

DRAFT MINUTES¹

Wednesday, 13 October 1999

at 2:00pm in AG 01

Minutes of the tenth meeting of the sixth statutory Academic Council held on 13 October 1999.

PRESENT:

A Pratt (Chairman)	J Carroll (Deputy Chairman)	D Bancroft
A Brady	E Buffet	P Burke
M Canning	E Cassidy	M Clynes
F Corcoran	E Cunningham	S Derby
L Davis	K Devenney	M Egan
B Flood	M Gannon	A N Glynn
J Horgan	J Hurley	P James
J Kerrane	P Kinsella	B Leavy
C Long	L Looney	T McCluskey
M MacConmara	K MacKeogh	L MacMathúna
B McMullin	B McNamara	D Madden
M Molony	A Morrissey	T Moynihan
G Murphy	S Ní Mhaolrúnaigh	D Ó Dúshláine
R O'Kennedy	O O'Reilly	M O'Sullivan
P Preston	A-M Ryan	J Ryan
R Saunders	P Sheehan	A Smeaton
M Smyth	M Townson	B Trench
D Walls	A Wickham	A D Wood

APOLOGIES:

M Brady	M Byrne	S Hashmi
M Henry	B Kehoe	E Kennedy
C McCorkell	B MacCraith	J Murray
C Nic Pháidín	E O'Halpin	H Ruskin

1. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

(Ref: AC99/M5/1)

The Agenda was adopted subject to the de-starring of item 6 (relating to membership of Academic Council) and the inclusion of some matters under 'any other business'. The Chairman welcomed the Registrar of Mater Dei, Dr Eoin Cassidy, and its Director of Studies, Sr Marcellina O'Sullivan, to their first meeting of Academic Council. The Registrar drew attention to and welcomed the various new members, at Head of School and Director level as well as some 16 new Chairpersons of Programme Boards and also the incoming Education Officer of the Students' Union, Mr Shane Derby. Members of Academic Council also welcomed the Director General to his first meeting as Chairman.

2. MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF ACADEMIC COUNCIL

a. MINUTES OF 9 JUNE 1999 MEETING OF ACADEMIC COUNCIL

(Ref: AC99/M5/2.1)

The minutes of the meeting of 9 June 1999 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

b. MINUTES OF 30 JUNE 1999 MEETING OF ACADEMIC COUNCIL

(Ref: AC99/M5/2.2)

The minutes of the meeting of 30 June 1999 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF ACADEMIC COUNCIL

(Ref: AC99/M5/3)

a. MARKS & STANDARDS 1999

(Ref: AC99/M3/7)

Academic Council noted the final version of the amended *Marks & Standards 1999* which will be effective in full from the 1999/2000 academic year.

b. EXAMINATION REGULATIONS

(Ref: AC99/M3/8)

Academic Council noted the final version of the amended *Examination Regulations* which include a number of important amendments relating to the appeals process.

c. REGULATIONS FOR POSTGRADUATE DEGREES BY RESEARCH & THESIS

(Ref: AC99/M3/9)

Academic Council noted the recently-amended version of the academic regulations for postgraduate degrees by research and thesis, including those relating to the role of the Registrar's Office in the application and registration procedures and the role of Faculty Research Boards in dealing with annual progress reports.

d. REQUEST BY BSc IN COMPUTER APPLICATIONS FOR A DEROGATION FROM THE SEMESTER CALENDAR

(Ref: AC99/M3/15.2)

Academic Council approved a request from the BSc in Computer Applications and BSc in Computational Linguistics Programme Boards for a derogation from the University's Semester Calendar for the next three academic years, namely 1999/2000, 2000/2001 and 2001/2002 respectively. The Chairperson of the Computer Applications (Day) Programme Board gave an undertaking to ensure that the final year of the programmes would conform to the semester calendar by the end of the three-year period in question.

e. TEACHING & LEARNING COMMITTEE

(Ref: AC99/M3/16.2)

Dr Barry McMullin, Dean of Teaching & Learning, advised the meeting of his work on the re-constitution of the University's Teaching & Learning Committee and his plans to bring forward a detailed proposal on organisation, membership and terms of reference to the 13 October 1999 meeting of Academic Council. In the meantime, he requested the advice and suggestions of colleagues in his formulation of this proposal.

f. PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

(Ref: AC99/M3/13)

Academic Council approved in principle a proposal from the Dean of Research to establish a Research Ethics Committee to

deal with ethical issues arising from research conducted within the University and research undertaken by individuals or groups associated with the University.

g. PROPOSAL FOR INSTITUTIONAL LINKAGE: MATER DEI

(Ref: AC99/M3/12)

Academic Council approved a proposal for Institutional Linkage with Mater Dei Institute of Education subject to a number of amendments in the text of the Agreement relating to research, academic freedom and ethos.

h. PROPOSAL FOR ACCREDITATION ARRANGEMENT: ALL HALLOWS

(Ref: AC99/M3/14)

Academic Council approved the establishment of an accreditation arrangement with All Hallows College for all its academic programmes and according to the terms of a Memorandum of Understanding between the University and All Hallows College which set out the arrangements for programme accreditation, student registration, appointment of external examiners, and university awards. The arrangement will apply to those students who commence programmes in All Hallows College in the academic years immediately following the date of signing of the agreement.

4. REPORTS FROM STANDING COMMITTEE OF ACADEMIC COUNCIL

a. MINUTES OF THE 3 JUNE 1999 MEETING

(Ref: AC99/M5/4.1)

Noted

b. MINUTES OF THE 8 JULY 1999 MEETING

(Ref: AC99/M5/4.2)

Noted

c. MINUTES OF THE 2 SEPTEMBER 1999 MEETING

(Ref: AC99/M5/4.3)

Noted

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF STANDING COMMITTEE

(Ref: AC99/M5/5)

Members of Academic Council are reminded that the endorsement of Academic Council is required in respect of recommendations and decisions made by Standing Committee. While this is normally achieved by adoption of the relevant minutes, it is important for Academic Council to note items of special significance contained within these minutes.

a. FACULTY/COMMITTEE/PROGRAMME BOARD MINUTES

(ref. AC-SC99/M7/4)

The Chairpersons of the relevant Programme Boards have been advised of the decisions of Standing Committee of Academic Council in respect of the specific issues raised in the minutes for consideration.

b. APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

(ref. AC-SC99/M7/5)

The Registrar reported that invitations had been issued to the various External Examiners recommended for appointment for Research Degrees and for Taught Programmes.

c. APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL & EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

(ref. AC-SC99/M7/8)

- It was agreed that members of Standing Committee would submit their views to the Registrar on the draft guidelines relating to internal examiners, the independent Chairperson and potential conflicts of interest in the appointment of External Examiners.
- It was further agreed that, with the assistance and cooperation of the Registrar and other members, Professor Brian MacCraith would bring forward proposals for the establishment of a Graduate Studies Office for the University.

6. CURRENT REGISTER OF ACADEMIC COUNCIL MEMBERS

(Ref: AC99/M5/6)

Academic Council noted the current membership with amendments to the titles of the listed Associate Professors and the inclusion of the ex

officio descriptor for the positions of both the Dean of Teaching & Learning and the Dean of Research.

7. REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM VALIDATION COMMITTEE

a. BNS IN NEPHROLOGY NURSING

(Ref: AC99/M5/7.1)

Academic Council approved the report from Validation Committee for the proposed BNS in Nephrology Nursing from the School of Nursing.

8. IEI ACCREDITATION: BEng IN TELECOMMUNICATIONS ENGINEERING

(Ref: AC99/M5/8)

Academic Council noted the 19 June 1999 decision by the Council of the Institution of Engineers of Ireland to provide accreditation to the University's BEng in Telecommunications Engineering until the period 30 June 2003 and subject to satisfactory progress on any recommendations made in the accreditation report.

