



A meeting of the Undergraduate Studies Committee was held on 21 April 2020 at 2.15 pm online.

Present: Professor Kevin Mitchell, Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies (*Chair*)
Ms Patricia Callaghan, Academic Secretary
Professor Kevin O'Kelly, Dean of Students
Professor Aidan Seery, Senior Tutor
Professor Stephen Matterson, Director of TSM/Trinity Joint Honors
Professor Áine Kelly, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Science Education
Professor Norah Campbell, Trinity Business School
Professor Nicholas Johnson, School of Creative Arts
Professor Brendan O'Connell, School of English
Professor Peter Crooks, School of Histories and Humanities
Professor Rachel Hoare, School of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies
Professor Breffni O'Rourke, School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences
Professor Elizabeth Nixon, School of Psychology
Professor Linda Hogan, School of Religion
Professor Michael Wycherley, School of Social Sciences and Philosophy
Professor Stan Houston, School of Social Work and Social Policy
Professor Aisling Dunne, School of Biochemistry and Immunology
Professor Jonathan Dukes, School of Computer Science and Statistics
Professor Nicola Marchetti, School of Engineering
Professor Frank Wellmer, School of Genetics and Microbiology
Professor Paschalis Karageorgis, School of Mathematics
Professor Mark Hennessy, School of Natural Sciences
Professor Paul Eastham, School of Physics
Professor Derek Sullivan, School of Dental Science
Professor Joe Harbison, School of Medicine
Professor John Walsh, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences
Professor Valerie Smith, School of Nursing and Midwifery
Professor Jake Byrne, Academic Director, Tangent
Ms Niamh McCay, Education Officer, Students' Union
Ms Zoe Cummins, Student Representative

Apologies: Professor Andrew Loxley, School of Education
Professor Eoin Scanlan, School of Chemistry

In attendance: Ms Sorcha De Brunner, Academic Affairs, Trinity Teaching & Learning; Ms Linda Darbey, Assistant Academic Secretary, Trinity Teaching & Learning; Dr Ciara O'Farrell, Head of Academic Practice; Ms Breda Walls, Director of Student Services; Ms Siobhán Dunne, Library Representative; The Revd Dr Patrick McGlinchey (CITI) and Professor Andrew Pierce (School of Religion) (for item USC/19-20/054); Quality Officer (for item USC/19-20/056); Admissions Officer and the Vice-President for Global Relations (for item USC/19-20/057).

USC/19-20/050 Minutes of the meeting of 26 March 2020

The minutes of the meeting of 26 March 2020 were approved.

USC/19-20/051 Matters arising

USC/19-20/045(ii) The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies advised that the Principles for Open Modules were approved by Council.

- USC/19-20/046** The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies reported that Council approved the proposal for the integrated UG/PG programme in Environmental Science and Engineering.
- USC/19-20/047** The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies confirmed that Council approved the temporary English language entry requirements.
- USC/19-20/049** The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies confirmed that Council approved the following items noted at the last meeting of USC:
- Trinity Open Day dates for 2020, 2021 and 2022
 - Handbook Policy (Revised)
 - Recognition of Prior Learning Policy (Revised).
 - Academic Awards Policy (Revised).
 - Course Title Change

USC/19-20/052 Academic Continuity Planning

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies updated USC on the decisions and activities since its last meeting. He commended the Assessment and Progression Team in the Academic Registry for producing an examinations timetable under great pressure. He commented that quite a number of online examinations had been set and highlighted the level of support required to host these. A member suggested that staff should anticipate likely problems that will arise with online examinations and work out solutions to these in advance.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies advised that information would be sent out to clarify the processes for student deferral and resit requests. He highlighted that students must defer all assessments if they are doing so under Covid-19 grounds, in which case the deferral would be granted automatically. If a student wishes to defer certain assessments, then such a request would have to be sent to the Student Cases team for consideration. Given other measures being put in place, for example, increased powers for courts of examiners and more liberal compensation regulations, it is hoped that deferral requests due to general difficulties caused by Covid-19 will be kept to a minimum. It was confirmed that normal regulations and processes remain in place for students who experience illness during the assessment session.

Speaking about requests for resits to improve performance, the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies confirmed that this possibility is only applicable to Sophister students and added that the deadline and criteria are yet to be established. A member highlighted concerns in relation to students resitting the capstone project and stressed that specific criteria must be developed for this situation. It was noted that students in the School of Engineering are being asked to provide a short paragraph on the effects of the Covid-19 lockdown on their work to accompany their capstone project; this may form the basis of a request for a resit if needed. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies commented that this was a good idea and clarified that requests for resits to improve performance in the sophister years will not be automatic; students will have to submit an application through their tutor to Student Cases. Responding to a query about resit requests for groupwork, he advised that these would be considered on a case-by-case basis. He also confirmed that this measure will not apply to assessments which were due for submission prior to the campus closure.

