



GRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the online meeting held via Zoom
at 10am on Thursday 25 March 2021

XX = Council relevance

Present (Ex officio):

Professor Martine Smith, Dean of Graduate Studies (Chair)

Directors of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) as follows:

Professor Rachel Mary Mc Loughlin, School of Biochemistry and Immunology

Professor Mary-Lee Rhodes, Trinity Business School

Professor John Boland, School of Chemistry

Professor Sarah-Jane Scaife, School of Creative Arts

Professor Ioannis Polyzois, School of Dental Science

Professor Keith Johnston, School of Education

Professor Biswajit Basu School of Engineering

Professor Bernice Murphy, School of English

Professor Ashley Clements, School of Histories & Humanities

Professor James Hadley, School of Languages, Literatures & Cultural Studies

Professor Deirdre Ahern, School of Law

Professor Kathleen McTiernan, School of Linguistic, Speech & Communication Sciences

Professor Manuela Kulaxizi, School of Mathematics

Professor Cian O'Callaghan, School of Natural Sciences

Professor Mary Hughes, School of Nursing and Midwifery

Professor Cristin Ryan, School of Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences

Professor Hongzhou Zhang, School of Physics

Professor Ladislav Timulak, School of Psychology

Professor Daniele Pevarello, School of Religion

Professor Thomas Chadefaux, School of Social Sciences & Philosophy

Professor Paula Mayock, School of Social Work and Social Policy

Professor Jake Byrne, Academic Director, Tangent

Ms Gisèle Scanlon, Graduate Students' Union President

Ms Abhiswetta Bhattacharjee, Graduate Students' Union Vice-President

In attendance for all items:

Ms Patricia Callaghan, Academic Secretary, Head of Trinity Teaching and Learning, (TT&L)

Ms Breda Walls, Director of Student Services

Ms Fedelma McNamara, Director of Internationalisation, TCD Global

Dr Cormac Doran, Assistant Academic Secretary, Graduate Education, TT&L

Mr Martin McAndrew, Postgraduate Student Support Officer, Senior Tutor's Office



Dr Geoffrey Bradley, Information Technology Services Representative
Ms Siobhan Dunne, Sub Librarian for Teaching, Research and User Experience
Ms Ewa Adach, Administrative Officer, Graduate Education – Zoom access support
Ms Ewa Sadowska (Academic Affairs, TT&L): Secretary to the Committee
Ms Laoise Quinn (Academic Affairs, TT&L): Minute taking

Apologies

Directors of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) as follows:
Professor Owen Conlan, School of Computer Science and Statistics
Professor Matthew Campbell, School of Genetics and Microbiology
Professor Kumlesh Dev, School of Medicine

Dean of Research: Vacant

In attendance for individual items:

Prof. Henry Rice (School of Engineering) for item GS/20-21/076
Prof. Anne Fitzpatrick and
Prof. Martin Worthington (School of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies)
for item GS/20-21/077
Ms. Jennifer Pepper (Acting Director, Academic Registry) for item GS/20-21/078

The Dean welcomed Prof. Mary Hughes (School of Nursing and Midwifery), for her first meeting and noted that she looked forward to working with her. She especially thanked Prof. Hughes for joining the sub-committee on approval of stand-alone modules for credit and micro-credentials.

GS/20-21/073 Minutes of 25 February 2021

The minutes were approved as circulated.

GS/20-21/074 Minutes of 10 March 2021

The minutes were approved as circulated.

GS/20-21/075 Matters Arising (25 February 2021)

The Dean advised members that all *Actions* from the previous meeting had been attended to. *Actions* with more specific updates provided by the Dean are referred to below.

Action GS/20-21/043: *Members to email details of thesis committee practices in their School to the Dean.*

The Dean reminded members that those who are yet to submit details of thesis committee practices in their School to do so that they can be collated in advance of the April meeting.



Action GS/20-21/044: Members to email the Dean to volunteer for a working group on PGR teaching survey.

The Dean reminded members that it is important to undertake this review of teaching requirements, opportunities and expectations of research students. She appreciated that volunteering is challenging and will contact people directly within the next two weeks to join the working group on PGR teaching survey.

