

ACADEMIC COUNCIL

MINUTES

Wednesday 14 February 2007

2.00-3.55 p.m. in AG01

PRESENT:

F Blin	C Mac an Bháird	V Poti
D Brabazon	A McAuley	F Regan
O Bree	M Mac Conmara	T Ryan
P Brereton	L McDermott (Secretary)	R Saunders
E Buffet	C McDonagh	P Sheehan
E Byrne	Á McGillicuddy	M Shine Thompson
J Cannon	A McGrady	A Simon
J Costello	G McGuinness	M Slowey (VPLI/Registrar)
J Doyle	K MacKeogh	M Smyth
M Drumm	M Molony	J Stokes
H Duncan	R Morgan	B Trench
S Fox	N Murphy	R Verbruggen
E Guilfoyle	M Nic Giolla Mhichíl	F von Prondzynski (Chair)
M Henry	P Ó Flatharta	R Walshe
T Hogan	N O'Reilly	C Woods
G Hughes	E Parikka	P Young
M Irwin-Bannon	M Parkinson	

APOLOGIES:

J Appleby	E Kennedy	B Pierce
J Connolly	T Lawrence	H Ruskin
J Dowling	B Leavy	A Scott
M Farren	P McDonagh	A Sinnott
B Flood	P Meleady	C Stevenson
N Gathergood	E O'Connell	R Tobin
J Geraghty	E O'Riordan	B Tolan
D Ging	B Paull	A Wickham
K Griffin	M Philbin	J Williams
J Hughes		

IN ATTENDANCE:

D Beirne

P McMorrow

The Chair noted that Mr Kevin Griffin, Director of Registry, would shortly be leaving the University to take up the post of Director of Registry in University College Dublin. On behalf of Council, he expressed appreciation for Mr Griffin's contribution to its work during his membership.

1. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted subject to the inclusion of one submission under Item 19.

A: Minutes and related issues**2. Minutes of the meeting of Academic Council of 6 December 2006**

The minutes were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

3. Matters arising

3.1 Noted that the working group to discuss the desirability or otherwise of anonymous marking would shortly begin its work and would consist of three academic members of staff from Academic Council, two members of the Students' Union (to be nominated by the Union) and one member of the Registry. The Chair is to e-mail the members of Council to activate the process of identifying the three academic members of staff. (Item 3.4)

3.2 Noted that agreement had been reached with the Executive Deans of Faculty in relation to their budgets for this academic year, although there might have to be some adjustments to take account of ongoing budgetary work being carried out by the HEA. (Item 7.1)

3.3 Noted that interviews for two positions as Theme Leader had taken place. (Item 8)

4. Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Strategy Committee of 10 January 2007

Noted.

5. Minutes of the meeting of the University Standards Committee of 23 November 2006

Noted and approved. Noted, in respect of Item 5.1.6, that Dr D Dowding was a member of staff at the University of York and, in respect of Item 5.1.12, that Professor H Abdalla was external examiner for the BEng in Manufacturing Engineering with Business Studies.

6. President's report

6.1 The Chair reported on the allocation for higher education under the National Development Plan 2007-2013 and said that the sum specified was the total that would be allocated to higher education in this period.

6.2 Proposals for funding under the current round of the PRTL (Programme for Research in Third-level Institutions) are being prepared at present so as to meet the submission deadline of 16 March. A project manager has been appointed to co-ordinate the work. The University is leading on one submission and is a participant in others. In the event of success in the submission, the University would itself also be required to provide some funding for the 15 per cent required for each project under the process, or 50 per cent matching funding should the financial thresholds for bids be crossed.

B: Policy and strategy issues

7. Strategy implementation

Work is continuing on implementing *Leadership through Foresight*, and progress can be tracked on the strategy web pages. Mr Gordon McConnell will make a presentation on the implementation at the 18 April 2007 meeting of Council.

8. Strategic Innovation Fund

The Chair and VPLI/Registrar noted that it would be very important to make every effort to ensure a successful outcome in the second round of submissions for funding and that taking a strategically-focused approach would be central to the undertaking. The date on which the call for submissions is to be issued is not yet known.

