

**UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN
TRINITY COLLEGE**

GRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 9.00 am on Thursday 27 April, 2006
Boardroom, Provost's House

Present: Prof. Patrick Prendergast, Dean of Graduate Studies (*Chair*),
Prof. Eunan O'Halpin, Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate), School of Histories & Humanities
Prof. J Saeed, Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate), School of Linguistic, Speech & Communication Sciences
Dr Cormac Ó Cuilleaináin, Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate), Vice Deanery, Faculty of Arts & Humanities
Prof. Vincent Cahill, School of Computer Science & Statistics
Dr Richard Timoney, Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate), School of Mathematics
Dr Stefano Sanvito, Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate), School of Physics
Dr Richard Porter, Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate), School of Biochemistry & Immunology
Prof. Kenneth Benoit, Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate), School of Social Sciences & Philosophy
Dr Helen Buckley, Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate), School of Social Work & Social Policy
Dr Kevin Tierney, Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate), School of Psychology
Prof. Paul Coughlan, Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate), School of Business
Prof. Henry Rice, Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate), School of Engineering
Prof. John Kelly, Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate), School of Chemistry
Dr Andrew Loxley, Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate), Vice Deanery, Faculty of Social & Human Sciences
Prof. Mark Lawler, Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate), School of Medicine
Mr Charles Larkin, Graduate Students' Union Vice-President (*Ex officio*)

Apologies: Prof. Ian Robertson, Dean of Research
Dr Kenneth Irvine, Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate), School of Natural Sciences
Prof. June Nunn, Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate), School of Dental Science
Mr Gerard Tobin, Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate), School of Nursing & Midwifery
Dr John Clancy, Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate), School of Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences
Prof. Seamus Martin, Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate), Vice Deanery of Genetics & Microbiology
Mr John Lawlor, MIS Manager (*Ex officio*)
Mr Trevor Peare, Keeper of Readers' Services (*Ex officio*)
Mr Ryan Sheridan, Graduate Students' Union President (*Ex officio*)

In attendance: Ms Ewa Sadowska, Graduate Studies Office, (*Secretary Ex officio*)
Ms Helen Thornbury, Graduate Studies Office

The Dean welcomed Prof. Mark Lawler from the School of Medicine as new member of the Committee

194.0 Minutes of 30 March 2006

The minutes of the meeting of 30 March 2006 were approved by the Committee as circulated.

194.1 Matters arising

a) Re. 193.1 (c): The Dean noted that the issue of the M.Phil. integration into the PhD programme under ARAM came under discussion at the last Heads' Committee meeting. The Heads' sub-committee on ARAM will be making recommendations to the ARAM Task Force regarding this and other issues.

b) Re. 193.3 The Dean noted that courses with few registered students would need to be reviewed in terms of their viability in the upcoming months subject to a reservation made at the previous GSC that they might be essential in some discipline/industry-specific market niches.

c) Re. 193.7 (b): After a short discussion the Committee approved the Dean's recommendation that a Working Party should be set up in Michaelmas Term next year to further discuss the issue of setting up a part-time fee structure for 2007/08 and an ARAM provision for part-time fees.

194.2 M.Sc. in Neuroscience (a new course proposal: 1 year full-time)

The Dean welcomed Dr Thomas Connor (a proposed Course Director) and invited him to speak to the circulated course proposal. He also explained that the proposal is currently being reviewed by an external assessor whose comments would be incorporated into the final submission to the University Council. Dr Connor explained that an interdisciplinary philosophy will be adopted in the delivery of the proposed M.Sc. programme, which is underpinned by the diverse

research expertise within Trinity College Institute of Neuroscience (TCIN). The course will represent the first M.Sc. in Neuroscience in this country, and will fill a significant void in postgraduate education. The introduction of this M.Sc. programme will be of strategic importance in any future bid to establish a Graduate School of Neuroscience in College. The programme is also in line with the overall strategy of the School of Medicine to enhance the profile of research training activities, and to foster collaborative ventures with other areas of College. Neuroscience has been identified as an area of strategic importance within College as evidenced by the establishment of TCIN.