Responding to a question about student lists and assessment timetables for those with reasonable accommodations, the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies confirmed that this issue was being worked on. He added that the Disability Service is advising on measures and that students with a disability will be provided with text to accompany their assessment submissions. A member reported that a separate assessment folder can be set

up in Blackboard to allow for the submission of assessments from students who have been granted reasonable accommodations.

The Director of Student Services reported that IT Services was working on a solution for the timetabling of events in SITS which are longer than 24 hours; currently, these must be timetabled outside of the system. In the meantime, timetables will be e-mailed to schools and course offices. Speaking about the list of students granted reasonable accommodations, she advised that the Academic Registry would provide these soon. Later in the meeting, it was confirmed that the Academic Registry had e-mailed examination timetables to schools and course offices. A member queried instances of 48-hour open book examination events ending over the weekend, especially given that staff members would have to monitor the end times. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies confirmed that he would look into the staffing issue. Another member asked what should be done when a real-time online examination 'clashes' with a 24-hr open book examination. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies noted that students would not be writing for the full 24 hours and therefore this 'clash' would not need to be resolved.

Speaking about the coming academic year, the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies advised that due to expected delays in the Leaving Certificate, it is possible that first year students will start their studies in November. Given the compressed nature of their first semester, first year students would be assessed by continuous assessment only. Continuing students are also likely to start the academic year late too, possibly in late September. It is preferred that all students will physically return to Trinity but this will depend on the level of infection in the community along with testing and contact tracing capabilities in the State. As a back-up, teaching would continue online but with greater supports.

USC/19-20/053 Trinity Education Project

XX i. Establishment of a Management Structure for the Undergraduate Trinity Education

A proposal from the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer and the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies, dated 15 April 2020, was circulated. Introducing the proposal, the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies commented that the Trinity Education Project (TEP) has brought about radical changes to the undergraduate curriculum with the introduction of Open Modules, New Minor Subjects and Trinity Electives. He noted that TEP, as a project, is formally ending in September 2020, and with this the TEP Office will be disbanded. Given the high level of curriculum sharing that will take place from the next academic year onwards, it is necessary to put in place a structure that will support and coordinate these shared elements across the common architecture.

It is proposed that a position of Associate Dean of Undergraduate Common Architecture (ADUCA) be established, as a counterpart to the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Science Education (ADUSE). He brought the committee through the proposal in relation to the role of the ADUCA, the Common Architecture Governance Committee and the Common Architecture Office.

There was a level of support for the elements contained in the proposal, however, the following concerns and queries were raised:

- Further clarification was sought as to the relationship between these new entities and the TSM/Joint Honors Management Committee and the TSM/Joint Honors Office.
- The role of the Common Architecture Office in disseminating results to subject courts of examiners was questioned.
- The nature of the Common Architecture court of examiners was sought.

- In order to confirm the moderatorship result for students undertaking the single honor or major/minor pathway, the local court of examiners would want to see students' full profiles of module results.
- The scale of the support required for the Common Architecture is substantial, yet the document does not cover resourcing nor details on the staffing of the new office.
- Given the lack of information on resourcing, the scope of the proposal should be more narrowly drawn in the first instance, with latitude to allow for growth in future years.
- The document is still vague in certain key areas.
- Communication with staff in the TSM/Joint Honors Office has been lacking.
- There is a gap in the document between the academic leadership and coordination roles.
- Clarification was sought in relation to the hierarchy between the new entities and participating schools.
- Where processes already exist, for example, in relation to Erasmus, there is a risk of duplication.
- College will be dealing with a huge level of change next year, as a result, the least risky option should be implemented.
- The timeline should be analysed to map out mission-critical tasks for different key stages of the academic year.
- Priority should be given to appointing the ADUCA and a small pool of administrative staff to start planning.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies addressed a number of the issues raised. He confirmed that Common Architecture Office will collate and disseminate results for the centralised courts of examiners and not for those at the subject-level; this will be corrected in the document. He confirmed that there will have to be a centralised examination board which would view the full profile of students' results across the different shared curriculum elements, however, detailed planning work is yet to be carried out; this would be one of the initial tasks for the ADUCA and the new office.

