EDUCATION COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Wednesday 2 February 2011

2.00-4.30 p.m. in A204

Present:	Professor Anne Scott (Chair), Dr Claire Bohan, Mr Cillian Byrne, Mr Jim Dowling, Professor Eithne Guilfoyle, Dr Jean Hughes, Dr Sarah Ingle, Mr Billy Kelly, Mr Martin Molony, Ms Louise McDermott (Secretary), Dr Ciarán Mac Murchaidh, Professor Richard O'Kennedy, Professor Bernard Pierce
Apologies:	Professor Malcolm Smyth
In attendance:	Mr Ian Bell (for Items 3.2 and 3.10) Ms Aisling McKenna, Dr Sheelagh Wickham

SECTION A: AGENDA, MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

1.   **Adoption of the agenda**

The agenda was adopted subject to the addition to Item 4 of a sub-item to allow for consideration of the current status of the preparatory work in respect of the DCU graduate attributes.

2.   **Minutes of the meeting of 12 January 2011**

The minutes were confirmed subject to the replacement, in Item 3.13, of the sentence:
Dr Bohan undertook to provide support in terms of making available, for reflective learning purposes, the Mahara open-source e-portfolio system.

with the sentence:

Dr Bohan undertook to provide some funding in terms of making available,
for reflective learning purposes, the Mahara open-source e-portfolio
system.

They were signed by the Chair.

3.   Matters arising from the minutes

3.1   Noted that proposals on the Recognition of Prior Learning would be made to the
University Standards Committee meeting of 3 February 2011. (Item 3.1)

3.2   Noted that, pending the integration of the student experience survey into Business
Intelligence (see Item 3.10 below), it would be important to ensure that the analysis
of the results of the 2010/11 survey could be done as efficiently as possible,
particularly in view of the large number of individual student comments that –
on the basis of the experience of the pilot surveys in 2009/10 – are to be expected.
Mr Kelly undertook to discuss with Ms McKenna a number of ways of leveraging
technology so as to achieve this. It was agreed that the University of Sydney
questionnaire should remain as the basis for the survey, given that it is a reputable
and internationally-validated instrument. There will be a small number of open-
ended questions, and these can be tailored to suit the requirements of the
Faculties. Mr Kelly undertook to make available the open-ended questions that had
proved most useful when DCU Business School piloted the survey in 2009/10, and
it was agreed also that the questionnaire would be made available electronically to
the Executive Deans of Faculty. It was noted that the survey would be distributed
to students in March/April 2011. It was agreed that the exact timeframe would be
determined after Ms McKenna had ascertained what other requests were due to be
made of students in these months and the Deans had ascertained the particular time
pressures that would obtain in their Faculties in these months. This timetable will
be noted to the next meeting of the EC on 2 March 2011. The Chair requested that,
immediately following this meeting of the EC, the Deans each identify a staff
member who would act as a contact point for Ms McKenna with regard to the
administration of the survey. She noted that the results of the survey would not
need to be reported in detail to the EC, their main relevance being to Faculties. The
importance of linking with the 'Your Voice – Heard' facility was noted.   It was
noted too that the *National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030* recommends that
all higher education institutions gather feedback from students and also proposes a
national student survey system. (Item 3.2)

3.3   Noted that the action plan following the institutional review of DCU in March
2010 was being prepared with a view to having the final external report sent to the
IUQB by 4 March 2011. (Item 3.3)

3.4   Noted that an application for Erasmus Mundus funding would be resubmitted
by the School of Physical Sciences. (Item 3.4)

3.5   <u>Noted</u> that the revised information for Programme Chairs would shortly be sent for consideration to the working group that had proposed the revisions and would subsequently be sent for comment to a number of Programme Chairs, including recently-appointed Chairs. (Item 3.5)

3.6   <u>Noted</u> that the programme review template was undergoing revision in preparation for upcoming reviews, and that the revisions would include the incorporation of recommendations made on the basis of the piloting of the template in 2009/10 as well as consideration of INTRA and the year abroad for DCU students. The potential of Business Intelligence (see Item 3.10 below) to facilitate the task of reviewing programmes was <u>noted</u>. (Item 3.6)

