

XX = Council relevance

**UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN
TRINITY COLLEGE**

Undergraduate Studies Committee

A meeting of Undergraduate Studies Committee was held on 24th March 2015 at 2.15pm in the Board Room.

Present: Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer, Professor Gillian Martin (*Chair*)
 Academic Secretary, Ms Patricia Callaghan
 Dean of Students, Professor Kevin O'Kelly
 Senior Tutor, Professor Claire Laudet
 Professor Jarlath Killeen, School of English
 Professor Fáinche Ryan, Confederal School of Religions, Theology and Ecumenics
 Professor Derek O'Sullivan, School of Dental Science
 Professor David Wilkins, School of Mathematics
 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 Howard Smith, School of Psychology
 Professor Mark Hennessy, School of Natural Sciences
 Professor Des Ryan, School of Law
 Professor Ken Mok, School of Biochemistry and Immunology
 Professor Ciaran Simms, School of Engineering
 Professor Charles Patterson, School of Physics
 Professor Rachel Moss, School of Histories and Humanities
 Professor Sharon O'Donnell, School of Nursing and Midwifery
 Professor Astrid Sasse, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences
 Professor Sarah Smyth, Director of TSM
 Dr Ciara O'Farrell, Senior Academic Developer
 Mr Trevor Peare, Library Representative

Apologies: Professor James Hanrahan, School of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies
 Professor Mike Brady, School of Computer Science and Statistics
 Professor Jane Farrar, School of Genetics and Microbiology
 Professor Martina Hennessy, School of Medicine
 Professor Mary-Lee Rhodes, School of Business
 Professor Gloria Kirwan, School of Social Work and Social Policy
 Professor Stephen Connon, School of Chemistry
 Professor Michael Shevlin, School of Education
 Ms Katie Byrne, Education Officer, Students' Union
 Ms Ciara Coughlan, Student Representative
 Ms Cliona Hannon, Director, Trinity Access Programmes

In attendance: Ms Elaine Egan; Ms Sorcha De Brunner, Trinity Teaching and Learning, for item USC/14-15/052; Ms Roisin Smith, Quality Officer, for item USC/14-15/055, Prof Tim Savage, Associate Dean On-Line Education, for item USC/14-15/056

USC/14-15/049 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 17th February 2015 were approved.

USC/14-15/050 Matters arising

USC/14-15/04 At its meeting of 25th February 2015, Board approved the implementation of a general paper in all Scholarship examinations and also the requirement to obtain a majority of first class marks, with the remaining papers achieving a mark of 65% or above.

USC/14-15/034 The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer had nominated the Directors of Undergraduate Teaching and Learning from the School of Engineering and the School of Business for membership to the SITS User Group. The Group would shortly hold its first meeting.

USC/14-15/042 The Admissions Forum had agreed to retain the faculty-based grouping of courses in the 2016 undergraduate prospectus, rather than move to a thematic grouping as had been considered during the initial review.

Schools/Disciplines have been contacted by the Admissions Liaison Officer and are required to submit revised course descriptions by 2nd April.

USC/14-15/045 The proposal from Marino Institute of Education (MIE) for the validation of a Bachelor in Science (Early Childhood Education) had been amended to address the issues raised by USC and had subsequently been sent for external review. Following the external review process it will proceed to Council for approval.

USC/14-15/046 A Plagiarism Working Group has been established and had met for the first time in the previous week. It is jointly chaired by the Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer and the Dean of Graduate Studies. The Group will consider the current definition of plagiarism in Trinity, appropriate methods of dealing with plagiarism cases, and how to manage and communicate anti-plagiarism resources.

USC/14-15/051 Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer's report

Education Project

The Education Project Group, chaired by the Provost, had held its first meeting on 23rd March. The Education Project is a core component of the Strategic Plan 2014-19 and will involve a review of Trinity's education and curriculum over the next 18-24 months. The Group will consider whether Trinity offers the kind of education that its students expect and what distinguishes a Trinity education. Group members have been asked to think about the attributes they would like to see in a Trinity graduate in ten years' time and what type of education and curriculum will produce this type of graduate. The Group will begin by scoping the work required and the types of issues that should be considered.