9. APPOINTMENT OF ACCREDITATION BOARDS

(Ref: AC99/M5/9)

Academic Council approved the appointment of Accreditation Boards for the underlisted programmes at All Hallows College and Mater Dei Institute of Education:

a. ALL HALLOWS COLLEGE

i. BA IN THEOLOGY & PHILOSOPHY

& BA IN HUMANITIES: PASTORAL THEOLOGY

ii. GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN HUMANITIES: HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT

iii. MA IN PASTORAL LEADERSHIP

b. MATER DEI INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

i. BACHELOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

i. MA IN RELIGION & EDUCATION

& MA IN RELIGION & CULTURE

ii. GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN THEOLOGICAL STUDIES

iii. GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN SCHOOL CHAPLAINCY/PASTORAL CARE

iv. **GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN HEALTHCARE
CHAPLAINCY**

**10. APPROVAL OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM BOARDS OF
EXAMINERS FOLLOWING CONSIDERATION OF EXAMINATION
RESULTS - AUTUMN 1999**

(Ref: AC99/M5/10)

The Registrar reported that, following completion of the Autumn 1999 diet of examinations, the Progression & Award Boards had duly met and made recommendations in respect of each student who had presented for Examination. The results and recommendations were determined in accordance with existing academic regulations and were detailed on the broadsheets of results being tabled for approval. Following clarification on the action required by Academic Council, the recommendations of the Progression & Award Boards were formally approved and adopted.

11. TIMING OF SUMMER & AUTUMN EXAMINATION MEETINGS

(Ref: AC99/M5/11)

- The Registrar advised the meeting that, in recognition of the concerns raised by academic and administrative staff regarding the timing of the Progression & Award Board (PAB) meetings for the Summer and, most especially, the Autumn diet of examinations, it has been suggested that Autumn Council might re-visit the schedule for such meetings in the light of recent experiences.
- The most pressing concern relates to the elapsed times between (a) the marking of examination scripts and the Programme Board Examination Review Committee (PBERC) meetings and (b) the PBERC and the corresponding PAB meetings. The meeting was presented with a diagrammatic summary of the schedules for the 1999/2000 Summer and Autumn diet of examinations which were published in the academic calendar approved by Academic Council.
- In a covering memorandum, the Registrar suggested that, if the meeting schedules were to be revised, with a view to increasing the elapsed times in respect of (a) and (b) above, two separate suggestions (for Summer and Autumn) merit consideration, namely:
 - . to delay publication of the examination results for the Summer diet of examinations; and
 - i. to bring forward the start of the repeat examinations for the Autumn diet of examinations.
- Members of Academic Council indicated general support to restrict the involvement of external examiners to the award years of programmes and it was considered that such a change of practice would lead to a reduction in the volume of work which

they undertake and also the time pressure referred to in the documentation before the meeting.

- o The Chairman sought and received endorsement for the proposal to convene a special Committee to examine both the timing of examination meetings as well as the implications for the recommended change in external examining practice. With a planned reporting date of the 8 December 1999 meeting of Academic Council, it was further agreed that the membership of this Committee would consist of a Head of School (Professor Richard O'Kennedy), a Programme Board Chairperson (Professor Tony Moynihan), a Senior Faculty Administrative Assistant (Ms Gillian Barry), the Education Officer of the Student Union (Mr Shane Derby), and the Registrar as Chairperson.

12. REPORT FROM THE APPEALS BOARD (SUMMER 1999)

(Ref: AC99/M5/12)

Academic Council noted a report on the meeting of the Appeals Board which was held on 27-28 July 1999 to consider appeals arising from the Summer 1999 diet of examinations. The Appeals Board considered a total of 123 appeals, of which 18 were upheld and 105 were rejected, and the breakdown of appeals against grounds for appeal is summarised as follows:

	Grounds for Appeal						Total
	12.6 (a)	12.6 (b)	12.6 (c)	12.6 (d)	12.6 (e)	Other/Re- Check	
Appeal Upheld	8	2	0	1	2	5	18
Appeal Rejected	9	6	0	41	7	42	105
Total	17	8	0	42	9	47	123

13. RE-CONSTITUTION OF THE TEACHING & LEARNING COMMITTEE

(Ref: AC99/M5/13)

In introducing this item, Dr Barry McMullin reminded the meeting of his appointed to the position of Dean of Teaching & Learning for a three year period from February 1999. At the 9 June 1999 meeting of Academic Council, he undertook to consult as widely as possible with the University community, and to then present a detailed proposal for the reconstitution of the Teaching & Learning Committee at the first Academic Council meeting of the 1999/2000 academic year. During a

discussion which followed on the proposal presented to the meeting, some minor amendments were suggested and agreed and these included additions to the membership (the Registrar of Mater Dei, or his nominee, and a nomination from the Research Committee) and the inclusion, in the terms of reference, of some consideration of ways of overcoming barriers to the adoption of best practice in university teaching and learning. Academic Council approved the proposed re-constitution of the Teaching & Learning Committee, together with the amended details relating to membership and terms of reference.

