UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN
TRINITY COLLEGE

GRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 9a.m. on Thursday 27th March 2014
Boardroom, Provost's House

Present: Professor Aideen Long, Dean of Graduate Studies (*Chair*),

Directors of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) as follows:
Professor Simon Wilson, School of Computer Science and Statistics
Professor Ebrahim Al Awadi, School of Dental Science
Professor Damian Murchan, School of Education
Professor Roger West, School of Engineering
Professor Darryl Jones, School of English
Professor Martine Cuypers, School of Histories & Humanities
Professor Anne Fitzpatrick, School of Languages, Literatures and
   Cultural Studies
Professor Alex Schuster, School of Law
Professor Christer Gobl, School of Linguistic, Speech and
   Communication Sciences
Professor John Stalker, School of Mathematics
Professor Anna Davies, School of Natural Sciences
Professor Anne-Marie Brady, School of Nursing and Midwifery
Professor Lidia Tajber, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical
   Sciences
Professor Louise Bradley, School of Physics
Professor David Hevey, School of Psychology
Professor Carlo Aldrovandi, Aspirant School of Religions, Theology and
   Ecumenics
Professor Peter Muhlau, School of Social Sciences and Philosophy
Professor Stephanie Holt, School of Social Work and Social Policy

The Academic Secretary, Ms Patricia Callaghan, CAPSL
   Representative (*Ex officio*)
Mr Ryan Kenny, Graduate Students' Union President (*Ex officio*)
Mr Trevor Peare, Keeper of Readers' Services (in attendance *Ex officio*)

Apologies: Directors of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) as follows:
Professor Melissa Sihra, School of Drama, Film & Music
Professor Martin Fellenz, School of Business
Professor Graeme Watson, School of Chemistry
Professor Orla Sheils, School of Medicine

Ms Sarah Smith, Graduate Students' Union Vice President (*Ex officio*)

In attendance: Ms Jennifer Hill, Graduate Studies Office, Secretary to the meeting
      (*Ex officio*)
    Ms Helen Thornbury, Graduate Studies Office (*Ex officio*)

GS/13-14/26   Minutes of 20th February 2013
   The minutes were approved by the Committee as circulated.

GS/13-14/27   Matters Arising
   The Dean informed the Committee that the Vice Provost had provided the circulated letter in response to items **GS/13-14/20 Online Education Initiative** and **GS/13-14/22 Processing non-EU Postgraduate Taught Applications**. In the letter, the Vice Provost also outlined the financial situation in College. She will attend the Graduate Studies Committee on 24th April 2014 to discuss this matter and will also invite all Directors of Teaching and Learning Postgraduate to their respective School budgetary meetings.
   In relation to item **GS/13-14/22 Processing non-EU Postgraduate Taught Applications**, the Dean reminded the Committee that the Vice President for Global Relations had suggested at the previous meeting that a working group would be put together to distil information from the policy to the Course Directors. Any volunteers should contact the Graduate Studies Office. The Global Relations Office is also in the process of putting together an FAQ on Admissions Process, particularly in the context of non-EU applicants. The Dean informed the Committee that at the previous University Council meeting the Provost had queried why applicants that meet minimum requirements are not automatically made an offer by administrators. The Dean confirmed that she requested an opportunity to implement the policy before this change takes place.

GS/13-14/28   Draft Objectives of the Strategic Plan 2014 - 2019
   The Dean explained that an Education Working Group has prepared a draft document that will be brought to the central committee preparing the strategic plan. The working group included the Dean of Graduate Studies, Senior Lecturer, Academic Secretary, Dean of Online Education, Associate Vice President for Global Relations, Faculty Representatives, Graduate Students' Union representative, Students' Union representative, Director of Careers Advisory Service and Sub-Librarian.
   The Working Group was asked to consider several themes:
1. Current challenges facing Trinity College: sources of funding, competition, internationalisation of higher education, information systems, physical environment, support for teaching and learning, and other challenges faced in reforming curriculum
2. Opportunities for future development: building on strategies / initiatives already in-train (eg, online initiative and enhanced technology, innovation and entrepreneurship strategy, innovation hub, internationalisation / Global Relations strategy, regional clusters, full implementation of SITS, new business school)
3. High level goals to be achieved: that TCD is recognised nationally and internationally as among the top 50-70 universities in the world for the quality of its education provision, that a TCD graduate will be prepared for self-employment and employment in the cultural, social and capital economies of the world but also for the challenges of modern life, that Trinity will provide an open and flexible learning environment delivering quality educational opportunities for continuing professional and personal

development, that Trinity as a learning organisation will commit to "educating the educator" and will have in place the teaching and learning infrastructure that inspires and supports innovation and creativity in the curriculum and pedagogy; supports the development and implementation of online education and hybrid learning; supports continuous improvement in the quality of the learning experience

4. Key Objectives: curriculum: to incorporate experiential learning and placements; to engage more in IT and e-learning and technology - allowing students access to an e-portfolio type system where they can record the skills they are learning in parallel to their taught learning; to embed the educational objectives of the innovation and entrepreneurship strategy; to increase national and international collaboration and partnerships - increasing mobility; to increase online delivery of programmes; to increase provision of short courses to students; to be more conscious of the employability of our graduates

5. Dependencies - systems, success in efforts to generate income

In relation to flexible learning it was noted that the health sciences field in particular is already looking for accreditation of prior learning and short programmes to build on up to masters level. Competitors, including UCD and RCSI can do this already. We need to be able to be flexible and respond to this need, however it was also noted that it is difficult to implement with current systems.