3.7   <u>Noted</u> that the University Readiness Module would be considered by the EC at its meeting of 2 March 2011. (Item 3.8)

3.8   <u>Noted</u> that a presentation on module learning outcomes had been made to the Heads' and Deans' meeting of 20 January 2011. (Item 3.9)

3.9   <u>Noted</u> that proposals in relation to INTRA would be considered by the EC at its meeting of 2 March 2011. (Item 3.13)

3.10   Mr Ian Bell of Information Systems and Services, together with Ms McKenna, made a presentation on Oracle Business Intelligence, which the Business Intelligence steering group has recommended that the University purchase so as to facilitate consideration of data in a flexible manner and on a comprehensive basis with a view to informing decision-making. <u>Noted</u> that different levels of access to information can be agreed and established (and that there is already a University policy on staff access to student data), that the system extracts and makes available information from all the online administrative tools currently in use, that the information is always live and that it is possible to develop additional or different functionality to meet changing requirements. <u>Agreed</u> that the student experience survey should be integrated into BI. The potential of BI for creating efficiencies, informing quality promotion processes and helping to minimise the number of quality reviews required was <u>noted</u>. The Chair, on behalf of the EC, thanked Mr Bell and the steering group for the work carried out to date on BI. She invited the members of the EC to submit comments, queries and suggestions on it to Mr Bell. She <u>noted</u> that the proposal to purchase the system would be put to Budget Committee and Executive. (Item 3.14)

3.11   <u>Noted</u> that work was in progress to make recommendations on the optimum ways of enhancing flexibility in relation to student learning. (Item 3.15)

3.12   <u>Agreed</u> that the working group to develop recommendations in respect of teaching quality evaluation and enhancement should be a working group of the EC. <u>Agreed</u> that Professor Guilfoyle would ascertain the availability of Dr Joe O'Hara, Head of the School of Education Studies, to chair the group and that it should include a minimum of one Head of School per Faculty, with a request for nominees to be made to the Heads' and Deans' meeting of 17 February 2011. <u>Noted</u> that the function of the group would be to design a process to facilitate teaching quality evaluation and enhancement, and that close ongoing contact between it and the Heads' and Deans' group would be essential. (Item 3.16)

3.13   <u>Agreed</u> that the proposal to create an Undergraduate Certificate in Homeless Prevention and Intervention from three approved 10-credit stand-alone modules in the School of Nursing could be approved by means of Chair's action if proposals to modify Marks and Standards, which would have the effect, *inter alia*, of facilitating the creation of such an award, were approved by the University Standards Committee at its meeting of 3 February 2011. <u>Noted</u> that further consideration of the credit ratings appropriate for minor, special-purpose and supplemental awards needed to be undertaken and that this work would be carried out by the working group originally set up to develop the flexible framework for responding to calls for submission of programme proposals (such as calls under the Labour Market Activation scheme) but now with a wider remit. <u>Noted</u> that this group would make a recommendation on the appropriate award type to be associated with the proposed Undergraduate Certificate. (Items 3.21 and 9)

3.14   <u>Noted</u> that the proposers of the Master's programme in Teaching, which had been considered by the Validation Subgroup on 18 January 2011 and recommended for accreditation, had expressed appreciation of the high level of engagement with the proposal which the VS had demonstrated. (Item 6)

3.15   <u>Noted</u> that the date on which the proposal for a new pathway (Bachelor of Nursing Theory) on the Bachelor of Nursing Studies programme had been approved in the Faculty of Science and Health had been confirmed as 15 December 2010. The proposal was therefore deemed approved by the Education Committee. (Item 7)

3.16   <u>Noted</u> that the working group recently established under the aegis of the EC to make recommendations on student engagement with learning, virtual learning, and related matters is to hold its first meeting on 17 February 2011, with the President, Professor Brian MacCraith, in attendance. The discussion at this meeting will be informed by a scoping paper which is being written by Dr Margaret Farren of the School of Education Studies and Mr Seamus Fox of Oscail. Once terms of reference for the group are drawn up, they will be made available to the EC. <u>Agreed</u> that a list of the members of the group would be circulated to the EC. (Item 10.1)