Action GS/20-21/044(i): The Dean will contact GSC members directly regarding membership of a working group on a postgraduate research teaching survey

GS/20-21/060 PG Open Day: The PG Open Day took place on 6 March 2021. The Dean noted that this was also an agenda item at the current meeting. Following contact from members disappointed in the lack of engagement of potential PG students on the day. She further noted, however, that traffic (e.g. podcast viewings etc.) can often take place after the event. Ms. Beibhinn Coman, Director of Marketing (TCD Global) has been invited to speak to GSC at April/May meeting.

Action GS/20-21/061: Members to email the Dean their suggestions how to further modify the previous form

Some suggestions have been submitted and the Dean noted that the deadline for any further comments is the end of the current week.

Action GS/20-21/064(i): Members to email the Dean if they anticipate difficulties with F2F deliveries and how the Dean could address them.

The Dean noted that any issues regarding face-to-face delivery can be discussed under COLSAG agenda item. She further noted that she had not heard from specific groups and is conscious that as the end of the term approaches, difficulties may become apparent that were not previously obvious. She stressed the importance of having oversight of potential challenges so processes can be put in place to help Schools, to reassure students and to avoid a crisis.

Action GS/20-21/064(ii): Members to email the Dean their suggestions on automated captioning of recorded lectures

The Dean noted that captioning has not been implemented. This will be discussed further under the COLSAG update.

GS/20-21/065 PG renewal update: Several committee members had to leave before the item was discussed at last month's meeting and so the item was added to the agenda of the current meeting.



Action GS/20-21/066(iii): The Dean is to raise the issue of PG students' access to Trinity VPN with relevant services in College.

VPN access is restricted to core staff and Financial Services Division (FSD) advised the Dean via email that there are major logistical difficulties for providing access to those outside of core staff. FSD understands that a system is in place whereby each School nominates a designated staff member with responsibility to process iExpenses on behalf of anyone outside core staff. The Dean will forward FSD's correspondence to all Directors for information.

Action GS/20-21/066(iv): The Dean is to forward correspondence relating to VPN access from FSD to all Directors for information.

GS/20-21/046 Non-Resident/Distance PhD: A query arose as to whether the non-resident PhD links had been forwarded to GSC members. The Dean had understood that this had already happened but will follow up again with the Academic Registry. She further noted that she is conscious of the AR's current workload in relation to processing of applications.

Action GS/20-21/046: The Dean is to follow up with the Academic Registry with regards to forwarding non-resident PhD links to GSC members.

XX

GS/20-21/076 New strand proposal (HCI 3): New strand in Zero-Carbon Technology to the restructured MSc/PgDip/PgCert in Mechanical Engineering

The Dean welcomed Prof. Henry Rice (Head of School of Engineering) and provided a brief overview of the new strand proposal. The current MSc structure is 50+40 ECTS, with taught and research components, which is out of alignment with 60/30 structure across the university and incompatible with the Framework model with PgCert, PgDip and MSc options. The proposed additional 10 ECTS of taught credits are enabled by an increased range of optional modules within the suite of modules. Learning outcomes are unchanged for the overall parent course and the dissertation module is restructured to 30 ECTS.

Existing entry to the MSc (traditional model, with option of PgDip as exit award) is retained with the addition of two new entry routes: PgCert in Mechanical Engineering; PgDip in Mechanical Engineering. The Masters course can be taken 1year full time, or part time over 2 or 3 years, depending on progression points. The new strand, Zero-Carbon Technology (proposed with the HCI P3 funding), lies within the parent course.

Standard application routes pertain: direct entry to 1year part time PgCert (exit with PgCert, or progress in Year 2 to PgDip, and in year 3 to MSc), direct entry to 1year full time PgDip, with potential to progress to part time MSc in Year 2) and direct entry to 1year full time MSc, with potential exit award of PgDip.

The PgCert course structure has 2x10 ECTS mandatory modules and a range of



optional modules from which to select additional 10 credits. PgDip comprises 3x10 ECTS and 1x15 ECTS mandatory modules, with a range of options to reach additional 15 credits. The MSc structure is as per PgDip, with a 30 ECTS research project and 15 ECTS optional credits.