9. Linkage agreements

The Chair reported that revised linkage agreements had been drawn up in respect of St Patrick's College and Mater Dei Institute of Education and that a linkage agreement had also been drawn up in respect of All Hallows College. It is hoped that these three documents will be signed by the relevant parties shortly. The Chair outlined his approach in the final discussions with the Archbishop of Dublin about the linkages, and this approach was endorsed by Council.

The members of Council representing St Patrick's College and Mater Dei Institute of Education noted with appreciation that the linkage arrangements had worked very successfully to date. The Chair stated that he wished this situation to continue, with a view to benefiting both the linked colleges (now to include All Hallows College) and the University while allowing all institutions to retain their individual identities.

10. Academic framework for innovation

Dr Françoise Blin made a presentation on this issue on behalf of the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning. It is proposed that further feedback on the proposed framework be sought from Faculties, that a number of principles be adopted in relation to it, that existing programmes be reviewed in the light of it (and of the National Framework of Qualifications, with which it is to be compliant) and that implementation then take place.

In the course of the presentation and of the discussion which followed, the following points were raised:

- it is most important that all the relevant issues are approached at the same time and in a coherent and strategic way
- it will be essential to ensure that adequate resources are in place for preparation and implementation
- issues such as timetabling and class size should be central to discussions
- the project has the potential to allow issues of over-teaching and over-assessing to be explored and, where necessary, remedied
- all staff should have the opportunity to become fully familiar with the National Framework of Qualifications
- for all programmes, learning outcomes will have to be reconceptualised in terms of the National Framework of Qualifications
- the level associated with each module should be a reflection of what is expected of the student
- the current system of naming levels will need to be reformed

- the funding model will be crucial in determining the extent to which a student can study on a flexible basis (e.g. by taking fewer than the total available modules in an academic year)
- flexibility has the potential to lead to improved academic standards in that students (especially those with commitments besides their studies) would be in a position only to take the number of modules feasible for them at any given time
- any changes that are made should not be of a nature that might tend to weaken current positive perceptions of the University and its programmes.

On behalf of Council, the Chair and the Vice-President for Learning Innovation/Registrar thanked the Associate Deans for the very significant work they had carried out on this issue to date.

11. Proposed change to examination appeal regulation

Agreed that the proposal should be referred back to the Appeals Board for further discussion. Members of Council are welcome to submit suggestions about it to Ms Valerie Cooke of the Office of the Vice-President for Learning Innovation/Registrar, who is Secretary to the Board.

C: Items for formal approval/noting

12. Validation recommendations

12.1 BA in Composition

Approved.

12.2 BSc in Physics with Biomedical Sciences

Approved.

13. Accreditation recommendations:

13.1 Graduate Diploma/MSc in Guidance and Counselling

Approved.

13.2 Participation by St Patrick's College in an Erasmus Mundus Master's programme

Approved.

13.3 Graduate Certificate in Development Education

Approved.

14. Academic Calendar 2007/2008

Noted and approved subject to the removal of the outline academic calendar for 2008/2009 at the end of the document. Agreed that it might be desirable to make some changes to the calendar for 2008/2009 and subsequent years, and that the further deliberations about the Academic Framework for Innovation (see Item 10 above) should incorporate discussion of this issue.

Noted that, with effect from November 2007, Oscail students would graduate in November rather than March.

15. Reports from December 2006 meeting of the Appeals Board

Noted.

16. Report from Summer and Autumn 2006 Appeals Boards: St Patrick's College

Noted.

17. Faculty Awards Boards recommendations for March conferring

Noted and approved.

18. Progression and Awards Boards recommendations for March conferring

Noted and approved.

19. Any other business

On behalf of the Students' Union, Mr Eoin Byrne urged the members of Council to support the Union in its Rag Week fundraising activities.

Date of next meeting:

<p>Wednesday 18 April 2007 2.00 p.m. in AG01</p>

Signed: _____
President

Date: _____