan, Lesley Grant.

1. Minutes of last Meeting

Approved with the following additions: Brian Brewer and Justin Doherty added to ‘present’ list; note that ‘HoS assured committee that numbers will be followed by resources’ added into item of managing fluctuating student demand, note added that ‘fluctuating demand policy will be formulated by a working party’, not the School Exec, and Sarah Smyth volunteered for this.

2. Matters Arising

- Languages as an elective - no update yet on this matter but DUTL Rachel Hoare will be following up.
- HoS welcomed new staff members to the School – Tylor Brand (NMES) and Jennifer Edmond (Digital Humanities).
- Jennifer Edmond will lead the initiative to create PhD pathways in Digital Humanities, Lit Trans and Comp Lit, as current Trinity system only allows for PhD in a discipline e.g. German.
- New MPhil – Hannes Opelz updated that they are still aiming for Graduate Studies approval in MT 2018 and for first intake of students in 2019/20. Placements and internships still require more work, but field trip to Brussels is secured. Hannes asked for anyone with contacts in NGOs, Cultural Institutes and tech firms to contact him. Hannes, James and Justin are working with School office on promo video, also with Global on a marketing campaign. Once approved, advertising and recruitment will be big task in HT 2019.
• HoS confirmed he will set up a working party for issuing a policy to managing fluctuating student demand.

3. Head of School report

• Thomas Brown lecturer Joanna Rzepa is leaving Trinity at the end of MT, replacement was found for HT 2019 and competition for an appointment will run early 2019.
• Athena SWAN – Sarah Alyn Stacey and Igor Candido are School volunteer champions and will be updating us on the progress. €5K was committed from Faculty for their buy-out as estimated 300 hrs over next 18 months will be needed to complete this application.
• HoS reported on FTSE numbers which have dropped in 2017/18. Due to current budgeting model based on teaching activity this has direct impact on School’s budgets.
• HoS reported that no budget has yet been received for 2018/19 but we should get it by the end of October.
• HoS spoke briefly about lone work policy presented at Head of School committee, and employers’ and line managers’ duty of care.

4. Student Concerns

None

5. Workload model – implementation, feedback, amendments

Head of School summarised some comments and concerns raised in writing by Spanish and Russian, namely:
• that certain duties were not included or adequately weighted – HoS asked staff to submit concrete example of and duties for consideration;
• that centralised gathering and retaining of information might be more efficient – HoS confirmed that gathering is to remain at dept. level as this is a tool to help HoDs with planning and allocation of teaching and admin duties. School office will retain the data and might use it for specific purposes e.g. when HoD asked for a new staff member;
• that HoDs do not have visibility of PG teaching and other UG teaching – School manager confirmed that steps were taken to ensure that HoDs know staff’s PG commitments prior to starting to plan for UG teaching, method used in 17/18 appeared to have worked well based on HoDs’ feedback. UG team-taught modules (EU, ML) are still a problem though and need further thinking.
• that early career academics need to be better supported – HoS suggested issuing a policy to be added to the workload model and ensure that junior staff are supported equally across all dept.
• that admin roles are not adequately reflected in the model, mainly due to the fact that dept. organise their admin differently – e.g. some have programme
co-ordinators, some year co-ordinators etc. – further thinking is needed on this.

It was once again confirmed that this is a tool for HoDs to plan teaching and admin workloads in their departments and HoS has no intention of getting involved in their internal day-to-day planning.

6. TEP

- Assessment – Rachel suggested that as a School we need to review assessment – how new methods are working, what the workloads for students and colleagues are, whether we are over-assessing or have simply replaced exams with continuous assessment, whether we are now assessing same if not more etc.

  It was suggested that first UG meeting in HT could be open to all members of School committee, with reviewing assessment and sharing of practices on the agenda.

- Joint Honours – Peter Arnds asked if conversation is still open as to what combinations will be possible in joint honours as Italian is worried re impact of reduced number of combinations from 2019/20. School manager confirmed that not to her knowledge and not for 2019/20 for sure.

- Fixed timetable is confirmed from 2019/20 on to be phased in year by year method. School got assurance that all programmes will be accommodated, possibility of cross-year teaching not yet clear.

7. A.O.B.

None

8. For noting

- DUTL – Rachel Hoare summarised DUTL report and asked for committee’s views on amending functions of court of examiners, now that there are no more special exams. Committee discussed that perhaps a special circumstances committee could be established and potentially precede the exams. Committee also pointed out that remit of Court of Appeals remains unclear as they often recommend special exams in their findings.

  Rachel spoke about Life after Trinity event organised by the School office for sophister students and alumni, informal event, 13th Nov in Global room, details to follow. Rachel asked for contacts of alumni especially of those who went on non-traditional or non-corporate career routes.

  Open day 10th November this year and HoDs should start planning the staffing.

  SS research workshops are being organised by Rachel, Daragh Downes and Library – this is mainly to support Capstone which will soon be introduced and will carry 20ECTS.

- Research - Brian Brewer explained a call by Dean of Research to gather some contacts for QS survey. We need to submit 20 names, and due to GDPR we need to get their consent to be contacted by QS, but we cannot influence
how to rate Trinity. Brian will circulate suggested wording, he has asked each dept to return 3 names to him.

- Late submission policy – some typos to be fixed and policy to be circulated for implementation from 2018/19. Rachel received comments from staff members to amend this policy and will be bringing suggestions to School exec for review.

- School HR Leave Policy – committee discussed some ambiguous wording, need for 3 week rule etc. HoS and School manager to review comments and amend where needed.

- Staff Email Protocol Policy – committee discussed restriction of hours for sending emails, asked for clarity on process when someone is out of office, and the need to acknowledge emails. HoS and School manager to review comments and amend where needed.

- Student Email Protocol Policy – Committee discussed timeline to respond to queries. HoS and School manager to review comments and amend where needed.

- School Executive terms of reference – Sarah asked for clarity of terms of reference of all the committees in the School. HoS and School manager will review all and circulate.

Sarah Smyth commented that School policies should not be for noting only. She has also asked for more detailed reports from Directors – perhaps not in writing but presented at the meeting – and these should in her opinion include summary of UG / PG / Research matters in School’s context, not only ‘digest’ from College committees.

Clodagh Brook commented that items for noting might not be read, perhaps a School-shared drive could be an option to store policies, minutes etc.