

ACADEMIC COUNCIL

MINUTES

12 December 2012

2.00-3.40 p.m. in AG01

PRESENT:

M Brady
C Brennan
K Browne
J Bruen
M Byrne
P J Byrne
J Carroll
A Clogher
D Cordial
M Crane
E Cunningham
R Devery
J Dowling
John Doyle
H Esmonde
M Farren
S Flanagan
Y Gao
E Guilfoyle (VPAA)

A Harvey
S Ingle
P Kinsella
M Kirwan
L Looney
J Lynch
C Mac an Bhaird
B MacCraith (President)
L McDermott (Secretary)
C McDonagh
I McEvoy
Á McGillicuddy
G McGuinness
P McMorrow
B McMullin
D Molloy
M Molony
G Moore
A Morrissey

G-M Muntean
G Murphy
M Nic Giolla Mhichíl
Rory O'Connor
Robert O'Connor
A Pearson-Evans
J Péchenart
M Pryce
J Rami
C Renehan
R Sadleir
M Slowey
P Smith
J Stokes
A Stover
R Tobin
S Wickham
P Willis

APOLOGIES:

L Barry	P Landais	J O'Higgins-Norman
J Bosak	C Mac Murchaidh	V Potì
O Bree	B McConalogue	K Rafter
Martin Clynes	T McCormack	D Reynolds
Mary Clynes	P McDonagh	M Roantree
J Costello	E McGlynn	P Sheehan
Jim Doyle	A McGrady	D Sinclair
B Flood	C McMullan	A Sinnott
M Glynn	P McNally	A Terres
M Humphrys	N Mulhern	F Waldron
B Kelly	C Ó Ciardubháin	R Walshe
D Kenny	P Ó Flatharta	G Warrington
S Knowlton		

IN ATTENDANCE

C Jameson
D Raftery
P Sheridan

The President welcomed Professor Eithne Guilfoyle to the meeting of Academic Council, her first in her new capacity as Vice-President Academic Affairs (Registrar), and mentioned that, in the event of unavoidable absence on his part from a meeting of Council, Professor Guilfoyle would chair it.

1. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted subject to the inclusion of one submission under Item 16.

A: Minutes and related issues**2. Minutes of the meeting of Academic Council of 10 October 2012**

The minutes were confirmed and were signed by the Chair.

3. Matters arising

- 3.1 It was noted that the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning/Education were leading the project to develop a policy on assessment and that they would be in contact with their Faculties with respect to this. (Item 3.4)
- 3.2 It was noted that it had been agreed to set up a working group to review the processes for validating and approving examination results at Progression and Awards Boards, that the membership would consist of Mr Billy Kelly, Deputy Registrar/Dean of Teaching and Learning (as chair), the four Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning/Education, the four Faculty Managers, two representatives from Registry and a representative from Oscail, and that it would begin its deliberations in early 2013. Mr Kelly will advise Academic Council of developments, as appropriate. Any recommendations ultimately approved are likely to be implemented on a phased basis. (Item 3.6)
- 3.3 Dr Lisa Looney, Dean of Graduate Studies, noted that information system requirements for postgraduate students had been identified and were being discussed with relevant Units in the University, though it was understood that the required resources might not necessarily be available to the extent that would be desirable. (Item 4)
- 3.4 In relation to the guidance documentation for all involved in the supervision and examination of research students, Dr Looney noted that such documentation would be made available on the Graduate Studies Office web pages according as it was discussed and approved by the Graduate Studies Board following consultation with Faculties. She also noted that supervisors were requested to apply to the GSB for permission for a student to extend registration beyond the maximum period permitted in *Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis*. (Item 5)
- 3.5 Ms Celine Jameson, Student Enrolment Manager, reported on the deliberations of the Task Group on Reform of University Selection and Entry, noting the importance and complexity of its work and the emphasis it was placing on the establishment of a firm evidence base for such recommendations as it would make. Four meetings have taken place to date, with the fifth scheduled for 18 December 2012 and due to focus on HPAT issues. The briefing note provided by the TGRUSE was noted. The Chair noted that any and all proposed changes to the current system would have to be agreed by the Academic Councils of all universities and that he viewed the engagement with the three fundamental challenges identified by the TGRUSE as being particularly important. He advised that it was unlikely that second-level teachers would be in a position to form views about possible recommendations until these emerged in detailed form. Ms Jameson undertook to mention to the TGRUSE a concern that was raised about the possibility that suggestions to award bonus points for Leaving Certificate

