



Trinity College Dublin

Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath

The University of Dublin

XX = Council relevance

A meeting of the Undergraduate Studies Committee was held on 24 May 2016 at 2.00pm in the Board Room.

- Present:**
- Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer, Professor Gillian Martin (*Chair*)
 - Academic Secretary, Ms Patricia Callaghan
 - Senior Tutor, Professor Claire Laudet
 - Dean of Students, Professor Kevin O'Kelly
 - Professor Jarlath Killeen, School of English
 - Professor Elaine Moriarty, School of Social Sciences and Philosophy
 - Professor Sarah Smyth, Director of TSM
 - Professor Ciaran Simms, School of Engineering
 - Professor Fáinche Ryan, School of Religions, Peace Studies and Theology
 - Professor James Hanrahan, School of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies
 - Professor Eric Weitz, School of Drama, Film and Music
 - Professor Peter Cherry, School of Histories and Humanities
 - Professor Des Ryan, School of Law
 - Professor Astrid Sasse, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences
 - Professor Mary-Lee Rhodes, School of Business
 - Professor Kevin Devine, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Science Education
 - Professor Mike Brady, School of Computer Science and Statistics
 - Professor Kevin Conlon, School of Medicine
 - Professor Mark Hennessy, School of Natural Sciences
 - Professor David Wilkins, School of Mathematics
 - Professor Charles Patterson, School of Physics
 - Ms Molly Kenny, Education Officer, Students' Union
- Apologies:**
- Professor Keith Johnston, School of Education
 - Professor Imelda Coyne, School of Nursing and Midwifery
 - Professor Derek Sullivan, School of Dental Science
 - Professor Derek Nolan, School of Biochemistry and Immunology
 - Professor Robbie Gilligan, School of Social Work and Social Policy
 - Professor Pauline Sloane, School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences
 - Professor Michael Bridge, School of Chemistry
 - Professor Howard Smith, School of Psychology
 - Professor Jane Farrar, School of Genetics and Microbiology
 - Ms Sinéad Baker, Student Representative
- In attendance:**
- Ms Elaine Egan; Mr David Mockler, Library Representative; Ms Alison Oldam, Director of Student Services; Dr Ciara O'Farrell, Senior Academic Developer; Ms Megan Kuster, TAP; Mr Dale Whelehan, incoming Students' Union Education Officer; Professor Joan Geoghegan, shadow DUTL, School of Genetics and Microbiology; Ms Fedelma McNamara, Trinity Education Project for item USC/15-16/153; Ms Sorcha De Brunner and Ms Sarah Coyle, Trinity Teaching and Learning, for item USC/15-16/155; Professor Patrick Geoghegan, Project Sponsor, Trinity Admissions Feasibility Study, for item USC/15-16/157; Ms Julia Maher, Global Relations Office, for item USC/15-16/161

USC/15-16/151 Minutes

- a) The minutes of the meeting of 19 April 2016 were approved.
- b) The notes of the special meeting of 3 May 2016 were approved subject to the following amendments in item USC/15-16/048:

Replace sentence commencing 'Professor Devine outlined the 3 Science streams... ' with: Professor Devine outlined the 3 Science streams: Chemistry and Physics; Life Sciences; Earth Sciences, Geography and stated that there would be places in the Chemistry degree for students in both the Chemistry/Physics and Life Sciences streams.

Replace sentence commencing 'A member noted the difficulties the capstone project ... ' with: A member noted potential difficulties that might arise for Schools under pressure to move towards an M.Chem. or equivalent as this might require the project to be postponed to the fifth/additional year with additional laboratory classes taken in the Senior Sophister year.

USC/15-16/152 Matters arising

USC/15-16/140 The draft policy on Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) had been approved by the Graduate Studies Committee on 21 April 2016 and subsequently by Council on 11 May 2016. RPL was at the implementation phase.

The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer also noted that the Widening Participation Task Group had met the previous week and would bring a paper to USC in Michaelmas Term 2016.

USC/15-16/140 The Level 5 Certificate in Arts, Science and Inclusive Applied Practice had received a positive external review and would proceed to Council for approval on 8 June 2016.

USC/15-16/140 The procedures for the approval of new undergraduate modules and modules with significant changes had been approved by Council on 11 May 2016.