The Group had reflected on the possibility that the complexity of College's systems and structures may act as an impediment to innovation and how there is a need to consider change at a structural level that would allow greater flexibility be introduced to the curriculum and greater innovation in teaching and assessment approaches.

A discussion followed and a member noted the dislocation between staff working in a constrained financial situation whilst, at the same time, being expected to innovate and enhance teaching quality. It was noted that the Education Group had discussed this issue and agreed that it will be challenging to free up the capacity necessary to effect change. It was acknowledged that College had undergone much change in the previous ten-year period and that whilst large-scale change would initially involve a high level of commitment from staff, once the changes have been embedded they should ease many of the current constraints encountered by staff and students.

In response to a query, it was confirmed that the programme of quality reviews will continue as scheduled and that issues identified in and recommendations arising from these reviews would be useful to inform and guide the Education Project.

International Baccalauréat (IB) Working Group

Following a concern raised by the Dean of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences, a Working Group has been established to consider the admission requirements for students presenting with the IB examination. The current equivalencies between results achieved at the Leaving Certificate and the International Baccalauréat may result in Trinity losing strong students who are applying through the CAO, particularly when compared with comparator institutions in the UK. The equivalencies exist at sectoral level and, thus, any proposed changes would need to be agreed at that level.

USC/14-15/052 Calendar Changes 2015/16

Calendar changes for the Foundation Scholarship section and for course entries in the three faculties and the Two-Subject Moderatorship had been circulated. The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer welcomed Ms Sorcha De Brunner, Trinity Teaching and Learning, to the meeting for this item.

Ms De Brunner noted that many requests for dual entry of courses had been received this year, but that the practice is for a course to be entered under a single school and for that entry to be referred to under the entries of other school(s) involved.

The majority of the changes were of a minor nature and did not require discussion at the meeting. Ms De Brunner brought the meeting through a small number of specific amendments and noted that minor points of clarification will be dealt with in the editing process. Some course amendments may be submitted and brought to USC at a later date, along with changes to the General Regulations section. Ms De Brunner undertook to liaise with the Enquiries Office regarding a style sheet for Calendar changes.

A section on the general paper and the 65% rule has been included in the Scholarship section, along with a footnote on grade profiling. Members were reminded to submit their changes for the Scholarship section to calendar@tcd.ie and that all entries should clearly indicate which papers or sections of papers are general and also the proportion of marks carried by each paper. Entries will be reviewed by the Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer and Ms De Brunner who will then liaise with colleagues to ensure consistency.

The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer thanked Ms De Brunner for joining USC to talk to this item.

USC/14-15/053 TGRUSE**a) Report from Council meeting of 11th March 2015**

A memorandum from the Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer, dated 4 March 2015, was circulated to members along with draft consultation documents on matriculation and entry requirements from the Irish Universities Association Task Group on the Reform of University Selection and Entry (TGRUSE).

The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer advised members that Council, at its meeting of 11th March had reiterated its position that Trinity should seek to retain the current matriculation requirements of mathematics and a language other than English and this position had been communicated to TGRUSE, along with the view that other universities should also seek to retain these subjects for matriculation. She also drew members' attention to a clause in the circulated 'Draft policy (for initial consultation) for Matriculation and Entry requirements' that would undermine the autonomy of universities to make decisions on admissions issues and noted that Council members had found this clause to be unacceptable.

XX b) TSM Course Codes

TGRUSE had required all universities to complete a template indicating the direct entry routes they will have in place in 2017. In light of the reconfiguration of the curriculum in the context of the education project, Trinity had received an exemption from including TSM. Following consultation with the Provost and the Vice-Provost, the Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer, the Director of TSM, and the Admissions Officer had met to investigate ways of reducing TSM course codes without negatively impacting on the range of available course choice. The outcome of these discussions was the bundling of Latin and Greek into Classic Languages, whereby students will now apply to Classic Languages and be assigned to either Latin or Greek following admission. This reduces TSM course codes by 11 for 2016 entrants.

