



A meeting of the Undergraduate Studies Committee was held on 08 November 2022 at 2.00 pm via Zoom.

Present: Professor David Shepherd, Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies (*Chair*)
Ms Patricia Callaghan, Academic Secretary
Professor Catherine McCabe, Dean of Students
Professor Stephen Smith, Senior Tutor
Professor Fraser Mitchell, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Science Education (ADUSE)
Professor Graeme Murdock, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Common Architecture (ADUCA)
Professor Catherine Welch, Trinity Business School
Professor Miranda Fay Thomas, School of Creative Arts
Professor Ann Devitt, School of Education
Professor Mark Sweetnam, School of English
Professor Robert Armstrong, School of Histories and Humanities
Professor Martin Worthington, School of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies
Professor David Kenny, School of Law
Professor Margaret Walshe, School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences
Professor Clare Kelly, School of Psychology
Professor Michelle D'Arcy, School of Social Sciences and Philosophy
Professor Julie Byrne, School of Social Work and Social Policy
Professor Jacob Erickson, School of Religion, Theology, and Peace Studies
Professor Heather Reilly, School of Dental Science
Professor Joe Harbison, School of Medicine
Professor Aileen Lynch, School of Nursing and Midwifery
Professor Astrid Sasse, School of Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences
Professor Vincent Kelly, School of Biochemistry and Immunology
Professor Iouri Gounko, School of Chemistry
Professor Goetz Botterweck, School of Computer Science and Statistics
Professor Kevin Kelly, School of Engineering
Professor Juan Pablo Labrador, School of Genetics and Microbiology
Professor John Stalker, School of Mathematics
Professor Matthew Saunders, School of Natural Sciences
Professor David O'Regan, School of Physics
Professor Jake Byrne, Academic Director of Tangent
Ms Zöe Cummins, Education Officer, Students' Union
Mr Yannick Gloster, Student Representative

Apologies: None

In attendance: Ms Ciara Conlon, Academic Affairs; Ms Linda Darbey, Assistant Academic Secretary; Ms Siobhán Dunne, Library Representative; Ms Breda Walls, Director of Student Services; Mr Patrick Magee, Director of IT Services, Mr Peter Hynes and Mr Dermot Cronin, Academic Registry (for item USC/22-23/026); Ms Roisin Smith, Quality Officer (for item USC/22-23/027); Ms Simone Cameron-Coen, Civic Engagement Officer, Ms Sarah Bowman, Director of Strategic Engagement & Impact Assessment and Ms Mary Colclough, Community & Enterprise Engagement Manager (for item USC/22-23/029).

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies welcomed Mr Yannick Gloster, who was recently appointed Student Representative to USC, to the meeting.

USC/22-23/023 Minutes of the meeting of 11 October 2022

The minutes of the meeting of 11 October 2022 were approved.

USC/22-23/024 Matters arising

- i. **USC/22-23/006:** The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies advised that the contingency dates for Semester 1, Semester 2 and the reassessment session were approved by Council. He advised that challenges in relation to the academic year structure were raised at the Council meeting and thanked the SU Education Officer for her contribution.
- ii. **USC/22-23/014:** The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies confirmed that he spoke with the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer regarding queries raised at the last meeting around the adequacy of the structures in place for the ongoing roll out of Online Module Enrolment (OME). He stated that the Chief Operating Officer has become more involved, and further steps will be taken as necessary.
- iii. **USC/22-23/018:** Speaking on the topic of Teaching Excellence Awards, the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies confirmed that some amendments were made based on the feedback from both USC and GSC.

USC/22-23/025 Senior Lecturer's Updates

- i. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies provided an update on the undergraduate regulations working group, which recently met for the first time to scope the work of the group and stated that this matter will be brought back to USC in due course.

USC/22-23/026 Online Module Enrolment

A memorandum from the Director of IT Services and the Director of Student Services, dated 08 November 2022, was circulated. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies apologised to members for the last-minute circulation, the details of which necessitated the approval of the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer. He welcomed Mr Patrick Magee, Director of IT Services, and Mr Peter Hynes and Mr Dermot Cronin, Academic Registry, and thanked them for their efforts to address the issues relating to OME for students who were reassessed or returning from study abroad.

The Director of Student Services spoke to the item by way of presentation. She explained that OME had moved into Academic Registry in 2021/22, and that round one in August was largely operationally successful, with 91% of students successfully registering with their requisite credit load within the time limit. However, there were some challenges in relation to round two, which takes place after the reassessment period in September. She explained that only 69% of students who participated in round two, which includes Junior Freshman, visiting students, returning study abroad students and those who participated in the reassessment session, successfully enrolled within the designated time limit. She explained that students reported issues in relation to limited choice and the fact that the enrolment period takes place after teaching term had started. Additionally, those returning from study abroad were unable to select particular modules due to missing pre-requisites the previous year, which prevented them from completing the registration process.

