

**UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN
TRINITY COLLEGE**

GRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 9.00 am on Thursday 22 January, 2009
Boardroom, Provost's House

Present: Prof. Carol O'Sullivan, Dean of Graduate Studies (*Chair*),
Directors of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) as follows:
Dr Richard Porter, School of Biochemistry & Immunology
Dr Carl Vogel, (*Acting*) School of Computer Science and Statistics
Prof. John Kelly, School of Chemistry
Dr Anne O'Connell, School of Dental Science
Prof. Brian Broderick, School of Engineering
Dr Carmel O'Sullivan, School of Education
Dr Darryl Jones, School of English
Dr Hazel Dodge, School of Histories & Humanities
Dr Neville Cox, School of Law
Prof. Cormac Ó Cuilleanáin, School of Languages, Literatures & Cultural Studies
Dr Jeffrey Kallen, School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences
Dr Stefan Sint, School of Mathematics
Dr Thomas Connor, School of Medicine
Dr Paula Murphy, School of Natural Sciences
Dr Fintan Sheerin, School of Nursing and Midwifery
Dr Andrew Harkin, School of Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences
Prof. Stefano Sanvito, School of Physics
Dr Gillian Wylie, Aspirant School of Religions, Theology and Ecumenics
Dr Robert Thomson, School of Social Sciences and Philosophy

Mr Michael McGrath, Acting Manager of MIS (*Ex officio*)
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*)

Apologies: Dr David Lloyd, Dean of Research
Directors of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) as follows:
Dr Matthew Causey, School of Drama, Film & Music
Dr Joe McDonagh, School of Business
Dr Seamus Martin, School of Genetics and Microbiology
Dr Jacqueline Potter, C.A.P.S.L. (in attendance)
Dr Kevin Tierney, School of Psychology
Dr Eoin O'Sullivan, School of Social Work and Social Policy

In attendance: Mr Robert Otway-Norwood, Graduate Studies Office, Secretary to the meeting (*Ex officio*)
Ms Helen Thornbury, Graduate Studies Office

GS/08-09/013 Minutes of 27 November 2008

The minutes of the meeting of 27th November were approved by the Committee as circulated.

GS/08-09/014 Matters Arising

The Dean informed the Committee that it is now clear that there will be a 40% cut in the Budget for SIF 2, although any appointments that have been made are safe. She pointed out that the PRTL1 5 call has a strong emphasis on Graduate Education, and in particular structured Ph.D. programmes. She also noted that a response was needed from the sector to the HEA's report on the recent review of structured PhD programmes.

The Dean pointed that the Erasmus Mundus II call will include international Doctoral Programmes and encouraged schools to put forward innovative proposals. She requested that DTLPGs forward names of interested parties to Ms. Thornbury for briefing purposes both at a College and sectoral level.

GS/08-09/015 Draft Paper on Trinity College Ph.D. for discussion

The Dean spoke to her circulated document 'The Trinity Ph.D.' and noted that this was a draft for discussion. The intention is to clarify what a Trinity Ph.D. is, both internally and externally.

A comprehensive discussion followed, in which many issues were raised and debated. These included, amongst other issues: the needs of students with disabilities; the division between PhD and other types of doctorates; contribution to the development of Ireland's economy and the relative opportunities and challenges involved; Modes of thesis delivery (e.g., "bound" theses) and assessment (e.g., open vivas); Part-time PhDs and lifelong learning issues; Inter-institutional programmes; Skills training and career options for PhD graduates.

The Dean thanked the committee for their input and said that their discussion would be reflected in the draft for Council – she also invited the committee to forward further comments to her if they arose subsequently.

GS/08-09/016 Taught Masters Dissertation issues

The Dean spoke to this item, and informed the committee that the situation concerning examination of taught Masters dissertations required clarification. In particular, arrangements for vivas and revisions varied greatly between schools. In the absence of appropriate regulations, the examination process for taught masters dissertations was becoming overly complex and time-consuming – in some cases exceeding the requirements for research dissertations. After some discussion, the committee welcomed the initiative to clarify and simplify the regulations in this regards, and a draft proposal for college-wide regulations on the examination of taught masters dissertations will be brought to the next GSC meeting.

GS/08-09/017 Guidelines for Nomination of Internal and External Examiners

The Dean spoke to the circulated document, which aims to provide further guidelines on avoiding conflict of interest in the appointment of examiners. The need to appoint the best possible independent, international experts was stressed – both to ensure the highest standards in the examination of PhDs, and to "advertise" to the international academic community the best practice in postgraduate research that is taking place in College.

GS/08-09/018 Changes to College appeals

This item was deferred to the next meeting of the Committee

GS/08-09/019 Draft Dean of Graduate Studies Annual Report

The Dean informed the Committee that the report has been prepared several weeks early to facilitate preparation of the VP-CAO's first annual report, which will draw on its contents. She asked that members of the Committee review the report as presented, and requested that they revert with any points or amendments as soon as possible, before presentation to Council. In reviewing the report the Dean noted that there is an increase in all types of postgraduate students.

GS/08-09/020 Postgraduate Open Day

Ms. Thornbury reported that, following the open day last year, there had been an increase in the number of applications for Postgraduate study in the College. This year's open day will be held on Thursday 5th February from 4.00 p.m. to 7.00 p.m. The Committee was informed that, while budgets would not allow for radio advertising as had been the case last year, it is intended to make full use of electronic advertising, and in particular on Google, Facebook and Student Newspapers. Members of the committee were strongly urged to participate fully in the event and to advertise the event as widely as possible in their own fields. Posters had been provided for the School noticeboards.

GS/08-09/021 Any Other Business

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 11.00 am.