



Trinity College Dublin

Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath

The University of Dublin

XX = Council relevance

A meeting of the Undergraduate Studies Committee was held on 23 May 2017 at 2.15pm in the Board Room.

Present: Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer, Professor Gillian Martin (*Chair*)
 Senior Tutor, Professor Aidan Seery
 Dean of Students, Professor Kevin O'Kelly
 Professor Cathriona Russell, School of Religions, Peace Studies and Theology
 Professor David Prendergast, School of Law
 Professor Louis Brennan, School of Business
 Professor Pauline Sloane, School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences
 Professor Jarlath Killeen, School of English
 Professor Keith Johnston, School of Education
 Professor Imelda Coyne, School of Nursing and Midwifery
 Professor Robbie Gilligan, School of Social Work and Social Policy
 Professor Charles Patterson, School of Physics
 Professor Elizabeth Nixon, School of Psychology
 Professor Mike Brady, School of Computer Science and Statistics
 Professor Paschalis Karageorgis, School of Mathematics
 Professor Derek Sullivan, School of Dental Science
 Professor Elaine Moriarty, School of Social Sciences and Philosophy
 Professor Alan O'Connor, School of Engineering
 Professor John Walsh, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences
 Mr Dale Whelehan, Education Officer, Students' Union
 Mr Colm O'Halloran, Student Representative

Apologies: Academic Secretary, Ms Patricia Callaghan
 Professor Brian Brewer, School of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies
 Professor Michael Bridge, School of Chemistry
 Professor Sarah Smyth, Director of TSM
 Professor Derek Nolan, School of Biochemistry and Immunology
 Professor Eric Weitz, School of Creative Arts
 Professor Mark Hennessy, School of Natural Sciences
 Professor Kevin Mitchell, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Science Education
 Professor Kevin Conlon, School of Medicine
 Professor Peter Cherry, School of Histories and Humanities
 Professor Frank Wellmer, School of Genetics and Microbiology

In attendance: Ms Elaine Egan; Ms Siobhan Dunne, Library Representative; Dr Alison Oldam, Director of Student Services; Dean of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, Professor Zuleika Rodgers, Near and Middle Eastern Studies, and Director of European Studies for USC/16-17/065; Deputy Director, TAP, and Director, Disability Service, for USC/16-17/067; Student Recruitment Officer (Ireland and the EU) for item USC/16-17/068

Agenda items 5 and onwards were taken in a different order at the meeting than presented on the agenda.

USC/16-17/063 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 18 April 2017 were approved. By request, a line will be added to indicate that provisional module results from Semester 1 modules would be produced through SITS.

USC/16-17/064 Matters arising

USC/16-17/048 At its meeting on 10 May 2017, Council approved the recommendation that 'seen' papers would not be permitted in the Foundation Scholarship examination. A Calendar entry had been prepared and would be circulated to the following meeting of USC.

USC/16-17/055a The nine recommendations in relation to Progression and Awards had been approved by Council at its meeting of 10 May 2017.

Further items from that Council meeting that were brought to USC's attention were:

- an annual report would be compiled to include data on the number of students seeking to defer, with particular focus on the final year;
- a document would be prepared outlining the institutional definitions of key terms;
- the subgroup had been asked to consider the recommendations in relation to gold medals and prizes and had held their initial meeting the previous day.

USC/16-17/055b

The interim report from Strand 5: Co- and Extra-Curricular Activities had been approved by Council on 10 May 2017.

USC/16-17/055c

The draft recommendations on module sizes had been approved by Council on 10 May 2017. It was noted that guidelines on ensuring that assessment is commensurate with the size of modules would be produced as a priority in 2017/18 and that these may be adopted by course committees in a discipline appropriate manner.

USC/16-17/056

The Student Partnership Policy and Implementation Documents Sections A, B and C had been approved by Council at its meeting on 10 May 2017.

