ACADEMIC COUNCIL

MINUTES

Wednesday 10 December 2008

2.00-4.15 p.m. in AG01

PRESENT:

S Anglim	M Irwin-Bannon	G Murphy
S-J Belton	M Kelly	N Murphy
F Blin	E Kennedy	L Muzellec
O Bree	S Knowlton	M Nic Giolla Mhichíl
P Brereton	B Leavy	P O'Byrne
J Bruton	H Lechleiter	P Ó Flatharta
B Casey	B Le Juez	M Parkinson
J Costello	C Mac an Bhaird	P Preston
P Donnelly	B McConalogue	P Sheehan
J Doyle	L McDermott(Secretary)	A Sinnott
H Duncan	Á McGillicuddy	M Slowey (VPLI/Registrar)
S Hashmi	A McGrady	P Smith
M Henry	K MacKeogh	A Stover
T Hogan	P McMorrow	R Tobin
T Holohan	C Mac Murchaidh	F von Prondzynski (Chair)*
L Horan	P McNamara	B Walsh
L Hourihane	R Meehan	S Wickham
G Hughes	A Morrissey	J Williams
S Hurley	B Murphy	P Willis
S Ingle		

APOLOGIES:

C Brennan	P Flood	J McManis
E Buffet	S Fox	P Meleady
J Carroll	N Gathergood	M Munro
E Connolly	E Guilfoyle	A-G Olabi
E Conway	C Holland	B Pierce
J Dowling	J Hughes	A Scott
M Farren	T Leufer	M Shine Thompson
O Finlayson	C Loscher	M Smyth
B Flood	C McDonagh	A Wickham

* Professor E Kennedy chaired the meeting for Item 13.

IN ATTENDANCE:
A McKenna

1.   **Adoption of agenda**

        The agenda was adopted subject to the transfer of Item 13 from Section C to Section B.

A: **<u>Minutes and related issues</u>**

2.   **Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Council of 15 October 2008**

        The minutes were confirmed, subject to the deletion of the last sentence in Item 8.1, and signed by the Chair.

3.   **Matters arising**

        None.

4.   **Minutes of the meetings of the Education Committee of 1 October and 29 October 2008, and draft terms of reference**

        The minutes were <u>noted</u>. The terms of reference were <u>approved</u>. <u>Noted</u> that the details of the new procedures for validation of programme proposals (as outlined in the terms of reference) would be made available to members of staff shortly.

5.   **Minutes of the meeting of 2 October 2008 of the University Standards Committee**

        <u>Noted</u> and <u>approved</u>.

5.1   **Minutes of the meeting of 4 September 2008 of the Graduate Studies Board**

        <u>Noted</u> and <u>approved</u>.

6.   Minutes of the meeting of 16 October 2008 of the Learning Innovation Advisory Panel

Noted and approved.

7.   President's report

7.1   The Chair outlined the serious financial constraints facing the higher education sector, noting that the situation was likely to deteriorate further in 2009/10. Funding for research is to be affected in this context; while the call for submission of proposals under PRTLI Cycle 5 is expected to take place, no funding is likely to be released until 2011. The IUA is engaging in a series of measures aimed at meeting the challenges posed by reduced funding. A discussion took place about the measures that the university itself could take to raise awareness of the implications of the funding constraints, such as encouraging expressions of solidarity from the alumni community and working towards Seanad representation for alumni. The Chair stressed that, notwithstanding the fact that the university has no deficit, it would be very important to exercise significant financial restraint for the foreseeable future. He also urged the members of the Council to make every effort to engage in energy conservation, noting that this could lead to both environmental and financial benefits.

7.2   The Chair noted that the announcement in the 2008 Budget that the quality assurance functions of the IUQB would be transferred to a new organisation carried implications for the future direction of quality assurance both in the university and across the sector. He stressed the desirability of maintaining the positive values inherent in the current system.

7.3   The Chair noted that the Governing Authority had initiated the search process for a new President for the university once his own term of office comes to an end in mid 2010. The search committee will begin its work in early 2009. The membership of the committee includes (along with the Chancellor, three other members of the Governing Authority, one member of the Executive, the Director of Human Resources and an executive recruitment consultant) three elected members of the Academic Council. The Chair will shortly issue a call for nominations. All members of the Council are eligible for nomination.

B: Policy and strategy issues

8.   Strategic Plan 2009-2011: outline of strategic objectives

8.1   The Chair noted that, following consultation, eight key objectives had been drafted. These will be circulated for comment, and additional open meetings will take place to facilitate further participation by the university community. A final draft will be submitted to the meeting of the Academic Council of 11 February 2009 and the meeting of the Governing Authority on 12 February 2009. The end date for the new strategic plan was originally indicated as being 2011; this date is now being reconsidered. The plan will incorporate a vision statement and a statement of values; these will be circulated in draft form for comment. The Chair undertook to e-mail the members of the Council to ask if a special meeting of the Council was considered necessary so as to discuss the drafts in detail; if there is a consensus that such a meeting is required, it will be organised. Discussion of the plan will also incorporate discussion of the component strategies. Information on the implementation of the current strategic plan, *Leadership through Foresight*, will also be made available shortly.