USC/15-16/53 Chair's Report – update on the Trinity Education Project

The following documents that had been discussed at the Council meeting of 11 May 2016 were circulated:

- a) Assessment Framework and Academic Year Structure
- b) Capstone Project
- c) Programme Architecture

Amendments to the Academic Year Structure (AYS) had been made following the discussion at Council and had been brought to the Heads of Schools meeting and the Science Course Committee meeting. Arising from feedback at these meetings and from a Strand 2 meeting in the previous week, the proposed models for the AYS had been further revised.

The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer reminded the meeting that the proposed assessment framework was intended to encourage the achievement of the graduate attributes, to support assessment *as* and *for* learning rather than just to measure learning, to be programme-focused, to support meta-learning, and to engage students and staff in dialogue around assessment. Strand 3 of the TEP had recommended that Trinity broaden the range and spread of formative and summative assessments.

The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer explained that the study/review weeks were designed to provide scheduled time for supporting teaching, learning and

assessment in a number of areas, including achievement of graduate attributes, integrative learning and feedback. Timetabled teaching or examinations would not take place during these weeks. She detailed a number of activities that could take place during these weeks, including: students completing set work, engaging in project/group/portfolio work, or undertaking field trips. They could be used as time for independent learning that would support the capstone project and provide opportunities for the application of learning outside of the classroom. Workshops to develop study skills and academic literacy could also be provided.

She displayed the two proposed models of the AYS and indicated that Council had not given support to previous iterations of the models that had included two blocked study weeks. An alternative suggestion for the provision of a half-day each week without timetabled classes had emerged at Council.

Each semester in Option 1 involved six weeks of teaching, followed by one week for study/review, another six weeks of teaching followed by one week for study/review, and one week for assessment; and incorporated a weekly non-timetabled half-day. The half-day could be used for study or review, or to engage in co-curricular activities.

Each semester in Option 2 incorporated four weeks of teaching, followed by one week for study/review, another four weeks of teaching followed by one week for study/review, followed by four weeks of teaching, and an assessment week. Option 2 did not include a weekly non-teaching half-day.

The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer summarised the features common to both options including an earlier start to the academic year, 12 weeks of teaching and two study/review weeks per semester, and one week of formal assessment at the end of each semester. In both options, the re-assessment and marking sessions would occur prior to the start of the new academic year. Both options contained an assessment week prior to Christmas which had emerged as the preferred option during consultation. The Dean also highlighted the differences between the options and those between the proposed options and the current AYS.

She advised that Council had been invited to consider whether the Junior Freshman year should be assessed on a pass/fail basis. There had been some appetite to support this at Council and further discussion would take place. Arising from a discussion by Council on the common architecture, a professional pathway in the single honors stream, involving 30 ECTS for breadth spread across the programme, was being proposed.

Members were asked for feedback on the proposed options and of those members who stated a preference, the majority preferred Option 2. A number of members raised concerns around difficulties in timetabling that the half-day might cause, particularly in relation to lab-based teaching. A member felt that Option 2 would provide for a better transition for incoming students and more time for orientation activities. In response to a concern about the lack of a study week immediately prior to Christmas in Option 2, the Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer emphasised the move to encourage students to engage for the full semester, rather than just for the examinations. A member had met with the College Counselling Service and relayed its satisfaction with the half-day: they felt that it would reduce pressure on students and allow them more time to engage in co-curricular activities. A member repeated her concerns that the earlier start to the academic year would require changes to Trinity's processes to enable allocation of tutors and S2S mentors for the start of the academic year. In response, the Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer advised that more first round CAO offers would have to be made to students and that systems would need to be reviewed to see how they could accommodate the different structures and the earlier start.

In response to a number of other queries/concerns, the Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer clarified that: provisional results would most likely be provided to students at the end of the first semester and the Courts of Examiners would convene at the end of the second semester within the period flagged as marking weeks; that a working group on a fixed timetabling system would be convened in the coming academic year; and that both proposed options represented an increase of one week for research. The Dean of Students emphasised that the extra weeks proposed in the AYS would not involve more content, but rather would lessen the intensity evident on staff and students in the current structure.

The Committee agreed that a cultural shift with regard to study/review weeks was necessary and that the purpose of these weeks as outlined must be emphasised to students. Lecturers should help to scaffold these weeks for students by setting projects, group-work, etc. It was agreed that the AYS must represent an achievable workload for students, and cognisance must be given to the fact that many students have part-time jobs and extra-curricular interests. Consideration should be given to the title of the study/review weeks.

In response to a member's query, the Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer reported that there may be cases when a level of flexibility is needed with regard to the 20 ECTS assigned to the Capstone project.

