

# ACADEMIC COUNCIL

## MINUTES

Wednesday 15 February 2006

2.00-3.30 p.m. in AG01

### PRESENT:

D Beirne  
C Blacklaw  
S Blott  
M Brady  
O Bree  
P Brereton  
P Burke  
J Carroll  
E Conway  
J Costello  
M Duffy  
H Duncan  
R Elgie  
O Finlayson  
A Flanagan  
B Flood  
R Forster  
M Gannon  
N Gathergood  
J Geraghty  
D Grimes

S Harrington  
S Hashmi  
M Henry  
T Hogan  
G Hughes  
J Hughes  
S Ingle  
M Irwin-Bannon  
D Kenny  
H Lechleiter  
C Mac an Bhaird  
A McAuley  
M Mac Conmara  
L McDermott (Secretary)  
C McDonagh  
G McGuinness  
J McKenna  
K MacKeogh  
I McMenamin  
P Meleady

M Molony  
K Moran  
G Murphy  
M Nic Giolla Mhichíl  
C Nic Pháidín  
P O'Byrne  
P Ó Flatharta  
E O'Riordan  
M Parkinson  
B Pierce  
H Sheehan  
A Simon  
A Sinnott  
M Slowey (VPLI/Registrar)  
M Smyth  
B Trench  
Y Tuohy  
R Verbruggen  
F von Prondzynski (Chair)  
R Walshe

### APOLOGIES:

L Boyle  
M Burns  
M Collier  
J Dowling  
S Fox  
E Guilfoyle

J Kerrane  
B Leavy  
A McGrady  
C Mac Murchaidh  
J O'Hara  
H Ruskin

R Scaife  
P Sheehan  
M Shine Thompson  
C Stevenson  
B Tolan  
A Wickham

M Hopkins  
P James

M Ryan  
R Saunders

J Williams  
P Willis

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

P McMorrow  
N O'Connor

**1. Adoption of agenda**

The agenda was adopted. Noted that requests had been submitted to discuss Items 13 and 14.

**A: Minutes and related issues**

**2. Minutes of the meeting of Academic Council of 14 December 2005**

The minutes were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

**2.1 Update on committee structures**

The Vice-President for Learning Innovation/Registrar reported that the recommendations of the Implementation Group in respect of the proposed new committee structures would be discussed by Executive at its meeting of 21 February 2006 and that interim arrangements would be made up to the end of March 2006 to ensure that all ongoing business continued to be transacted as required.

The President confirmed that validation and accreditation reports and recommendations would continue to be submitted to Council for noting and formal approval.

**2.2 Fees for part-time research students**

The Vice-President for Learning Innovation/Registrar reported that Executive had agreed to modify the fee structure for research students to take account of the fact that many such students are effectively studying on a part-time basis.

**3. Minutes of the meeting of Academic Council Standing Committee of 1 December 2005**

Noted and approved.

**4. President's report****a. Tribute to the late Ms Justice Mella Carroll**

On behalf of Council, the President paid tribute to the Chancellor, Ms Justice Mella Carroll, who died on 14 January 2006.

**b. Governing Authority**

The President reported that the term of office of the present Governing Authority would come to an end at the end of February 2006 and that arrangements would be made to appoint a new Authority. Once this new Authority was in place, arrangements would be made to appoint a successor to Ms Justice Carroll as Chancellor.

**c. New Deputy President**

The President noted that, as had recently been announced to the University community, Professor Anne Scott had been appointed Deputy President in succession to Professor Albert Pratt.

**d. National Research Plan**

The President noted the imminent publication of the National Research Plan and outlined its implications for the university sector, in particular the fact that the proposed graduate schools were envisaged as being discipline rather than institution based. He invited the members of Council to reflect on the areas in which the University had particular strengths and might therefore be in a position to take a position of leadership with regard to graduate schools. Documentation about the plan is to be made available to Council members in due course.

**e. Strategic Innovation Fund**

The President outlined the proposals for the Strategic Innovation Fund which is to be used to fund both research-based and teaching-based initiatives in higher education, stressing that inter-institutional initiatives would be essential if funding were to be made available and again inviting Council members to reflect on ways in which the University might assume leadership of initiatives. Documentation about the fund is to be made available to Council members in due course.