USC/16-17/065 Trinity/Columbia Dual Degree Programme proposals**XX**

Proposals for a dual B.A. programme with Columbia University in European Studies and a dual B.A. programme with Columbia University in Middle Eastern and European Languages and Cultures were circulated. The Dean of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, Professor Darryl Jones, together with Professor Zuleika Rodgers, Near and Middle Eastern Studies, and the Director of European Studies, Professor Graeme Murdock, were welcomed to the meeting for this item. It was noted that in 2016 Council had approved a proposal for the structure of a dual award with Columbia University (CL/16-17/035).

The Dean emphasised the strategic importance of partnering with a leading international institution of Columbia University's standing and noted the imaginative response of both Trinity and Columbia to the intellectual challenges of the course. He outlined the work and consultation that had taken place to ensure that the requirements of both universities had been taken into account.

Students at Columbia must complete the 'Columbia core' which requires study of a diverse group of subjects, with some of the core programme being met by elements of the Freshman programme in Trinity and the remaining elements being taken in a student's final two years at Columbia. The dual degree would comprise two years of study in Trinity

followed by two years in Columbia University and students would be registered in both universities for the duration of their studies. In the first two years of the programme, the regulations of Trinity would apply to students, whilst the regulations of Columbia would apply in the final two years. It was proposed that the first cohort of students would enter the programme in September 2018. The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer noted that the structure of the two proposed programmes was based on the structure that had been approved by Council.

The Director of European Studies introduced the proposal for a dual B.A. programme with Columbia University in European Studies. He reported that issues previously raised by USC in relation to the pilot proposal had been addressed in the proposal. He had spoken with colleagues in the academic departments in Columbia and worked through important details. He advised that students could progress by means of seven different pathways: History, Political Science, Hispanic Studies, French, German Literature and Cultural History, Italian, and Slavic Studies. The course structure and content would provide the appropriate level of both breadth and specialism.

The credit volume of the programme was 300 and would, therefore, involve students completing Trinity modules to the value of 60 ECTS, in addition to the standard 240 ECTS credits. The additional ECTS would be achieved through the Capstone project involving shared supervision; through mandatory study abroad through their European language of choice; and also through an internship programme. Columbia University has a very well developed network of partnerships for internships that would be available to all students on the programme. Internships would have to be approved to ensure they were appropriate to the character of the degree programme.

Professor Rodgers, Near and Middle Eastern Studies, introduced the proposal for the dual B.A. programme with Columbia University in Middle Eastern and European Languages and Cultures. The domestic programme in Middle Eastern and European Languages and Cultures would commence in September 2017. It was largely based on the model for the European Studies programme, but differed in so far as the European language was started in the first year and the Middle Eastern language in the second year.

Professor Rodgers noted that the dual degree focused on the millennia-long interaction between Europe and the Middle East, including language, history and culture. She noted the well-established resources in Columbia for studies in Middle Eastern languages and cultures. The additional ECTS would be achieved through the Capstone project involving shared supervision; through study abroad through a European language or participation in Columbia's summer Arabic programme in New York or Jordan; and also through an internship programme. The dual degree had three major pathways in the third and fourth years: Middle Eastern, African and South Asian Studies; Religion; and History. Columbia University had strong links with Middle Eastern universities and NGOs and other governmental positions where students would have opportunities for internships.

A member welcomed her School's involvement to the European Studies Dual Degree, but noted that due to the greater commitment to European Studies, the module EU1002 would no longer be offered in 18/19; European Studies would be integrated into the Social Science offerings in the Junior Fresh year. She requested that the proposal be updated to show the new developments. She noted that there was as yet no agreed model for incentivisation for schools taking students on the programme. The Dean advised that the discussion around incentivisation was taking place and confirmed that Schools would receive additional funding as appropriate.

In response to a query relating to the availability of tutors for students on the course, it was noted that in addition to a Trinity tutor, the students would be supported by both an academic advisor and a departmental advisor at Columbia.

In response to a query regarding the academic year structure, with particular reference to the Capstone project, it was confirmed that the Columbia marks would be considered and forwarded to Trinity in good time for the Trinity examination boards in the annual session. The proposers also clarified that quality control for the summer programmes would be carried out by the Language Department Coordinators who carry out this role on the existing European Studies programme and have the necessary country expertise. The summer programmes would be carefully considered to ensure that they are an appropriate learning mechanism for students.

