

ACADEMIC COUNCIL

MINUTES

Wednesday 15 October 2008

2.00-3.20 p.m. in AG01

PRESENT:

S Anglim
S-J Belton
O Bree
C Brennan
P Brereton
J Bruton
J Carroll
B Casey
J Connolly
E Diskin
J Dowling
J Doyle
N Gathergood
D Ging
E Guilfoyle
S Hashmi
M Henry
T Hogan
C Holland
L Horan

L Hourihane
G Hughes
S Hurley
S Ingle
M Irwin-Bannon
B Leavy
B Le Juez
T Leufer
C Loscher
C Mac an Bhaird
B McConalogue
L McDermott (Secretary)
C McDonagh
Á McGillicuddy
A McGrady
K MacKeogh
J McManis
P McMorow
R Meehan

P Meleady
A Morrissey
C Mulcahy
R Munck
N Murphy
L Muzellec
M Nic Giolla Mhichíl
P Ó Flatharta
A-G Olabi
P Preston
H Ruskin
A Scott
P Sheehan
M Slowey (VPLI/R & Chair)
P Smith
A Stover
A Wickham
S Wickham
C Woods

APOLOGIES:

F Blin
S Blott
E Connolly
J Costello
M Farren
O Finlayson
B Flood

M Kelly
E Kennedy
S Knowlton
H Lechleiter
C Mac Murchaidh
P McNamara
K Moran

N O'Reilly
M Shine Thompson
A Sinnott
M Smyth
C Stevenson
R Tobin
R Verbruggen

P Flood
S Fox
J Hughes
D Jacobson

M Munro
B Murphy
G Murphy
P O'Byrne

F von Prondzynski
A Way
J Williams
P Willis

IN ATTENDANCE:

C Jameson
G McConnell

1. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted.

A: Minutes and related issues

2. Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Council of 23 June 2008

The minutes were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

3. Matters arising

3.1 The Chair noted that responsibility for strategic oversight a range of academic and other issues in the university, which had been the responsibility of the Academic Strategy Committee, would now come under the aegis of a new Education Committee to be chaired by herself, the detailed terms of reference of which would be submitted to the 10 December 2008 meeting of the Council. The ASC has terminated its operations. (Item 4 of the meeting of 11 June 2008)

3.2 The Chair noted that, at the 6th Joint IUQB Conference in University College Dublin on 14 October 2008, the *Irish Universities' Graduate Student Skills Statement* had been launched. (Item 14 of the meeting of 11 June 2008)

4. President's report

4.1 The Chair noted that the President was currently attending an urgent IUA meeting to discuss the financial environment for higher education and would in due course inform all staff of the position.

- 4.2** The Chair presented a report on behalf of the President indicating that a submission had been made to the HEA on 29 September 2008 for SIF funding for a Management Information System but that the outcome was uncertain; however, a significant proportion of the SIF II funding already allocated to the university would be made available. It is also hoped that there will be a call for submissions under PRTL 5, though possibly with no funding forthcoming in 2009. Funding may, however, become available for capital expenditure projects.
- 4.3** The Chair noted that it was intended to merge HETAC, FETAC and the NQAI into one new organisation and that (subject to the approval of the universities' Governing Authorities) this organisation would assume the responsibility for quality assurance in the universities that currently rests with the IUQB.
- 4.4** The Chair emphasised that the coming two years would be challenging in financial terms and that, while the university had no deficit, it would be necessary for staff to be mindful of the need for financial prudence and the desirability of operating in a spirit of entrepreneurial innovation.

B: Policy and strategy issues

5. Draft strategic plan

Mr Gordon McConnell reported on the state of development of the draft new strategic plan for the university as well as on that of the component strategic plans and indicated that a series of consultative meetings with staff was about to begin. He emphasised the importance of proceeding with strategic planning notwithstanding the uncertain economic climate and urged the members of the Council to take an active part in the consultative meetings and to join drafting groups as necessary. He noted that more detailed information on the strategic planning process would be made available to the 10 December 2008 meeting of the Council.

