

ACADEMIC COUNCIL

MINUTES

Wednesday 12 December 2007

2.00-4.00 p.m. in AG01

PRESENT:

J Appleby
C Bohan
D Brabazon
M Brady
O Bree
P Brereton
J Bruton
E Buffet
J Carroll
J Connolly
J Costello
M Farren
B Flood
S Fox
N Gathergood
J Geraghty
S Grimes
E Guilfoyle
S Hashmi
H Hayes
M Henry
T Hogan
C Holland
T Holohan

L Hourihane
G Hughes
S Ingle
M Irwin-Bannon
S Knowlton
B Leavy
H Lechleiter
B Le Juez
C Mac an Bhaird
N McClave
L McDermott (Secretary)
C McDonagh
K MacKeogh
P McMorrow
B Murphy
P Meleady
M Molony
K Moran
C Mulcahy
G Murphy
N Murphy
M Nic Giolla Mhichíl
E O'Connell
P O'Connor

P Ó Flatharta
J O'Hara
O O'Reilly
E O'Riordan
J O'Sullivan
M Parkinson
P Preston
H Ruskin
R Saunders
R Scaife
A Scott
P Sheehan
M Shine Thompson
A Simon
A Sinnott
M Slowey (VPLI/Registrar)
P Smith
J Stokes
R Tobin
B Tolan
R Verbruggen
F von Prondzynski (Chair)
C Woods

APOLOGIES:

F Blin	B Kelly	B Pierce
S Blott	E Kennedy	T Ryan
E Conway	P McDonagh	M Smyth
M Drumm	A McGrady	C Stevenson
O Finlayson	C Mac Murchaidh	R Walshe
D Ging	P O'Byrne	A Way
D Gray	N O'Reilly	P Willis
J Hughes		

The Chair proposed that Professor Martin Henry be co-opted as a member of the Academic Council in his new capacity as Academic Project Leader for the Academic Framework for Innovation. This was approved.

1. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted. It was agreed that Item 13 would be the subject of discussion before any decision about the proposals contained in it was made.

A: Minutes and related issues**2. Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Council of 10 October 2007**

The minutes were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

3. Matters arising

3.1 The Chair noted that it was expected that the outcome of the current submission for funding under the Strategic Innovation Fund would be made known by the end of the calendar year 2007. The Chair also noted that the submission would be made available on line for all staff. (Item 8)

3.2 The Chair noted that an *aegrotat* degree of MSc in Work and Organisational Psychology had been awarded to a student on 6 November 2007. (Item 11)

4. Minutes of the meetings of the Academic Strategy Committee of 3 October and 7 November 2007

Noted.

5. Minutes of the meeting of the University Standards Committee of 4 October 2007

5.1 Noted and approved.

5.2 Noted that adjustments had been made to the ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) grades as indicated, per module, on transcripts, to reflect the changes to marks bands approved by the Council at its meeting of 18 April 2007, and that these changes would be reflected on transcripts issued from the end of Semester 1 2007/08. (Item 6)

5.3 Minutes of the meeting of the Graduate Studies Board of 1 November 2007

Noted and approved.

6. President's report

6.1 The Chair reported on the university's likely financial situation into the foreseeable future, following the publication of the Budget and Book of Estimates on 5 December 2007, and urged all members of the Council to note that financial restraint, and continuing efforts to obtain income for the university from new sources, would be features of the coming years. The Chair also noted that, once the current funding allocation for the university was known precisely, he would convey it to Council with a view to further discussion.

6.2 The Chair reported that the university had been successful in obtaining funding from Science Foundation Ireland to set up a new CSET (Centre for Science, Engineering and Technology) in localisation technology. He congratulated Professor Josef van Genabith, who had co-ordinated the submission for funding, and those who had worked with him on it, and undertook to write to them to express the Council's appreciation of their achievement.

