



**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 Wednesday 27 September 2017 at 11.15 am in the Board Room.**

<i>Present</i>	Provost, Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer, Registrar, Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies, Dean of Graduate Studies, Senior Tutor, Dean of Students, Dean of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, Professor J Walsh, Dean of Engineering, Mathematics and Science, Professor C Gardiner, Professor S Murphy, Dean of Health Sciences, Professor R A Kenny, Professor A M Brady, Professor M Clarke, Professor M Corry, Dr S Chandra, Professor A O’Gara, Ms S Cameron-Coen, Ms A MacPherson, Mr C O’Halloran, Mr P Shanahan, Mr R Doherty, Mr M Bhargav, Ms L Peters.
<i>Apologies</i>	Vice-President for Global Relations, Dean of Research, Professor D Faas, Professor S Garrigan, Professor A Holohan, Professor J Jones, Professor E O Nuallain, Mr M Kenyon.
<i>In attendance</i>	Academic Secretary, Secretary to the College, Librarian and College Archivist, Dr A Oldam (Director of Student Services), Professor M Hennessy (Associate Dean of Research), Ms S De Brunner.
<i>Observers</i>	Secretary to the Scholars (Mr P Lavelle).

**SECTION A**

The Provost requested that Council members declare any potential conflicts of interest in relation to the agenda. None was declared

- CL/17-18/001 Declaration**  
The new members made the required statutory declaration. The Provost advised Council that the Associate Dean of Research, Professor Martina Hennessy, would attend meetings for the Dean of Research.
- CL/17-18/002 Minutes**  
The minutes of the meeting of 7 June 2017 were approved and signed.
- CL/17-18/003 Matters Arising**
- (i) **CL/16-17/218:** The Dean of Graduate Studies provided an update on the new postgraduate studentship scheme, which had been renamed to the Provost’s Scholarship Awards. He noted that 199 applications, related to a broad range of research areas, were received prior to the closing date on Friday 22 September 2017. An evaluation panel will be convened and will include, as an external member, a Dean of Graduate Studies from a high ranking university. He confirmed that this panel will

reach decisions on the successful applicants by the end of November, which will allow for sufficient time to recruit new PhD students. Responding to a request, from the Vice-President of the Graduate Students' Union, to consider the eligibility of existing PhD students within the remit of the new award scheme, the Dean of Graduate Studies highlighted that this scheme replaces one which has only been open to entrant PhD students and that to do otherwise would distort the four-year funding model. He acknowledged that adequate funding for PhD students was always of concern and would be considered further.

- (ii) **CL/16-17/214:** The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies advised that she would provide an update on the number of Northern Irish applicants and entrants under the agenda item on admissions later in the meeting.
- (iii) **CL/16-17/217:** The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies confirmed that a proposal related to the criteria for Entrance Exhibition awards is under development and is scheduled to be circulated to Council in October.

#### **CL/17-18/004 Provost's Report**

- (i) The Provost updated Council on developments related to Trinity's largescale philanthropic funding campaign and meetings of the Campaign Cabinet, the Provost's Council and the Campaign Steering Committee. He noted the increasing importance of this project to allow Trinity to move into the space of philanthropically funded universities like a number of top institutions in the United Kingdom and the United States. He indicated that the campaign is likely to launch in a year's time.
- (ii) The Provost, referring to the E3 (Engineering, Energy and the Environment Institute) project, outlined two phases, the Learning Foundry, which is almost fully funded, and E3 Research Institute. Of the latter phase, he confirmed that this is to be housed in the Trinity Technology and Enterprise Campus and that architects, Perkins and Will, had been retained to work on a master plan for its development.
- (iii) The Provost outlined progress in relation to the building of the Trinity Business School, the Cancer Institute at St. James's Hospital and the planning phase for the Law School, which may result in a new building or in the substantial refurbishment of existing buildings.
- (iv) The Provost advised that philanthropic funding will be sought for professorships to tie-in with critical research areas, as identified through the review of Trinity's research themes. Further funding will also be sought for studentships.
- (v) The Provost briefly referred to the Trinity Education Project (TEP) and confirmed that its new governance structure is in place. He noted that Council members would receive an update on developments later in the meeting.
- (vi) The Provost updated Council on his recent travels. In June he visited London to attend a fundraising event for the Long Room Hub, followed by the Glion Colloquium in Switzerland to discuss the convergence of the activities of public and private universities and how the public good is best served. From 29 June-11 July 2017, he travelled to Canada, visiting Toronto University, McGill University, the University of British Columbia and Waterloo University, and signed a number of student exchange agreements. In August, he met with Lord Irvine Laidlaw, a benefactor of many universities in the United Kingdom, to discuss the inclusion of Trinity students under the Laidlaw Undergraduate Internship Programme in Research and Leadership. He noted that this project is being overseen by the Academic Secretary and the Dean of Development and presents a significant opportunity for Trinity. He noted the launch of the Science Gallery in Venice and the appointment of its Director. He travelled to