A brief discussion took place around progression regulations and the Dean confirmed that students would be bound by Trinity regulations in the first two years and by Columbia regulations in the last two years.

The proposers noted that the admissions process had built on a Columbia/Sciences Po partnership and would involve a different process for EU and non-EU students. EU students would apply through the CAO and would then be required to carry out an interview. Non-EU applicants must meet the entry requirements of both institutions and would also be required to carry out an interview. It was confirmed that the timing between the CAO process and interview process had been discussed with the Academic Registry.

The proposers withdrew and members had a brief discussion during which minor items were clarified and the committee indicated their approval for the proposals. The Dean re-joined the meeting and was advised that USC recommended the proposals for external review and subsequently to Council for approval.

USC/16-17/066 TR080 Business Studies – proposed change to course title

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A memorandum from the DUTL, Trinity Business School, dated 17 May 2017, had been circulated. The Director spoke to this item and informed the meeting of the proposal to change the course title for the direct entry course TR080 from Business Studies to Global Business, with effect for Junior Fresh entrants in 2018/19.

The name change would distinguish the course from the single honors business course available via BESS and ensure that no confusion would arise between the two courses. The revised title would also better reflect the content and purpose of the course which is to provide value to students completing the course irrespective of where they work in business across the world.

The Director noted that the direct entry Business Studies course has some curriculum elements that distinguish it from the Business Studies in BESS course. The course would be extending its suite of sophister accountancy modules to ensure that graduates would be eligible for full exemption from the professional accounting body examinations.

USC approved the change in course title.

USC/16-17/067 Widening Participation update

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The Director of the Disability Service and the Deputy Director, TAP, were welcomed to the meeting. A paper had been circulated to update USC on the activity undertaken by the widening participation working group since the previous discussion at USC in February 2016. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies noted that the College Strategic Plan had identified a target of 25% for widening participation groups and

statistics captured on 1 November 2016 had shown that this group represented 22% of the student cohort. It was noted that compilation of the data presented considerable complexity and that the percentage figure could vary depending on which groups were captured and when the data were captured. In this regard, she drew members' attention to the tables in Appendix 1. A number of groups had been identified in the 2016 report as priority groups and it was noted that while figures were available for most of these groups, they were not available for the category 5 group; a process would need to be worked out to collect these data.

Since February 2016, a number of initiatives had been undertaken in relation to widening participation, including improvements to the website, the development of the RPL policy, and research on how to open up more routes from further education to higher education. More efficient ways to capture and disseminate data were being explored, including the activation of 'Accessibility Manager' in SITS. It was noted that data for mature students, disadvantaged students, and students with a disability were being captured in separate databases. The group had also considered the role of Academic Liaison Officers (ALOs). Since its establishment, this role had become more operational than strategic in nature and was now assumed by either an academic or administrative member of staff. A redefinition of the role was needed and this would be explored in consultation with ALOs and Directors of Undergraduate Teaching and Learning.

In order to progress the work of widening participation, the group had also considered the establishment of a more formal structure than the current working group. This could take the form of a committee with a specific brief of widening participation. It was noted that the TAP Steering Group only dealt with issues relating to disadvantaged and mature students, but not students with a disability. The Equality Committee and the Diversity and Inclusion Committee were also involved with issues of widening participation. It was suggested that a committee might be established that would comprise members from Directors of Teaching and Learning, the Disability Officer, the Director of TAP, the Mature Student Officer, the Admissions Officer and members from the other relevant committees, so as to achieve greater cohesion and coherence in approach.

The Director of Student Services noted that the recommendation to increase certain groups to 25% across College had not been accompanied by an increase in resources. This had resulted in an increase in students with additional needs, without any additional resources and was having a very significant impact on the ground. The Director noted that some talk had taken place around a strategic admissions group that could be established to have responsibility for looking at the totality of admissions agendas for both domestic and international students.

A member highlighted that the documentation showed that the three individual faculties had exceeded the 25% target whereas the multi-faculty courses were well below the target. The Deputy Director, TAP, clarified that this was often due to the matriculation requirements of these courses with stringent entry requirements in mathematics, languages, or both. It was agreed that further prospecting of the data would be undertaken to investigate the disparity between the faculty and the multi-faculty courses.