6. Dublin Region Higher Education Alliance

The Chair reported that, while SIF expenditure had been paused, DCU was in a position to proceed with much of the work plan it had set itself, on the basis of the very considerable preparatory work that had taken place and notwithstanding the uncertain funding environment. Members of the Alliance also indicated a commitment to continuing collaborative to the greatest extent possible. She noted that she would be in a position to make a much more detailed report to the Council at its meeting of 10 December 2008 because the situation with regard to funding for the activities of the DRHEA would have been clarified by that time.

7. Report on the Academic Framework for Innovation

- 7.1** Professor Martin Henry, Academic Director of the Academic Framework for Innovation, reported on developments in relation to the AFI, noting that the work of implementing the National Framework of Qualifications with a view to full Bologna compliance could continue notwithstanding the uncertain economic environment. He outlined the work that had taken place in Summer 2008 in terms of discussions aimed at revising *Marks and Standards*, learning outcome clinics and the rewriting of all programme outcomes. The verification exercise to ensure that this rewriting exercise has been satisfactorily completed is to take place on 21 and 23 October 2008, and the work of rewriting module outcomes will then begin. The implementation of AFI will be greatly facilitated by the participation of AFI Fellows across the university. These staff members have been identified and undergone initial training, and ongoing training will be made available to them also.
- 7.2** It was noted that uncertainty surrounded the availability of SIF II funding for a MIS system (see Item 4.2 above) and that the timescales originally identified for the implementation of AFI might require revision if the development of such a system were delayed, because the system would be crucial to the implementation. It was noted that the aim is to bring proposals in relation to *Marks and Standards* to the 10 December 2008 meeting of the Academic Council.
- 7.3** Professor Henry expressed thanks to all involved in the ongoing process of implementing AFI. The Chair, in her turn, expressed appreciation to Professor Henry for his leadership on the issue.
- 7.4** Dr Kay MacKeogh noted that a consultation process on the e-learning strategy was in progress and that e-learning clinics would be made available to staff.

8. Presentation on the Foresight exercise

- 8.1** Professor Ronaldo Munck made a presentation, entitled *From Foresight to Strategic Plan*, on the Foresight exercise, and noted that the *DCU Foresight Report 2008* would be launched on 20 November 2008 by a representative of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment. Among the issues raised in discussion were the following: the importance of ensuring that the priorities of each Faculty, as articulated in discussions about Foresight, were made clear in the *Report* and that each Dean was in a position to satisfy him/herself that this was the case; the need to ensure clarity in terms of the concepts 'strategy' and 'foresight' and the differences between them and to make explicit the ways in which they interacted with and informed each other; the importance of DCU's distinctiveness as a core concept and of quality as a core value.

- 8.2** Professor Munck encouraged all members of the Council to submit comments to him on the Foresight exercise. The Chair confirmed that the *Report* would reflect the full range of perspectives articulated. She also suggested that it might be helpful to circulate to the Council the output of a mapping exercise of existing major research centres undertaken by Dr Declan Raftery.

C: Items for formal approval/noting

9. Register of programmes accredited in 2007/08

Noted.

10. Register of Academic Council members 2008/09

Noted. Noted that a small number of final changes remained to be made.

11. Reports from Autumn 2008 examinations/Progression and Awards Boards

Noted and approved.

12. Report from Autumn 2008 Faculty Awards Boards for Research Degrees

Noted and approved. Noted that one further student was to be added to the list. The approval of the Council was granted in the case of this student subject to approval by the relevant Faculty Awards Board for Research Degrees. The Chair expressed thanks to all involved in the very considerable achievements of the research students.

13. Report from 2007/2008 Appeals Boards

Noted.

14. Report from the Disciplinary Appeals Committee

Noted.

15. Report on anonymous marking

Noted.

16. Any other business

None.

Date of next meeting:

<p style="text-align: center;">Wednesday 10 December 2008 2.00 p.m. in AG01</p>
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Signed: _____
President

Date: _____