Venice to attend the Science Gallery International board meeting and to visit the new gallery. He noted that the Science Gallery has spread to London, Melbourne, Bengaluru and Detroit, with a possibility of openings in Cape Town and San Paolo. In September, he visited Thapar University, in India, an institution with which Trinity is in partnership.

The Provost also highlighted a number of events which had taken place since the last meeting of Council, including: a commemoration in July, held in Regent House, of the Irish Convention on its 100 year anniversary; a Launchbox demonstration day in August; the second annual meeting of the Provost's Council; the Trinity 425 symposium at which An Taoiseach, and Trinity graduate, Leo Varadkar spoke. The Provost noted that the Taoiseach, in his speech, indicated that a student loan scheme would not be implemented. Responding to a query about the Government's position on third-level education funding and sustainability in the sector, he highlighted the 25% projected increase in student numbers across the sector by the year 2028, the possible effects of 'Brexit' and the outcome that private funding would have to increase to sustain the sector. He also explained that government funding for higher education is fixed, meaning that as student numbers increase the level of funding per student decreases. He acknowledged that additional funding might become available through an increased National Training Levy imposed on employers, however, in that eventuality, Trinity would need to safeguard its autonomy over its curriculum.

- (vii) The Provost noted that he had established a Provost's Advisory Committee to provide guidance in relation to lowering Trinity's carbon output and increasing sustainability. He tabled a brochure with information on how to reduce energy consumption, minimise waste and to increase recycling.
- (viii) The Provost updated the meeting on the annual dialogue meeting with the Higher Education Authority, which took place earlier in September.

#### **CL/17-18/005 Trinity Education Project**

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer provided an update on the various strands of TEP by way of a presentation, dated September 2017.

He outlined the overlapping timelines for the roll-out of different elements of TEP, noting that the new academic year structure, Christmas examinations and new progression regulations would take effect in 2018/19 for all years of all undergraduate courses. The new curriculum architecture and new entry routes would be applicable to some courses in 2018/19 but not for the majority of courses in the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, which are dependent on the review of entry into two-subject courses. This means that the introduction of Trinity electives and approved modules would also roll out on a two-phased basis, as will the degree classification calculation based on the Junior Sophister year 30% and the Senior Sophister year 70%.

He noted that the new science entry routes had already been publicised. Significant work has been carried in relation to the fixed timetable, internships and Trinity electives. In relation to electives, he advised that these will be aligned as far as possible with Trinity's research themes. Responding to a concern about out-of-date information appearing on the Trinity website in relation to science education in Trinity, the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer noted that the timing of communications is critical so that current students and prospective applicants are clear as to the version of the curriculum being undertaken. On the topic of communications, it was commented by a member that it could not be assumed that relevant information is filtering down to staff members who need it. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer confirmed that a great deal of focus had been given to providing relevant information to different cohorts of staff and students.

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

Other comments included:

- consideration should be given to appeals mechanisms and timelines;
- there are specific issues related to courses in the Health Sciences and professional schools;
- the new academic year structure does not fit with postgraduate courses which tend to be delivered over 12 months rather than within an academic year;
- TEP is not just about policies and systems, academic staff members are being asked to re-think what and how they teach;
- the monthly Academic Registry forum with School Administrative Managers could help with communications and the assistance of Council was sought to improve attendance.

