



A meeting of the Undergraduate Studies Committee was held on 10 December 2019 at 2.15 pm in the Trinity Board Room, Trinity Business School Building.

Present: Professor Kevin Mitchell, Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies (*Chair*)
Professor Kevin O'Kelly, Dean of Students
Professor Aidan Seery, Senior Tutor
Professor Stephen Matterson, Director of TSM/Trinity Joint Honors
Professor Áine Kelly, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Science Education
Professor Brendan O'Connell, School of English
Professor Rachel Hoare, School of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies
Professor Breffni O'Rourke, School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences
Professor Elizabeth Nixon, School of Psychology
Professor Michael Wycherley, School of Social Sciences and Philosophy
Professor Stan Houston, School of Social Work and Social Policy
Professor Linda Hogan, School of Religion
Professor Jonathan Dukes, School of Computer Science and Statistics
Professor Nicola Marchetti, School of Engineering
Professor Frank Wellmer, School of Genetics and Microbiology
Professor Paschalis Karageorgis, School of Mathematics
Professor Mark Hennessy, School of Natural Sciences
Professor Paul Eastham, School of Physics
Professor Derek Sullivan, School of Dental Science
Professor John Walsh, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences
Ms Niamh McCay, Education Officer, Students' Union
Ms Zoe Cummins, Student Representative

Apologies: Ms Patricia Callaghan, Academic Secretary
Professor Norah Campbell, Trinity Business School
Professor Nicholas Johnson, School of Creative Arts
Professor Andrew Loxley, School of Education
Professor Peter Crooks, School of Histories and Humanities
Professor Ailbhe O'Neill, School of Law
Professor Aisling Dunne, School of Biochemistry and Immunology
Professor Eoin Scanlan, School of Chemistry
Professor Joe Harbison, School of Medicine
Professor Valerie Smith, School of Nursing and Midwifery

In attendance: Ms Sorcha De Brunner, Academic Affairs, Trinity Teaching & Learning; Ms Linda Darbey, Assistant Academic Secretary, Trinity Teaching & Learning; Dr Ciara O'Farrell, Head of Academic Practice; Professor Kevin Kelly (for Item USC/19-20/024).

USC/19-20/022 Minutes of the meeting of 19 November 2019

The minutes of the meeting of 19 November 2019 were approved, subject to the list of attendees being corrected to include Professor Nicola Marchetti.

USC/19-20/023 Matters arising

USC/19-20/018 The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate noted that discussions were ongoing with the Academic Registry in relation to including additional assessment and progression data into the Academic Registry's Annual Report.

USC/19-20/019 The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies noted that Council approved the articulation route for Engineering students from ICAS/Manipal University into the third year of the Engineering programme in Trinity at its meeting on 4 December 2019.

USC/19-20/024 **Module Mapping Tool**

A presentation from Professor Kevin Kelly, dated December 2019, was circulated. The Senior Lecturer prefaced this item by noting that a particular issue being reported by students is the difficulty caused by continuous assessment deadlines falling during the examination assessment weeks. Added to this, continuous assessment elements appear to be added to existing module assessment components rather than replacing examinations.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies welcomed Professor Kevin Kelly to the meeting. Professor Kelly spoke to the module mapping tool by way of his presentation, advising that development work is ongoing. The tool has been designed to help schools to map module activities such as lecture hours, tutorials, laboratories, assessment types and deadlines. The resulting data can be aggregated for each module to pinpoint busy weeks for students, to help estimate average workload hours and to show the breakdown of activities and their module weightings. The data can also be aggregated across the academic year to show peak busy times for students, to show the proportional breakdown of modes of module activities, to look at module activities and the number of assessments due in any particular week. Initial work has been carried out in relation to the mapping graduate attributes across modules.

Professor Kelly noted that it has been tested with the School of Religion during a workshop organised by CAPSL and will be trialled by the School of Computer Science and Statistics. A number of students in Engineering have also used the mapping tool and have reported on its usefulness, particularly for time management and the organisation of their work; they were less interested in accumulated graduate attributes. From these trials, he highlighted a recurring issue in schools in relation to being able estimate student workload hours, particularly independent study hours.