The presentation would be sent to members following the meeting and feedback could be sent to fmcnamar@tcd.ie by 12 noon Monday 30th May 2016. The proposed Academic Year Structure would be circulated to Council for final approval in June 2016.

USC/15-16/154 Draft Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer's Annual Report 2014/15

A draft version of the Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer's Annual Report 2014/15 had been circulated together with a memorandum from the Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer dated 17 May 2016.

The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer emphasised the draft nature of the report to the Committee. She noted that some data were still to be included and the report's introduction would be incorporated once this information had been received and all further checking had been completed.

She commented on a number of items of interest as follows:

- Total applications to Trinity for all preferences had increased from 2014, however they were lower than the level of 2013;
- The number of applicants listing TCD as one or more of their CAO course preferences had increased by 2% from 2014;
- The number of first preferences had increased from by 5% from 2014 but was slightly under the number in 2013;
- Acceptance rates in a small number of programmes showed significant fluctuation from year to year;
- The vast majority of students were from Leinster, with Dublin featuring predominantly. The Student Recruitment Officer had been engaging more with schools in Munster and Connaught, but there was a shortage of resources to facilitate this;
- The Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences had the highest percentage of non-traditional students, whilst the Faculty of Engineering, Maths and Science had the lowest percentage;

- The most widely used information source for students was the Trinity website, followed by the printed prospectus and Open Day;
- The Staff:Student ratio average across College was 1:19. The ratios ranged from 15:1 in the Faculty of Health Sciences to 23:1 in the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences;
- Only 66% of reports from external examiners had been received. The external examiner process had recently changed and may need to be further explored;
- The retention and progression data showed fluctuations across programmes, but overall were seen as very positive.

A discussion ensued on barriers to students outside of Leinster and a number of members suggested the main obstacle could be a lack of affordable accommodation in the Dublin area.

The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer thanked Ms Jade Barreto and Ms Elaine Egan, Trinity Teaching and Learning, for their work on the report. The report would be circulated to Council following its completion.

USC/15-16/155 Calendar Changes 2016/17

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Calendar changes for the General Regulations section, 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 and Ms Sarah Coyle, Trinity Teaching and Learning, to the meeting for this item.

Ms De Brunner noted that a revised process for Calendar changes had been implemented this year and issues arising from the changes had been clarified prior to circulation.

She advised that Ms Coyle had discussed with course owners the requirements arising from the Council decision for new entrants from 2014/15 onwards to complete a dissertation/ project in one of their final two years. This regulation would affect the Calendar in 2017/18 and details should be included with the Calendar changes for that year.

Ms De Brunner brought the meeting through a number of specific amendments. These included the new entry in the General Regulations section on the degree of ordinary B.A. This paragraph had been included as the majority of undergraduate degree programmes awarded the ordinary B.A. as an exit award and to reflect elements of the Council-approved policy on RPL. Ms De Brunner highlighted that Council permission would no longer be required to award an ordinary B.A. in cases of advanced entry, provided that a student has passed the Junior Sophister year and had spent at least two years in the University.

She flagged that changes would be likely for the 2016/17 Calendar with regards to the H.E.C. programme in relation to its structure, fee level and payment processes; details would be provided by a group which was looking at those issues.

The Committee's attention was also brought to the revised entry on plagiarism that further defined the powers of the Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer and provided further details on when it was appropriate to refer cases to the Junior Dean.

Ms De Brunner referred to the paragraph relating to half-year exchanges for TSM students where compensation issues had been clarified. The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer noted that it appeared that differing compensation practices were in place across College in relation to students on study abroad and confirmed that a discussion around these issues would take place in Michaelmas Term 2016.

Ms De Brunner outlined that a small amount of information was outstanding from departments and in particular highlighted that changes were expected to the titles of a number of modules in Social Studies as this would affect a number of other courses that share these modules. Calendar changes of a minor nature did not require discussion at the meeting.

A member inquired whether the Calendar changes process could be carried out at an earlier stage in the academic year and it was agreed that the timeline would be reviewed to consider if there might be scope to accommodate this. Ms De Brunner confirmed that she would liaise with the Secretary's Office and follow up with USC in relation to the online location of the Academic Year Structure and the timing of the publication of the Calendar.

USC/15-16/156 Trinity/Intel Agreement

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The Academic Secretary gave a presentation on an employability award initiative that had evolved following a strategic review of the Careers Advisory Services, the MOU signed with Intel in September 2015, and the Trinity Education Project's commitment to directly connect co-curricular activities with graduate attributes. Its focus is on assisting students recognise and articulate the skills and competences they develop outside the core curriculum that enhance employability.