He advised that the circulated proposal had been developed to address current gaps, and that without instituting such a structure and supports, it would be impossible to deliver on the common architecture. He advised that the Common Architecture Office would be a new entity with a much larger remit than that of the TSM/Joint Honors Office. The new office will take over the running of the final years of the TSM programme with the ADUCA, overseeing its phasing out. The level of change being brought about by the Trinity Education is enormous and certain decisions have already been made that must be implemented, such as online pathway and module selection; schools would not be able to manage these processes individually.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies agreed that the document should contain a road map of mission-critical activities and noted that the ADUCA and new office would be responsible for their development and implementation. He requested members to e-mail him further feedback to enable greater clarity in the document.

Decision USC/19-20/053(i): USC noted that the proposal document would be further refined. In particular, it will include a timeline of mission-critical milestones.

XX ii. Integrating Non-pillar Subjects

A memorandum from the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies, dated 23 March 2020, was re-circulated. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies

provided an update on discussions which had taken place since the last meeting of USC. He confirmed that partners for the new subject in Social Policy had been agreed and that History and Political Science would come into the Joint Honors architecture with single subject quotas. In recognition of the uncertainty surrounding the demand for combinations and the distribution of students across subjects, he confirmed that the document now commits to a review of the new system following the admission of students in both 2021 and 2022. He confirmed that these reviews would be led by the ADUCA and the Common Architecture Governance Committee. He presented the text related to the review to the meeting.

The Director of Teaching and Learning (UG) for the School of Histories and Humanities thanked the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies for engaging with his School and requested that History and Political Science subject combination be specifically mentioned in the remit of the review.

Decision USC/19-20/053(ii): USC recommended the proposal document on integrating non-pillar subjects for Council approval and noted that specific reference would be made to History and Political Science in the terms of reference for the review.

USC/19-20/054 Course proposal: Christian Theology and Practice

XX A course proposal from the School of Religion, in conjunction with the Church of Ireland Theological Institute (CITI), dated 15 April 2020, was circulated. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies welcomed the Revd Dr Patrick McGlinchey (CITI) and Professor Andrew Pierce (School of Religion) to the meeting.

The Revd Dr McGlinchey brought the meeting through the main features of the course, provided the impetus for its development and outlined the expected student profile. The proposed course has been developed to replace the current foundation course, delivered by St John's College, Nottingham, to prepare students for entry to the Master in Theology programme, which must be completed by those seeking ordination in the Church of Ireland. In addition to this cohort of students, the programme is expected to provide preparation for lay-readers in the Church of Ireland as well as those wishing to complete it for faith formation. Students will complete six modules, carrying 30 ECTS in total, over a calendar year commencing in January 2021. Two modules will be taught by the School of Religion with the remainder delivered by CITI. All modules will be delivered through a mixture of face-to-face and online teaching.

Professor Pierce added that the proposal was reviewed by the Revd Dr Richard Briggs, St John's College, Durham University, who confirmed his support for the proposal while making a number of useful suggestions. The programme team, comprising members from CITI and the School of Religion, has responded to these suggestions and has implemented a number of changes.

It was clarified by the Director of Teaching and Learning (UG) for the School of Religion that it is necessary for ordinands to have gained the M.Th. qualification, however, it does not guarantee ordination in the Church of Ireland.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies commended the proposal.

Decision USC/19-20/054: USC recommended the proposal for a one-year, 30 ECTS, programme leading to the award of Certificate in Christian Theology and Practice, placed at Level 7 on the National Framework of Qualifications, to Council. USC noted that the course is due to commence in January 2021.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies thanked the Revd Dr Patrick McGlinchey and Professor Andrew Pierce, who then withdrew from the meeting.

USC/19-20/055 Senior Lecturer's Annual Report 2018/18

XX A draft version of the Senior Lecturer's Annual Report for 2018/19, dated April 2020, was circulated along with a presentation, also dated April 2020. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies noted that the report draws heavily on data contained in the Academic Registry's Annual Report and he thanked the Assistant Academic Secretary, Ms Linda Darbey, for her work in preparing the document.

Speaking to his presentation, he brought the meeting through information related to the three main sections of the report:

- Overview of developments 2018/19
- Undergraduate Admissions
- Progression and Student Lifecycle (Post-Admission)

Decision USC/19-20/055: USC noted the draft Annual Report for 2018/19 and recommended it to Council.

USC/19-20/056 Institutional Review

A memorandum from the Quality Officer, dated 3 March 2020, was circulated with a presentation. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies welcomed the Quality Officer to the meeting.

The Quality Officer introduced the item and noted that Trinity would undergo an institutional review from 23-27 November 2020, the focus of which will be the effectiveness of quality assurance processes related to education, training, research and services to ensure that agreed standards are being met. She advised that key topics are likely to relate to TEP, research, the student experience, governance and even Trinity's recent response to the Covid-19 pandemic, in terms of online teaching, assessment and engagement with students. The members of the review team have not been confirmed yet.