Providing some context to this development work, Professor Kelly explained that the project is being sponsored by the Academic Secretary and is being assisted by eight Master's level students. The first phase is coming to an end and the next will include the usability of the mapping tool, in terms of its look and feel, and software validation.

Professor Linda Hogan spoke of using the mapping tool at the School of Religion workshop, as mentioned. She highly recommended the module mapping tool, explaining that she and colleagues had found it illuminating to view assessment from a student's point of view.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies commented on an imbalance of workload between 5 ECTS and 10 ECTS modules noting that, in general, 5 ECTS modules appear to attract more than half the workload of 10 ECTS modules; he suggested that this tool should make module workloads more transparent. He also commented that exploring this application with different student groups would be beneficial to gain broad insights.

Members discussed the difficulty schools experience in trying to estimate realistic student workload hours; it was suggested that guidelines would be helpful along with longitudinal data derived from this tool. A member commented that this application could also be used to avoid the over-assessment by any one type of assessment method. Dr Ciara O'Farrell, Head of Academic Practice, advised that one of the key aspects of TEP's assessment framework was the implementation of a programme-level approach to assessment in order to avoid the over-reliance on specific methods and/or to avoid the over-assessment of any one learning outcome. In terms of this programme focus, a member queried if the tool

could be applied to joint honors combinations. Professor Kelly confirmed that in future it would be available to use by joint honors students.

Professor Kelly confirmed that the mapping tool should be ready for rollout to academic staff in September 2020 and that data derived from its use could be released to student services, such as the Trinity Disability Service and Student Counselling so that they have information on student deadlines.

Professor Kelly then gave a demonstration of the application and advised that integration with SITS is hoped for in the future. The Senior Lecturer confirmed that much of the data required for input into the tool should come from Module Manager in SITS.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies thanked Professor Kelly who then withdrew from the meeting.

USC/19-20/025 Partners in Learning Sub-group

A draft survey was circulated for discussion. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies brought the meeting through the proposed survey questions, which covered the broad areas of teaching and learning practices, approaches to teaching and learning and approaches to staff/student interactions. He noted that the questionnaire would be sent to schools in January. The following comments were made:

- a clearer distinction should be made between student feedback and student evaluation;
- some examples of student feedback should be provided to prompt responses;
- allowing schools to comment on the practices that work, and those which do not, would be informative;
- the survey should be sent to multi-disciplinary units which have their own teaching and learning committees, for example the Science Course Office.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies noted that responses would be sought during February. He commented that the implementation phase of TEP is due to end by September 2020 and that the information gathered from the survey would help to uncover barriers to student engagement and to inform further necessary cultural change.

USC/19-20/026 Any other business

i. Iveagh Fellowship Programme

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies referred to the memorandum from the Director of Careers, dated 9 December 2019, circulated just prior to the meeting. He noted that the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade had recently announced the Iveagh Fellowship Programme for 2020 and, as with last year, Directors of Teaching and Learning (UG) are requested to participate in the evaluation of student participants.

ii. RDS - Examinations Announcements

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies commented on examinations being held in the RDS and noted that there were still far too many announcements related to corrections. He urged members to ensure that robust quality control measures are in place to vet examinations papers in their schools.

iii. Open Modules Capacities

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies noted that schools will be asked to provide information on the total capacity available in open modules, rather than just the additional capacity, as had been sought previously. A member advised that this data collection method would be problematic for modules within BESS. It was noted that further consideration would be required in relation to this exercise.

USC/19-20/027 Minutes

USC noted the minutes of the Widening Participation Group's meeting of 3 October 2019.

USC/19-20/028 Items for noting

The following items were noted:

- i. New Minor Subjects being offered for 2020/21**
Memorandum from the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies,
dated 28 November 2019
- ii. Open Modules being offered for 2020/21**
Memorandum from the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies,
dated 28 November 2019
- iii. Bespoke Open Modules for 2020/21**
Memorandum from the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies,
dated 4 December 2019