The course will include study of the nature and functioning of the nervous system at all levels, from the molecules that make up individual nerve cells, to the complexities of human/animal behaviour. It will focus on the biological basis and treatment of psychiatric and neurological disorders. It will encompass modules in neuroimaging and in neuroimmunology; two research areas that are rapidly developing within TCIN. It will involve in-depth instruction in modern methodologies used in neuroscience research, including the fundamentals of molecular and cellular biology. Students will also be trained in experimental design, data handling and research skills.

In a discussion which followed some probing questions were asked about the use of UG modules in the area of psychology in the delivery of this course. Dr Connor explained that he had been in communication with the Head of the School of Psychology *re* this issue and both sides were satisfied that the modules in question were at an advanced Senior Sophister level suitable to those postgraduate students who do not have an undergraduate degree in psychology. He also noted that only one such undergraduate module to the value of 3 ECTS (out of the total 90 ECTS) can possibly be taken as part of the student workload. The issue of a credit allocation to an undergraduate module was raised in general terms of it being different for undergraduate students from the one for postgraduate students taking the same module. The Dean undertook to clarify this matter further. The Dean also noted that even though the course is presented in the financial proposal as an inexpensive option in terms of its teaching costs it would attract a significant share of indirect College costs allocated to the School under ARAM. Dr Connor further explained that, in terms of admissions, medical graduates were also targeted especially the ones who hold ordinary B.A. or those who after 3 undergraduate years in the Medical School wish to take a year out to complete a taught masters before returning to do the clinical years. The Committee approved the course subject to any changes to the proposal as outlined in the forthcoming external assessor's report.

194.3 M.Sc./P.Grad.Dip. (exit only) in Palliative Care (a new course proposal: 2 years part-time)

The Dean welcomed Dr Richard Redmond and Dr Kevin Connaire (a proposed Course Director from October 2006) to speak to the circulated course proposal. He also explained that the proposal is currently being reviewed by an external assessor whose comments would be incorporated into the final submission to the University Council. Dr Redmond explained that the course has been developed by the School of Nursing and Midwifery with some contribution from the Schools of Social Work and Social Policy and of Medicine, and St. Francis Hospice in Raheny. Students will come from a variety of disciplines including nursing, medicine, occupational therapy, social work, physiotherapy and chaplaincy. Practice is an integral component to the course and students are required to engage in critical analysis of their practice in relation to applying the principles of Ethics and Law, Research, Pain and Symptom Management and Psycho Social Care. The course facilitates students to develop component skills, such as caring, interpersonal skills, empathy, understanding, reflection and intuition, which combine to meet the palliative care needs of individuals with a life threatening illness, across the life span, and their families. In addition, professional practice placements which are integral to the core and specialist modules will facilitate the critical application of theory and practice to meet the specific palliative care needs of persons with Intellectual Disability and Dementia, and paediatric-specific palliative care needs of children and their families.

The Dean has complemented the School on a very well developed proposal and welcomed the new course, noting that it fitted well with the College's strategic research plan *vis-à-vis* the Trinity Consortium on Ageing. In a discussion which followed it was clarified that applicants without a primary degree would also be considered providing that they have significant professional qualifications and adequate clinical experience. It was recommended that a Prospectus entry drops a specific reference (on page 52) to a lower degree (II.2 or III) as an admissions qualification. Dr Connaire explained that there is a Centre of Continuing Studies in the Hospice whose staff has significant expertise in the discipline and will deliver the specialist modules. He further noted that he would welcome a closer link between the Hospice and Trinity, and it was agreed that this issue should be further explored. Dr Connaire who is a coordinator on a number of modules of the proposed course explained that he hopes to be replaced in that role by other staff to be recruited to the course in later years. It was noted that by doing all their specialist courses in the Hospice in Raheny the students might become alienated from the Trinity campus. Dr Redmond agreed to make contact with Prof. Mark Lawler, DTLP in the School of Medicine in an effort to identify further contacts that could be made in the School of Medicine and its teaching hospitals. Subject to that reservation and any changes to the proposal as outlined in the forthcoming external assessor's report the Committee was happy to approve the course.