The restructured Masters course has the same award as the existing parent course but includes a new taught strand. Duration, format, delivery, quality assurance and course governance remain the same, as do admission requirements and fees. The proposed starting date is September 2021, under HCI P3. Three new modules are focused on decarbonisation of power, transport and natural resources and the technologies that underpin these solutions to the global climate change and sustainability challenges. The Dean noted that the revised course clearly aligns to strategic priorities for E3, Trinity and national and international initiatives and offers possible synergies with many other new offerings.

The restructured course would be attractive to both EU and non-EU students, which is a growing area of importance. Admission is normally restricted to graduates who have achieved at least an upper second-class honours degree (2.1), in engineering, science, computing, statistics, mathematics or a related discipline. However, well-qualified candidates or industry professionals from other numerate disciplines who have sufficient knowledge of engineering and science, may also be considered.

Prof. Rice thanked the Dean for her summary and a short discussion ensued with Prof. Rice's participation. In response to the Faculty Dean's letter cautioning about ambitious target student numbers, Prof Rice noted that the target market will be professionals with over ten years' experience given that these are the people who would be guiding the industry through the reduction in carbon. The marketing focus would be at PgCert level, while enabling students to continue their studies if they wish. He also noted that there is currently a gap in the system at this level which this course would cater for.

The Dean queried a reference made within the course proposal that the geo-resources carbon impact module which runs in conjunction with the School of Natural Sciences would not be available in the first year of roll-out. Prof Rice noted that he had hoped that the module was to be available but would clarify. Prof Rice also noted that this is the first part of the response to the HCI initiative and that School of Engineering is hoping to introduce other initiatives to fulfil their commitment to HCI from the next academic year.

Prof Rice was queried as to the number of new and existing modules within this proposal. He confirmed that there would be two new 10 credit modules run by the School of Engineering. A third module is an assembly of two existing modules from School of Natural Sciences that will be repackaged as one 10 credit unit.

Prof Rice was asked about involvement from industry in the delivery of some modules. He noted that the course is not relying on external input at present.

Prof Rice noted that he has seen a small error in the document, which would not



influence the decision, but he confirmed that he will send on the correction of same to the Dean.

The Dean noted that the proposal was well received. There were no additional issues raised and the committee endorsed the proposal.

Decision GS/20-21/076: The committee endorsed the new strand in Zero-Carbon Technology to be added to the restructured MSc/PgDip/PgCert in Mechanical Engineering for Council subject to a favourable external review.

XX GS/20-21/077 New course proposal: MPhil/PgDip/PgCert in The Middle East in a Global Context (online)

Before the Dean admitted Prof. Martin Worthington (proposed Course Director) and Prof. Anne Fitzpatrick (Head of School, School of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies) to the online meeting, the DTLP for the SLLCS asked to address the meeting. He wished to note that the proposal potentially sets a precedent which, he stated, may be unfortunate. The School's Postgraduate Committee had agreed in principle to the proposal in 2019, but it has undergone many revisions since then. In order to table the proposal for discussion at the March GSC, the School Executive Committee was given the proposal with one day's notice to review. The Postgraduate Committee did not receive the final draft. The DTLP for the SLLCS confirmed that he did not wish to undermine the contents of the proposal; rather he wished to note the risk of setting a precedent by which a proposal may not be given the full scrutiny that it deserves. The Dean thanked him for his contribution and noted that quality assurance of all course proposals is an important consideration for GSC. The responsibilities of the Directors are considerable. Therefore consideration may need to be given to ensure the rigour of the process of review of proposals across all Schools. She further confirmed her understanding that the DTLP's comments were not related to the quality of the proposal, but rather to the review process at School level and therefore drew the meeting's attention to the course proposal submitted by SLLCS.

The Dean welcomed Prof. Martin Worthington and Prof. Anne Fitzpatrick to the meeting. She then gave a brief overview of the new course proposal – an online only MPhil (90 ECTS), PgDip (60 ECTS) and PgCert (30 ECTS). The PgCert is part time only, but the PgDip and MPhil can be taken full or part time and allow exit awards. The course has received philanthropic support through the Al-Maktoum Foundation, which has given significant funding to the Department of Near and Middle Eastern Studies to support staffing that will deliver the programme. The course targets graduates from any discipline with an interest in studying the region of the Middle East, culture, history, language and politics.

