

# ACADEMIC COUNCIL

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WEDNESDAY, 13 December 2000

AT 2:00 PM IN AG01

## PRESENT:

A Pratt (Chairperson)  
D Bancroft  
E Buffet  
J Carroll  
E Cassidy  
F Corcoran  
T Coulson  
E Cunningham  
J Dowling  
L Doyle  
M Drumm  
M Farren  
B Flood  
R Flynn  
D Gray  
G Hamilton  
M Henry  
J Horgan

J Hurley  
P James  
B Kehoe  
C Kenny  
P Kinsella  
C Long  
C Lynch  
K McKeogh  
L MacMathúna  
L McDermott  
C McDonagh  
P McGee  
B McMullin  
A Maillot  
M Marsh  
R Morgan  
A Morrissey  
T Moynihan

G Murphy  
J Murray  
C NicPháidín  
E O'Connell  
R O'Kennedy  
O O'Reilly  
C Petite  
B Richardson  
R Saunders  
M Shields  
A Smeaton  
W Tuke  
J Van Genabith  
R Verbruggen  
D Walls  
S Wickham  
A Wood

## APOLOGIES :

P Barker  
M Brady  
J Bruton  
M Clynes  
U deVries  
A Glynn  
S Hashmi  
L Looney

M MacConmara  
P MacNeela  
B McNamara  
S Marlow  
M Molony  
K Monks  
B O'Dwyer  
B Pierce

J Ryan  
A Scott  
P Sheehan  
A Sinnott  
F von Prondzynski  
A Wickham

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## 1. Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was adopted, subject to the inclusion of one matter under ‘any other business’.

## **2. Minutes of Meeting of Academic Council 11 October 2000**

The minutes of the meeting of 11 October 2000 were adopted and signed by the Chairperson

## **3. Matters arising from the minutes of Academic Council**

### **3.1 Analysis of Students Carrying Failed Modules**

This item was deferred until the next meeting of Academic Council.

### **3.2 Future of the Irish Language in DCU**

The Chairperson reported that the Resource Review Group did not have enough information on the tasks/job description of the proposed Irish Language Officer. The issue will be examined again at the RRG meeting of 9 January 2001.

### **3.3 Web-based Delivery of Programmes**

The Dean of Teaching and Learning reported back that work was still ongoing. Due to pressures of time the Group was unable to report back to this meeting, but will do so in due course. Details on the Group’s deliberations to date can be obtained informally from the Dean of Teaching and Learning.

### **3.4 Review Structures For Academic Management**

The Dean of Teaching and Learning spoke on the issue, and outlined the process of review undertaken to date. He noted in particular that the Working Group had endeavoured to consult widely with the Academic community in relation to its proposals but had received little response. Further, concerning the feedback that has been received, the most notable characteristic revealed is the lack of consensus that exists on the issue. Concerning the way forward for the process, the Dean of Teaching and Learning noted two key points:

- (i) The review has collided with the University’s strategic planning process. The original proposals will therefore need to be reviewed in the light of the new strategy.
- (ii) The terms of reference of the Group were originally too narrow. In particular, they did not ask any questions about Programme structures.

These need to be looked at in terms of flexibility, access and their modification through evolution.

Overall, then, the Working Group was unable to bring a concrete proposal to the meeting. It was agreed therefore that it should reconvene early in the New Year and examine its original proposals in the light of the Strategic Plan. It will also look at the broader question of Programme structures. In addition, it was also stressed that the Schools and the Faculties need to engage more with the process than hitherto, otherwise little progress will be made.

### **3.5 Workshops on meetings and Interviewing Skills**

Louise McDermott, Assistant Registrar (Academic Operations), spoke on behalf of the Registrar and reported that two workshops on meetings will have taken place by the end of December. An additional workshop will be arranged if there is sufficient demand. The workshops on Interviewing Skills are currently being arranged in conjunction with Personnel.

### **3.6 Role of Academic Council**

Louise McDermott, Assistant Registrar (Academic Operations), spoke to the paper on the Registrar's behalf. The main proposal, that a review of the structure of Academic Council be deferred until the outcome of the review of Academic Management is known, was adopted by Council.

The other proposal, that colleges such as All Hallows and The Royal Irish Academy of Music whose programmes are accredited by DCU should each have an observer seat on Academic Council, was also adopted.

It was also agreed that there should be representatives on Council from James Connolly Memorial Hospital and St Vincent's Hospital Fairview; and that the phrase 'teaching members of the Board' (within the third suggestion paragraph) should be amended to 'non ex-officio members of the Board'.

## **4. Minutes of Standing Committee of Academic Council**

### **4.1 Minutes of meeting of 5 October 2000**

Noted.

### **4.2 Minutes of meeting of 2 November 2000**

Noted.

