

## ACADEMIC COUNCIL

### MINUTES

Wednesday 11 February 2009

2.00-3.45 p.m. in AG01

#### PRESENT:

S Anglim	L Hourihane	R Munck
F Blin	G Hughes	M Munro
D Brabazon	J Hughes	G Murphy
O Bree	S Hurley	N Murphy
C Brennan	B Kelly	M Nic Giolla Mhichíl
P Brereton	S Knowlton	P Ó Flatharta
J Bruton	B Le Juez	A-G Olabi
J Burzlaff	C Mac an Bhaird	M Parkinson
E Connolly	B McConalogue	A Scott (Deputy President/Registrar)
E Conway	L McDermott (Secretary)	M Shine Thompson
E Diskin	C McDonagh	D Sinclair
P Donnelly	A McGrady	A Sinnott
J Dowling	K MacKeogh	M Smyth
J Doyle	J McManis	A Stover
B Flood	P McMorrow	R Tobin
S Fox	R Meehan	R Verbruggen
M Henry	P Meleady	F von Prondzynski (Chair) *
C Holland	A Morrissey	A Wickham
L Horan	J Morris	S Wickham

#### APOLOGIES:

S-J Belton	D Ging	B Murphy
S Blott	S Hashmi	L Muzellec
C Bohan	T Hogan	P O'Byrne
J Carroll	S Ingle	N O'Reilly
B Casey	M Irwin-Bannon	B Pierce
J Costello	M Kelly	P Sheehan
T Draper	B Leavy	C Stevenson
H Duncan	H Lechleiter	A Way
O Finlayson	Á McGillicuddy	P Willis
P Flood	C Mac Murchaidh	C Woods
N Gathergood	K Moran	

\* Professor A Scott chaired the meeting from Item 9 onwards.

**1. Adoption of agenda**

The agenda was adopted subject to the transfer of Item 12 from Section C to Section B and the inclusion of one submission under Item 14.

**A: Minutes and related issues**

**2. Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Council of 10 December 2008**

The minutes were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

**3. Matters arising**

- 3.1** The Chair noted that, following the end of the term of office of Professor Maria Slowey as Vice-President for Learning Innovation/Registrar and discussion by Executive and Governing Authority, Professor Anne Scott, Deputy President, had assumed the role of Registrar for a period of two years, and the post of Vice-President for Learning Innovation had been advertised internally, also for a period of two years. (Item 16)
- 3.2** The Deputy President/Registrar noted that the new arrangements for validation (involving the establishment of a Validation Subgroup of the Education Committee) would be outlined in a presentation to the Heads' Meeting of 26 February 2009 with a view to ensuring that knowledge of the new arrangements was available to Schools and Faculties. (Item 4)
- 3.3** The Chair noted that three members of the Academic Council had been identified as members of the search committee for a new President of the university from mid 2010. He undertook to let the members of the Council know the identity of the three people involved as soon as possible. (Item 7.3)
- 3.4** It was noted that there had been no new developments with regard to SIF funding, and it was not expected that such funding for a management information system would be made available. Noted also that the launch of the Dublin Region Higher Education Alliance is planned for mid March. (Items 9.1 and 9.2)

**3.5** The Chair noted that he intended to raise with Executive, at its meeting of 24 February 2009, the issue of the fitness for purpose of the ITS system. The Deputy President/Registrar noted that Budget Committee had highlighted to Executive the need to discuss this issue. (Item 10.2)

**3.6** It was noted, in relation to the Certificate in Operations and Technology Management, that agreement had been reached on the outstanding issues arising from the operationalisation of the National Framework of Qualifications and that the accreditation document had been rewritten accordingly. (Item 13)

**4. Minutes of the meeting of the Education Committee of 3 December 2008**

Noted. The Deputy President/Registrar noted that the issue of programme review had been the subject of two meetings of a working group of the Education Committee and that the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning/Education were now in the process of discussing it within Faculties with a view to making recommendations to the EC.

