

UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN  
TRINITY COLLEGE

GRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Graduate Studies Committee on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> June, 2003 in Room 2026, Arts & Social Sciences Building.

Present (Chair)	Dean of Graduate Studies
Arts (Letters)	Dr. C. Morris
	Prof. D. Singleton
Business, Economics & Social Studies	Dr. K. Benoit
Engineering & Systems Sciences	Dr. A. Moore
	Dr. T. Orr
Health Sciences	Dr. F. Falkiner
	Ms. A. Higgins
Science	Dr. P. Kruger
GSU	Mr. T. O'Donnell

In attendance: Ms. E. McGlade (Library); Ms. G. Hogan (ISS); Mr. J. Walsh (GSU); Dr. L. Donnellan (GSO); Ms. N. Saunders (GSO); Dr. J. Ridley (CLCS); Prof. F. Boland (ESS); Dr. A. Kokaram (ESS);

Apologies: Dr. T. Kavanagh; Prof. M. Gibney (Dean of Research); Dr. M-A. Valiulis; Mr. C. Travis; Dr. E. Mahon; Dr. A Chantler; Mr. D. Scammell

The Dean began the meeting by saying that this was the last meeting of the year and thanked everyone for their input, especially the people who have come to the end of their term on the committee: Dr. A. Chantler, Dr. K. Benoit, Dr. P. Kruger and Dr. T. Orr. He noted that Dr. Orr was returning for another term on the Committee and that Dr. Joe McDonagh had been nominated to replace Dr. Benoit. The Dean mentioned in particular that Dr. Liz Donnellan was leaving the Graduate Studies Office to take up an appointment in the Quality Office and thanked her on behalf of the committee for all the hard work she has put in as Secretary to the Committee.

**171.0 Minutes of the meeting of the 21<sup>st</sup> May 2003**

The minutes were approved by the Committee, with a correction to the spelling of a word in item 170.7, and signed by the Dean of Graduate Studies.

**171.1 Matters arising**

Re. Item 6 on the agenda: 'Proposed termination of the M.Sc. in Community Health', the Dean postponed the item, reporting that it was to be discussed at Faculty level before coming forward to the Graduate Studies Committee.

Re. Item 169.1 in the minutes of the meeting of 8<sup>th</sup> May 2003, the Dean reported that the Department is to respond formally to the Committee on the proposed changes to the Ph.D. in Political Science. He stated that Professor Laver is in agreement with the Committee's decision but wishes to fully consult with his staff prior to implementing the relevant changes. Dr. Benoit responded that the Department will meet next week to discuss the issue and was confident that

the changes in registration policy would not result in too many changes to the curriculum. The Dean undertook to request a formal response from the Head of Department.

Re. Item 170.2, the Dean reported that the review is still in progress and that the Financial Review Advisory Group has as part of its report to the Provost recommended that an additional amount of €300,000 be provided for the new teaching fellowships. Board will consider the report at a meeting next week. The Dean suggested that while the Unit Cost Management Working Group will be finalising the funding details, it will be the responsibility of the Graduate Studies Committee to advise on best practice and support the administration of the awards. The Dean said that although some details remained to be settled, at present it appeared that the value of the awards would be EU fees plus a maintenance award of approx. €4,000. The Dean said that he would circulate proposals for the awards scheme prior to the next meeting and requested that committee members would respond with recommendations from all Faculties, to be discussed at the next GSC meeting.

The Dean reported that the M.Sc. (Mgmt.) in International Business, the M.Sc. in Computer Science (Ubiquitous Computing) and the M.Sc. in Management of Information Systems have all been approved by Council at its last meeting, subject to approval by the Finance Committee.

The Postgraduate Diploma in Applied Building Repair and Conservation and the Postgraduate Diploma in Health and Safety in Construction will be tabled at the next meeting of Council.

Re. Item 170.8, the Dean confirmed to the Committee that he had written to the Finance Committee regarding the 9% increase in post-graduate fees and to the Bursar regarding the loss of teaching space in No. 1, College Green.

### **171.2 Reviews of the M.Phil. in Applied Linguistics, Linguistics and Speech & Language Processing**

The Dean explained that this item was postponed from the meeting of 21<sup>st</sup> May at the request of the Head of CLCS who felt that the summaries of the reviews were brought to the attention of the Department too late for them to respond adequately. The Dean therefore agreed to bring all three complete reports to the Committee at this meeting together with the Departmental response. The Dean noted that the reports were very positive. He stated that all three examiners had raised the issue of the timely provision of Annual Reports to CLCS. He said that the system had now been fine-tuned to address this concern. The Dean then welcomed Dr. Jennifer Ridley, course co-ordinator for all three courses. Dr. Ridley responded to the concern expressed over the low student numbers by comparison with similar programmes in the UK by explaining that the TCD courses did not have a specific English language focus. She also pointed out that applicants often found it hard to raise the finance necessary to complete the course. She stated that the number of applicants this year had risen and they hoped to have a larger cohort for the next academic session. Dr. Ridley commented on the difficulties regarding student recruitment and said that she understood that this issue was being studied at College level along with publicity for all Faculties. She responded to the comment of one Examiner that the leaflets produced by CLCS did not adequately reflect the standard of the courses offered by stating that this was under discussion within the Department. The Dean thanked Dr. Ridley and the committee held a short discussion on the reports. Professor Singleton informed the committee that comparisons made between CLCS and similar UK courses could not be upheld as the UK universities are much larger with corresponding support mechanisms and centrally run advertising and publicity drives. He felt that the perception held by some foreign applicants that an M.Phil. is of a more difficult