## **5. Matters arising from Minutes of Standing Committee**

### **5.1 Application Process for applicants with disabilities (BA in Journalism)**

Patrick Kinsella spoke to the meeting to convey the position of the Programme Board, concerning the essay submitted by disabled and other direct entry applicants to BAJ. In essence, he argued that the essay sought from applicants was not intended as a hurdle or a criterion for selection. It is designed to help students and staff prepare for the interview and to provide material for conversation.

Council agreed that Patrick Kinsella should respond formally to Standing Committee and address the concerns it has raised.

## **6. Report and Recommendations From Progression and Award Boards**

Louise McDermott, Assistant Registrar (Academic Operations), spoke to the paper on the Registrar's behalf. The paper was adopted by Council with the following amendments:

*Section 2 Management of PABS, Point 10 on precision rules:* It was agreed that bullet point 2 should be amended, as the rounding up practice it advocates is not a standard practice throughout the University. The new wording should allow for the fact that a variety of practices, including the holding of oral examinations for borderline cases, exist within the different Faculties. It was also agreed that the word 'other' should be deleted from bullet point three.

## **7. Report From the Appeals Board (Autumn 2000)**

Academic Council noted a report of the Autumn 2000 Appeals Board for the Autumn 2000 diet of examinations. The Appeals Board considered a total of 58 appeals and rechecks of 24 were upheld and 34 rejected. It was noted that 21 of the 24 appeals upheld were made on the grounds that illness or other factors had adversely affected the students' performance. Council agreed that it would be a better practice if these difficulties were handled through the deferral process.

## **8. Request from Faculty of Distance Education for Adjustment to Academic Calendar 2000/2001**

The request to move back the PAB meetings to 8-11 January 2001, and the knock on changes to the dates for issuing of results etc were approved by Council.

## **9. Academic Calendar 2001/2002**

The Academic Calendar was approved with the following amendment: to remove the reading week scheduled for the week 29 October-Fri 2 November, as it was

considered to be too early in the Semester, there was a perception that no consultation had been undertaken in advance of the decision to insert one and there is no equivalent stipulation for Semester 2. If we are to have a reading week in 2001-2002, it will need to be tabled and discussed as a separate item at a future Council meeting. In addition, it was agreed that DCU should run their academic calendars by St Patrick's College, Drumcondra, Mater Dei and All Hallows to allow for proper synchronisation of schedules.

It was also suggested that the Registry should look at the issue of de-coupling the Graduation ceremonies from the Bank Holiday weekend, as this was now a popular holiday break period for many graduates and their families.

It was agreed that oral examinations in languages could take place during Reading Week between end of semester and examinations.

#### **10. Report on Targeted Funding for Special Initiatives**

The report was noted by Council.

#### **11. Proposed Structure of the Research Advisory Panels**

At the last meeting of Council it was decided to establish a high-level Research committee to formulate the University's wider research policy, but the decision on whether to adopt the Advisory Panels proposed by the Dean of Research was postponed until this meeting.

A vigorous debate on this outstanding issue took place amongst Council members. Concerns were strongly voiced by staff from the Faculty of Humanities that their disciplines would lose out in terms of research funding unless Humanities obtains its own Advisory Panel. Staff from the Faculty of Science spoke strongly in favour of having one Advisory Panel, for which each School and Centre could be requested to elect a representative.

Council voted 19-16 in favour of establishing one Advisory Panel. However, it was agreed that this decision would be reviewed after a year, to ensure that no group has been disadvantaged by it.

#### **12. Report on the North Dublin Access Programme**

Maeve O'Byrne, the Access Officer, spoke to the paper. Council noted and adopted the main proposal to consider Direct Entry applications from students from any school in the country who wish to apply under the Access initiative. The proposal was adopted subject to reviewing the quotas and ceiling at the next meeting of Academic Council.

**13. Proposal on Optional Wearing of Academic Robes at Conferring Ceremonies**

This item was deferred until the next meeting of Council.

**14. Schools Liaison Annual Report**

This item was deferred until the next meeting of Council.

**15. Reports and Recommendations from Validation Committee**

Academic Council noted the report from its Validation Committee in respect of the underwritten programmes. Programme Boards have been appointed and potential Accreditation Board members identified.

**15.1 MA/Graduate Diploma in Integrative Psychotherapy (proposed by Turning Point, championed at DCU by the School of Nursing, co-ordinated by Professor Anne Scott)**

**15.2 Masters in Religious Education (Primary) (proposed by Mater Dei, championed by Fr. Eoin Cassidy)**

**15.3 BSc in Nursing (proposed by School of Nursing, co-ordinated by Prof. Anne Scott)**

**15.4 Foundation Certificate in Computer Applications (proposed by Colaiste Ide, championed at DCU by the School of Computer Applications, co-ordinated by Dr Mike Scott)**

**16. AOB**

**16.1 Report on Open Day 2000**

This item was deferred until the next meeting.

**Date of Next Meeting:**

<b>Wednesday, 14 February 2001</b>
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Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson

Date: \_\_\_\_\_