

# ACADEMIC COUNCIL

## MINUTES

Monday 29 June 2009

2.00-2.40 p.m. in AG01

### 1. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted.

### A: Minutes and related issues

### 2. Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Council of 10 June 2009

The minutes were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

### 3. Matters arising

- 3.1 The Chair noted that the debate entitled ‘Academic Flexibility – Friend or Foe?’ had taken place on 22 June 2009 and had been a success. He thanked the members of the Council who had attended it, noting that it would be helpful to conceptualise it as part of an ongoing discussion of a number of important issues relating to the university’s values. (Item 3.6)
- 3.2 The Chair noted that the employment control framework was expected to be agreed with the HEA soon and that it would provide clarity for the university in terms of the extent of flexibility which would apply to staff recruitment in the foreseeable future. The Deputy President/Registrar, to whom all issues relating to the framework should be addressed, noted that all current requests for staffing are being considered on an equal footing. (Item 7.1)
- 3.3 It was noted that the finalised interim *Marks and Standards* had been approved by the Council. (Item 9.5)

**3.4** It was noted that the finalised policy on plagiarism had been approved by the Council. (Item 11).

**3.5** The Deputy President/Registrar thanked all those who had contributed to the smooth running of the Progression and Awards Boards which had taken place in the week beginning 22 June 2009. She noted that follow-up meetings with relevant staff members would take place to determine what improvements should be made in relation to both the examination process generally and, more specifically, the operation of anonymous marking (2008/09 having been the first academic year in which anonymous marking was implemented for all written examinations). She noted also that the implementation of the new interim *Marks and Standards* (see Item 3.3 above) would involve a learning process for staff and students in 2009/10. (Item 15)

**4. Minutes of the meetings of the University Standards Committee of 2 April 2009 and 4 June 2009**

Noted and approved. The Deputy President/Registrar noted that the new report forms for use by external examiners had been piloted on a paper basis in 2008/09 and the feedback from this exercise would be used to inform the implementation of a web-based reporting system in 2009/10 (minutes of 2 April 2009, Item 3.16). She noted also that the USC had approved guidelines and a framework for an Accreditation of Prior Learning/Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning process and that Ms Jean Hughes would be in touch with Faculties with a view to drawing up detailed implementation guidelines; it is possible that, in the context of the current upskilling agenda, developments in relation to AP(E)L will become particularly significant for the university (minutes of 4 June 2009, Item 13).

**5. Minutes of the meeting of the Graduate Studies Board of 5 March 2009 and 14 May 2009**

Noted and approved.

**6. President's report**

**6.1** Noting the current very severe economic climate and the likelihood that funding for higher education would be further reduced in the coming academic year, the Chair requested all the members of the Council to exercise the utmost restraint in terms of spending consistent with the delivery of high-quality services. He noted that the meeting for all staff, due to take place on 2 July 2009, would provide an opportunity for more detailed discussion of the issues.

- 6.2** The Chair noted that discussions were taking place between the university, the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland and the National University of Ireland, Maynooth. These discussions are an extension of previous discussions which arose in the context of joint submissions for funding under PRTL. Recommendations based on the discussions are to be submitted to the September 2009 meeting of the Governing Authority. Prior to this, there are to be opportunities for consultation with staff (most likely in the second half of August 2009). The Deputy President/Registrar, who along with Professor Eugene Kennedy represents the university on the working group which is conducting the discussions, stressed the importance of grounding them in a strongly-articulated academic strategy. Professor Kennedy noted the already strong relationships which exist across the three institutions in terms of research collaboration.
- 6.3** The Deputy/President Registrar, who along with Mr Martin Conry represents the university on the IUA working group on subject provision, noted the following: there is complementarity, but relatively little overlap, in terms of subject provision across the university and RCSI and NUIM; there appears to be greater potential for the provision of shared programmes at postgraduate than at undergraduate level; many similar discussions on shared programme provision are taking place internationally.

**B: Policy and strategy issues**

**7. Strategic implementation**

See under Item 6 above.

**8. Request to award an *aegrotat* Diploma**

Approved.

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

**9. Examination and Progression and Awards Boards reports, Summer 2009**

Noted and approved.

**10. Any other business**

The Chair thanked the members of the Council for their significant contribution to its work in the academic year 2008/09.

**Date of next meeting:**

<p><b>Wednesday 14 October 2009 2.00 p.m. in AG01</b></p>
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Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
President

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