A member commended the aims of the working group, but also noted the limitations of the data, including the absence of data relating to gender, children in care, and ethnic minority groups. It was also noted that the National Access Plan had determined certain priority groups in relation to widening participation, including those captured in the six groups identified by Trinity. It was highlighted that a Trinity strategic admissions group would be in a position to look at groupings outside of these six priority groups.

A member suggested that additional funds might be offered as an incentive for taking up the Admissions Liaison Officer role and also that a competitive process to fill the role might increase its prestige and encourage staff to work towards it. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies wondered whether there might be an opportunity to recapture some of the initial thinking around the ALO role, in particular the strategic dimension, if the more operational aspects were carried out by systems such as the 'Accessibility Manager'. In this regard, the Director of the Disability Service noted the progress that had been made in relation toward implementation of this system and the opportunities, in future, to explore its application to TAP and mature students. Members agreed with the idea of the role comprising elements of a more strategic dimension such as an 'Access Champion', but felt that the ALO should be connected to the School Executive committee to fully support the strategic focus. Some members suggested that the role could be linked to the DUTL role.

In discussion, the large amount of access work that was being carried out by Schools was acknowledged and the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies indicated that efforts should be made to ensure this became more visible.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies also indicated in relation to the development of routes from FE to HE that further work and consultation would be required with Schools around the individual pathways and quotas. The Deputy Director, TAP, noted the number of students who had come to Trinity via further education, predominantly into AHSS, but also into the School of Nursing and TR071. The progression rate for these students compared favourably to other TAP cohorts. She noted that the further education area was vast and that a considerable amount of work would need to be carried out to ensure that the further education institutions were a good match for entry to Trinity. Trinity was behind in the sector in fully facilitating entry for these students.

USC approved the report and the proposals to look at the establishment of a more formal committee, at the formalisation of further entry routes from the FE sector, and at including a more strategic dimension in the ALO role. The working group would continue in its current form while these proposals were explored.

USC/16-17/068 Northern Ireland report and recommendations 2016/17

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'Northern Ireland report and recommendations 2016/17' was circulated together with a memorandum from the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies and the Student Recruitment Officer (Ireland and the EU), dated 16 May 2017. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies welcomed the Student Recruitment Officer (Ireland and the UK) to the meeting for this item.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies noted the positive increase in the number of applicants from Northern Ireland (NI) over the last few years. The previous year had seen an increase of nearly 20% in the number of applications from Northern Ireland. However, the number of NI students as a percentage of the overall CAO intake had declined from 3.02% in 2015/16 to 2.52% in 2016/17. The total number of acceptances relative to the number of offers had also decreased, from an average of 42% between 2011/12 and 2015/16 to 32% in 2016/17. Anecdotal evidence from other universities had also indicated a decline in NI acceptances in 2016/17.

In 2015/16, the percentage of feasibility study applicants and applicants via the standard route receiving an offer was 32% for both cohorts; in 2016/17, 24% of feasibility study applicants and 27% of applicants via the standard route received an offer. It was thought that the recalibration of the A-level system, which resulted in high points courses becoming more accessible for students from NI, might be behind this change. It was also

noted that a higher percentage of applicants to the feasibility route accepted offers than applicants to the standard route.

In seeking to explain the drop-off in acceptances in 2016/17 and the possible impact of Brexit, a small-scale survey had been carried out of students who had been offered but not accepted a place in 2016/17. The survey results had revealed a diverse range of reasons; however, Brexit did not feature prominently. The survey results highlighted that NI students found it more comfortable to remain in the local area and attend Queen's University and that there were issues around accommodation and the cost of living of attending university in the Republic.

The main focus of the recommendations in the report related to work needed to improve the conversion of offers to acceptances. Work should continue on increasing the number of applicants from NI through increased commitment to outreach work, including school visits, and engagement with recent alumni from NI. The recommendations noted that students should be encouraged to apply to Trinity Hall and suggested that consideration could be given to guaranteeing accommodation there for first year NI students. It was also recommended that the feasibility study continue for a further year in light of the ongoing uncertainty as a result of Brexit and taking into account that 2017/18 would be the first year with the new scoring system for the Leaving Certificate.