Under the talent development strand of the Trinity-Intel MOU, €192K had been secured for scholarships. A total of 28 students had applied to the fund and 16 students had been selected to receive scholarships.

Trinity was also working on the Intel Employability Award and hoped to establish a two-year feasibility study to work with other companies to see if they would consider providing sponsorships in a range of subject areas. Intel sponsorship was currently only in place for STEM subjects. The participating students would complete 30 hours of co-curricular activities, a compulsory module on job search and reflective learning (4 hours), and a module to develop hard skills that would be core to Intel and transferable elsewhere (12 hours of Intel workshops).

A number of recognised co-curricular activities were listed, including: student societies, Trinity sports clubs, volunteering and part-time work. The Academic Secretary noted there were differing views on whether to include part-time work.

The Schools involved are Physics; Chemistry; Mathematics; Engineering; and Computer Science and Statistics. The Feasibility Study would involve students in their Junior Sophister year and would be capped at 50 participants in the first year. Random selection with gender and subject distribution would apply if more than 50 students registered interest.

Students would submit two 500-word reflective pieces or one 500-word reflective piece and a short video. The submissions would be reviewed by Trinity and Intel staff and all submissions that passed would receive an award. Using defined criteria, a shortlist of 6 of the submissions would be created and finally one male and one female winner would be chosen. Intel would provide the six shortlisted participants with an iPad/laptop and would also award the two winners with a cash prize of €2,500.

The Academic Secretary brought the Committee through the proposed timeline as follows: the project would be launched in September 2016, workshops would be conducted from October to February, students would submit their work in April 2017, work would be assessed in May/June and the awards would be presented in September 2017. A review of the first year of the study would take place and recommended changes would be

implemented in year two.

Members were invited to comment on the award in general and particularly in relation to the inclusion of part-time work as a recognised co-curricular activity. Members supported the inclusion of part-time work and noted that employers regularly highlighted their preference for students who worked part-time. A member suggested that the co-curricular activities should be broadened to include caring responsibilities. Another member suggested that consideration should be given to making the initiative a credit-bearing module.

A member commented that the development of the graduate attributes through this award was very similar to the experiential learning that had been built into the curriculum and noted that we must be cautious not to create confusion in the students by presenting multiple similar ways to achieve the attributes.

A discussion took place about the impact of different levels of part-time work on students' studies but no consensus was reached. The Academic Secretary explained that the project reflected the reality that many students worked part-time and reminded the Committee that many Trinity programmes comprised internships and placements. The Education Officer of the Students' Union noted that the level of work proposed was very low and should not negatively impact students' academic work.

The Academic Secretary outlined that she had previously brought the proposal to School Executive Committees and she undertook to bring it to Schools/Departments.

The Committee gave its support to the agreement and the feasibility study.

USC/15-16/157 Trinity Admissions Feasibility Study (TAFS)

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A memorandum dated 16 May 2016 from the Project Sponsor of the TAFS, Professor Patrick Geoghegan, had been circulated. The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer welcomed Professor Geoghegan to the meeting for this item.

Professor Geoghegan reported that in 2015, Council had approved the extension of the TAFS for a third year in order to allow for the collection of further data, to explore ways of extending the study to other colleges, and to allow some experimentation to take place in relation to how the Study operated. He advised that a research project run by Dr Stephen Minton and a team in the School of Education's CAVE (Cultures, Academic Values and Education Research Centre) had recently commenced around the study.

As Council had approved, the study had undergone some changes in the third year, whereby the personal statement would act as a qualifier only, rather than being scored as in the previous two years. Professor Geoghegan proposed extending the study for a further year to allow for completion of two cycles of the study – two years under the original system and two years under the revised system. He also invited Schools/Departments in the EMS areas to consider testing the new admissions route for a small number of places in 2017/18. He confirmed that the three subject areas involved in the study wished to continue in the fourth year and some had also expressed interest in continuing with the new admissions route in some form afterwards.

In response to a query, Professor Geoghegan outlined the questions that would be considered in the research project. These included: what kind of students were admitted through the study? Did they have abilities that had not been captured through Leaving Certificate points? How were they performing in College? Was the relative performance rank important and, if so, what might be the appropriate weighting for it?

