

UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN
TRINITY COLLEGE

GRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Graduate Studies Committee on Thursday 21st May, 2003
in Room 2026, Arts & Social Sciences Building.

Present (Chair)	Dean of Graduate Studies
Dean of Research	Prof. M. Gibney
Arts (Humanities)	Dr. M.-A. Valiulis
	Dr. A. Chantler
Arts (Letters)	Dr. C. Morris
Business, Economic & Social Studies	Dr. E. Mahon
	Dr. K. Benoit
Engineering & Systems Science	Dr. T. Orr
Science	Dr. T. Kavanagh
	Dr. P. Kruger
Health Sciences	Ms. A. Higgins
	Dr. F. Falkiner
GSU	Mr. C. Travis
	Mr. T. O' Donnell

In attendance: Ms. E. McGlade (Library); Ms. G. Hogan (ISS); Ms. L. Donnellan (GSO); Ms. N. Saunders (GSO); Prof. V. Cahill (Computer Science); Mr. B. Bromwich, Dr. S. Pavia & Dr. E. Farrell (Civil, Structural & Environmental Engineering); Dr. R. Honan (Psychology); Mr. J. Walsh (GSU)

Apologies: Prof. D. Singleton; Dr. A. Moore; Mr. D. Scammell

170.0 Minutes of the meeting of the 8th May, 2003.

Ms. Higgins requested a change to the wording of item 169.4.

Re item 169.1, Dr Mahon asked for clarification as to whether the Department of Political Science had agreed to implement the changes to the Ph.D. in Political Science in 2004 that had been recommended by the Committee. The Dean said that it was his understanding that they would be implementing the changes in 2004 but that he would seek confirmation from the head of department.

170.1 Matters arising

Re item 169.9, the Dean reported that he had conveyed the Committee's approval of the proposed European Doctorate in Sound and Vibration Studies to the Registrar. The Registrar agreed that further proposals for European Doctorates should be approved by this Committee before being forwarded to him.

170.2 Review of Postgraduate Awards

The Dean gave a brief history of the Unit Cost Awards Scheme (Category II awards) and noted that the context in which the scheme had been designed had changed considerably, in particular in terms of increases in available external funding for

research students. He reported on his consultations on revisions to the scheme and the resulting proposal that the scheme be replaced by a teaching fellowship system. He noted that the Financial Review Advisory Group was likely to recommend an increased level of support for such a scheme. Though this proposal was still under discussion and had not been approved by Board, it was likely that the sums being discussed would allow an increase in the maintenance allowance from €2,158 to approx €4,000 without reducing the overall number of awards available. The finer details of the scheme, such as the number of teaching hours that a student would be expected to do, would need to be discussed and agreed by the Committee. Dr. Kruger asked whether the teaching that students in receipt of teaching fellowships would be required to do would be additional to any current teaching workload. The Dean replied that the scheme would specify a maximum number of hours and that the recipient would be free to add further teaching or any other suitable income generating activity up to an income limit, to be agreed by the Committee. He felt that the Committee would have to establish a code of best practice to guard against such teaching having a harmful effect on a student's own research. He noted that this issue was to be addressed as item 7 later in the agenda. Currently the income limit is ca€12,700. Dr. Kruger expressed concern that the scheme might be used by Departments as a way of getting students to do more teaching at a lower cost to the Department. Mr Walsh welcomed the increase in maintenance allowance but felt that the number of teaching hours required should be relatively moderate. The Dean suggested that this was a matter for the code of best practice. Dr Valiulis congratulated the Dean on the new scheme. Mr Travis asked how the new scheme would apply to non-EU students. The Dean replied that as in the existing system, the awards would cover EU fees. However he said he hoped for a continuation of the top-up fee awards scheme for non-EU students, where currently ten non-EU award holders receive an award to cover the difference between EU and non-EU fees. Mr. Travis expressed concern that while College was hoping to attract more non-EU students, adequate financial support was not been supplied for them. Dr. Kruger asked whether the scheme would be introduced for the coming academic year and the Dean said that he hoped it would be and that if it were he felt that current applicants should be offered the option of accepting awards under the old scheme, since the new scheme had not been advertised. The Committee welcomed and approved the proposal for teaching fellowships to replace the existing college awards.

170.3 Proposal for an M.Sc. in Ubiquitous Computing

The Dean welcomed Prof. Vinny Cahill from the Department of Computer Science, who outlined the proposal to the Committee. Prof. Cahill emphasised that the course aimed to combine students with a technical computing background and those with more media-based or creative arts background. In order to bring people from these diverse backgrounds up to the same skills level, students would complete a Diploma year initially and then move on to the Masters course. Dr Kavanagh asked whether the diversity of background of students on the course would pose any problems. Prof. Cahill said that he did not think that it would, since students from such varied backgrounds on the M.Sc. in Networks and Distributed Systems course and the M.Sc. in Multimedia course currently worked together on projects within the Department with great success. Prof. Cahill felt that the challenge of the proposed course would be to foster similar interdisciplinary work. Dr Kavanagh asked whether students from non-technical backgrounds did as well as those from more technical backgrounds and Prof. Cahill said that they did but that their success was in different areas. Mr Travis said that his experience of the broad

curriculum programme was that students adapt well to areas that are not their primary speciality. Mr O' Donnell asked whether the course must start in October 2003 in order to secure the funding and Prof. Cahill confirmed that it did. The Dean then thanked Prof. Cahill and the Committee discussed the proposal. Dr Valiulis queried whether there would be enough teaching space to house the students from this course. The Dean said that this was routinely a factor in a proposal's approval at Faculty level. He undertook to seek assurances on this from Prof Cahill. The Committee approved the proposal.

