

# ACADEMIC COUNCIL

## MINUTES

Wednesday 13 June 2007

2.00-3.55 p.m. in AG01

### PRESENT:

F Blin	H Lechleiter	N O'Reilly
M Brady	C Mac an Bhaird	O O'Reilly
E Buffet	M Mac Conmara	V Poti
E Byrne	L McDermott (Secretary)	H Ruskin
J Connolly	C McDonagh	R Scaife
J Costello	Á McGillicuddy	A Scott
J Doyle	G McGuinness	A Simon
O Finlayson	K MacKeogh	A Sinnott
B Flood	P McMorrow	M Slowey (VPLI/Registrar)
R Forster	P Meleady	P Smith
S Fox	M Molony	M Smyth
N Gathergood	K Moran	R Tobin
D Ging	A Morrissey	B Tolan
E Guilfoyle	R Munck	B Trench
M Henry	G Murphy	F von Prondzynski (Chair)
E Kennedy	M Nic Giolla Mhichíl	A Wickham
H Lechleiter	P Ó Flatharta	C Woods

### APOLOGIES:

O Bree	M Irwin-Bannon	T Ryan
P Burke	A McGrady	R Saunders
M Byrne	C Mac Murchaidh	P Sheehan
S Conaghan	R Morgan	M Shine Thompson
M Drumm	E O'Connell	R Verbruggen
H Duncan	B Paull	R Walshe
T Hogan	B Pierce	A Way
J Hughes		

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

P Barker

H Hayes

**1. Adoption of agenda**

The agenda was adopted subject to the deletion of Item 11 and the renumbering of all subsequent items.

**A: Minutes and related issues****2. Minutes of the meeting of Academic Council of 18 April 2007**

The minutes were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

**3. Matters arising**

- 3.1** Noted that the Chair would shortly arrange for the members of Council to be contacted with a request for nominations to the new working group to be set up to discuss the desirability or otherwise of anonymous marking, and that the recommendations of this working group would be submitted to the 10 October 2007 meeting of Council. (Item 3.1)
- 3.2** Professor Eugene Kennedy reported on the ongoing selection process under the current round of funding in the context of PRTLTI (Programme for Research in Third-level Institutions), noting that it was likely to be very competitive. All Faculties in the University are involved in submissions. Site visits to institutions which have made submissions are in progress at the moment. The Chair thanked Professor Kennedy and his colleagues in the Office of the Vice-President for Research for the very significant work they had carried out in supporting the University's submission. (Item 7.1)
- 3.3** Noted that a policy statement in relation to the decision-making processes used by the Disciplinary Committee would be submitted to the Academic Strategy Committee and subsequently to Council. (Item 11)

**4. Minutes of the meetings of the Academic Strategy Committee of 2 May and 23 May 2007**

Noted. The Chair noted that discussions were in progress about further developing the potential of the Academic Strategy Committee to engage in the shaping of the University's strategic priorities.

**5. Minutes of the meeting of the University Standards Committee of 22 March 2007**

Approved.

**6. Minutes of the meeting of the Learning Innovation Advisory Panel of 8 May 2007**

Approved.

**7. President's report**

**7.1** The Chair reported that the Irish Universities Association, through the seven University Presidents, had made a submission to the Taoiseach requesting that the incoming Government prioritise the needs of higher education, including funding needs, with particular reference to recurrent funding.

**7.2** The Chair stated that he would shortly communicate with University staff about an ongoing human resources case.

**B: Policy and strategy issues**

**8. Strategy implementation**

The Chair stated that the targets set out in *Leadership through Foresight* were largely being met and that Mr Gordon McConnell would present a detailed progress report to Council at its meeting of 10 October 2007. It will soon become necessary to start giving consideration to the next strategic plan, i.e. the successor to *Leadership through Foresight*.

## **9. Strategic Innovation Fund**

The VPLI/Registrar stated that the call for submissions under the second round of the SIF was expected over the Summer months and that two types of submission, sectoral and institutional, would be involved. The University's discussions in relation to sectoral submissions have centered around capacity-building, infrastructure and collaboration in teaching and learning. A significant number of responses had been received to the call issued within the University for submissions under institutional funding; these will need to be consolidated into a very small number of strategically-focussed submissions.

## **10. Proposal on Academic Framework for Innovation**

**10.1** The VPLI/Registrar stated that a formal proposal on this issue was nearing completion and would be submitted to Council for consideration at its meeting of 25 June 2007. Prior to this, further consultation would take place with both a wider group of staff and the Students' Union.

**10.2** In response to concern expressed about the timing of this proposal, the Chair stated that he would e-mail the members of Council to emphasise the crucial importance of the issue and encourage full participation in the discussion.

## **11. Proposal on Graduate Studies**

**11.1** Dr Gary Murphy, Director of Graduate Research, made a presentation on current proposals relating to graduate studies. Issues raised in the subsequent discussion included the following:

- practice in terms of attributing credits to PhD programmes varies across higher education in Ireland
- it will be important to distinguish between ECTS credits and ECTS-*type* credits
- it will be important to ensure continuing good practice with regard to procedures for progressing research students while avoiding administrative overload
- the ways in which students can participate in contributory activities (such as tutoring or making presentations at conferences) vary across Faculties and disciplines
- cognisance needs to be taken, on an ongoing basis, of the basis on which funding agencies will support research students.

**11.2** It was agreed, as a matter of principle, to establish a credit-based PhD system. Further discussion will need to be devoted to the precise way in which the system will work.

- 11.3** It was agreed to establish a Graduate School Board (or similar title), chaired by Dr Murphy, to discuss and make recommendations on both broad issues relating to graduate studies and a range of specific issues to do with individual students (specifically, the issues currently handled by the University Standards Committee).
- 11.4** It was agreed that further discussions would take place about the proposal to create Doctoral Review Committees, and that no decision would be taken on the matter pending these discussions.

**12. Report from Extra-curricular Awards Committee**

Professor Patricia Barker reported on the operation of the Uaneen Module in 2006/2007, noting the following: for the first time, it had contributed to the degree award for a number of students; information on its operation had been shared with other universities; participation across Faculties had been somewhat uneven, and consideration would be given to how this might be addressed; a word limit had been placed on the report required of students; mentoring sessions would henceforth be mandatory for students; the external examiner's comments had been positive; an Uaneen module link staff member would be appointed in each Faculty. She expressed thanks to the Registry, the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning, the Students' Union and Ms Jean Hughes, Head of the Learning Innovation Unit, for their work on this module. The Chair, in turn, expressed appreciation to Professor Barker, on behalf of Council.

**C: Items for formal approval/noting**

**13. Validation recommendations**

**13.1 BSc in Environmental Science and Health (International)**

Approved.

**13.2 Restructuring of Master's programme in Oscail**

Approved.

**13.3 New BA programme: All Hallows College**

Approved.

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

Approved.

**14. Accreditation recommendations**

**14.1 BA in Composition (Royal Irish Academy of Music)**

Approved.

**14.2 BA in Acting (Gaiety School of Acting)**

Approved.

**14.3 Graduate Diploma/MSc in Emergency Management**

Approved.

**15. Proposal on revisions to membership of Academic Council**

Approved.

**16. Any other business**

None.

**Date of next meeting:**

**Monday 25 June 2007  
3.00 p.m. in AG01**

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

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