USC/14-15/054 Proposal for Discontinuation of Irish Studies

This item was deferred to a later meeting of USC.

USC/14-15/055 External Examiner reports

A memorandum from the Quality Officer, dated 19th March 2015, was circulated along with a revised external examiner report template. The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer welcomed the Quality Officer to the meeting for this item.

The Quality Officer emphasised how the external examiner process is an integral part of the quality assurance of programmes in Trinity. The process has been under review by Trinity Teaching and Learning at the request of the Quality Committee. The review has focused on: payment of external examiners, receipt and dissemination of reports, a single report template and quality assurance of the issues reported by external examiners. The circulated report template had been designed in line with best practice¹ and in consultation with the Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer, the Dean of Graduate Studies and the Senior Academic Developer (CAPSL), and had been reviewed by nominees of the Deans prior to circulation to USC. Members provided feedback on the template and the Quality Officer agreed to make the appropriate amendments. Members approved the revised template, subject to the agreed amendments, for use in the 2015/16 academic year. The final template will be circulated to USC for noting.

A member raised a concern regarding the difficulty some external examiners had experienced in relation to receiving their examining fee and was advised that the review of the payment procedures had resulted in a number of recommendations which, when implemented, will alleviate issues and simplify the process for receiving the examining fee. The recommendations will be implemented in either the current academic year or 2015/16 at the latest.

The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer thanked the Quality Officer for presenting the revised template to USC.

USC/14-15/056 Update on Online Developments

The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer welcomed the Associate Dean On-Line Education to the meeting for this item.

The Associate Dean gave a presentation to the meeting to update members on the work of the Online Education Unit, online developments to date, and the future of online education in Trinity.

The online education pilot had seen Trinity launch a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) in Irish History and a Postgraduate Diploma in Applied Social Studies. The MOOC was considered to be very successful with a completion

¹ <http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/highereducation/Documents/2011/ReviewOfExternalExaminingArrangements.pdf>

rate more than twice the average for MOOCs and had provided global exposure to Trinity College.

The Strategic Plan 2014-19 states the aim of increasing Trinity's online learners to 1,000 within the five-year period, focusing primarily on the postgraduate and continuous professional development areas. In 2015/16, a second MOOC will be launched and also four online postgraduate courses in the areas of: radiotherapy, managing risk and system change, health and exercise, and dementia.

HEIs are operating in an environment of the 'new millennial learner' who are always connected, learn via social media, prefer multimedia, and may be easily bored. Online courses should equip students with 21st century skills including critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, and media and technology skills.

Technology can enhance programmes in a spectrum of ways from using web-based technology to facilitate a course, to a course where most or all of the content is delivered online. The Associate Dean suggested a middle-ground approach, where technology is used to enhance face-to-face learning, to be most appropriate for Trinity. In the future, it may be possible to adopt a blended-learning approach which allows for online collaboration and allows students the ability to take modules through the most appropriate medium. The idea of the flipped classroom - where the traditional lecture and homework elements are reversed - was also discussed and the space implications of this were acknowledged.

The lessons gained in the online environment should be used to enhance the learning experience of campus-based students where appropriate. The Associate Dean encouraged Directors to engage with the VLE in College and to explore the ways in which technology can be used to enhance teaching.

The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer thanked the Associate Dean for updating USC on online developments.

USC/14-15/057 Any other business

A memorandum from the Examinations and Timetables Officer, dated 24th March 2015, was tabled. The memorandum proposed that the old log (Mathematical) tables are taken out of circulation for Trinity examinations, with immediate effect, and from 2015/16 only the new Formulae and Statistics tables are made available. Where an examination refers to the old tables, a copy of the relevant page(s) should be appended to the master copy of the examination paper prior to submission to the Examinations and Assessment Team. USC approved the proposal as presented.

USC/14-15/058 Trinity Access Programmes Steering Committee

The draft minutes from the meeting of 3rd December 2014 were noted and approved.

USC/14-15/059 Items for noting

USC noted the following document which had been circulated for information:

1. Grade conversion tables - updated March 2015