194.1 M.Sc./P.Grad.Dip. (exit only) in Chemical and Biological Techniques (a new course proposal: 2-3 years part-time)

In the absence of Prof. Sylvia Draper (the proposed Course Director), the Dean welcome Prof. John Corish (the Head of School of Chemistry) and Dr Susan Quinn (a proposed Course Coordinator). Prof. Corish explained that the new course

has been developed by the School of Chemistry in partnership with the School of Chemistry and Chemical Biology at UCD after Trinity's School of Biochemistry and Immunology had pulled out in January. It will specifically cater for graduates currently working in industry, and recent graduates who are considering a career in the Pharmaceutical Sector in Ireland. There are currently no options for those graduates who wish to study a combination of Chemical and Biological techniques at Masters level. This course aims to breach this gap by providing training and further professional development in this area. From the School's point-of-view the programme will provide a basis for the future development of new professional and postgraduate courses and will also make available a set of taught modules that can be integrated into a comprehensive postgraduate research degree programme either within the School or as an inter-university initiative. Such a development will support the strategic objectives of the School of (i) increasing its intake of postgraduate research students, by increasing the attractiveness of its Ph.D. degree through an improvement in the quality of the training provided, and (ii) the establishment of a Chemistry Graduate School. Dr Quinn focused on clarification of structural and academic aspects of the new course. She explained that applicants without a primary degree but with a considerable professional experience in industry may be considered for admission and an interview of applicants will be an integral part of the admissions process. She also elaborated on a broad range of duties for the role of course coordinator of this course. The DTLP from the School of Chemistry expressed his willingness to support the course coordinator in the role which is especially demanding and exceptional as inter-institutional liaising will be required with the UCD staff.

The Committee expressed appreciation for an innovative nature of the proposed course in that it is a joint inter-university collaboration between Trinity and UCD. The Dean noted that the course will lead to the masters award exclusively by the University of Dublin and that the UCD staff would be examiners for their modules, accept the moderation of Trinity's external examiner regarding their modules, and attend Trinity's court of examiners for the course. It was commented that, while a letter from the Head of School in UCD was a welcome guarantee that UCD would abide by the TCD regulations on the examination procedure and academic standards, an additional safeguard from a more senior UCD officer (i.e. the Registrar) would be required as a guarantee of the UCD commitment to provide continuous teaching on the course and of serious intent on an institutional level to collaborate on the course. Dr Quinn has explained that UCD was willing to contribute to this course as an initial step towards establishing further collaborative programmes with Trinity possibly leading to a joint graduate school. In response to a question for clarification, the DTLP from the School of Biochemistry and Immunology explained that the reason why his School had to pull out from the new course was that it would not have been in a position to provide the amount of teaching required. Prof. Mark Lawler has expressed concern with regard to this pull out from the initial arrangements in that it might possibly lead, in the future, to Trinity losing its reputation for graduate-level teaching in this area, and that UCD might be seen to establish itself as a leading centre for such expertise. Subject to those reservation and any changes to the proposal as outlined in the forthcoming external assessor's report the Committee approved the course.

194.2 Master in Education – a course proposal for the restructured M.Ed./P.Grad.Dip.(exit only) Course (2 years part-time/1 year full-time)

The DTLP in the Vice-Deanery in the Faculty of Human and Social Sciences Dr Andrew Loxley (also the proposed Course Director) spoke to the circulated course proposal. Dr Loxley explained that the proposal for a re-structuring of the Master in Education course was being sought in light of the re-organisation of some of the School of Education's postgraduate courses. The motivation for this is partly due to the on-going review of postgraduate provision that began three years ago. The proposed revision has a high degree of fit with the School's 'Strategic Plan'. Two substantive changes are being proposed. One, the discontinuation of the following three MSc programmes: M. Sc./P.Grad.Dip. (Educational Guidance and Counselling) – codes 663/664; M. Sc (Educational Management) – code 212; M. Sc (Science Education) – code 249. In addition, three new tracks, or 'routes' to the M.Ed. will be created giving 7 in total as follows:

- Science Education;
- Educational Guidance and Counselling;
- Educational Leadership and Management;
- Special Education;
- Aggression Studies;
- Drama in Education;
- Foundation Studies.

Each route comprises of normally four modules (each of 40 ECTS credits). The second change is the opening of the formerly exclusively full-time M. Ed. course to part-time access. The re-structuring of the M. Ed. degree and the discontinuation of the M. Sc degrees do not affect the M. St. degree (code 232) as it is provided presently. In terms of a new course structure the M.Ed. will be part-time (2 years) or full-time (1 year).

