

**UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN
TRINITY COLLEGE**

GRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 9.00 am on Friday 15 June, 2007
Boardroom, Provost's House

Present: Prof. Patrick Prendergast, Dean of Graduate Studies (*Chair*),
Directors of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) as follows:
Prof. Paul Coughlan, School of Business
Prof. John Kelly, School of Chemistry
Prof. June Nunn, School of Dental Science
Mr Brendan Tangney, School of Computer Science & Statistics
Dr Matthew Causey, School of Drama, Film & Music
Prof. Stefano Sanvito, School of Physics
Prof. Henry Rice, School of Engineering
Dr Damien Brennan, School of Nursing & Midwifery
Dr John Clancy, School of Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences
Prof. Nicholas Grene, School of English
Dr Helen Buckley, School of Social Work & Social Policy
Dr Richard Timoney, School of Mathematics
Ms Ruth Palileo, Graduate Students' Union President (*Ex officio*)
Mr Paul Laird, Graduate Students' Union Vice-President (*Ex officio*)

Apologies: Prof. Ian Robertson, Dean of Research (*Ex officio*)
Mr John Lawlor, MIS Manager (*Ex officio*)
Directors of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) as follows:
Dr Philip Matthews, School of Education
Dr Neville Cox, School of Law
Prof. Seamus Martin, Vice Deanery of Genetics & Microbiology
Prof. Robert Holton, School of Social Sciences & Philosophy
Dr Richard Porter, School of Biochemistry & Immunology
Prof. Cormac Ó Cuilleaináin, School of Languages, Literatures & Cultural Studies
Prof. John Saeed, School of Linguistic, Speech & Communication Sciences
Dr Kenneth Irvine, School of Natural Sciences
Prof. Eunan O'Halpin, School of Histories & Humanities
Dr Kevin Tierney, School of Psychology
Prof. Mark Lawler, School of Medicine
Mr Trevor Peare, Keeper of Readers' Services (*Ex officio*)
Ms Helen Thornbury, Graduate Studies Office

In attendance: Prof. Carol O'Sullivan, Incoming Dean of Graduate Studies
Dr Iain Attack, Aspirant School of Religions, Theology and Ecumenics
Ms Ewa Sadowska, Graduate Studies Office, Secretary to the meeting (*Ex officio*)

The Dean welcomed Dr Iain Attack, the incoming Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) in the Aspirant School of Religions, Theology and Ecumenics, who came to the meeting in attendance.

202.0 Minutes of 24 May 2007

The minutes of the meeting of 24 May 2007 were approved by the Committee as circulated and signed by the Dean.

202.1 Matters arising

a) *Re 200.5:* The Dean advised that IRCSET/IRCHSS calls for Graduate Research Education Programmes have been announced on the Councils' websites.

202.2 Postgraduate Diploma in Conscious Sedation in Dentistry (18 months p-t)

The Dean welcomed Prof. Leo Stassen, the proposed Course Director, and Dr Mary Clarke, the proposed Course Coordinator, from the School of Dental Science to speak to the circulated proposal. Dr Clarke explained that the postgraduate diploma course is being proposed in response to a requirement from the Dublin Dental School and Hospital (DDSH) for such a course in Ireland covering all forms of sedation relevant to dentistry. At present the only Dental Council-recognised course in the country is a two-day didactic course, with clinical attachments, in inhalational sedation

given by the DDSH to the Health Services Executive (HSE) Dental Service staff. The new course is designed to meet a wider professional need. The Irish Dental Council has informed the DDSH that there is an urgent need for a recognised course to cover the demand for treatment under conscious sedation, from both the public and profession. The DDSH intends to request the Dental Council to approve this course with a view to the Postgraduate Diploma becoming a registerable qualification. Such approval is required in order to regulate the practice of conscious sedation in Ireland. This course will attract students from Ireland and UK and fill an obvious gap in Irish post-professional training education. The demand for the course is expected to be high and entry will be on a competitive basis. The course will be based in the DDSH with outreach sessions held in clinics such as St. Mary's Hospital, Phoenix Park, and Dublin 2. The course will be managed and run by consultants and specialists within the DDSH with a specific interest/experience in conscious sedation, as part of a committee chaired by the Director of the course Prof. Leo FA Stassen. A member of the administration staff will be designated the Course Administrator and will have responsibility for the day-to-day running of the course. The course will run over a period of 18 months, on a part-time basis with first intake commencing in January 2008. Candidates for the Postgraduate Diploma in Conscious Sedation will have to attend a total of 11 didactic days, 20 clinical sessions (10 days) and produce an essay project.

The Dean thanked both Dr Clarke and Prof. Stassen for their presentation and expressed his support for the proposal noting that it seemed to be an important development for the School of Dental Studies and the professional discipline in Ireland.

In a discussion which followed a few issues were raised and the following clarifications were obtained:

- a) on the allocation of student numbers: that it is intended to offer maximum of 6 places to external applicants but that another 6 places will be reserved for the internal applicants registered on the Doctoral programme;
- b) that some elements of conscious sedation are already present in the undergraduate curriculum but the postgraduate diploma will provide a in-depth professional training in the area as requested by the Irish Dental Council;
- c) that a submission to the University Council will include a statement that the participants of the course will be aware of the regulatory environment surrounding the risk benefit and assessment in the aspects of the best professional practice in this area.