The course content and focus clearly aligns with the School, Departmental and University vision for enhancing global citizenship. Critically, it honours the legal agreement signed a number of years ago by Trinity and the Al Maktoum Foundation to offer an MPhil. The course extends the suite of PGT opportunities within the School, and since there is no comparable programme in Ireland, it is likely to be attractive internationally.



A key challenge in developing the MPhil has been to resolve the structural relationship between the Al Maktoum Foundation, Trinity and the Al Maktoum-Dundee College in regard to how the proposed course could be presented and delivered. Extensive discussion has taken place among the key stakeholders in Dundee College and the Department of Near and Middle Eastern Studies. Further details are on p.32 of the proposal document.

The programme has been designed and will be delivered exclusively by Trinity staff. Due to the funding support from by the Al Maktoum Foundation, there is a structural relationship with Al Maktoum-Dundee College, whose role is to enhance recruitment, due to their extensive network in the Middle East. However, students will be registered in Trinity only. In light of the funding arrangements in place already, fee structure is tailored so that where students are recruited through Dundee, 40% of fees is retained by Dundee.

The MPhil and PgDip have four 10-credit mandatory modules, three of which are mandatory for attainment of a PgCert. The PgDip includes two additional optional modules and the MPhil requires students to complete a mandatory research project as well as two additional optional modules. All cohorts of students will participate together, regardless of pathway.

Course delivery is online only, and the School has considered resources that need to be in place for staff and students, including a designated School Expert who has extensive experience in online programmes as well as building on learning from Covid-19 experience. Synchronous lectures will be recorded and made subsequently available for students with online real-time tutorial support and virtual open office hours available to students. Extensive use of Blackboard Collaborate Ultra and additional student supports for an online programme have also been considered.

In relation to assessment, it was noted that a pass mark of 40% is consistent with other programmes within the School. Compensation may be considered for one failed module and supplemental assessment may be permitted with marks capped at the pass mark for the module. Distinction is based on a credit weighted average. There are a range of progression options across FT and PT pathways to enable flexible structure for PgCert, PgDip and MPhil awards.

Learning outcomes include the ability to demonstrate a critical understanding of the framework for the study of the Middle East and North Africa, to demonstrate cultural competence in the cultures, societies and peoples of the region, to examine Islam and its cultures, to explore minority groups and identities in the region in their historical and cultural settings and to examine European and western interventions in the region with a particular emphasis on the Ottoman Empire and World Wars I and II.

Prof. Fitzpatrick thanked the Dean for her presentation and addressed queries on the proposed course. She clarified that all staff are funded through the foundation, but all were appointed as per normal Trinity procedures, without involvement from the Foundation. The Dean clarified that prospective students could be recruited and



register directly through Trinity and for those students, Trinity retains 100% of fees. Dundee College only retains 40% of fees for students it has recruited directly.

It was noted that the relationship between Trinity and Al Maktoum College-Dundee is unusual, as it would appear that Dundee seem to be the window for applicants. A question was posed as to how the relationship arose – whether through Global Relations or the Al Maktoum Foundation – and how the relationship will evolve, if at all. Prof. Fitzpatrick noted that the Foundation is very involved in education, funding schools in Egypt and Sudan.

On being asked for more details on the legal agreement between Trinity and foundation, Prof. Fitzpatrick noted that the legal agreement was signed in 2019 following years of negotiation. It includes the financing of four staff members, three of whom have already been appointed, with one more to be appointed in the next 12 months. In turn, Trinity would develop Middle Eastern studies further and develop programmes that would increase interest in the Middle East in Ireland and internationally in line with the Foundation's goal of building bridges between communities and in conjunction with the Al Maktoum research centre in Trinity. It was also agreed that Trinity would help to raise the profile of the Al Maktoum College of Higher Education, Dundee by allowing them to engage with Trinity, e.g. inviting their staff and students to join in online public lectures. Prof. Fitzpatrick noted that the Al Maktoum Foundation has a keen interest in Ireland, having built the Islamic Cultural Centre in Clonskeagh and being involved in stud farms and horse racing in Ireland. Prof. Fitzpatrick noted that the legal agreement was carefully negotiated by College solicitors and the Provost and Trinity were satisfied with the terms.