#### **Decision/Action**

**005.1:** The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer and the Dean of Graduate Studies are to discuss the postgraduate courses in the context of the academic year structure and identify solutions to issues identified.

#### **CL/17-18/006 Report on Student Evaluation Review**

A report from the Academic Secretary and former Students' Union Education Officer, Mr D Whelehan, dated June 2017, was circulated with a related presentation, dated September 2017. The Academic Secretary spoke to the item and explained that the review was carried out following Council's consideration of an overarching report on quality assurance measures in each of the faculties (CL/16-17/037(ii)).

She explained that she and Mr. Whelehan visited 20 schools during Michaelmas and Hilary terms in 2016/17 and conducted a number of focus group meetings attended, in total, by 157 students and staff members. In these discussions, it became apparent that neither staff nor students supported the discontinuation of module evaluations. She brought the meeting through a number of findings from the review, including:

- evaluations take a number of forms across Trinity involving online and paper-based surveys, staff-student focus groups, staff-student committees or meetings and through the use of 'clickers';
- a number of schools have reverted to paper-based surveys due to poor online response rates;
- feedback to students can be provided by the lecturer, communicated through the class representative, by posting information on websites or via meetings of staff-student committees;
- changes, when implemented, often benefit subsequent cohorts rather than the students evaluated;
- anonymity was valued, particularly where courses have small student numbers;
- examples of good practices include the Staff-Student Liaison Committees in the School of Chemistry (one for Freshers and one for Sophister students), and mid-module reviews.

The Academic Secretary sought Council's approval for the following recommendations:

- (i) conduct a pilot study with a number of schools and the Science (TR071) programme;
  - a. introduction of mid-module evaluations and/or
  - b. establishment of student-staff liaison committees, similar to the Chemistry model
- (ii) develop a structure to introduce independent facilitators for small class focus groups on module/course evaluation.

She noted that the Schools of Psychology, English and Engineering had agreed to take part in the pilot study.

The current Students' Union Education Officer, Ms Alice MacPherson, expressed the support of the Students' Union for the recommendations and acknowledged the work of the Academic Secretary and the former Students' Union Education Officer in their review. She noted that the Students' Union will focus on module and programmatic reviews in the current academic year

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

and will establish an Academic Senate for students, which will comprise student representatives, numbering five, from each school in Trinity. The Provost welcomed the establishment of this new forum but highlighted the potential for confusion with specific University committees such as Council and Senate. He advised that the formal title should make reference to students.

Responding to questions, the Academic Secretary confirmed that it is up to schools to decide on the most suitable evaluation methods. Some student members articulated a sense of survey fatigue and suggested that surveys could be simplified by reducing the number of questions, and that consideration should be given to the timelines for the release and completion of surveys to avoid times when students are completing assignments.

The Provost thanked the Academic Secretary and the former Students' Union Education Officer for their work on this review.

#### **Decision/Action**

**006.1:** Council approved the recommendations outlined in the Report on the Student Evaluation Review, as circulated.

**006.2:** Council noted that the new committee established by the Students' Union would make reference to students in its title, for example, 'Students' Union Academic Senate', to avoid confusion with committees of the University.

#### **CL/17-18/007 Academic Quality Assurance: Faculties Report 2015/16**

A report from the Quality Office on behalf of the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer, dated September 2017, was circulated. Speaking to the item by way of a presentation, also dated September 2017, the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer noted that the report provided an overview of academic quality assurance in Trinity in 2015/16. He drew Council's attention to the high-level data on activities in each of the faculties and highlighted the strong rate of module evaluations but expressed concern about the return rate of external examiners' reports for postgraduate taught courses in the Faculty of Health Sciences. He highlighted the retention and progression rates for new entrants in each faculty and applauded the fact that these were all above 90%.

Turning to key issues raised through the faculty reports, he noted that work is being carried out by the Quality Office to look at quality review procedures and accreditation review mechanisms for professional courses to achieve streamlined processes, where possible; discussions with Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) are ongoing in this regard. Other issues highlighted related to space, Library access, quality assurance mechanisms for clinical and other placements, and supports for international students. He noted that the Librarian and College Archivist would bring a proposal to Council related to the UK e-legal deposit system and access to resources in due course.