A query was raised regarding experiential learning and how this may not always work and there are concerns about how this would be implemented. It was clarified that a work placement does not necessarily have to be done in course time, but can be done in holidays etc. Even being given a few days to do something like this is beneficial.

GS/13-14/29 Masters in Education Studies (Early Childhood Education)
The Dean introduced Professor Anne O'Gara, Marino Institute of Education and invited her to speak to the circulated proposal.

Professor Anne O'Gara noted that Professor Carmel O'Sullivan worked closely on this proposal and there was also involvement from Ewa Sadowska and Dimitri Paraskevas from the Bologna Desk.

The course has been developed in context of the revised agreement between the Associated Colleges of Education and Trinity College and will be solely delivered by Marino Institute of Education, but overseen by the Associated Colleges Degrees committee (ACDC) in terms of academic quality and validated by the University of Dublin, Trinity College.

In January 2009 the government announced the introduction of a free pre-school year for children. In 2010, the number of children participating in this was 63,000. This number is set to rise to 68,000 in 2014 due to an increased birth rate.

In September 2013 the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs announced measures to ensure the enhancement of qualifications of the early years' sector. This move to up-skill the early childhood sector is based on research which demonstrates that increased qualifications lead to an increase in quality provision.

The course comprises six integrated modules taken over two years, part-time: Module 1: Early Childhood Education – Policy and Practice; Module 2: Psychology of Early Childhood; Module 3: Language and Literacy; Module 4: Inquiry-based learning; Module 5: Research Methodology; Module 6: Dissertation.

The School of Education confirmed that the course has been developed in

consultation with the School and they welcome the proposal. Early Childhood Education is not an area that the School of Education focuses on at present but they are enthusiastic about the future of the programme.

In answer to a query it was confirmed that project work will be marrying theory with practice. The expectation is that students would be working in early years education but there will be no placement as part of the programme.

It was also confirmed that as part of the admission requirements a 2.1 honors degree is the minimum academic requirement. All applicants are interviewed but a waiver of the three year teaching requirement may be made in exceptional circumstances. This will be made clearer in the Calendar entry.

The Committee approved the course for submission to the University Council subject to the above amendments to the proposal and any additional amendments that may be required following the external assessor's report.

GS/13-14/30   Postgraduate Diploma in Applied Social Studies (Online)
The Dean introduced Professor Stephanie Holt and Dr Julie Byrne and invited them to speak to the circulated proposal.

Professor Holt provided the background and rationale to the proposal. The course relates specifically but not explicitly to the Masters in Social Work which is an academic and professional qualification. It is a robust and intensive 2 year programme with very strict requirements. Those applicants that do not meet the admission requirements are advised to attend a conversion programme in social policy or social studies and those based in the greater Dublin area tend to apply to UCD which provides a one year, full-time, level 8, Diploma in Social Policy. As such, it was noted that this programme may have been developed anyway to retain students but having an online course offers another option.
The demand for the Masters in Social Work is high and this proposed programme fits well with this - retaining current undergraduate students or attracting new.

The course is comprised of seven core modules delivered over three terms. All modules have been newly developed and tailor-made to its on line format. Students who register for the Diploma can lead onto the Masters programme but the course is also standalone. The most innovative aspect of the course is the online delivery. Online students receive induction and will be introduced to TCD via video and will also participate in a technical check and equipment check. One session of the modules is to be released to the student per week on a Friday when the materials are released on Blackboard. Each session within the course will follow a similar format of mixing asynchronous and synchronous content. Asynchronous content relates to any content that the student can complete at their own pace at a time chosen by them, such as pre-recorded lectures/PowerPoint presentations, activities based around library readings, the use of web resources and tools such as Blackboard Learn's discussion forums, blogs and wikis. The Synchronous content is the term given to real-time interactions between online lecturer and student where the academic is online at the same time as all of the students and can respond to questions through microphone or text. It provides real engagement to make sure the learning is there.

An instructional designer would assist with developing the modules once the course is approved but one module (Introduction to Social Work) has been done as example and module description and learning outcomes have been provided for each session.