During a discussion which followed a number of substantive issues were raised. Dr Loxley explained that the new course will be supported by the existing administrative staff already in place and that research methodology component of the course, compulsory but non-assessed will however be indirectly assessed via a dissertation as a lot of what is taught there comes into the dissertation. Prof. Saeed expressed concern over an issue of there being a lack of apparent correlation between the allocation of ECTS and the actual size of dissertation in terms of its words varying between 15,000 to 25,000 for 30 to 45 ECTS. The Committee expressed concern with regard to the lack of any details about the Science Education Module and it was decided 1) to approve the discontinuation of the courses listed above and 2) to approve the proposed

M.Ed. subject to any changes to the proposal as outlined in the external assessor's report and substantial changes made to the Science Education Module.

194.3 Role of Directors of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) – Admissions

Ms Helen Thornbury brought the meeting through an updated admissions process and a nomination form as a final part of the process of reviewing the Graduate Studies Office administrative procedures as adjusted to the new academic structures. It was noted that there was no change to the nomination form for taught courses, and it was agreed that a research nomination form would need to be signed off by the DTLP who will also receive from the GSO admissions application files for their Schools. In a discussion which followed it was confirmed that it would be up to the Directors to organise administrative support for the admissions process locally and to come up with an effective procedure to ensure that all applications received will be brought to the attention of the academic staff in an effort to review them and identify a supervisor. In Vice Deaneries, such applications will continue to be forwarded to Heads of Department who sign off on the nominations.

194.4 Graduate Studies Annual Report 2004/05 with Admissions date 2005/06

The Dean briefly spoke to the circulated document and the Committee thanked the Dean for it. The Committee approved the document as read. The Report would be presented to the University Council on 10 May 2006.

194.5 A Review of the size and presentation format of research theses

The Dean explained that this item had come up at the Heads' Committee meeting on the 4th April which expressed the view that the thesis format (A4 size hard cover with gold lettering, etc.) was becoming outdated. Also the library would prefer a smaller format. In a short discussion which followed there was agreement that the Committee would be happy to review the size and format of theses subject to recommendation from the Library.

194.6 Provision of graduate skills courses

The Dean spoke to the circulated document. He noted that it is possible that a call for submissions will be issued by the Department of Education and Science under the Strategic Innovation Fund (SIF) in early summer 2006. Trinity's institutional proposal will incorporate innovation in graduate education (the 'Fourth Level'). One requirement for development in graduate education was likely to be the provision of generic skills/transferable skills courses for all PhD students in the University – if advanced discipline modules are offered in addition then it would constitute a 'graduate programme'. It seems employers are particularly interested in such courses and if our graduates do not have them they will be at a disadvantage in the jobs market. Quite apart from these external drivers, the Dean argued that such courses might prove beneficial for graduate students as part of their broader education and could be welcomed in that regard alone. It was agreed that in preparation for a bid under the SIF, a process of identifying generic skills/transferable skills courses and a possible mechanism for their administration should begin as soon as possible. Consultation with Directors of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) across the broad areas of College will commence shortly. The Dean explained that the Academic Development Manager from CAPSL has agreed to facilitate the discussions. It was agreed to consider generic/transferable courses within the framework of three Divisions as follows

- (i) Business, Engineering, and Science,
- (ii) Humanities and Social Sciences, and
- (iii) Health Science and Healthcare.

The Dean indicated that the next step would be to call a meeting with each Division separately to discuss generic skills/transferable skills provision, to define a list of such courses to be offered to students and the possible learning outcomes, and to propose how teaching and administering them may be resourced under the SIF or the National Research Plan.

194.7 AOB

a) Prof. John Kelly requested further discussion of the Calendar entry on the transfer procedure to the PhD register (circulated as Item B2). The Committee agreed to introduce further changes to the entry as follows: to delete the stipulation that the DTLP or his/her nominee is required to act as chair as s/he will act as a reader; to stipulate that the supervisor "should" rather than "will" be present at the transfer interview; to replace that the supervisor "may" not be a member of the transfer panel by "shall", and finally to break the entry into paragraphs for easier readability.

b) The Committee approved a document circulated under AOB from Prof. Damian McManus, School of Irish for entry on "Henry Flood Research Scholarship" into the Postgraduate Awards and Travel Funds section of the Calendar part 2, 2006/07.

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 11 am. The next meeting is scheduled for 18 May 2006.

Prof. Patrick J. Prendergast.

Date: 5 May 2006