The Committee approved the course proposal subject to implementation of the above amendments in the Council submission and noting that the course may in the future exceed to 12 the currently maximum number of 6 students recruited from outside of the School.

202.3 Modularisation

The Dean welcomed the Senior Lecturer Prof. Colm Kearney who had been invited for this item. In a slides presentation, the Senior Lecturer outlined a background and the current situation with respect to the modularisation and the new academic year structure issues and thanked members of the Working Party (WP) present at the meeting for their contribution to its deliberations over the last year. He noted that with respect to modularisation the WP had recommended the CS3 option which stipulates that "College should consider introducing into its undergraduate degree programmes the structured but flexible combination of core and elective curriculum, incorporating the existing Broad Curriculum. With respect to the new academic year structure, he noted that the WP recommended that "College should adopt the academic year structure in YS3 with a twelve-week Michaelmas term, and a twelve-week Hilary term, and a Trinity term devoted to preparing for and conducting the examinations process. Both twelve-week terms would incorporate a reading week." The Senior Lecturer also advised that the Heads' Committee at its last meeting had accepted, in principle, the CS3 option but recommended that some issues be further discussed and reported back before any final decision can be taken.

The Dean thanked the Senior Lecturer for his presentation. In a discussion which followed several issues were discussed. They may be summarized as follows:

- a) that the current three-semester structure of the academic year in College seems to be out of line with all the universities in Ireland, and its proposed amendment to a two-semester one is likely to facilitate an inter-institutional collaboration to a significant degree;
- b) that the Graduate Studies Committee would favour an implementation of the new academic year structure without undue delay as soon as all the issues have been clarified, hopefully for the academic year 2008/09. This is essential for the implementation of new graduate education programmes currently under development as these programmes involve collaboration with other Irish and international universities. The vast majority of these universities operate a semester structure;
- c) that, according to the Senior Lecturer, the intended sequence of events will be first to finalise in Michaelmas Term 2007 the administrative restructuring, to be then followed by the implementation of the new YS3 structure, and then by the implementation of modularisation (CS3) in the following years;
- d) that in the new YS3 structure there is some limited room for organising examinations before Christmas but the official College examination period will be in Trinity Term.

The Dean thanked the Senior Lecturer for taking the time to come and talk to the Committee about these important issues, particularly in view of the fact that 1/3 of the College's students are now postgraduate students and increasing that proportion is now part of the College's strategic plan.

202.4 Graduate Research Education Programme (GREP) proposals: preliminary approval [part III]

The Dean noted that an additional submission in Computational Mechanics has come from the School of Engineering; as a response to the recent IRCSET call. The Dean briefly spoke to the proposal and thanked Prof. Henry Rice for this submission. The Committee was happy to approve the proposal outline for subsequent presentation to the University Council.

An issue of a sign-off procedure has been raised. In response to it, the Dean confirmed that the Graduate Studies Office will create a consolidated list of all approved GREPs for the Research Office and the next meeting of the University Council. The Dean will sign off on the GREP submissions after the Research Office would have approved their financial sections to its specified deadline.

202.5 Masters in Ministry (M.Min.)

The Dean introduced the item by noting that the development of a new Masters course is being carried out in collaboration with the Church of Ireland Theological College and the Aspirant School of Religions, Theology and Ecumenics. He welcomed Prof. Linda Hogan, the Head of the Aspirant School, to speak to the tabled document noting that it had also been circulated electronically prior to the meeting.

Prof. Hogan explained that the Bachelor of Theology degree, running in its present form since 1988 and jointly delivered by the Church of Ireland Theological College and the TCD School of Religions and Theology as a principal professional pathway for ordinands proceeding to ministry in the Church of Ireland, is currently under review. Following discussions between College officers and representatives of the bishops of the Church of Ireland over the last twelve months, proposals have emerged from the Church of Ireland representatives that would overhaul the professional ordination pathway, involving the discontinuation of the B.Th. and the introduction of a new postgraduate pathway.

The proposed professional course would be a Masters-level qualification with the core modules designed to be vocationally oriented and as integrated with each other as is practically possible, and with skills training across a wider spectrum than has been the case with the B.Th. The Church of Ireland has expressed a strong interest in securing as much course delivery as TCD can offer consistent with this plan and in developing, in partnership, the syllabus for such a degree with colleagues in the aspirant School of Religions, Theology and Ecumenics. In order to forward these discussions, representatives of the Church of Ireland and of College (including the Dean of Graduate Studies) meet recently, and reached preliminary view on the possible structures for such a new degree. Since that time colleagues in the new School have been considering the academic implications of the proposal and their possible role within it. If agreement can be reached on issues of syllabus and course content, it is envisaged that the formal structure of such a taught postgraduate degree would have the following features:

