# ACADEMIC COUNCIL

## MINUTES

Wednesday 11 June 2008

2.00-3.50 p.m. in AG01

**PRESENT:**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| F Blin | M Irwin-Bannon | N Murphy |
| D Brabazon | E Kennedy | M Nic Giolla Mhichíl |
| P Brereton | H Lechleiter | P O'Byrne |
| J Bruton | B Le Juez | P Ó Flatharta |
| J Connolly | C Mac an Bhaird | N O'Reilly |
| J Costello | N McClave | R Scaife |
| O Finlayson | L McDermott (Secretary) | A Scott |
| B Flood | A McGrady | P Sheehan |
| S Fox | K MacKeogh | A Simon |
| S Hashmi | P McMorrow | A Sinnott |
| H Hayes | B Murphy | M Slowey (VPLI/Registrar) |
| M Henry | P Meleady | P Smith |
| C Holland | R Munck | F von Prondzynski (Chair) |
| L Hourihane | G Murphy | P Willis |

**APOLOGIES:**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| C Bohan | E Guilfoyle | O O'Reilly |
| O Bree | T Hogan | B Pierce |
| E Buffet | J Hughes | H Ruskin |
| P Burke | S Ingle | R Saunders |
| J Carroll | S Knowlton | M Shine Thompson |
| E Conway | C McDonagh | C Stevenson |
| M Drumm | P McDonagh | R Tobin |
| M Farren | C Mac Murchaidh | R Verbruggen |
| N Gathergood | R Morgan | A Way |
| D Ging | | |

**IN ATTENDANCE:**
S Hurley
C Jameson


 1.     **Adoption of agenda**

        The agenda was adopted.


**A:       Minutes and related issues**

2.      **Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Council of 9 April 2008**

        The minutes were confirmed and signed by the Chair.


3.      **Matters arising**

        The Chair noted that the call for submissions for funding under PRTLI Cycle V was
        awaited and that some uncertainty prevailed over the likely timescale.  He and
        Professor Kennedy, Vice-President for Research, noted that, notwithstanding the
        uncertainty, preparatory work was in progress.  (Item 7.1)


4.      **Minutes of the meetings of the Academic Strategy Committee of 17 April 2008
        and 7 May 2008**

        Noted.


5.      **Minutes of the meeting of the University Standards Committee of
        3 April 2008**

5.1     Noted and approved.


5.2     **Minutes of the meeting of the Graduate Studies Board of 1 May 2008**

        Noted and approved.  Noted that the GSB had had a successful first year of operation.
        The Chair congratulated Professor Murphy for his work in this regard.

**6.**     **Minutes of the meeting of the Learning Innovation Advisory Panel of
           17 April 2008**

           Noted and approved.


**7.**     **President's report**

**7.1**    The Chair described the opening of the *DCU in the Community Initiative* centre in
           Ballymun, on the morning of 11 June, as having been very successful and well
           attended, and invited those members of the Council who had not had an opportunity to
           attend to visit the centre on a future occasion.  He expressed appreciation, on behalf of
           the Council, to Professor Ronaldo Munck, Theme Leader for Internationalisation,
           Interculturalism and Social Development, and all others involved in the setting up of
           the centre.

**7.2**    The Chair advised the Council that it was likely that the economic climate for higher
           education would be difficult in the coming years.  The Deputy President, Professor
           Anne Scott, urged all the members of the Council to bear in mind that each staff
           member had a responsibility to maintain awareness of economic realities and to take
           account of them in carrying out their work on behalf of the university.


**B:**     **Policy and strategy issues**

**8.**     **Strategy implementation**

           The Chair noted that the new strategic plan, for implementation from early 2009,
           would shortly be developed and that it was proposed to request the Governing
           Authority to conduct initial debate and analysis.  This would be followed by a series of
           internal processes (deliberately designed to be more streamlined than those which had
           been involved in the preparation of *Leadership through Foresight*).  The draft plan
           would form a major item on the agenda of the meeting of the Academic Council of
           15 October 2008 and would be submitted to the Governing Authority for final approval
           in December 2008.


**9.**     **Strategic Innovation Funding**

           The Vice-President for Learning Innovation/Registrar, Professor Maria Slowey,
           summarised the development to date of the DRHEA (Dublin Region Higher Education
           Alliance), noting that the university was active in all four strands of activity overseen
           by this group and would be a significant contributor to the DCAD (Dublin Centre for

Academic Development), established on a virtual basis to further a number of DRHEA projects, including the likely shared provision of a postgraduate programme in teaching in higher education.  She noted that funding would be available for a number of fellowships across different areas funded under SIF.  She also congratulated Mr Niall McClave, Humanities Faculty Convenor in the Students' Union and incoming President of the Union, on having been selected to represent the students of all the DRHEA institutions on the management board of the DRHEA.

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

**10.1**    Professor Martin Henry, Academic Director of the Academic Framework for Innovation, made a presentation on current and planned developments with regard to the Framework, and expressed his appreciation of the very significant work done by the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning/Education and a number of other colleagues in relation to it.  Among recent and planned activities are the Learning Outcomes week (the week beginning 28 April 2008) and the Learning Outcomes clinics, which will take place monthly over the Summer and weekly thereafter.

**10.2**    It was noted that, notwithstanding the importance of SIF funding for the AFI, SIF-funded activity was not synonymous with the AFI but covered a significantly wider range of activities.