A member commented that the study was effectively pushing out students at the lower end of the required points who may have otherwise been offered a place and wondered whether a cost/benefit analysis had been carried out to demonstrate the efficacy of the study. Professor Geoghegan noted that the workload involved in scoring the personal statement was particularly laborious. He noted that costs would be significantly reduced if the personal statements were not given the same level of scrutiny, especially as the statements were only a qualifier and were not included in the final calculations, and a member agreed with this measure in light of the financially constrained circumstances in place in College. He added that RPR was being reviewed and how it might be expanded. Professor Geoghegan advised that if the study were to continue with an additional course, the places in that course should be additional to quota. In response to a question about the overall value of the personal statement, he supported the removal of the personal statement component if the project were to continue beyond the fourth year.

A member offered his full support for the continuation of the study and commented that the measure of the effectiveness of the study was how successfully or otherwise the students were performing in College. Professor Geoghegan pointed out that anecdotal evidence for the academic success of the students on the History courses was positive. He noted that it would be difficult to benchmark the success of the students in Law as most had achieved points very close to the minimum points level.

USC supported the extension of the project for a further year. A member of Trinity Access Programmes highlighted the difficulty her office would face in administering the project in future years without dedicated resources. The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer advised that the proposal would continue to Council for approval in June 2016 and that the financial and resource implications of the Study would need to be addressed.

USC/15-16/158 Report on Northern Ireland Engagement Programme

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A report updating members on the Northern Ireland Engagement Programme was circulated together with a memorandum from the Senior Lecturer, dated 18 May 2016. The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer reported that 923 applications had been received from Northern Ireland. This represented an increase of almost 20% on the final figure of 754 applications received in the previous year. The increase in applications was thought to be due to engagement with schools. Of the 923 applications, a total of 196 applications had been received through the Feasibility Study. She noted that this would be the first year that the new conversion system for A-Levels would be in place

The Dean reported on the difficulty in converting offers to acceptances and then to registrations. This issue was being considered and solutions were being sought along the lines of the engagement 'campaign' with students from the Republic of Ireland.

She noted that there was still a level of confusion amongst many guidance counsellors in Northern Ireland with regard to applying to Colleges in the Republic. An event had been held some weeks previously with guidance counsellors the aim of promoting Trinity and also improving the understanding of the CAO system.

The Senior Lecturer invited USC to approve the proposed extension of the Feasibility Study for a further year. She highlighted the ongoing effort needed to rebuild relationships with schools in the North if College was to facilitate the stated aim of admitting 300 students from Northern Ireland each year.

In response to a query, the Senior Lecturer advised that Trinity was currently not in a position to guarantee accommodation to applicants who received offers. The Committee noted how this disadvantaged Trinity when compared to UK universities and most other

Irish universities that provisionally provided accommodation alongside making offers. The Dean of Students reported that he chaired the Accommodation Steering Group and had been tasked with improving the accommodation situation for students. He outlined some of the difficulties that College faced in acquiring further student accommodation and referred to the constraints in the accommodation sector in Dublin. He hoped that it might become possible to offer accommodation earlier in the acceptance process.

The Committee approved the proposed extension of the Feasibility Study for one further year. The proposal will proceed to Council for approval.

USC/15-16/159 General Component in Scholarship Examinations 2015/16

A memorandum from the Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer, dated 17 May 2016 had been circulated. In the academic year 2015/16 all programmes were required to have a minimum of 25% of the overall Scholarship mark as a general component. This was alongside the requirement to obtain a majority of first class marks with remaining paper/s achieving a mark of 65% or above. Fifty candidates had been elected to Scholarship with an even split between women and men.

Following the completion of the Scholarship process in 2015/16, a survey had been sent to the Foundation Scholarship Representatives for each degree course. Amongst other topics, respondents were invited to comment on how the general paper/sections worked in their programme/s and how students had performed in these sections. The nature of the responses relating to the introduction of the general component was 21 positive, 5 negative and 31 neutral.

In response to a comment, the Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer clarified that the large reduction in the number of Scholarships awarded might be attributed to the rule relating to achieving 65% or above, rather than to the general component.

A discussion ensued with regard to a member's suggestion that College should consider merging the Scholarship examinations with the Semester 1 examination period, proposed within the context of the earlier discussion on the academic year structure. A number of members offered support for this suggestion and felt that it should be given full consideration. One suggestion was that end-of-semester examination papers could contain an extra section only for those students attempting the Scholarship examinations. The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer outlined that merging the Scholarship examinations had previously been discussed on a number of occasions, including during the Scholarship review in 2012, and the feedback was consistent that there should be a separate session for Scholarship examinations. It was also pointed out that not all programmes were assessed by means of examination and that Scholarship examinations assessed the work of the preceding 1.5 years whereas end-of-semester examinations tended to assess modules from one semester only. A member noted her concern with module-level assessments and felt that assessments should be on a whole-programme basis.