standard that an M.A. has College-wide implications and should be noted. The Dean noted these comments and stated that ISA had been asked to extend their recruitment activities to postgraduate students, as resources allowed. The committee formally accepted the reviews.

### **171.3 Review of the M.Sc. in Integrated Systems Design**

The Dean welcomed Dr. Anil Kokaram and Professor Frank Boland from the Department of Electronic and Electrical Engineering. Dr. Kokaram summarised the report and said that the reviewer had been very complimentary of both the technical and academic aspects of the course. He said that the review process has been instrumental in the Department's decision to re-structure the course. This was deemed necessary due to the downturn in the I.T. sector and the corresponding low application rate, as companies are now reluctant to finance employees and grant them the leave necessary to follow a two-year course. Dr. Kokaram felt that a one-year, full-time course would be more appropriate to the current market but added that the Department would have to resolve staffing issues and settle a fee structure prior to bringing a re-structuring proposal to the Graduate Studies Committee. The Dean said he looked forward to receiving this proposal and noted that the review process had highlighted similar problems with taught postgraduate courses providing professional development for commercial and industrial sectors. Professor Boland supported these views. The Dean thanked Professor Boland and Dr. Kokaram and the committee noted and accepted the review.

### **171.4 Good Practice guidelines for postgraduate teaching**

The Dean referred to the Graduate Students Union proposals brought to the committee in item 170.7 and said he would circulate a proposal, which he would like Departments and Faculties to respond to by email as soon as possible with any Department specific suggestions. The Dean said he would like to see guidelines in place for the next academic year.

### **171.5 Proposed termination of the M.Sc. in Community Health**

Postponed - see item 171.1.

### **171.6 CHIU guidelines on good practice for Ph.D.'s - Dean to report**

The Dean informed the Committee that the Conference of Heads of Irish Universities (CHIU) had received funding for a project to establish guidelines and a code of practice for Ph.D. programmes. The project would involve pooling information on postgraduate studies from the member universities and formulating a document from this. The Dean stated that he believed that the correct forum for discussing and formulating policy in this regard would be the Graduate Studies Committee and felt that the Committee should take a pro-active stance on this issue. Professor Singleton queried how prescriptive the guidelines would be, given the differing nature of research from faculty to faculty. The Dean replied that he hoped that the result would be a set of central guidelines and principles that would allow some degree of flexibility, given differences between and even within universities. He suggested that it is important for the defence of the autonomy of universities to be able to stand over practices in this important area. It is likely in the future that external agencies, such as research councils, will insist on the possession of such good practice guidelines. Mr. Walsh stated that Computer Science had formulated a good practice document and that such documents might be pooled for information.

### **171.7 Eligibility for supervision of Ph.D. students**

This item arose out of a letter from Professor Brian Sheppard of the Dept. of Obstetrics and Gynaecology to Dr. Fred Falkiner, for consideration by the Committee. Professor Sheppard requested that the Graduate Studies Committee discuss the current policy that Senior

Experimental Officers not be allowed to supervise research students, even when they possess the necessary qualifications and are active within a department's research. The Dean explained that the current regulation restricts supervision to academic members of staff and consequently staff in grades such as senior scientific officer are not permitted to supervise research students, whatever their qualifications. He suggested that this was properly a matter for the Personnel and Appointments Committee, since it related to the duties of different classes of staff. However he agreed to pass on to that Committee the opinion of Graduate Studies Committee members. Prof. Sheppard's letter pointed out that this was particularly a problem in departments such as his where there are few non-clinical academic positions. Dr. Falkiner outlined his belief that suitable members of staff with Ph.D.'s should be able to act as supervisors for research students. He felt strongly that the current policy with respect to supervision deterred initiative in staff. Dr. Kruger supported Dr. Falkiner's position and enquired whether an honorary lectureship could be granted to such staff to circumvent the problem. The Committee agreed that it would be unfortunate if the University, and research students, could not officially avail of the research expertise of individuals in these staff grades. The Dean undertook to pass on these views to the Personnel and Appointments Committee.

**171.8 Any other business**

The Dean congratulated Ms. Eileen McGlade on her retirement and thanked her for her input to the committee over the past few years.

There being no other business, the meeting closed. The next meeting is due to take place in October 2003, further details to be forwarded.

Signed:

Date: