

XX = Council relevance

UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN
TRINITY COLLEGE

Undergraduate Studies Committee

A meeting of Undergraduate Studies Committee was held on 18th February 2014 at 2.15pm in the Board Room.

Present: Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies, Professor Patrick Geoghegan (*Chair*)
Academic Secretary, Ms Patricia Callaghan
Senior Tutor, Professor Claire Laudet
Dean of Students, Professor Kevin O'Kelly
Professor Jane Farrar, School of Genetics and Microbiology
Professor Graeme Watson, Director of Science (TR071)
Professor Mark Hennessy, School of Natural Sciences
Professor Oran Doyle, School of Law
Professor Pauline Sloane, School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences
Professor Christine Poulter, School of Drama, Film and Music
Professor Elaine Moriarty, School of Social Sciences and Philosophy
Professor Gloria Kirwan, School of Social Work and Social Policy
Professor Astrid Sasse, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences
Professor Ciaran Simms, School of Engineering
Professor Mairead Brady, Director of BESS
Professor Jarlath Kileen, School of English
Professor Paschalis Karageorgis, School of Mathematics
Professor Pádraig de Paor, School of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies
Professor Sharon O'Donnell, School of Nursing and Midwifery
Professor Jacinta McLoughlin, School of Dental Science
Professor Ken Mok, School of Biochemistry and Immunology
Mr Jack Leahy, Education Officer, Students' Union
Ms Clare Donlon, Student Representative

Apologies: Professor Martina Hennessy, School of Medicine
Professor Fáinche Ryan, Confederal School of Religions, Theology and Ecumenics
Professor Mary-Lee Rhodes, School of Business
Professor Stephen Connon, School of Chemistry
Professor Moray McGowan, Director of TSM
Professor Andrew Butterfield, School of Computer Science and Statistics
Professor Michael Shevlin, School of Education
Professor Philip McEvansoneya, School of Histories and Humanities
Professor Michael Gormley, School of Psychology
Professor Graham Harper, School of Physics
Dr Ciara O'Farrell, Senior Academic Developer
Ms Cliona Hannon, Director, Trinity Access Programmes

In attendance: Ms Elaine Egan; Mr Trevor Peare, Library Representative; Ms Lynn Scarff, Science Gallery, for item USC/13-14/045.

USC/13-14/043 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 21st January 2014 were approved.

USC/13-14/044 Matters arising

XX USC/13-14/039 In order to include the courses which have a pass mark of 50% the harmonised capping regulation will be revised to: Where assessments count towards

an award, any assessment component in which a student supplements will be capped at the pass mark (40% or 50%).

USC/13-14/035a The proposal for a Diploma in Acting and Theatre, School of Drama, Film and Music, in association with The Lir Academy, received favourable feedback from external review and had been approved by Council.

USC/13-14/035b The proposal for a Professional Diploma in Orthodontic Therapy, School of Dental Science, received favourable feedback from external review and had been approved by Council.

USC/13-14/036 Members provided feedback on the 'Academic Skills for Successful Learning' Blackboard module and agreed that the module was very thorough and would be of great benefit to students. Members were asked to encourage students to take the module.

USC/13-14/045 Report from the Science Gallery

The Senior Lecturer welcomed Ms Lynn Scarff, Programme Manager, Science Gallery, to the meeting. Ms Scarff spoke to the meeting about the opportunities for undergraduate teaching and learning in Science Gallery. A survey carried out by Science Gallery last year had shown that 38% of incoming students had been to the Gallery and 7% had indicated that Science Gallery had been an influence on their decision to study science in Trinity.

Science Gallery hosts a number of exhibitions each year and runs a mediator programme where undergraduate students engage with the exhibition visitors. The mediators would be mostly, but not exclusively, students of science and would usually be in their 2nd or 3rd year of study. Mediators undertake an 8/9 week training programme in Science Communications which offers training on how to give information to, and collect data from, an audience, and also provides theme-specific training. The students work 2/3 hours per week and find the experience useful and fulfilling. Feedback from recruitment firms has shown that students who have taken part in the mediation programme usually perform very well in interviews. Science Gallery is looking to extend the programme and recruit more mediators. Ms Scarff will notify USC of the twice-yearly recruitment drives when students can apply to become a mediator.

Science Gallery offers a Broad Curriculum course each year and the 2013/14 course 'Science, Technology and Society: the Idea Translation Lab at Trinity College Dublin', is run in partnership with the Innovation Academy. The theme for this year is Strange Weather, and it ties in with Science Gallery's summer exhibition for 2014. Following completion of the course and presentation of their projects, a select number of students will have the opportunity to further develop their projects and to take part in an intensive summer workshop at Le Laboratoire in Paris where they will work alongside selected Harvard students and others to develop their projects into prototypes with expert mentors.

The Science Gallery attracts over 350,000 visitors each year. The 'lab in the Gallery' series sees the public taking part in research experiments on an ongoing basis and this data provides extensive research opportunities. The data has been used by postgraduate students but Science Gallery is currently investigating whether it could also provide research opportunities for undergraduate students. A number of Science Gallery staff members are in the process of being set up as supervisors. Four postgraduate theses have been produced based on Science Gallery research data and Ms Scarff will circulate these to USC to allow members to appreciate the types of opportunities available. Members were asked to bring the information on research opportunities back to their schools. The Senior Lecturer thanked Ms Scarff for speaking to USC.

USC/13-14/046 Trinity Education – Student Survey

A memorandum from the Senior Lecturer dated 12th February 2014 had been circulated, together with survey results and a report 'Improving the Quality of Teaching and Learning in Europe's Higher Education Institutions'.

The Senior Lecturer had met with small groups of students to discuss various issues including admissions and the curriculum. One group had suggested conducting a survey and the Senior Lecturer, with assistance from the Students' Union Education Officer, circulated a survey comprising ten questions to all undergraduate students and invited them to provide further comments and suggestions. By the survey closing date of 12th February, 2,801 students had responded and a number had followed up with in-depth comments. Students had been very enthusiastic to be asked their opinions on these issues and had provided very useful feedback. The Senior Lecturer brought the meeting through each of the survey responses. There was no demographic data available on the respondents and it was agreed that future surveys could have the data broken down by year and faculty.

The Senior Lecturer and the Students' Union Education Officer would hold two Town Hall meetings to discuss issues concerning the Trinity Education, following which the Senior Lecturer will provide an update of the discussions to USC.

The Senior Lecturer invited a discussion on the circulated report. It was agreed that the recommendations and guidelines were very useful and that the document re-balanced teaching and learning with research. There was an emphasis in the report on rewarding quality teaching. The Academic Secretary queried how we could best implement the recommendations in College. The difficulty of implementing recommendations surrounding internationalisation was discussed and the Senior Lecturer advised that online education could be very beneficial in promoting this in College. It was noted that Trinity had a very low number of students taking the Erasmus year abroad and it was thought that this was largely due to language barriers. The Academic Secretary advised that at a recent meeting with the HEA they had indicated that Trinity would need to improve in the area of internationalisation and the Senior Lecturer noted that he was keen to build up Trinity's international collaborations.

USC/13-14/047 US Open Days and Trinity Explore

A memorandum from the Senior Lecturer dated 12th February 2014 had been circulated. The Global Relations Office had organised two open days to take place on the East Coast of America: in Westchester on 11th April 2014 and in Georgetown on 12th April 2014. The Open Days will target all students in the East Coast area who have received offers to Trinity, potential applicants and their families, and high school guidance counsellors. The primary objective of the open days is to increase the conversion rate of offers to acceptances. Amongst others, the Senior Lecturer and the Admissions Officer will attend, along with a number of students. The Senior Lecturer sought suggestions from members on how best to promote College at the open days and comments included:

- Contacting the Junior Common Room as this would be the initial point of contact in College for many US students
- Including a video on the future of the Trinity student
- Podcasting the Open Days so that a wider audience could view the events
- Involving an American parent of a Trinity student.

It was agreed that College must be able to follow through on what is said at the open days and it was considered vital that international students be able to advance register. Finding suitable accommodation is seen to be the biggest problem facing international students and if Trinity were able to guarantee accommodation to first year international students it would be beneficial for international recruitment.

The Senior Lecturer noted that a budget is available to create further videos for Trinity Explore and some of these could also be used for the open days. At the Admissions Forum meeting on 13th February 2014 the group supported an excellent suggestion by the Admissions Liaison Officer to invite students to create their own videos for Trinity Explore and enter them in a competition with the best three videos and all published videos receiving a prize. An email was sent to all undergraduate students on 17th February inviting them to submit a video by the closing date of 31st March 2014.

USC/13-14/048 Broad Curriculum

A memorandum from the Senior Lecturer dated 12th February 2014 was circulated. The Senior Lecturer requested that members review their current undergraduate provision to see if it would be possible for courses to open an existing Junior Freshman or Senior Freshman module to the Broad Curriculum programme. The majority of Broad Curriculum courses on offer are now modules of a main course that are opened up to students in other disciplines. The uptake for Broad Curriculum courses was at its highest this year and approximately 200 students who wished to take one were turned down.

Any changes to the Broad Curriculum should align with College's Strategy for Innovation and Entrepreneurship which was launched on 27th November 2013. Some members noted that it was increasingly hard for students to find space in their timetables to take a Broad Curriculum course and queried whether slots could be reserved for these courses as they were when the programme was first set up. Some members queried whether we could give a broader definition to the Broad Curriculum that would provide more diversity in accruing credits. In response to a request, the Senior Lecturer agreed to follow up on the possibility of offering interdisciplinary Broad Curriculum courses.

The Senior Lecturer invited members to consider whether we should change the name Broad Curriculum and a member suggested the term 'Curriculum Connects'.

USC/13-14/049 Scholarship 2014

A memorandum from the Senior Lecturer dated 12th February 2014 was circulated. The Senior Lecturer reminded the meeting of the regulations concerning Scholarship, in particular the requirement that grade profiling must be used. To be awarded Scholarship, candidates must have an average mark of 70% or higher, and the candidate's grade profile should indicate a majority of first class marks, or a first class mark in half the examination papers where there is an even number of papers. All courses making recommendations for Scholarship must submit reports to the Central Scholarship Committee 'confirming that the recommendations have been followed (and providing summary details in each case)'; no Scholarships will be awarded until such information has been provided.

USC/13-14/050 Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies' update

Notes from the Admissions Forum meeting of 13th February 2014 were tabled. The Senior Lecturer informed the meeting that some Irish universities offer extra points in the admissions process to elite sports people and that he would prepare a paper on this for the Task Group on University Entry and Selection.

USC/13-14/051 Any other business

An email had been sent to first year and final year undergraduate students and taught postgraduate students encouraging them to take the ISSE survey. Members were asked to encourage students to take the survey as the response rate to date was very low.

USC/13-14/052 Items for noting

The Proposal for a Module in Acting and Irish Theatre, School of Drama, Film and Music, in association with The Lir Academy, was noted.