The Director of Student Services explained that a potential solution has been put forward by IT Services, which would mean that OME would take place in one single round, either in July or August. With the exception of those visiting Trinity from other institutions, all students would be able to choose modules for the upcoming year, confirmation of which would be subject to progression. She brought the meeting through the current OME journey and pointed out that if the suggested solution is to be implemented, further academic consideration is needed around New Minor Subjects (NMS) and Trinity Electives (TE), which are currently selected as a pre-cursor to OME. This is due to the academic principles guiding the allocation of these modules; currently NMS are allocated based on academic achievement in the final assessment and TEs are allocated based on an algorithm that ensures an even balance of students from different faculties, year of study etc. The Director

of Student Services acknowledged that this solution doesn't address all issues, including the issue of pre-requisites, and that work will continue to find solutions.

During the discussion that followed, members acknowledged the work that has progressed on this issue, and one member stressed that solutions need to be implemented for the next academic year. Members emphasised that the proposed solution does not address issues such as pre-requisites, front loading and back loading, time-tabling pillars and students going on study abroad for only one semester. A member raised the considerable administrative burden presented by OME on staff in certain Schools and implored colleagues from all Schools to take an interest as a matter of solidarity. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies acknowledged the burden on particular Schools and advised that solutions are being sought.

Several members requested that a document outlining all the issues presented by OME is brought to USC. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies and the Director of Student Services advised that this will be provided. The Director of Student Services stated that the current solution is focused on targeting the areas that would have the greatest benefit to students and that further work is ongoing in the background. She made a commitment that the process will start earlier this year to ease the time pressure on Schools.

A member suggested that a systems solution could be implemented to address the issue of study abroad students and pre-requisites, by utilizing an alert system within the OME student interface to advise students of the pre-requisite requirements and to check if they had communicated with their School on this, which would not prevent them from completing the registration process. The Director of IT Services thanked the member for the suggestion, stating that this system, which places responsibility on the student to ensure their choice of module is correct, is in place in other Universities, however in Trinity the system works to enforces progression rules.

In response to a query on the breakdown of issues affecting students in round two, the Director of Student Services stated that JF students had difficulties due to unfamiliarity or lack of engagement with the portal and advised that more support will be provided in the next academic year.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies wrapped up the discussion and thanked the Director of IT Services and the Director of Student Services for their work. He stated that there will be ongoing engagement on the matter and that he hopes that the solution put forward goes some way toward addressing problem areas, and he recommends the relevant sub-committees to progress the work.

Decision/Action

026.01 The Director of Student Services to provide USC with a comprehensive overview of all issues that arose because of Online Module Enrolment.

026.02 The Trinity Electives Sub-Committee and the Undergraduate Common Architecture Governance Committee to consider the proposal in respect to the academic principles that guide the allocation of Trinity Electives and New Minor Subjects respectively.

USC/22-23/027 Workload Distribution for External Examiners (for tax purposes)

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A memorandum from the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies, dated 02 November 2022, was circulated. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies welcomed the Quality Officer for the item.

The Quality Officer spoke to the item, stating that further clarification had been sought from Schools regarding the assessment of the tax liabilities that External Examiners face. A model

is being put forward that proposes three categories for the distribution of workload, which is based on what was previously approved at Graduate Studies Committee.

The three categories are as follow:

- A. Examiners complete most of the review of assessments and assessment processes prior to their physical visit to the university, when the primary focus is participation in the Court of Examiners' meeting and discussions with staff and/or students: Proposed distribution of workload **offsite:on-site = 75%:25%**
- B. Examiners complete some work prior to their visit to the university, but may review some assessments on-site, or may be involved in viva voce examinations of specific students: Proposed distribution of workload **offsite:on-site = 50%:50%**
- C. Examiners participate in in-person assessments of students, including clinical examinations and complete most of their responsibilities while physically present in the university: Proposed distribution of workload **offsite:on-site = 25%:75%**

The Quality Officer confirmed that work completed outside the jurisdiction of Ireland does not attract an Irish tax liability and a further category D can be added to reflect this.

Decision/Action

027.01 USC supported the proposal on categorisation of the workload distribution for External Examiners for tax purposes.

USC/22-23/028 Academic Integrity

A memorandum from the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies, dated 02 November 2022, was circulated. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies stated that the Academic Integrity Working Group and its sub-groups are progressing work in this space, namely on preventing and responding to academic misconduct and academic Integrity. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies invited members to contact him with any feedback they had in relation to the recent e-mail campaign during National Academic Integrity Week, and thanked Professor Michelle D'Arcy for her contribution to this.