**5. Minutes of the meeting of the University Standards Committee of 4 December 2008**

Noted and approved.

**5.1 Minutes of the meeting of the Graduate Studies Board of 6 November 2008**

Noted and approved.

**6. Minutes of the meeting of the Learning Innovation Advisory Panel of 18 December 2008**

Noted and approved.

**7. President's report**

Covered under Item 8 below.

**B: Policy and strategy issues****8. Strategic Plan 2009-2011: final draft**

**8.1** In introducing the strategic plan, the Chair noted the rapidly-changing national and international context into which it would emerge. The main factors likely to influence developments are the very difficult economic climate, the recently-launched process to develop a new national strategy for higher education and increasing societal expectations in terms of efficiency in the higher education sector. The Chair's presentation ranged over a number of areas: the university's size and profile, its distinctiveness in terms of both the student experience and the range of disciplines available; the possible implications for universities, linked colleges including colleges of education, and institutes of technology of recommendations to be made in the context of the new national strategy; the advantages that might attach to maintaining and strengthening strategic alliances with other institutions; the possibility that, in future, individual institutions might be characterised by a focus primarily on third-level, or primarily on fourth-level, education.

**8.2** The Chair suggested that, notwithstanding the many challenges presented by the issues outlined in 8.1 above, the university now has an opportunity, by means of the strategic plan, to articulate its vision for the coming years.

**8.3** The Chair noted that it was intended shortly to hold a series of meetings for staff at which the issues could be discussed. The members of the Council are encouraged to get in touch with him with comments or queries on them.

**C: Items for formal approval/noting****9. Validation recommendation: BSc (Hons) in Aviation Management**

Approved.

**10. Faculty Awards Boards recommendations for March 2009 conferring**

Approved.

**11. Progression and Awards Boards recommendations for March 2009 conferring**

Noted that, as the Progression and Awards Boards were still in progress, the recommendations would be made available to the Council electronically on Friday 13 February 2009.

**12. Academic Calendar 2009/10**

**12.1** Approved subject to the removal of the outline dates for 2010/11 at the end of the document, as these will now be the subject of discussion (see 12.2 below).

**12.2** Agreed that a small group, including though not confined to the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning/Education, would examine a number of issues relating to the calendar (with effect from the 2010/11 calendar) and would make recommendations to the meeting of the Academic Council of 8 April 2009. The group will take as the basis for its discussions: (a) feedback on timetabling issues which the Associate Deans have collected from the Faculties; (b) additional feedback to be made available by the Registry; (c) a number of issues proposed as meriting consideration: the structure of the academic year, with particular reference to the articulation between the semester dates and Easter; the possibility of having the examination timetable available before rather than after registration; the importance of ensuring adequate marking time between the end of examinations and the Programme Board Examination Review Committees/Progression and Awards Boards; the possibility of streamlining practices in relation to reading week; the importance of ensuring that issues relating to postgraduate students are factored into the timetable equally with issues relating to undergraduate students.

**13. Report on INTRA activities 2008**

Noted.

**14. Any other business**

**14.1** The Deputy President/Registrar brought to the attention of the Council an exercise in which Programme Chairs or equivalents will, where appropriate, need to engage, through standard Faculty approval procedures which will be co-ordinated by the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning, and which is aimed at ensuring that there is clarity in relation to the procedures for dealing with failed modules and repeat marks for overall grade classification purposes in 2008/09. The outcome of the exercise will be reported to the Academic Council at its meeting of 8 April 2009.

**14.2** The Deputy President/Registrar noted the importance of ensuring that the revised *Marks and Standards*, which are currently being prepared, allow for flexibility of application only within commonly agreed and strictly defined limits, and urged the members of the Council to engage in relevant discussions on the issue at Programme, School and Faculty level to ensure that the widest possible range of opinion was factored into the preparatory work.

**Date of next meeting:**

**Wednesday 8 April 2009  
2.00 p.m. in AG01**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
President

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