

UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN
TRINITY COLLEGE

Undergraduate Studies Committee

A meeting of Undergraduate Studies Committee was held on 1st February 2011 at 2.15pm in the Board Room.

Present: Senior Lecturer, Dr Aileen Douglas (*Chair*)
Academic Secretary, Ms Patricia Callaghan
Directors of Teaching and Learning (Undergraduate)
Dr Evangelia Rigaki, School of Drama, Film and Music
Dr Philip Coleman, School of English,
Dr Peter Cherry, School of Histories and Humanities
Dr Rachel Hoare, School of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies
Dr Irene Walsh, School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences
Dr Eleanor Denny, School of Social Sciences and Philosophy
Ms Gloria Kirwan, School of Social Work and Social Policy
Dr Jim Quinn, School of Business
Dr Conor McGuckin, School of Education
Dr Andrew Butterfield, School of Computer Science and Statistics
Professor Richard Timoney, School of Mathematics
Dr Ian Sanders, School of Natural Sciences
Professor David Grayson, School of Chemistry
Dr Clair Gardiner, School of Biochemistry and Immunology
Professor Dan Bradley, School of Genetics and Microbiology
Professor Shaun McCann, School of Medicine
Dr Jacinta McLoughlin, School of Dental Science
Dr Anne Marie Healy, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences
Professor Moray McGowan, Director of TSM
Dr Francis O'Toole, Director of BESS
Professor Graeme Watson, Director of Science (TR071)
Dr Brian Foley, Director of CAPSL
Ms Jennifer Fox, Education Officer, Students' Union
Ms Rachel Barry, Student Representative

Apologies: Dr Zuleika Rodgers, Aspirant School of Religions, Theology and Ecumenics
Dr Michael Gormley, School of Psychology
Dr Oran Doyle, School of Law
Dr Dermot O'Dwyer, School of Engineering
Dr Stefan Hutzler, School of Physics
Dr Catherine McCabe, School of Nursing and Midwifery

In attendance: Ms Sorcha De Brunner, Mr Trevor Pear, Dr Seán Delaney (UGS/10-11/021) and Ms Cliona Hannon (UGS/10-11/022)

The Senior Lecturer welcomed Dr Evangelia Rigaki, Professor Moray McGowan and Professor David Grayson to their first meeting of the Undergraduate Studies Committee (USC).

UGS/10-11/019 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the 16th November 2010 were approved.

UGS/10-11/020 Matters arising

- (i) *UGS/10-11/011(i)* The Senior Lecturer noted that the specifications for the new virtual learning environment (VLE) were being considered in tandem with those for the new student administration system to avoid duplication of functionality. The implementation of the VLE has been paused to allow for a full mapping exercise to be conducted.
- (ii) *UGS/10-11/011(iii)* The Senior Lecturer informed the meeting that course materials related to the International Foundation Year had been circulated to USC members and she thanked those who had provided comment.

UGS/10-11/021 Proposal for the validation of a course in Education Studies**XX**

A proposal for the validation of a new undergraduate programme in Education Studies, to be delivered in Coláiste Mhuire, Marino Institute of Education (MIE), dated January 2011, was circulated. The Senior Lecturer welcomed Dr Seán Delaney, Interim Registrar of Coláiste Mhuire to the meeting to talk to the proposal.

Introducing the item, the Senior Lecturer advised the meeting that new arrangements were entered into with Trinity College's Associated Colleges of Education towards the end of the 2009/10 academic year. Under the new arrangements the University of Dublin will validate appropriate programmes delivered by MIE. Validation protocols have been established whereby proposals for new courses are submitted to the Associated Colleges Degree Committee (ACDC) before entering the normal internal approval procedures within Trinity College whereby proposals for new courses are considered by either USC or the Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) before presentation to the University Council.

Speaking to the proposal, Dr Delaney advised that Coláiste Mhuire has been delivering primary teacher training for over 100 years and has been formally associated with Trinity College since 1975. He explained that the rationale for the development of the programme is to provide undergraduate education to those who wish to work in areas related to education which do not require a teaching qualification, for example, in areas of policy formation or educational administration. He commented that the programme spans four distinct pillars: Lifelong Learning; Ethics and Social Justice; Education and Culture; and Policies and Practices. The programme fits with both the mission of MIE and its strategic objectives. Responding to a query on competition he identified the B.Sc. (Education and Training) offered by DCU, however, he stated that the proposed course is sufficiently different.