In answer to a query about the course being more structured than expected it was explained that one of the main issues with online learning is sense of isolation and to deal with this a sense of structure, purpose, continuity and retention has been

built. It is important to build a sense of community amongst the class to engage with discussion and provide for an emotional, as well as learning, experience.

It was confirmed that Blackboard offers "breakout rooms", group discussion boards, etc. which should assist with the difficulties of group work and engaging online.

It was noted that as the lectures are pre-recorded they will take time to develop but can then be repeated. However, the lecturer needs to be available for the synchronous lecture and also for moderated discussion taking place two to three times a week.

It was noted that the Library are very supportive of online courses but it was queried as to what use of campus facilities will be available for students based in Dublin / Ireland. It was confirmed that the students on this online course will register as TCD students so should have same access. It is proposed that in relation to college services the assumption will be that all services will be available but some will be limited – e.g. College Health, Counselling (some of the service will be available such as online counselling services but not face-to-face). This will be made clear up front to the student. The core principal must be equity and therefore services will not be offered to students based in Ireland that cannot be offered to international students not based in Ireland.

The fees for the course were confirmed as €5,000 (EU); €10,000 (non-EU).

There was some discussion as to whether the course should be submitted for an external reviewer in the same way that any new course proposal would be. It was decided that the academic elements of the course should be reviewed but online elements could be reviewed at a later date and it may be possible for these to be reviewed by one person (an instructional designer) for all online courses.

The Committee approved the course for submission to the University Council subject to the above amendments to the proposal and any additional amendments that may be required following the external assessor's report.

GS/13-14/31   Postgraduate Certificate in Dementia (Online)

The Dean introduced Professor Anne-Marie Brady and Professor Michael Brennan and invited them to speak to the circulated proposal.

Professor Anne-Marie Brady confirmed that the School of Nursing and Midwifery were delighted to have the opportunity to respond to the call for online courses with this proposal and explained that the School currently offer an M.Sc. Dementia (with exit diploma). A market exists (particularly internationally) to offer a certificate and the modules adapted for delivery within this online programme are currently delivered in the M.Sc./P.Grad.Dip. in Dementia programme and were originally developed to meet the demands and challenges within the health care system and specifically within dementia care.

The course is a 30 ECTS certificate and is comprised of three specialist dementia modules which will be delivered online. The three modules are:
Ways of Understanding Dementia and Dementia Care; Critical Issues in Assessment and Care Planning and Enhancing the Experience of Living with Dementia.
Each module will carry 10 ECTS.

The School already has resources available to support the online component.

One of the main challenges for students on the existing course is the difficulty in finding time to attend college. This online option will facilitate a better experience for students to engage. Bringing students in at this level can be seen as an opportunity to recruit for future masters and doctoral education. Part of the Schools strategic plan is to create a range of course options - certificate, diploma, masters, etc.

It was confirmed that as the modules already exist as part of another programme they have already been approved academically. However, it is now necessary to seek approval of a different teaching strategy and the certificate award. The modules have been approved as part of the masters but not as a standalone 30 ECTS certificate. The external reviewer should therefore be given a very clear remit of what it is they are reviewing and should provide a more focused review. It was noted that the M.Sc./P.Grad.Dip. in Dementia programme was approved relatively recently and therefore it may be possible to consult with the academic who reviewed the original course and this will be considered.

The Committee approved the course for submission to the University Council subject to the above amendments to the proposal and any additional amendments that may be required following the external assessor's report.

GS/13-14/32   Future of Academic Development

The Dean explained that this item ties in with the concept of "educating the educator" (as noted in item **GS/13-14/28 Draft Objectives of the Strategic Plan 2014 – 2019**) to provide for officially recognised training for staff (academics).

The table provided in the circulated document indicates that Trinity College is bottom of the league table in support for staff.

It was noted by members of the Committee that we need to be mindful of the fact that we are losing academic staff and that while we need to encourage staff that are here to participate we do not have the resources to replace those that might be seconded to a potential "teaching and learning academy". It was also noted that many Schools are involved in Academic Development but this may not be officially recorded.

Section B for noting and approval

1. The Committee noted and approved the memo from the School of Medicine to offer a Postgraduate Diploma in Healthcare Infection Management. It was noted that access rights will differ for a Postgraduate Diploma student as to a Masters and there could be issues if students on both streams are sharing modules. However, it was explained that the rationale for having the standalone diploma is due to a requirement for different fees and therefore it cannot be set up as an exit diploma.
2. The Committee noted and approved the memo from the School of Psychology requesting to include new modules on the M.Phil. Psychoanalytic Studies. It was noted that assessment for all modules is identical. It was confirmed that there is diversity in the core module options.
3. The Committee noted and approved the memo from the School of Nursing and Midwifery to revise the M.Sc. in Mental Health to include a new strand in Psychosocial Interventions. There has been some re-branding of modules to facilitate the strands

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 11am.

Prof. Aideen Long   Date: 27th March 2014