**B: Policy and strategy issues****5. Strategic implementation**

The President noted that Mr Gordon McConnell would report in detail on this issue to the 12 April 2006 meeting of Council and that the members of Council would be invited to submit queries about the issue in advance of this meeting. Information would also be made available about the actions implemented in the first one hundred days following the launch of the plan. The President encouraged members of Council to advert to the strategic planning section of the University's website, and particularly to the information that would shortly be made available there on the balanced scorecard system to be used to monitor the success of the implementation.

It was noted that Faculty strategic plans are currently being drawn up.

**6. Student recruitment and retention**

The Vice-President for Learning Innovation/Registrar reported on the work of the Task Group on Student Retention, noting that while participation in Semester 1 examinations had increased there was an exercise to be conducted at School level to discuss with non-attending students the supports that they might find necessary, and that the summary of reasons given for non-attendance would be made available shortly by Faculties.

Various issues were raised in the ensuing discussion, including the following: the relationship between the proposed University framework awards and the broader deliberations of the Working Group on Modularisation; the synergies between this Working Group, the Task Group on Student Retention, the implementation of the Learning Innovation action items from the Strategic Plan and the development of the academic themes; the relationship between attendance at lectures and academic achievement; the need to ensure and support high standards of teaching; the ways in which Moodle and other online supports might be used optimally to ensure student engagement with subject matter.

The following were noted: the Vice-President for Learning Innovation/Registrar is to convene an IUA working group on lifelong learning which will, *inter alia*, make recommendations on a new funding model which might facilitate part-time study; the Working Group on Modularisation has set up a subgroup to make recommendations on certain aspects of *Marks and Standards*; an electronic system of monitoring student attendance at lectures is being piloted and may be made available to areas within the University where the use of such a system might be deemed appropriate.

It was noted that the Vice-President for Learning Innovation/Registrar would circulate information on participation in the examinations for Year 1, Semester 1.

## **7. Review of first-year experience for 2006 intake**

The following were noted as priority action items as part of the University's commitment to enhancing the first-year experience:

- the possibility of extending orientation activities beyond the beginning of Semester 1, across that semester and into Semester 2, possibly by means of a taught module
- the piloting of student learning agreements with individual students, particularly non-traditional students
- the enhancement of the effectiveness of the personal tutor system, including consideration of workload issues and timetabled sessions
- the encouragement of small group teaching
- the encouragement of flexibility in terms of assessment, particularly in Semester 1 of first-year undergraduate programmes.

A proposal has been made to Budget Committee to provide funding for pilot actions in these areas within the context of the implementation of the Strategic Plan. Heads of Schools and Chairpersons of Programme Boards (or other committees as appropriate) will be contacted shortly with additional information on the action items. The possibility of modifying the academic calendar to allow Semester 1 to be completed before Christmas will be examined.

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

### **8. Report and minutes from Validation Committee – 25 January 2006**

#### **8.1 Minutes of Validation Committee meeting**

Approved.

#### **8.2 Validation recommendations:**

- **BSc in Children's and General Nursing (Integrated)**
- **MBS in Strategic Procurement**
- **BA in Acting (Gaiety School of Acting)**

Approved.

**9. Accreditation recommendations**

- **BSc in Physical Education with Biology**
- **BSc in Marketing, Innovation and Technology**
- **MBS in Human Resource Management**

Approved.

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

Noted and approved, with the addition of the name of one candidate to the list.

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

Noted and approved.

**12. Report from Appeals Board (Winter 2005/06)**

Noted.

**13. Academic calendar 2006/2007**

Approved in respect of all the dates listed in the draft calendar. Noted that an issue had been raised in relation to the timing of Faculty Awards Boards, and agreed that it should be discussed with Ms Phylomena McMorrow of the Registry, as should any other issues in relation to calendar entries to which dates had not yet been assigned. Agreed that Professor Carroll would submit recommendations in respect of study weeks to the next meeting of Council and that this meeting would be requested to approve all the dates on the draft calendar which had remained unconfirmed up to the time of the present meeting.

**14. Academic Council nominees to Academic Promotions Committee**

Noted that a proposal to include an academic representative (at Associate Professor or Professor level) from each Executive Faculty on this committee was to be discussed by Executive at its meeting of 21 February 2006 and that, if it were approved by Executive, the nomination and (if necessary) election process would be activated. Noted that gender balance would be ensured in terms of any new members of the

committee and that any new members need not necessarily also be members of Council.

**Date of next meeting:**

<p><b>Wednesday 12 April 2006 2.00 p.m. in AG01</b></p>
-------------------------------------------------------------

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

President

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