He advised that the proposal had been developed with input from Professor Edward Pajak, of John Hopkins University, who visited MIE as a Fulbright Specialist in the spring of 2010. He stated that useful feedback was also received from the ACDC, the School of Education, the Bologna Desk and other staff in the Vice-Provost's Office. The Director of Teaching and Learning (UG) from the School of Education confirmed that the School had reviewed the proposal carefully and were happy to endorse the programme.

Responding to a query about the proposed award title of Bachelor in Science, Ms De Brunner advised that courses validated by the University of Dublin are awarded 'named' degrees and not the generic Bachelor in Arts (Moderatorship). It was felt that the title of Bachelor in Education Studies was too similar to the existing Bachelor in Education, which confers eligibility to teach. Picking up on the social science aspect of the programme, it is proposed that the programme will lead to a B.Sc. (Education Studies). Referring to formerly validated courses in the Dublin Institute of Technology, she commented that a number of these were awarded a B.Sc., including a programme in Management.

Concerns were voiced regarding the expectation that students would organise their own work placements and it was suggested that contingency arrangements be put in place. It was also commented that if MIE wishes to foster good relationships with placement providers, care should be taken to avoid overburdening any particular provider; without controls it is possible that several students could contact the same provider. Dr Delaney commented that, by the end of their third year, students should have a good idea of the area(s) in which they wish to work or to take up further study and MIE does not wish to limit placement opportunities. MIE has extensive experience in placing students and he advised that students would be guided and fully supported in this task. He commented further that he would explore contingency arrangements and noted that MIE has particular contacts that would be useful for this purpose.

The Senior Lecturer thanked Dr Delaney for attending the meeting to present the proposal.

The USC recommended the proposal for validation to Council, subject to some revisions being made in relation to the placement and the inclusion of details about similar courses in Ireland.

UGS/10-11/022 Trinity Access Programmes**XX****(a) Alternative admission routes to Science (TR071)**

A memorandum from the Access Officer, Trinity Access Programmes (TAP), 'Alternative admission routes into TR071 Science', dated 27th January 2011, was circulated.

The Senior Lecturer welcomed Ms Cliona Hannon, Access Officer, to the meeting to talk to the item. The Access Officer noted that the proposals concerning two alternative admission routes to Science (TR071) related to recommendations contained in the Trinity Access Plan, 2009-2013. This matter had been initially discussed at the TAP Steering Committee meeting of 9th November 2010, following which, the Course Directors of Science (TR071) and Engineering had been contacted for feedback on new entry routes based on reduced points and progression from certain FETAC (Further Education and Training Awards Council) accredited courses. She advised that these proposals are still under discussion in relation to the Engineering course.

Noting that the Science (TR071) Management Committee had discussed and approved the proposals, USC recommended the following progression routes for Science (TR071) to Council for approval:

- (i) DARE/HEAR students should be admitted on 350+ points, provided they meet the specific subject requirements for Science. This proposal should be introduced on a three year trial period.
- (ii) The creation of a quota (maximum of 10 students) for entry to Science (TR071) for students successfully completing specified Level 5 FETAC accredited courses provided they attain the necessary standard in 5 required modules.

It was noted that progression from the specified FETAC courses could not be implemented until the admission period in 2012.

(b) Retention, Completion and Destination of Trinity Graduates of TAP

A document from the Access Officer, 'Summary Report on Retention, Completion and Destination of Trinity Graduates of the Trinity Access Programmes', dated January 2011, was circulated.

Speaking to the document, the Access Officer noted that students coming through TAP are admitted to courses offered by a wide variety of Schools in College. She confirmed that students are supported both by TAP and by the relevant Schools and Departments. She commented that supports offered by TAP mainly relate to the Junior Freshman year as this is the critical year for retention. It is also felt that students should not be treated differently from the main cohort of students in subsequent years. She confirmed that mature students progressing from TAP tend to use the supports more readily than those progressing from the courses for young adults.

She highlighted some significant data related to retention and completion in 2009/10, which included:

- The average retention rate across the JF, SF and JS years in 2009/10 was 90%.
- The SS completion rate in 2009/10 was 97% of those students entering the year.
- Final degree results compare well to overall degree results in Trinity. Whilst there are lower levels of first class results, at 6% compared with 15% across College, there are lower levels of third class results at 7% compared with 10% overall.
- There is a higher level of 2:2 grades achieved at 37%, compared to the College average of 22%.
- The level of 2:1 results is almost on par with the College norm at 50% (53% College-wide).
- Mature students coming through TAP tend to achieve a higher proportion of 2:2 results than the young adult cohorts, which tend to achieve more 2:1 degree results.