In relation to a question on how long the funding is available for staff and what happens to the course after that date, Prof. Fitzpatrick clarified that the funding has been agreed for eight years and the School's financial projections show confidence that by this date the course will be self-financing, which is the goal of the relationship. She further noted that there could even be a possibility of funding being extended.

It was noted that the main benefactor to the fund, His Highness Shaikh Hamdan bin Rashid Al Maktoum, had died in the last few days, and it was queried whether the recent bereavement would have any implications for the funding. Prof. Fitzpatrick stated that the foundation has been run by the deceased's son for many years. The bereavement does not affect the work of the foundation and therefore it would not affect the funding.

In relation to the blended learning guidelines, and on the understanding that there was a School expert to support learning, it was noted that in the current context all delivery in Ireland is online. From a statutory point of view, the QQI Guidelines for Blended Learning is the set of guidelines to be followed in relation to online learning. In addition, a working group, led by Geoff Bradley, IT Services, is seeking to create a Trinity 'minimum standard' for online offerings. Prof. Fitzpatrick noted that she would inform the School Expert, Prof Omar Garcia of same.



Prof. Fitzpatrick noted that the School works hard to recruit MPhil students every year. She is optimistic that the new course will recruit well given that there are not comparable MPhil courses online and other offerings tend to focus on religion and Islam, while the proposed course looks at the Middle East in a wider cultural context from antiquity to the present day and is inter-disciplinary, to include relations and engagement with the West, human rights and Arabic poetry. The proposed maximum target is 20 students but Prof. Fitzpatrick noted that they would be happy with 7 or 8 students in the first year and reiterated that Dundee has a wide international network and may offer a number of scholarships in the first few years to help promote the programme.

An observation was made that there could be significant interest in the new course given its broad remit within the arts, e.g. theatre, film and drama.

It was queried whether there was an instructional designer or technologist within the School available to help given that there is a lot of extra work involved in getting the course delivery online. Prof. Fitzpatrick confirmed that Sinéad Doran, Project and Programmes Manager within the School Office holds a Masters in online education and the School Expert ran over 200 programmes in Queen Mary University, London. She confirmed that they are aware that the new online course will be complex and demanding and it aims to give the highest quality of experience to students.

The Dean noted that the proposal was well received. There were no additional issues raised and the committee endorsed the proposal.

Decision GS/20-21/077: The committee recommended the new course proposal, MPhil/PgDip/PgCert in The Middle East in a Global Context (online) to Council, subject to an positive external review.

XX GS/20-21/078 Academic Registry Annual Report 2019/20 with additional PG data (for GSC circulation) – Jennifer Pepper (Acting Director of Academic Registry) to present

The Dean welcomed Ms Jennifer Pepper (Acting Director of Academic Registry) to the meeting and noted that the Academic Registry Annual Report had been circulated to GSC. The Dean further noted that she was keen to hear members' views as to what is important to be highlighted or raised as a concern for inclusion in the Graduate Studies Annual Report.

AR had another busy year in 2019/20, with over 18,000 direct UG and PG applications, over 17,000 CAO applications (Ireland and EU), €160M of student fees income and €9M payment for student via student finance team processed.

There were over 120,000 student queries and nearly 19,000 students were registered. There was an increase in student case activity with 5,000 last year. 65,000 exam sittings and 46 graduation ceremonies. The organisational structure was as per previous year, with Ms Leona Coady as AR Director during 2019/20 and together AR



delivered all core activities supporting the student life-cycle and were involved in significant projects such as Digital Trinity 2 project.

AR 2019/20 initiatives were focused on implementation of COVID-19 emergency measures and a move to working remotely. This involved rapid deployment of a remote service delivery model for staff and students and remote management of system upgrades as well as a move to online examinations and graduation ceremonies.