- a) That the 'full-time' version of the course would be recognized for academic purposes as two full years of study and one year of part-time study, with the ECTS reflecting that reality [60 + 60 + 30 ECTS -- these totals subject to confirmation that they can be accommodated under Bologna rules];
- b) That the name of the course would be Masters in Ministry, reflecting growing international practice;
- c) That the course would be managed by a Postgraduate Coordinating Committee to be made up of representatives of the Church of Ireland Theological Institute and of participating TCD disciplines; that its membership should reflect the balance of teaching delivery; that the academic reporting line for this Committee should be to the Executive of the new School of Religions, Theology and Ecumenics;
- d) That an Advisory Board be established with representation from the House of Bishops and the University (including possibly the College Registrar and the Head of School of Religions, Theology and Ecumenics).
- e) That the University would be represented on appointments committees for the recruitment of academic staff to the Institute, but in an external capacity;
- f) That proposals emanating from these discussions may be modified by the Graduate Studies Committee and/or by the University Council, particularly in the light of comments from the external reviewer to be appointed by the Dean of Graduate Studies. (It was also noted that College practice is for the Head of a School proposing a new degree course to supply, after appropriate consultation, the names of two of possible reviewers to the Dean of Graduate Studies.);
- g) That the present negotiating team (possibly reconstituted) should remain in place to respond to the comments and recommendations of the external reviewer and of the Graduate Studies Committee, and to shepherd the proposal through its later stages.

Prof. Hogan also noted that admission regulations to the proposed Masters course are still under discussion and it is understood that candidates would come from a variety of disciplinary and professional backgrounds.

The Dean thanked Prof. Hogan and expressed his support for the proposal noting that Trinity has had a long-standing relationship with the Church of Ireland Theological College. The Dean opened the issue for discussion. In a discussion which followed a few issues were raised:

- a) that the proposed 150 ECTS allocation seems to be in excess of that required for a Masters programme. Prof Hogan outlined the rationale for such a high allocation of ECTS describing how it was necessary for academic integrity of the course. The Dean noted that the 90 ECTS should be seen as a minimum, and that higher allocation of ECTS could be specified, as was being proposed for the M.Min. if that was necessary for the academic and professional formation required for students of the subject;
- b) that the relationship between the Postgraduate Coordinating Committee and the Advisory Board was unclear. Prof. Hogan noted that this will be a matter for further discussion but that the Board will only have advisory role to the Coordinating Committee which will be the sole executive body running the course, and it is expected that it would not report to the Advisory Committee.
- c) In response to a question about whether or not access to the course would be limited to students studying for the ministry in the Church of Ireland, Prof Hogan noted that it was not envisaged that access to the course be limited only to this group. This issue will be addressed in the full proposal.
- d) regarding admissions it was noted and agreed by the Committee that special consideration would need to be given to admissions and that this would be laid out in the proposal when it came to the Graduate Studies Committee in due course.

With these clarifications, the Committee agreed to endorse the paper circulated by Prof. Hogan, and to approve the M.Min. in principle pending a fully developed course proposal being brought before the Committee in Michaelmas Term 2007, or as soon as possible thereafter. The Dean thanked Prof Hogan for attending the Committee for this item.

202.6 Calendar Part 2 changes for 2007/08

The Committee noted and approved Calendar Part 2 changes for 2007/08 as circulated under Item B1 (a-b), namely:

a) with reference to point B1 (a) it was accepted to add a sentence to the end of Section 3.1 in the Calendar Pt 2, Chapter B.3 General Regulations For Taught Graduate Courses as follows:

“All taught Masters degrees may be awarded a mark of Distinction. The award of a taught Masters with Distinction shall require the achievement of a distinction for the dissertation, but may include additional conditions as specified by the course committee. A distinction cannot be awarded if a candidate has failed any credit during the period of study. Criteria for the award of a distinction for the dissertation shall be approved by the relevant Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate).” This regulation will apply from new entrants in 2007/08.

b) with reference to point B1 (b) to insert a sentence in paragraphs 7.6 and 7.11 (on pages 177 and 178 with regard to research studentships [code 1252] and Ussher awards [code 1244] respectively) that “Payments are made in 12 monthly instalments directly to the student’s bank account via the Staff Office payroll.”

202.7 AOB

- a) Ms Ruth Palileo, the outgoing President of the GSU advised that the new GSU President from July 13th is going to be Alessio Frenda and the new GSU Vice-President will be Molly Doros (replacing Paul Laird).
- b) The Dean noted that today’s meeting was his last as his term of office will expire on 12 June 2007 and thanked the Committee members for most fruitful and satisfying cooperation in running the committee.
- c) On behalf of the Committee, Prof. Nicholas Grene thanked the Dean of Graduate Studies for his exceptionally efficient chairing of the committee, and the members expressed their thanks directly by giving the Dean a round of applause.
- d) The Dean also expressed his thanks to Ms Ewa Sadowska, the Secretary to the Committee for her efficient support to the committee, to Ms Helen Thornbury from the Graduate Studies Office for her contributions, and the whole team in the Graduate Studies Office with whom it had been a pleasure to work over the past three years.

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 11.30 am.



Prof. Carol O’Sullivan.

Date: 15 November 2007