Members also discussed the nature of the Scholarship examinations with some members expressing support for the inclusion of coursework and a move away from written examinations. The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer acknowledged that a recommendation from the 2012 review had been to only include written examinations. The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer undertook to bring these points to the next meeting of the Central Scholarship Committee and also to flag the suggestion that Scholarship might be folded into the Semester 1 assessment period to Strand 2 of the Trinity Education Project.

USC/15-16/160 Return of Coursework Policy

A memorandum from the Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer, dated 17 May 2016 had been circulated. A policy on the return of coursework had been approved by Council in June 2014. The policy outlined that feedback on assessed work should be made available to students within 20 working days of submission at undergraduate level. In cases where the return of work within the 20 days was not possible or appropriate, lecturers should inform students in advance and provide an alternative date for feedback to be given.

Members were invited to provide comment on the implementation of the policy in their areas. The logistical difficulties facing lecturers with large class sizes were discussed. The many demands on staff time were acknowledged and members felt that it was often very difficult to meet the demands of both teaching and research. The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer acknowledged the often competing demands on academic staff and emphasised the importance of managing students' expectations at times when it was not possible to return feedback within the stated timeframe.

A member noted that in her School, students undertaking an Erasmus exchange in their Junior Sophister year had complained because visiting students had received their marks whereas Trinity students had not. This was because they were final marks and had to be considered as part of the end-of-year examination process. The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer confirmed that it was acceptable to give provisional marks if students requested them. This practice existed in other departments.

It was acknowledged that a small number of staff members were non-compliant with the policy and the Dean advised that these cases should be reported to the relevant Head of School. Students should report instances of non-compliance for which no explanation or alternative date was provided to course managers. Members were reminded that a question relating to feedback should be included in the student surveys. The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer acknowledged that more communication was necessary to raise awareness of the policy in College and reminded members that the policy should be included in all course handbooks. A member noted that students did not always avail of the feedback sessions provided and should be encouraged to do so.

USC/15-16/161 Study Abroad Provider Policy

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The Study Abroad Provider Policy was circulated together with a memorandum from the Vice-President for Global Relations, dated 18 May 2016. The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer welcomed Dr Julia Maher, Global Relations Office, to the meeting for this item.

Dr Maher explained that study abroad providers advised and facilitated students who were interested in enrolling in short-term study at universities abroad. These students enrolled in Trinity for a term or an academic year and could enrol directly, through a partner university, or through a study abroad provider. Providers guided students through the application process and also acted as pastoral caregivers.

The policy set out the framework for engagement with study abroad providers and students whose entry to Trinity was facilitated through providers. The policy was informed by the *'Code of practice for provision of programmes of education and training to international learners'* (QQI, 2015) which aimed to ensure that international learners received a high quality educational experience.

The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer noted that issues had arisen with

providers in the past and welcomed the introduction of the policy. USC approved the policy which would proceed to Council for approval.

USC/15-16/162 Any other business

a) The Students' Union Education Officer invited members to send her any information they wished to impart to students, for inclusion in a poster and also in SU diaries.

b) In response to a query, the Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer clarified that medical certificates should be submitted to course offices and to student cases in order to ensure a student is not returned as excluded from a programme.

c) A member sought clarification with regard to where responsibility lay for obtaining transcripts for returning Erasmus students. Difficulties in knowing which office to contact in this regard had led to delays in obtaining transcripts.

The Director of Student Services responded that she would endeavour to determine the responsibility for this. The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer noted that the issue would be revisited at USC in the first term of the coming academic year.

d) In response to a query, it was confirmed that feedback from student surveys was submitted to faculties via the Quality Report.

The Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer thanked members for all their work during the year and highlighted the high volume of work that had been achieved by the Committee. She extended good wishes and thanks to those Committee members who were stepping down at the end of the academic year, in particular the Senior Tutor and the Education Officer of the Students' Union.

USC/15-16/163 Minutes

USC noted the following minutes:

Royal Irish Academy of Music, Associated College Degrees Committee, draft minutes of 4 May 2016

USC/15-16/164 Items for noting

There were no items for noting.