Giving an overview of KPIs in relation to PG students, it was noted that processing times for PGT and PGR applications were marginally improved on the previous academic year, although they still failed to meet targets set. The primary causes identified for this were continued growth in applications unmatched by increased staffing levels and challenges with turn-around times in some Schools. Other KPIs were achieved.

Overall, there has been a 2.9% increase in registered students compared to 2018/19 (71% UG, 29% PG, 0.3% foundation programmes). There was a 22% increase in PGT applications compared to the previous year. PGT programmes had an application to offer conversion rate of 54% (up from 41%) and offer to registration was 52% (down from 77%). PGR application to offer was 46% (up from 44%) and offer to register was 67% (down from 82%). The drops in registration have been attributed to the impact of COVID-19.

In relation to Recognition of Prior Learning, 124 postgraduate applications were considered, 108 were approved for admission by the Admissions Officer and 16 complex cases were referred to the Dean of Graduate Studies, of which 1 was approved for admission.

24 PG scholarships were awarded (all 12 available were used by AHSS, 1 was unused by FEMS/STEM, and all 4 were used in HS). Provost PhD Project Awards in 2019/20 compared to 2018/19 were detailed in the slides.

PG student case management noted an 18% increase of (to 2,312) requests logged. The largest growth was marked in June, July and August 2020 due to an increase in requests for extensions to submit (264) and pre-registration withdrawal requests (120). Both were COVID-19 related. The slides gave details on the length of time taken for cases to be progressed.

Assessment and progression were as usual in Semester 1, but there was a move to complete remote and online assessment in Semester 2. Scheduling software needed to be updated to accommodate alternative assessment. A faculty-based pod system to support Schools was also put in place in Semester 2. Exams scheduled and managed decreased by 9.7% due to reduction in Council approved exams, reduction in matriculation, reduction in reassessment and that term tests were scheduled locally rather than by AR.



The number of theses examined was 17% less than the previous year, with a slightly higher proportion approved by degree award as a first outcome (34% compared to 32%). Due to COVID-19, students were not obliged to submit a hard copy of their thesis to the library and were eligible to be approved for the award once an electronic version of their thesis was submitted via TARA software.

Early graduation ceremonies were organised for clinical classes in May and June 2020 so that they could register early with their professional bodies to support the national pandemic effort. Alterations were made to the *my.tcd* portal so students could upload images of themselves for the virtual ceremonies and a video template was devised to capture the essence of the ceremony. 5,000 students were invited to graduate and of those 2,723 were conferred virtually in absentia. The other students had deferred graduation to a future date where in-person ceremony may be possible.

Following the Acting Director of AR's report, the Dean opened the floor to comments and/or questions. It was noted that the report had stated that a quicker turn-around from Schools would be welcome and the Acting Director was asked if there was anything further that PG Directors could do to help this.

Action GS/20-21/078(i): The Acting Director of The Academic Registry will arrange for AR to provide training to School staff based on needs identified by DTLPs.

There was a query as to whether there was a document that explains the structure of AR and who to approach on various issues. The Acting Director confirmed that these details were on the AR website, including an escalation point for each team and she undertook to forward the link to the website. She noted that clinics and video links had been set up in the last academic year and it may be possible to set up a similar drop-in clinic giving an overview of AR.

Action GS/20-21/078(ii): The Acting Director of The Academic Registry will forward GSC a link to the AR webpage that explains the structure of AR and associated contact details.

Action GS/20-21/078(iii): The Acting Director of The Academic Registry will investigate the setting up of drop-in clinics for staff to gain an overview of AR.

The number of PG scholarships awarded by Faculty and by Provost was queried. The Acting Director confirmed that although a new model was introduced, the same number of scholarships were awarded. The number of scholarships awarded by faculty was reduced from 65 to 25, with one award to be allocated to each School, with one remaining award to be issued at the discretion of the Dean of Graduate Studies. The remaining 40 awards were rebranded into the Provost Project Award scheme and increased the financial support available to recipients with full fees for four academic years, plus a stipend of €16,000 per year.

The Director of Global Relations noted that Trinity is at a crucial time at present in relation to applications and conversion activities. She noted that it would appear from the data that there are issues in some areas and offered support from the Global Office.