He also provided examples of good practice in terms of quality enhancement in each of the faculties including reviews of learning at clinical sites and the appointment of an Assistant Professor for Inter-Professional Learning in the Health Sciences. In Arts, Humanities and Social Science there has been work done to achieve greater co-ordination in relation to assignment deadlines. In Engineering, Mathematics and Science he pointed to the restructuring of science education and the new entry routes.

The Dean of Graduate Studies suggested that the low response rate amongst external examiners in the Faculty of Health Sciences might be related to the large number of small postgraduate courses being delivered in that Faculty. He advised Council that the Quality Office has put in place procedures for the return of external examiners' reports and noted that the response rate has improved since 2015/16. The Dean of Health Sciences confirmed that she would take a closer look at the data and report to a future meeting of Council.

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

The Provost thanked the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer, the Academic Secretary and all involved in compiling and providing input into the report.

#### **Decision/Action**

**007.1:** Council noted the content of the Academic Quality Assurance: Faculties Report 2015/16.

**007.2:** The Dean of Graduate Studies and the Dean of Health Sciences are to analyse the external examiner response rate of 28% for postgraduate taught courses in the Faculty of Health Sciences and report back to a future meeting of Council.

#### **CL/17-18/008 Undergraduate Admissions Data 2017/18**

A memorandum with data compiled by the Admissions Officer, on behalf of the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies, dated 20 September 2017, was circulated. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies spoke to the item and advised that the data circulated was preliminary due to the open status of the admission process for 2017/18.

She advised that this was the first cohort of entrants being scored on the new Leaving Certificate marking scale and revised points system and noted, overall, that there had been a slight decrease in points for courses and fewer instances of random selection.

She noted that the number of applicants placing Trinity as their first preference rose by 4%, from 7,965 (2016) to 8,278 (2017), which represents 11% of the total number of applications to Level 8 courses in 2017. Other institutions which saw a rise in the number of first preference applications were Maynooth University, National University of Ireland, Galway, and the Pontifical University Maynooth. The Provost queried the basis for the increase in first preference applications and whether this was related to an increase in quotas. It was noted that this could not be ascertained with confidence since other institutions tend to publish average quotas rather than exact figures. It was suggested that first preference applications could be considered in the context of new entrant numbers rather than quotas, in an attempt to produce some comparative data across the sector. Looking particularly at Trinity courses, the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies noted that both Drama and Theatre Studies and Human Health and Disease received a significant increase in first preference applications but decreases were experienced in some other courses.

Looking at offers and acceptances, based on CAO Round One, the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies noted that the rate of acceptances to offers stood at 76% (77% in 2016). Whilst the overall acceptance rate was similar to that of 2016, there were large fluctuations on a course-by-course basis. She confirmed that the majority of courses filled their quota at Round One. Responding to a question as to why a number of courses were listed with a higher number of acceptances than their quota, she noted that with the introduction of the new academic year structure in 2018/19, the Academic Registry will have to make more offers in Round One than had previously been the case and that they have trialled a new approach in preparation; she added that not all acceptances convert into registrations. She noted that a number of courses fail to meet their quota on an annual basis.

Commenting on applications from Northern Ireland, she drew attention to the fact that whilst there was an increase in the number of applications and offers made, disappointingly, the number of acceptances had fallen from 102 (2016) to 98 (2017). She confirmed that there is uncertainty in relation to fees from 2018/19 onwards due to 'Brexit' which is likely to have had an impact on acceptances.

In relation to widening participation, whilst all data was not yet available, she noted that the percentage of student admitted under access routes was likely to remain stable at 21%. Turning to the Admissions Feasibility Study, she confirmed that there had been a higher number of applicants and that both History and Law had each filled their quota of ten places

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

under this scheme, whilst Ancient and Medieval History and Culture had fill four out of five places.

The Dean of Arts, Humanities and Social Science commented that some TSM subjects wished to change their quotas and that these would take effect from next year. The Provost noted that the Planning Group will look at the implications associated with courses not filling quotas.