The Student Recruitment Officer advised that the report represented a culmination of the work of the last 3-4 years and demonstrated the gains that had been made in this period. He noted that the first step in the recruitment process was to increase the pool of potential applicants and increase awareness of Trinity as a viable option for NI students. He emphasised that attending a UK university is seen by NI students as being a more secure option than accepting a place in an Irish university and that a further year of the feasibility study would demonstrate Trinity's continued commitment to NI and work towards reassuring NI students that attending Trinity would be a secure and comfortable option with a simple admissions process. He pointed out that the conditional offer system in UCAS coupled with greater certainty around accommodation increased the challenges of attracting NI students. However, the more attractive price of attending Trinity was a valued selling point in the NI market. The importance of the school visits for providing information on both attending Trinity and on the CAO process in general was emphasised. In response to a query, it was clarified that an undertaking had been given by the IUA in relation to the status of NI students taking up a place in an Irish third level institution in 2016/17 and 2017/18 only.

A member acknowledged the historical and political commitment to NI, but questioned how far recruitment work in this market should go when it would appear from the recent admissions statistics that the message had been heard, but that perhaps NI students would continue to have low interest in attending Trinity. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies noted that Trinity did not engage with students in the post-offer stage to the same level that UK universities and that more work would have to be undertaken to address this discrepancy in order to see if this impacted positively on enrolment. The Student Recruitment Officer mentioned the success of engaging the six student ambassadors for school visits and the positive response this elicited from students. A number of members noted that they were against the suggestion to guarantee accommodation in Trinity Halls for NI students.

USC approved the recommendations in the report, including the continuation of the Feasibility Study for a further year.

USC/16-17/069 Trinity Education Project – Final guidelines for approved modules

A paper on Approved Modules had been circulated. The paper provided additional

clarification on what constituted an approved module and on the credit weighting of approved modules. Clarification was sought by a member and it was explained that modules that are part of the core curriculum for particular groups of students are opened up to other students as approved modules, in the same way as currently happens in some Broad Curriculum modules. If a programme approves a module that may be taken by its students, that module should not be part of the students' core curriculum. Core curriculum is defined as including both mandatory and optional modules. It was further explained that electives are driven by student choice, whereas approved modules are approved by programmes. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies emphasised the importance of looking at curricula within the context of TEP and determining which modules of the curriculum are mandatory, which are optional, and which may be approved by the programme. It was noted that in some programmes it might be appropriate to allow students on one stream to take a module offered by another stream within that programme. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies advised that the initial step was for programmes to identify which of their modules could be offered to students outside of the programme. They should remain mindful of pre-requisites when undertaking the exercise. This step would be followed by a matching process.

The DUTL from the School of English raised a concern held by the TSM students in the School. He noted that the single-honor English students took a greater number of modules than the TSM students and requested that modules that contributed to the core curriculum for single-honor students be approved for TSM students to take. It had been noted that this would not be possible and the member noted that the School and students refuted the sense of this. The DUTL emphasised that the School was advocating for TSM students in this matter. In response, the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies reminded members of the purpose of the approved modules within the context of the common programme architecture, specifically, their contribution to breadth and, in this context, emphasized the incompatibility of students taking additional English modules as approved modules. Taking additional English modules could, therefore, not be approved for the TSM cohort.

USC/16-17/070 Any other business

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies thanked members for their hard work over the academic year and in particular those members that were retiring from the committee. She reminded members of the USC meeting that would take place on 30 May 2017.

USC/16-17/071 Minutes

USC noted the following minutes:

- 1. Marino Institute of Education Associated College Degrees Committee, 8 February 2017**
- 2. Careers Management System Steering Group, 31 March 2017**

USC/16-17/072 Items for noting

Gold Medal Criteria, updated April 2017, had been circulated in order to provide a point of clarification regarding category 5. An issue had subsequently been highlighted by a USC member and, as a result, the criteria would need to be looked into further. This would be brought back to a future meeting of USC.