The Academic Secretary noted that the data presented is extremely useful and that it would be important to have a link to the various AR reports over the past number of years for quality assurance purposes in relation to both programmes and Schools. She further noted that it would be beneficial to have such a link given that Trinity is undergoing an institutional review this year. The Acting Director of AR agreed that this can be arranged.

Action GS/20-21/078(iv): The Acting Director of The Academic Registry will forward a link to recent AR reports to GSC.

It was confirmed that the virtual video graduations can be viewed on the Registrar's website.

Many Directors applauded the important work being done by AR staff, with many added challenges especially over the last year. The President of GSU added that although there may be some difficulties in the process, individual staff members were very supportive.

The Director of Student Services noted that there is much conversation about 'fixing a broken AR'. However, she noted that this presentation has shown much detail of the work of a small AR and hoped that the conversation can be repositioned towards acknowledging and even celebrating the work and achievements of AR as well as examining fault lines in the system. She noted that in 2015 there were 58 AR staff members and without any additional staff, five years later there has been a 70% increase in direct applications, 23% increase in fee revenues collected, 20% increase in programmes supported, an additional 2,000 PG cases transferred and handled, 26% growth in outward mobility and 18% growth in commencements as well as a second set of exams.

The Dean noted that PG students make up less than one third of the student body and yet there are almost as many PG student cases as UG cases and these PG cases are managed by one person only. She agreed that there are aspects of AR that cause many people frustration, often without knowing the challenges that are in the background. She noted that the report contains important information that can be used to plan for supporting PG students.

The Dean thanked the Acting Director of Academic Registry for the report and the AR staff for their work throughout the year and noted that she would follow up on any recommendations from members for inclusion in the Graduate Studies Report.

Action GS/20-21/078(v): The Dean of Graduate Studies will collate recommendations from GSC for inclusion in the Graduate Studies Report.

GS/20-21/079 PG Open Day

The Dean noted that this was an opportunity for members to raise issues briefly as the Director of Marketing, Global Relations would be attending GSC meeting in April or May.



Members voiced disappointment at the low level of public engagement with the PG Open Day. Comments from colleagues indicated that there was much work involved on the part of staff – producing videos in advance and attending the Open Day - but there were very few questions from the public. One School had 14 staff working at the Open Day, but only 7 questions were asked. Another School noted that in the first two hours, there were 3 queries. Some colleagues had described the event as a waste of time. Others felt that, in their experience, despite having long-running and over-subscribed MSc courses, the PG Open Day rarely aided in recruitment.

There were suggestions that the event could have been advertised better to attract more footfall. A more organised approach was suggested, whereby the numbers of pre-registered students would be relayed to Schools so as they could adjust preparations as necessary. One idea was that perhaps the event should take place in Michaelmas term as by March many students have made their plans for the coming year. However, it was also acknowledged that after 12 months of interactions taking place virtually, this year is a particularly difficult year to attract people to an online event.

It was noted a year into online practice, online planning is no longer an emergency or contingency scenario and so it is disappointing that we have not seen the investment in proper supports for a professional promotion of programmes in Trinity. It was suggested that a lack of high quality video producing programme does not reflect well on Trinity and marketing the university and its courses in this way could cause reputational damage. Funding for better quality materials that promote the values of Trinity was called for rather than use of a low quality platform such as PowerPoint. It was further suggested that rather than consider online delivery and promotion as a secondary or lesser preference, this could be an opportunity for Trinity to shine as a premier online institution.

The Director of Global Relations thanked members for their feedback and noted that this was the first time that the PG Open Day took place online. She agreed that the online experience needs to be delivered in the best way and that there were slightly reduced resources this year.

The Dean added that the online offering gives an opportunity to access people before they make their decisions. She noted that Course Directors know best how to reach the people they need to reach and welcomed suggestions from members or from their Schools as to what would work in their particular situations, bearing in mind that the responses may be different for each School.

Action GS/20-21/079: DT to submit suggestions from their own Schools to the Dean in relation to planning for future PG Open Days.



GS/20-21/080 COVID-19 and update from COLSAG

The Dean advised that relevant documents had been circulated and focused on plans for next academic year regarding teaching and considerations of assessment processes.