B: Policy and strategy issues**7. Academic Framework for Innovation**

7.1 Professor Martin Henry made a presentation on the implementation plans for the AFI, noting that the extent of change which it would be possible to implement under it would be significantly determined by the level of SIF funding to be made available and decisions of the HEA in relation to the funding of students who take fewer than 60 credits per year.

- 7.2 Noted that Professor Henry and Professor Slowey were in the process of holding meetings with each Faculty to ensure that the consultation process was as wide as possible at this stage of the planning for the AFI.
- 7.3 Noted that an AFI Steering Group had been established and that it had in turn set up project teams to formulate recommendations, in the context of the AFI, in the following areas: learning outcomes; marks and standards; infrastructural issues; funding models.
- 7.4 Noted that training for staff in relation to the changes to be brought about by the AFI (including training in the writing of learning outcomes so that they clearly outlined what was to be expected of students while not being seen to be exhaustive in terms of the totality of what students might learn) would be a crucial part of the planning process and that, as far as possible, existing expertise from both within and outside the university would be utilised to the full in this regard.
- 7.5 The Chair thanked Professor Henry and his colleagues for their work to date on the implementation of the AFI and noted that the Council looked forward to contributing to this work over the lifetime of the project.

8. Report on anonymous marking

- 8.1 During a discussion on whether or not anonymous marking should be adopted, as a matter of principle, for all formal written examinations in the university, the following points were made:
- it is recognised that the effects of anonymous marking can be applied to formal written examinations only and that there are many additional or alternative forms of assessment to which it cannot be applied
 - any expressions of concern about possible bias are intended to be general expressions, not aimed at any particular individuals or groups
 - there is unease about the ease of use, and reliability, of the system already in use to apply anonymous marking to pilot groups
 - it would be important to ensure that any form of anonymous marking which might be used would not oblige students with a disability to disclose this disability to an extent greater than they wished
 - it would be important to ensure that any form of anonymous marking which might be used would enable academic staff, once marking has been completed, to view and be in a position to take responsibility for the full range of marks per module for any student, including the final module mark and its composition
 - it would be important to take the specific issues relating to Oscail into account in the implementation of any form of anonymous marking

- the area of anonymous marking is known to be an under-researched one globally; consideration might be given to encouraging interested parties within the university to conduct further research into it.

8.2 Following a vote, it was agreed that, as a matter of principle, anonymous marking should be applied to all formal written examinations in the university.

8.3 It was agreed that, notwithstanding the decision noted at 8.2 above, anonymous marking should be applied only provided the system used was both straightforward from a user point of view and reliable in terms of accuracy of results. It was agreed that a proposal on the system to be used would be submitted to a future meeting of the Council.

C: Items for formal approval/noting

9. Validation recommendation:

MA in International Communication and MA in International Journalism Studies

Approved.

10. Accreditation recommendations:

10.1 BSc in Financial / Applicable Mathematics

Approved.

10.2 Bachelor of Arts programme, All Hallows College

Approved.

10.3 Graduate Diploma/MSc in Operations and Technology Management

Approved.

10.4 Higher Diploma in Psychiatric/Mental Health Nursing

Approved.

**10.5 Inservice Certificate/Diploma in Education (Special/Inclusive Education),
St Patrick's College**

Approved.

11. Report on programme review: Graduate Diploma/MA in Social Justice and Public Policy, All Hallows College

Approved.

12. Report from Winter 2007 Examinations/Progression and Awards Boards

Noted and approved.

13. Appeals Board regulation 14.6(d)

Agreed that this regulation should be changed with a view to making it easier to understand than it is at present and that the new wording should be as follows:

‘There was a substantial error of judgement on the part of the Examiners.’

14. Reports from Appeals Board meeting of 5 October 2007

Noted.

15. Report from 2007 Appeals Board meetings, St Patrick’s College

Noted.

16. Report from Disciplinary Appeals Committee meeting of 22 October 2007

Noted.

17. Any other business

None.

Date of next meeting:

**Wednesday 13 February 2008
2.00 p.m. in AG01**

Signed: _____
President

Date: _____