In terms of the review itself, she highlighted the importance of contributions from the Directors of Teaching and Learning (UG) in terms of providing case studies and participating in meetings with the review panel; it is important that they meet a cross-section of academic staff at all levels in the University.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies highlighted the importance of the review noting that quality is the responsibility of all areas in the University and not just of the Quality Office. There is a collective responsibility for quality that is directly linked to Trinity maintaining its institutional autonomy, and as such he encouraged USC members to participate in the review process.

The Director of Teaching and Learning (UG) for the School of Religion commented on her experience as a review team member for another Irish University. She advised that common themes tend to emerge and if there are any systemic issues, these will come up repeatedly at different meetings. It is likely that the panel will want to see evidence that Trinity does what it commits to do. It would be useful to know the composition of the review panel and she hoped that it will contain members with experience of the Irish political landscape and the financial constraints in which we operate.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies thanked the Quality Officer, who then withdrew from the meeting.

USC/19-20/057 Admissions

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies welcomed the Admissions Officer and the Vice-President for Global Relations to the meeting.

XX i Admission and Transfer Policy (Revised)

A memorandum from the Admissions Officer, dated 16 April 2020, was circulated along with a revised version of the Admission and Transfer Policy. The Admissions Officer brought the meeting through the amendments.

A member queried whether Trinity would be able to enforce all of the grounds cited under 6.10 to refuse entry to an applicant, in particular, where the applicant 'may prejudice the reputation, management, governance or discipline of the University'. The Admissions Officer confirmed that she had reviewed similar policies from a number of institutions and that this wording is standard. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies advised that this would not have to be enforced very often but it was useful to formally state it in the policy document.

Decision USC/19-20/057(i): USC noted the revised Admission and Transfer Policy and recommended it to Council.

XX ii Recognition of Foreign Qualifications Procedure

A procedural document on the Recognition of Foreign Qualification, dated February 2020, was circulated. The Admissions Officer outlined the processes for recognising foreign qualifications for entry to undergraduate and postgraduate courses.

The definition of a foreign qualification was queried, and the Admissions Officer confirmed that this would be amended and refined.

Decision USC/19-20/057(ii): USC recommended the procedure to Council, subject to the refinement of the definition of a 'foreign qualification'.

XX iii Amendment to GPA requirement for incoming visiting non-degree seeking students

A memorandum from the Vice-President for Global Relations, dated 15 April 2020, was circulated. The Vice-President for Global Relations spoke to the proposal to amend the GPA requirement for visiting and exchange students from 3.3 to 3.1.

Decision USC/19-20/057(iii): USC recommended the revised GPA requirement of 3.1 for visiting and exchange students to Council.

iv Proposal for revision to direct undergraduate admissions requirement

A memorandum from the Admissions Officer and the Regional Manager for India (Global Relations Office), dated 15 April 2020, was circulated. The Vice-President for Global Relation spoke to the proposal, which contained two parts:

- a. Introduction of a band structure in relation to competitive non-EU entry requirements for undergraduate degree programmes.
- b. A complete review of specific programme requirements.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies noted that the information presented in the memorandum was draft and that more final proposals would come back to USC for consideration following the completion of further work.

Decision USC/19-20/057(iv): USC supported the proposals in principle and noted that concrete proposals would be presented to USC for consideration and fuller approval, in due course.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies thanked the Vice-President for Global Relations and the Admissions Officer, and they withdrew from the meeting.

USC/19-20/058 Any other business

There was no other business.

USC/19-20/059 Minutes (Section B)

USC noted and approved the following set of minutes.

- XX i Associated College Degrees Committee (RIAM)**
Draft minutes of the meeting of 19 February 2020.
In particular, members supported the establishment of a one-year part-time Certificate course within the two-year part-time Diploma in Music Teaching and Performance programme. From 2021/22, students who successfully complete the first year of the Diploma course but chose not to progress into the second year will be eligible for a Certificate award (NFQ Level 7). Depending on the modules taken, students will be eligible to graduate with one of:
 - Certificate in Music Performance
 - Certificate in Music Pedagogy
 - Certificate in Music Performance and Pedagogy

USC/19-20/060 Items for noting (Section C)

USC noted and approved the following documents.

- XX i Northern Ireland Feasibility Study**
Memorandum from the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies, dated 14 April 2020. Members supported the continuation of the Northern Ireland Feasibility Study for an additional year for entrants in September 2021.
- ii USC dates for 2020/21**
Memorandum from Ms Sorcha De Brunner, Academic Affairs, dated 14 April 2020.