The Senior Lecturer commented that the figures are heartening and thanked the Access Officer for attending the meeting to speak to the TAP related items.

UGS/10-11/023 Review of the Academic Year Structure

A memorandum from the Senior Lecturer, 'Academic Year Structure', dated 26th January 2011, with attached data on examinations and an illustrative outline of the 2011/12 academic year, were circulated.

Speaking to the item, the Senior Lecturer advised that Council, at its meeting of 19th May 2010 (CL/09-10/173) requested that USC review the academic year structure during 2010/11. Since the discussion at Council, a number of individual representations had been made concerning the introduction of examinations at the end of Michaelmas term. She advised that the GSC is also considering the issues surrounding this matter and that comments from both USC and GSC will form part of the consultation before Schools are asked to comment on possible changes.

She advised that, if approved, the introduction of end of term examinations would be likely to require significant changes prior to implementation. She cautioned that the introduction of end of term examinations would not necessarily be straightforward and that information would be required from Schools about their intentions in relation to assessment modes. She commented that the status quo would remain if there is no appetite across College to introduce further changes.

The following comments and queries were raised during the discussion:

- It was queried why the examinations were not positioned before the Christmas break and it is likely that students would prefer this option even if it meant starting the academic year earlier.
- Starting the academic year earlier would decrease the time available to lecturers for research and the time between academic appeals and the start of supplemental examinations, which would have to be moved to mid-August.
- Examinations after Christmas would not assist with assessment arrangements for visiting international students. Separate assessments would still be required.
- Consideration would have to be given to closure arrangements over the Christmas break.
- End of term annual examinations are better suited to discrete five-credit modules and, if introduced, the retention of year-long modules would become unworkable.
- Permitting term-tests at the end of Michaelmas term would probably suffice for a number of courses, for example, those within the Business, Economics and Social Studies suite.
- The re-opening of the academic year structure issue is very frustrating for those delivering programmes as is the continual state of flux.
- The timing of Scholarship examinations must be considered.
- Courses are currently structured to fit with end of year examinations and the introduction of end of term examinations would require significant levels of curriculum review and related work on lecture timetables.
- There would be logistical issues where courses overlap and any deviations would be hard to accommodate where courses are delivered by Schools in partnership.
- Professional courses, with accreditation requirements, would still require flexibility in programme delivery and assessment schedules.
- Within individual programmes different years may have different 'rhythms' requiring different types of assessment and assessment schedules which would not be accommodated by a modularised structure.
- Some disciplines are not suited to delivery in a modular structure and there are valid pedagogical reasons for resisting its introduction, for example, certain professional courses in the Health Sciences require a 'spiral' curriculum structure.
- Some courses have been half modularised and it would be desirable for those wishing to fully modularise to do so. However, not all Schools should be forced into this model.
- It would be preferable for many students to complete examinations as close as possible to the completion of relevant modules rather than months later.
- Bologna policies are half implemented in Trinity College and a firm decision must be made to properly modularise or not.
- The current structure does not work anyway, therefore, some changes are required.

The Senior Lecturer thanked members for their contributions.

UGS/10-11/024
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Discontinuation of UG programme in Philosophy and Political Science

A proposal from the School of Social Sciences and Philosophy, dated 18th November 2010, to discontinue the Moderatorship in Philosophy and Political Science, was circulated. The Senior Lecturer commented that students wishing to take this particular combination can do so under the Philosophy, Political Science, Economics and Sociology

(PPES) programme. In response to a query it was confirmed that the last Junior Freshman cohort would enter in 2011/12.

There were no concerns or other queries raised by members.

UGS/10-11/025 **Any other business**

There was no other business.

UGS/10-11/026 **Minutes**

The meeting noted and approved the Trinity Access Programmes Steering Committee minutes of 9th November 2010

UGS/01-11/027 **Items for noting**

The USC noted the following documents circulated for information:

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- (i) Correspondence concerning the change of title of 'Moderatorship in Biochemistry with Immunology' to 'Moderatorship in Immunology', dated 19th November to 6th December 2010
- (ii) Memorandum, 'Insurance for students not registered', dated 24th January 2011
- (iii) Dublin Region Higher Education Alliance (DRHEA), Enhancement of Learning (EOL) Newsletter, Issue No.1.:
<http://www.drhea.ie/files/dreha%20eol%20newsletter%20high-res.pdf>

signature

date