170.4 Proposal for a Diploma in Health & Safety in Construction

The Dean welcomed Mr Brian Bromwich and Dr Eric Farrell from the Department of Civil, Structural and Environmental Engineering. Mr Bromwich outlined the course proposal to the Committee. Dr Falkiner, in his capacity as College safety officer, noted that the course content did not include a module on laser safety and suggested this be included. Mr Bromwich agreed to this proposal and undertook to amend the proposal accordingly. Dr Falkiner then asked whether 10 hours on disease and injury was sufficient and Mr Bromwich said that if more time was required, the syllabus could be adjusted as necessary. Dr. Mahon asked whether companies were obliged by law to employ a trained safety officer and Mr Bromwich confirmed that they were. Dr. Mahon then asked whether this had been taken into consideration when designing the course and Mr Bromwich said that it had. The Dean then thanked Mr Bromwich and Dr Farrell and the Committee approved the proposal, following discussion.

170.5 Proposal for a Diploma in Applied Building Repair and Conservation

The Dean welcomed Dr Sara Pavia and Dr Eric Farrell from the Department of Civil, Structural and Environmental Engineering. Dr Pavia outlined the proposal to the Committee and said that the course not only fulfils a need in the area, as there is no similar course running in Ireland, but that it also fits in with the research interests of the Department. Dr Falkiner highlighted an error in the financial calculations, which Dr Pavia said had already been corrected. Dr Morris queried what related backgrounds would make a student eligible to apply for the course. Dr Pavia said that architecture, archaeology and any qualification in the area of heritage or building conservation would qualify as suitably related disciplines. Dr. Mahon queried whether there should be overt reference in the proposal to cultural history and the history of art. Dr. Pavia said that these topics would be covered in the 'Fundamentals' module under 'Buildings'. Dr Morris asked whether there would be scope to include something on international heritage and Dr Pavia said that there would. The Dean then thanked Dr Pavia and Dr Farrell. The Committee discussed the proposal and approved it subject to correction of the financial details and elaboration within the proposal of the related disciplines from which students would be eligible to apply.

170.6 Review of the M.Sc. in Counselling Psychology

The Dean introduced Dr. Rita Honan from the Department of Psychology who briefly outlined the results of the review. Dr. Honan said that she had noted a continuing improvement in the course in her time as course co-ordinator and that the number of applicants for the course has doubled over the last few years. However, the financial viability of the course remained an issue, since they receive no funding from the Health Board or the Department of Health. She described the employment prospects of counselling psychologists, noting that until last year counselling psychologists could not be hired as community psychologists. However, this situation had now changed and graduates of the course were being hired by the Health Boards as community

psychologists. The Dean thanked Dr. Honan and following a short discussion, the review was formally noted.

170.7 Teaching by postgraduate students: Principles for good practice

The Dean introduced Mr John Walsh, vice-president of the Graduate Student's Union, who presented a document to the Committee outlining proposed principles governing postgraduate teaching. Mr Walsh said that the document was open to correction and discussion and that it should form the basis for a code of best practice for postgraduate teaching. The Dean thanked the Graduate Student's Union for their work on the document and said that there was some overlap between this area and discussions being held by the Research Committee in developing a code of best practice for research. He described the proposals as timely in the light of the proposal for a teaching fellowship scheme and said that they would form an important contribution to the Committee's proposals for good practice guidelines in this area. The Committee discussed the document and decided to accept the document as the GSU input to this discussion. The Dean requested comments and feedback from the Committee on this issue and said that in the light of these he will bring back an amended version of the document to a future meeting.

170.8 Any other business

Dr. Orr raised the issue of the 9% increase in postgraduate fees for 2003/2004 and asked whether the Graduate Studies Committee had any input in setting/approving this fee increase. The Dean said that the increase had been set and approved by the Finance Committee, and that he had been invited to make comments. Dr Falkiner said that he was concerned that some taught postgraduate programmes would not remain competitive if fees were too high. The Dean agreed that this was possible but said that this had to be judged on a case by case basis and he welcomed any information on such cases. Some Committee members voiced the concern that such an increase would highlight deficiencies in our provision to graduate students, especially to non-EU students. The Dean said that he would convey this view to the Treasurer for the Finance Committee. Dr. Orr asked whether there had been any progress from the Senior Lecturer on the issue of advertising postgraduate courses. The Dean said that he had received no indication of a decision by officers on this. He undertook to query progress on this issue.

Dr. Mahon wished to flag the loss of teaching space for postgraduate programmes in the Departments of Politics and Sociology in no. 1 College Green due to the opening of a restaurant on the ground floor. The Dean replied that he felt that perhaps this was an issue for discussion between the departments concerned, their Dean and the Bursar but he undertook to communicate this concern to the Bursar.

There being no other business, the meeting closed. The next meeting is due to take place on the 5th June, 2003.

Signed :

Date :