**Decision/Action**

**008.1:** Council noted the preliminary admissions data for 2017/18.

**008.2:** The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies is to update Council on the ratio of first preference applications against net acceptances for the university sector.

**CL/17-18/009 Any Other Urgent Business**

There was no other business.

**SECTION B**

**CL/17-18/010 Undergraduate Studies Committee**

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies drew the attention of the meeting to items on Entrance Exhibitioners, the International Foundation Programme and the Senior Lecturer's Annual Report. She noted that the Annual Report will be produced by the Academic Registry in future years.

The draft minutes of the meeting of 12 September 2017 and the Senior Lecturer's Annual Report 2015/16 were noted and approved.

**CL/17-18/011 Human Resources Committee**

The draft minutes of the meeting of 25 May 2017 were noted and approved.

**SECTION C**

**CL/17-18/012 Administrative Arrangements in the Summer Session**

The Council noted the Memorandum from the Secretary to the College, circulated, dated 28 August 2017.

**CL/17-18/013 Committee Membership**

**(i) Membership of Academic Committee of Council**

The Council noted and approved the Memorandum from the Registrar, circulated, dated 6 September 2017.

**(ii) Junior Academic Progressions Committee Membership**

The Council noted and approved the Memorandum from the Secretary to the Junior Academic Progressions Committee, circulated, dated 13 September 2017.

**CL/17-18/014 Course Director**

The Council noted and approved the appointment of Professor Stephen Matterson to the position of TSM Course Director, with effect from 3 July 2017, for a period of three years.

**CL/17-18/015 Additional External Examiners to note retrospectively**

The Council noted and approved the Memorandum from the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies, circulated, dated 7 September 2017.

**CL/17-18/016 Higher Degrees—Reports of Examiners**

The Council noted and approved the reports of examiners on candidates for higher degrees, approved by the sub-committee of Board and Council on 7 June and noted by Board on 14 June 2017.

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

**MD** Rosalind Hughes.

**DChDent** Samira Al-Anqudi.

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

**PhD** Aoife Teresa Beirne; Benedetta Bianchi; Camille Boostrom; Yan Bourke; Aoife Frances Brady; Derek Brawn; David Breeckner; Grainne Brennan; David Caffrey; Brian Coleman; James Creel; Alistair Saviour De Gaetano; Suzanne Elizabeth Dennen; Rachael Dillon; Deirdre Adrienne Dunlevy; Paul Fleming; Sinead Margaret Foran; Laura Frey; Ruth Hennessy; Bridget Marie Johnston; Mashaal Mahmoud Ali Khayyat; Pankaj Kumar; Roisin Loftus; Alejandro Lopez Valdes; Paul Martin Lyons; John McCrossan; Emer McGowan; Melika Mohammadkhah; Sinéad Moylett; Sylvia Martina Murphy Tighe; Caitlín Emira Saoirse Nic Íomhair; Hisham Osman; Francisco Castro Paisana; Radosław Maciej Przedpełski; Mohammad Sarhan; Cristina Taut; Víctor Valls Delgado; Christina Wade; David Whyte; Xiubo Zhang; Kun Zhao.

**MSc** Jill Burns; David John Greene; Brendan O'Connell; Aine Niamh O'Toole.

**CL/17-18/017 Head of School**

The Council noted that the Board had approved on 20 September 2017 the nomination of Professor Michael Gill as Interim Head of the School of Medicine from 21 August 2017, until a formal election has taken place in Michaelmas Term 2017.

**CL/17-18/018 School Directors – Law**

The Council noted and approved the following appointments for a two-year term 2017-19:

- (i) Director of Research – Professor Blanaid Clarke
- (ii) Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) – Professor Deirdre Ahern
- (iii) Director of Teaching and Learning (Undergraduate) – Professor Rachael Walsh.

**CL/17-18/019 Heads of Discipline**

The Council noted and approved the following appointments from 3 July 2017:

- (i) School of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies  
Italian: Professor Peter Arnds for a 1-year term, 2017-2018
- (ii) School of English  
English: Professor Paul Delaney for a 3-year term, 2017-2020.



**SECTION D**

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

Signed .....

Date .....

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