He reported that the responses to the poll issued were very insightful and clarified that the responses indicated that the use of fines, which are utilized in other institutions, were not thought to be useful. He informed members that discussions have been ongoing to pilot the [International Centre for Academic Integrity faculty and student](#) surveys, which would provide an international benchmark for assessing the attitudes toward academic integrity/misconduct, and consideration is being given to submitting an application for funding from the Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) who has recently issued a call for proposals in relation to this.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies invited feedback in relation to the questions contained in the circulated memo. During the discussion the following points were made:

- Members commended the resources shared during the National Academic Integrity Week.
- A member cautioned against stringent categorizing of offences as it is often difficult to prove what offence a student has committed, such as in cases of collusion to copy.
- A member highlighted the need for discipline specific advice as certain categories of academic misconduct may not be applicable across all programmes.
- It was pointed out that misconduct in the case of group work was not addressed i.e., a student not contributing.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies thanked the meeting for their feedback and stated that he will consult with all areas of college to ensure that the final list is appropriately inclusive of the various species of academic misconduct. He invited members to contact him with any further comments.

USC/22-23/029 Civic Engagement

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies welcomed Ms Simone Cameron-Coen, Civic Engagement Officer, Ms Sarah Bowman, Director of Strategic Engagement & Impact Assessment, and Ms Mary Colclough, Community and Engagement Officer.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies explained that the Associate Dean of Civic Engagement and Social Innovation was unable to join the meeting, however, she has prepared a presentation for USC.

Ms Simone Cameron-Coen thanked the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies for the invitation to share the work being done in this area. The video presentation, prepared by the Associate Dean of Civic Engagement and Social Innovation gave an overview of the work being done to advance the [Trinity's Civic Engagement & Social Innovation Action Plan \(2023 – 2025\)](#). In the video, she explained that the key goal was to collate and highlight socially innovative collaborations already taking place in Trinity and build on these. She stated that it is hoped that this Plan will feed into the next College Strategic Plan. The current work process is divided into four Phases: namely the Audit, Consultation, Strategy, and Implementation Phases. She explained that they are currently in the Consultation Phase and drew members' attention to the [conversation café events](#). Members were invited to provide input on opportunities to collaborate and support efforts to enable environments for civic engagement and social innovation.

In the discussion that followed, the team were congratulated on their work. Some members suggested that providing concrete examples of collaborations with civic engagement or social innovative aspects would be helpful. A member commented that it was crucial to set the standard high to ensure meaningful translation into action and delivery of socially beneficial activities. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies stated that it is important that these ideas are reflected across the undergraduate experience and students are provided with opportunities to engage.

Ms Simone Cameron-Coen invited USC members to provide further feedback through a document that will be circulated after the meeting and to attend upcoming conversation café events, which are happening off and on campus.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies thanked Ms Simone Cameron-Coen, Ms Sarah Bowman and Ms Mary Colclough for an interesting presentation.

USC/22-23/030 Effective Teaching Practices

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies introduced the item by referring to the Irish Survey of Student Engagement and stated that work is underway to disseminate the results of the most recent version. He referred to fruitful discussions at USC last year on Collaborative Learning and explained that for this year, he had invited three DUTLs to outline effective teaching practices from their respective Schools, including Professor Aileen Lynch from the School of Nursing and Midwifery, who offered her presentation.

Professor Lynch thanked the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies for the opportunity to present and took the meeting through some practices utilized in their undergraduate programmes that have been evaluated highly by students. These practices included standardised Blackboard module organisation and colour-coding of teaching

activities, provision of clear guidelines and detailed feedback on two drafts of the Capstone project and the utilization of examples or illustrations and collaborative learning.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies thanked Professor Lynch for sharing excellent practices. As the meeting was coming to an end, he invited the remaining two DUTLs to instead share at a subsequent meeting.

USC/22-23/031 Any other business

- i. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies advised members that due to a scheduling clash, the December 2022 meeting will be moved to 5th December instead. The meeting will take place in person in the Trinity Boardroom, TBS.

USC/22-23/032 Minutes (Section B)

USC noted and approved, where necessary, the following set of minutes.

- i. **Undergraduate Common Architecture Governance Committee**
Minutes of the meeting of 5 April 2022

USC/22-23/033 Items for noting (Section C)

USC noted and approved, the following item:

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- i. **Change of Subject Title – English Studies**

A memorandum from Undergraduate Common Architecture Governance Committee, dated 19 October 2022, was circulated, which outlined a request from the School of English that the Trinity Joint Honours subject name change from English Literature to English Studies and the New Minor Subject name change from English to English Studies. This will apply from 2024-25.