**10.3**    Concern was expressed at the fact that the information on the SIF funding for IT infrastructural developments had not yet been finalised.  It was agreed that it would be important to define the nature and scope of SIF-related IT developments as soon as possible.

**11.       Presentation on the Foresight exercise**

Professor Ronaldo Munck made a presentation, entitled *Managing our Destiny in Uncertain Times*, on the Foresight exercise.  The Chair related this exercise to the ongoing strategic development activity, noting that the information gleaned from the exercise enabled the university to situate this development activity in a much more future-oriented context than would otherwise be the case.  Professor Kennedy noted that targeted staff recruitment was another significant means of creating and building upon distinctive strengths and obtaining external funding.  It was noted also that the activities of the DRHEA would be factored in to the next stage of analysis within the Foresight exercise.

**12.      Proposal on the implementation of anonymous marking**

The proposal was <u>approved</u> subject to amendments to the form to be used to record instances where the sealed flap on an examination answer booklet was opened.  It was <u>noted</u> that the proposed date of implementation was 1 September 2008 but that this was subject to the resolution of a small number of technical matters and that the implementation group would confirm the implementation date to the Council once it was known.

**13.      Presentation from the Director of Quality Promotion**

**13.1**   Dr Heinz Lechleiter, Director of Quality Promotion, made a presentation on current issues in the area, focusing on four: targeted projects funded by Quality Improvement funding; common themes emerging from reviews of Schools; outcomes from the student forum on quality which had been established; the recent thematic review of the first-year and beginning student experience.  With regard to the last-named issue, he expressed his appreciation of the work done by Dr Claire Bohan and Dr Sarah Ingle in co-ordinating a very complex project, and <u>noted</u> that discussion would take place about the best means of sharing information about the areas of good practice that had been identified.  The Chair endorsed his appreciation of the preparatory work, and it was <u>noted</u> that the self-assessment report, though not to be published, would be made available on request to individual members of the Council.

**13.2**   The VPLI/Registrar <u>noted</u> that Student Affairs was undertaking developmental work with regard to the personal tutor system, that developmental work with regard to the provision of academic advice would be undertaken in the context of AFI development and that the Learning Innovation Unit provided a series of courses on bringing about improvements in teaching.  She encouraged the members of the Council to consider attending the *International First Year Experience* conference in University College Dublin in late June 2008.  Professor Hashmi <u>noted</u> that, in the School of Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering, academic staff were required to spend one hour per week on personal tutor activities in lieu of teaching.

**14.      Report and presentation on Graduate Research Training**

**14.1**   Professor Gary Murphy, Director of Graduate Research, made a presentation on graduate research training.  It was <u>noted</u> that having a structured training programme in place would be timely in view of the forthcoming review of structured PhD provision

to be carried out by the HEA, and that it was intended that a similar structure would be set up in all universities.

**14.2** The following was <u>approved</u>: the proposals in the report, including the proposal for a credit-based PhD system; the proposal that shared graduate initiatives in which DCU is either a leading or an active participant be termed 'Graduate Research Programmes', to be submitted for approval, as required, to the Graduate Studies Board (and thereby to the University Standards Committee and the Academic Council).

**14.3** It was <u>noted</u> that the second of the two items approved under 14.2 above should be incorporated into the proposal documentation and that the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences preferred the term 'education' to the term 'training' to describe the activities referred to in the documentation.

**14.4** The Chair, on behalf of the Council, thanked Professor Murphy for his work on the development of the proposals.

## 15. Report on the Uaneen module

**15.1** Dr Françoise Blin, on behalf of the Extra-Curricular Committee, reported on a number of issues related to the Uaneen module: the staff activities associated with it are currently undertaken on an entirely voluntary basis; no funding is currently available for it; the learning outcomes associated with it need to be aligned with NFQ learning outcomes, and decisions will then need to be taken on which modules should, and should not, be deemed to be contributory modules to awards; most students taking the Uaneen module currently come from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, and it would be desirable to have increased participation from other Faculties.

**15.2** The Chair advised Dr Blin and her colleagues to consider submitting proposals on the financial issues associated with the Uaneen module to Budget Committee and Executive, and the Deputy President <u>noted</u> that Budget Committee had already undertaken discussions about these issues. She also <u>noted</u> that Student Affairs was reviewing the management arrangements for the module.

## C: Items for formal approval/noting

## 16. Validation recommendations:

### 16.1 Addition of Chinese as a language option on the BA in International Business and Languages

<u>Approved.</u>

**16.2    Undergraduate Certificate in Operations and Technology Management**

Approved.


**17.      Accreditation recommendations:**

**17.1    MSc in Computational Science and Complex Systems**

Approved.

**17.2    Graduate Diploma in Counselling and Psychotherapeutic Practice
           Master's and Doctorate in Psychotherapy**

Approved.

**17.3    Graduate Diploma/MSc in Psycho-oncology**

Approved.


**18.      New and outgoing Deputy Presidents of the Students' Union**

On behalf of the Council, the Chair thanked Ms Hazel Hayes, outgoing Deputy
President of the Students' Union, for her significant contribution to the work of the
Council during her year in office, and welcomed her successor, Ms Susan Hurley.
Ms Hayes expressed her appreciation to the Chair and the other members of the
Council for having contributed to making her year in office a stimulating and enjoyable
one.

**Date of next meeting:**

**Monday 23 June 2008**
**2.00 p.m. in AG01**

Signed: _____          Date: _____
                    President