subjects of relevance to the discipline to be studied at third level might conflict with the principle of encouraging students to take a broad first-year university programme prior to specialising. It was noted that the TGRUSE was not engaging with issues relating to non-traditional learners because it had been tasked with focusing on the interface between second- and third-level education via the traditional Leaving Certificate. (Item 5.1)

- 3.6** Ms Phylomena McMorro, Director of Registry, noted that there were very few cases, nationally, where a student who had had to withdraw from a programme having exceeded the maximum number of attempts to pass had subsequently been re-admitted to it by means of an application through the CAO. The situation with respect to DCU will, however, be kept under review to determine the extent, if any, to which it might be appropriate to develop a policy on the issue; for the present, however, any instances which may arise will be referred to the Programme Chair, whose recommendation will in turn be referred, for decision, to the Vice-President Academic Affairs (Registrar). To enable the situation to be reviewed, the CAO will produce a report identifying any relevant students. (Item 13.3)

4. Minutes of the meetings of the Education Committee of 5 September 2012 and 3 October 2012

Approved.

5. Minutes of the meeting of the University Standards Committee of 13 September 2012

Approved.

6. Minutes of the meetings of the Graduate Studies Board of 28 June 2012 and 10 September 2012

Approved.

B: Policy and strategy issues**7. President's report**

- 7.1** The President drew the attention of Council to the documentation made available on the HEA website in November 2012:
- a. the report by the International Expert Panel: *A Proposed Reconfiguration of the Irish System of Higher Education*
 - b. the HEA document: *Institutional Responses to the Landscape Document and Achieving the Objectives of the National Strategy for Higher Education: A Gap Analysis*
 - c. the ESRI report to the HEA: *A Study of Future Demand for Higher Education in Ireland*.

With respect to a. above, he noted that there was not an intention to implement the reconfiguration as proposed in the report.

With respect to b. above, he encouraged the members of Council to read the text of the speech on higher education reform made on 22 November 2012 by the Minister for Education and Skills, Mr Ruairí Quinn, in which four priorities are outlined: the strengthening of the university system; the development and consolidation of the Institute of Technology sector; the formation of regional clusters between universities, stronger IoTs and future technological universities; increased sustainability and capacity in the higher education system. The President noted the relevance of this speech to a number of areas including staffing issues relating to higher education, rationalisation of programme provision and regional focus in terms of programme provision.

With respect to c. above, he noted that demographic imperatives would be likely to have a very significant effect on future decisions with respect to higher education.

- 7.2** The President noted that the work towards developing the potential of the 3U Partnership was well in hand and that the ongoing activities included regular meetings of steering groups, detailed discussion of plans for collaborative programme, and progress towards identifying a Director.
- 7.3** With respect to the formation of the Institute of Education, regular meetings of the high-level steering group are taking place to engage with, and reach agreement on, the many and complex issues involved, and outcomes will be communicated as appropriate.

- 7.4** Discussions are ongoing between the University and All Hallows College with a view to furthering potential collaboration.
- 7.5** A high-level group has also been formed, and is meeting regularly, to further discussions about increased collaboration between the University and Dundalk Institute of Technology. In this connection, it is noted that the university with which Athlone Institute of Technology is to have the closest future collaboration is the National University of Ireland, Maynooth. The discussions involving Dublin Institute of Technology, the Institute of Technology, Blanchardstown and the Institute of Technology, Tallaght, about the potential formation of a technological university are noted, as is the fact that DIT will be moving to a consolidated campus in Grangegorman.
- 7.6** Further detail about future directions will emerge by means of discussions between University leaders and the HEA, planned for January 2013, and it is expected that the HEA will, in March/April 2013, make further recommendations to the Minister as to the future higher education landscape.
- 7.7** All comments and suggestions, from members of Council and members of the wider University community, as to how the University can engage fruitfully with ongoing developments are welcomed.
- 7.8** Each of the actions specified in the University's strategic plan 2012-2017, *Transforming Lives and Societies*, is the responsibility of a member of Senior Management. The five constituent strategies will be completed by the end of Quarter 1 2013, and in this context the fact that there will, for the first time, be a Student Experience constituent strategy is noteworthy. Members of Senior Management including the President will visit all Faculties early in 2013 to further discussions about the implementation of the plan, and regular progress reports will be made to Governing Authority.
- 7.9** Sincere appreciation is due to all who worked to make the October and November 2012 graduation ceremonies, including the honorary conferrings, such a success; many very positive comments were received from graduates and their guests. The University intends to continue to make honorary awards, and members of Council are encouraged to submit suggestions as to suitable candidates. The prerequisites for consideration for an honorary award are excellence in one's chosen field and commitment to values similar to those espoused by the University.
- 7.10** Funding for the Nobel Laureate annual lecture series will be available for some years, and members of Council are encouraged to submit suggestions as to Laureates, from all disciplines, who might be invited to give the lectures.

- 7.11 The launch of the Age-Friendly University took place successfully on 9 November 2012.
- 7.12 The rosebowl sculpture was formally inaugurated on campus on 30 November 2012. Members of Council are encouraged to submit suggestions in respect of further public art installations on campus, in light of the University's intention to enhance the campus in this respect.

8. Proposed University statute relating to Academic Council

- 8.1 In considering the draft statute prepared by the working group established by Council following a request by Dr Declan Raftery, Chief Operating Officer, and chaired by Professor John Carroll, Head of the School of Mathematical Sciences, Council noted the proposal to reduce the size of the membership. A proposal by a member of Council to reduce the membership by a figure less than that proposed by the working group was not seconded. The importance of ensuring the efficiency and effectiveness of Council, and of fostering a sense of ownership of Council by both its own members and the wider University community, was noted. With respect to the representation of Directors of Unit on Council (other than the three Directors proposed as being members *ex officio*), it was noted that a selection process could be worked out between Dr Raftery and the Directors.
- 8.2 The proposed statute, including the reduced size of the membership, was approved. It was noted that it would be submitted for the consideration of Governing Authority at its meeting of 14 February 2013. It was agreed that, if the proposed statute were approved by Governing Authority, it would be desirable to review the revised size of the membership, for fitness for purpose, by the end of the term of office of Governing Authority. The President thanked Dr Raftery, Professor Carroll and the other members of the working group for having drafted the statute, and expressed appreciation to the members of Council for their engagement with the issues. He noted that the proposal to reduce the size of the membership was consistent with the recommendations of the IUA's 2012 report to the Minister for Education and Science on university governance.

9. Proposed Academic Calendar 2013/14

Ms Phylomena McMorrow explained that a small number of dates in the proposed calendar were still under consideration, to take account of the need to determine the ongoing feasibility of holding graduation ceremonies over two days as is currently the case and the discussions of the working group set up to review the management of processes relating to examination results (see Item 3.2 above). She undertook to give

consideration to the possibility that the staff/student consultation dates in June might be moved to the Thursday and Friday following the promulgation of examination results and to review again the issues relating to the time required post-PAB to prepare for such promulgation. The Chair requested members of Council to make submissions to Ms McMorrow on these issues should they wish. The proposed Calendar was approved subject to the resolution of these issues.

C: Items for formal approval/noting

10. Matters from the Education Committee and the University Standards Committee

Approved.

11. Report from Winter 2011 Examinations/Progression and Awards Board

Approved.

12. Accreditation report: School of Computing

Approved.

13. Report from the Research Committee

Noted.

14. Reports from Appeals Boards 2012

Noted.

15. Report from the Disciplinary Committee

Noted.

16. Any other business

The President thanked the members of Council for their significant commitment to the work of the University during a challenging year and wished them a happy and peaceful Christmas and New Year.

Date of next meeting:

<p>Wednesday 13 February 2013 2.00 p.m. in AG01</p>
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Signed: _____
President

Date: _____