8.2   Ms Aisling McKenna, Institutional Research and Analysis Officer, made a presentation on student numbers in the university on the basis of data available on 1 November 2008. A number of trends were noted, including increases in the numbers of postgraduate research students and non-standard entry students. Ms McKenna undertook to provide additional information to interested staff members upon request (e.g. an explanation of HEA funding models or more detailed breakdowns of student numbers). The Chair thanked Ms McKenna for her presentation, noting the relevance of trends in student numbers to strategic planning and the importance of maintaining vigilance in relation to possible decreases in future applications even in subject areas in which current student numbers are high.

9.   Dublin Region Higher Education Alliance

9.1   The Vice-President for Learning Innovation/Registrar noted that, while a significant proportion of the funding originally made available under SIF would still be forthcoming and would cover arrangements already entered into, cutbacks had none the less been made and these had necessitated prioritsation of the four strands identified in the original submission for funding. The two strands now to have priority are Enhancement of Learning and Graduate Education. The university will still participate in the work of the other two strands, Internationalisation and Widening Participation, but will not commit funds to them. The DRHEA (Dublin Region Higher Education Alliance), of which the university is a member, will itself need to engage in prioritisation as a result of the funding shortfall. It is also likely that SIF funding for a management information system in the university will now not be made available.

9.2   It is expected that the DRHEA will formally be launched in Spring 2009. The Chair noted that it had the potential to develop a wider remit than that encompassed by the current work on SIF-funded initiatives.

10.   **Report on the Academic Framework for Innovation**

10.1   Professor Martin Henry, Academic Director of the Academic Framework for Innovation, reported on progress in two major areas: the implementation of the National Framework of Qualifications and preparatory work towards the provision of increased flexibility of progression for students. The latter initiative will be underpinned by revised *Marks and Standards* which it is intended to submit for approval to the Academic Council in June 2009 following university-wide consultation.

10.2   Professor Henry paid tribute to all those who had participated in the recent, and comprehensive, review of programmes and rewriting of programme learning outcomes on the basis of the NQF. He noted that the final outcome of this process would be submitted for approval to the Academic Council at its meeting of 11 February 2009 and that preparatory work was under way for the next stage, which would involve the rewriting of all module learning outcomes and their alignment with programme learning outcomes. A database system to facilitate this work had been identified, and funding to buy it would be sought from the university. Noted that the ITS system could not facilitate this work. The Chair undertook to raise with the Executive the general issue of the fitness for purpose of ITS.

10.3   Professor Henry noted that, notwithstanding the significant progress made in relation to AFI implementation to date, some implementation deadlines had had to be adjusted in the light of the shortfall in funding.

10.4   The two documents submitted by Professor Henry, including the proposed principles to underpin the new *Marks and Standards*, were approved. The Chair, on behalf of the Council, thanked Professor Henry and all involved in the implementation of AFI.

11.   **Report from the Research Committee**

11.1   Professor Eugene Kennedy, Vice-President for Research, in presenting his report, paid tribute to all the members of the university community who had contributed to the significant successes achieved by the university in terms of attracting and utilising research funding. This statement was endorsed by the Chair on behalf of the Council. Professor Kennedy supplemented the information in the report by noting the following: the university has achieved considerable success in terms of CSET funding in proportion to its size; the recommendations of the review of research centres entitled

The Organisation and Governance of University-Designated Research Entities at DCU are now being implemented; the IUA intends to set up a national citation index; while new initiatives are being encouraged, it is none the less important to consolidate, and ensure continuity with, the successes of the past. He <u>noted</u> the difficulties caused by the current adverse economic situation, which had also been alluded to by the Chair (see Item 7.1 above), and encouraged colleagues to be proactive none the less in making submissions for such funding as might be available.

11.2   It was <u>noted</u> that the SFI STARS programme, discontinued at present, had been very successful in encouraging second-level Science teachers to engage in research.

13.   **Accreditation recommendation: Certificate in Operations and Technology Management** *(note: this item was transferred from Section C to Section B)*

<u>Approved</u> subject to agreement on a number of issues relating to the implementation of the National Framework of Qualifications. <u>Agreed</u> that a meeting of interested parties would take place as soon as possible to resolve the issues.

C: **<u>Items for formal approval/noting</u>**

12.   **Validation recommendation: BA in International Business and Languages (English + one other language – French/Spanish/German)**

<u>Approved.</u>

14.   **Report from Winter 2008 Examinations/Progression and Awards Boards**

<u>Approved.</u>

15.   **Reports from Appeals Boards: St Patrick's College and Mater Dei Institute of Education**

<u>Noted.</u>

16.   **End of term of office of the Vice-President for Learning Innovation and Registrar**

Professor Maria Slowey informed the members of the Academic Council that, as her term of office as Vice-President for Learning Innovation and Registrar would come to

an end in January 2009, this would be her last meeting of the Council which she would attend in that capacity. She expressed her gratitude to colleagues for their support and collaboration. The President thanked Professor Slowey for her work over the past five years.

Date of next meeting:

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Wednesday 11 February 2008
2.00 p.m. in AG01

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Signed: _____   Date: _____
              President