The draft discussion document on examining three scenarios of what could potentially lie ahead was brought to COLSAG in early March and subsequently went to USC. The Dean advised that she would bring feedback to the Vice Provost directly after this meeting as the document will go to Council for discussion.

Action GS/20-21/080(i): The Dean will forward GSC feedback in relation to the 'Draft discussion document for COLSAG 2 March 2021, Option for teaching activities Academic Year 2021-22' to the Vice Provost in advance of an upcoming Council meeting.

In response to a query, the Dean noted that this document is focused on teaching rather than research and significant efforts were made to try to ensure that research was less impacted. She acknowledged that success of these efforts has depended on the domain of the research.

A concern was expressed that it is not evident from the document what lessons College has learned from the previous year. The Dean confirmed that there is a realisation that there must be certainty for a semester at the minimum to enable planning. However, the challenge remains that the COVID-19 situation continues to change and a strong theme expressed was the need for flexibility at School level and at programme level. However, it was also noted that there needs to be certainty reasonably early to be able to understand what it is that College is planning. It was stated that this is important from a messaging point of view for students and is also important for Schools to be able to plan sufficiently.

Some inconsistencies about numbers was noted (p.294) where the document refers to classrooms being full in one scenario with 25 students and in another at 50 students. An inconsistency about student placements was also raised. The document states that placements take place in Scenario A, but the Director of Psychology noted that healthcare placements are also running under Scenario C, perhaps other similar fields too (e.g. psychology, occupational therapy, social work etc.)

There was a comment regarding the declining number of students attending live online classes which are also being recorded. It was queried what message College is sending students and whether staff are encouraging or even incentivising them to attend. Some concern was also noted regarding the need to close teaching laboratories, especially significant where there is an accreditation requirement for same, as in Engineering.

The DTLP of the School of Chemistry voiced a concern regarding laboratories and how the change from a 2hr limit to 1hr45mins has made it impossible to run labs in Chemistry. He noted that this was causing frustration and stress on the part of both staff and students. The Dean noted that this particular issue would be better discussed



outside of the meeting and had already been discussed between the Head of School and the Vice Provost.

Action GS/20-21/080(ii): The DTLP of the School of Chemistry will liaise with the Dean in relation to difficulties being encountered by the School in relation to laboratory time constraints relating to COVID-19 restrictions.

Student experience was also commented on and many members noted that a strong and consistent message is required, especially given that many potential applicants are now making decisions about whether to enrol on courses. The Director of Global Relations further noted that, from a sectoral perspective, there are some discussions that some universities are actively discouraging students from coming to the country. The President of GSU noted her engagement with students regarding student experience - having safe places to eat, study, to attend labs etc. and further clarification was also sought on resource implications.

The Dean thanked all for their inputs and having read over the main points, confirmed that she would bring all feedback to the Vice Provost directly after this meeting.

GS/20-21/081 LERU update

The Dean informed members that the LERU Doctoral Summer School 2021 will be online only.

Action GS/20-21/081: The Dean will circulate the LERU Doctoral Summer School programme to members, along with the details for registration and attendance (online only).

GS/20-21/082 PG renewal update

Due to time constraints the item was postponed to a later GSC meeting.

GS/20-21/083 AOB

The Assistant Academic Secretary, Graduate Education, reminded members to forward information on achievements within their Schools for inclusion in the Dean of Graduate Studies Annual Report.

Action GS/20-21/083: DTPLs to forward information on achievements within their Schools to the Assistant Academic Secretary, Graduate Education for inclusion in the Dean of Graduate Studies Annual Report.



XX Section B for noting and approval

GS/20-21/084 Change to MD registration dates to 31 January and 31 July from 2022 – memo from Prof. Kumlesh (School of Medicine)

The Dean noted that the memo contains two parts – a proposed change in MD registration dates and a reference to an MD by publication. It was clarified that the suggested MD by publication required further exploration and therefore would not be considered at this meeting, but members endorsed the request for revised registration dates.

Decision GS/20-21/084: The committee recommended the change of MD registration dates to 31 January and 31 July from 2022.

XX Section C for noting

There were no agenda items for Section C to note.

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12 pm.

Prof. Martine Smith

Date: 25 March 2021