14. ELIGIBILITY FOR THE POSITION OF DEAN OF FACULTY

(Ref: AC99/M5/14)

Academic Council was advised that there are currently two vacant Deanships, those of the Joint Faculty of Humanities and of the Faculty of Science and Paramedical Studies. Both Faculties have indicated that they wish to extend the eligibility for election, currently confined to Professors and Heads of School. As a consequence, the Chairman presented two proposals for consideration by Academic relating to Deanships of Faculties (with a rationale provided in each case):

- Proposal 1: That Professors and Senior Lecturers be eligible to serve as Deans of Faculty:

As part of the process of widening the involvement of staff in University governance, the proposal was introduced as a timely mechanism to extend the constituencies from which Deans of Faculty may be elected to include Professors and Senior Lecturers. To date, the latter group have been ruled ineligible for election. It was considered that there were many Senior Lecturers who were well capable of contributing with distinction in this capacity and who would in addition benefit significantly from the experience gained from holding such office.

- Proposal 2: That a Head of School may not in future stand for election as a Dean of Faculty:

It was stated that a Head of School has primary responsibility for the welfare and development of a specific School whereas a Dean is expected to behave even-handedly towards all the Heads and Schools within a Faculty. The nature of the post of Head is such that it requires a high concentration of effort in managing the affairs of an individual School, and the level of activity and responsibility involved leaves little time for discharging the additional responsibilities associated with being a Dean of Faculty. It was also suggested that there was in principle the possibility that conflicts of interest might arise between the requirements of the two posts.

Following a discussion, it was agreed that Proposal 2 be withdrawn and an amended Proposal 1:

``That all full-time, permanent members of the teaching staff be eligible to serve as Deans of Faculty''

was formally approved by Academic Council.

15. STUDENT UNION'S PROPOSED FRAMEWORK OF GOOD PRACTICE

(Ref: AC99/M5/15)

As a means of reducing student stress and enhancing the quality of the overall student learning environment, the Education Officer of the Student Union, Mr Shane Derby, introduced a proposal which identified principles of good practice in the areas of timetabling, assessment workloads, role of class representatives, the introduction of new modules, adequacy of class materials, office hours for informal consultations, orientation for first years, and web access to past examination papers. Members of Academic Council expressed support and enthusiasm for the general thrust of the proposal. In welcoming the proposal, the Dean of Teaching & Learning considered that it might be further enhanced and made more complete through the inclusion of details relating to the responsibilities and obligations of individual students. Academic Council agreed to the offer of support and assistance to the Student Union from the Dean of Teaching & Learning, through the Teaching & Learning Committee, and the Chairman recommended that a revised proposal be brought back to a future meeting of Academic Council following the appropriate consultations.

16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- **STUDENT MEMBERSHIP OF STANDING COMMITTEE**

(Ref: AC99/M5/16.1)

Academic Council approved a proposal that the student member of Standing Committee of Academic Council will in future be the Education Officer of the Students' Union. The proposal was submitted by the Students' Union in recognition of the importance of student participation in Standing Committee business and the relative difficulty for any full-time student to fulfil the regular monthly meeting commitments throughout the year. The Registrar paid tribute to the outgoing student member, Mr Diarmuid Ó'Dúshláine, and thanked him for his attendance and participation at Standing Committee meetings.

- **DIRECTORY OF TAUGHT PROGRAMMES 2000/01**

(Ref: AC99/M5/16.2)

Mr Mike Egan drew Academic Council's attention to a recently-published directory of the University's taught programmes for 2000/01. Copies were distributed during the meeting.

○ **ADULT & CONTINUING EDUCATION**

(Ref: AC99/M5/16.3)

Mr Mike Egan advised that a paper dealing with recent University developments in adult and continuing education would be presented to the 8 December 1999 meeting of Academic Council. The Registrar of St Patrick's College, Dr Liam MacMathúna, expressed the College's great interest in this area and requested that it be kept informed of developments in this regard.