SECTION B: STRATEGIC MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION

4.   Progress on EC goals

4.1   Updated information on students who have withdrawn from the University

In the discussion about this information, the following were <u>noted</u>:
- there is a level of stability across recent years in terms of numbers of withdrawals, especially at undergraduate level
- approximately half of all withdrawals take place at postgraduate level
- there has been a decrease in the numbers of students indicating that they dislike the programme they are taking
- Ms McKenna intends to discuss with the Registry the concepts of 'disliked university' and 'change of mind' as applied to the R27 (notification of withdrawal from DCU) form in which they are listed as possible reasons for withdrawal, to ascertain what the difference between them is and if any changes to wording might be desirable
- it is very difficult to ascertain the views of students who withdraw informally without indicating reasons; in this connection, the outcome of the research being undertaken by Dr Bohan and Dr Wickham into the views of students who withdrew some years ago is likely to be helpful; Dr Bohan also undertook to remind students, in the information she provides to them about key dates, about the dates of relevance to withdrawal and the importance of completing forms
- it is important to ascertain the proportion of deferred students who take up their place following the deferral.

It was <u>noted</u> also that, at the 2 March 2011 meeting of the EC, information on student persistence and progression, and those students to be deemed 'at risk', would be made available on the basis of the outcomes of the February 2011 Programme Board Examination Review Committee and Progression and Awards Board meetings.

4.2   Integration of teaching and research

4.2.1   <u>Agreed</u> that an institutional position was needed in relation to the extent to which a researcher could be required to teach notwithstanding the preference of, for example, a Principal Investigator that the researcher not teach. This matter will be discussed at the EC meeting of 2 March 2011.

4.2.2   <u>Noted</u> that a summary of recent discussions in the EC about the integration of teaching and research would be made available to Academic Council at its meeting of 9 February 2011.

4.3   Graduate attributes

4.3.1   A discussion took place following the presentation by Dr Bohan of the project
plan aimed at embedding the attributes. It was <u>agreed</u> that, as there are synergies
between this work and the ongoing work of validating programme learning
outcomes, the working group to be set up to agree a template to map programmes to
the Graduate Attributes Profile would include a member of OVPLI, or a staff
member otherwise closely associated with the Academic Framework for
Innovation, who would be in a position to advise on the inclusion of considerations
relating to the mapping of programme learning outcomes to attributes. <u>Noted</u> that
work remains to be completed on the mapping of module learning outcomes to
programme learning outcomes.

4.3.2   The following were <u>agreed</u> in relation to the project plan:
- it should be ensured that, as far as possible, the work to be undertaken in
relation to the plan does not involve the creation of deadlines close to existing
deadlines such as academic structure submission dates
- it will be important to keep in mind that the responsibility for measuring the
development of the attributes lies with the University rather than with
employers
- responsibility for monitoring progress on mapping programmes to attributes lies
with the Deans
- progress on the implementation of the plan can be reported electronically to the
EC
- it will be important for the EC to be satisfied with the development of the
initiative before significant work is undertaken to develop the proposed website.

4.3.3   The Chair <u>noted</u> the possible synergies between the proposed e-portfolio for
students to be developed as part of the plan and the working group on student
engagement with learning, virtual learning and related matters (see Item 3.16
above). She requested that EC members provide any further comments they might
have on the plan to Dr Bohan by 4 February 2011.

5.   Proposals on the personal tutor system

<u>Noted</u> that, where a system of appointing Year Heads exists, it tends to be most
successful when the appointee is responsible for teaching a core module taken by all
the students in the year. <u>Noted</u> that experience varies across the University in terms
of whether or not the original personal tutor system is still needed where Year
Heads have been appointed; in the light of this, it was suggested that if a
University-wide system of Year Heads were ultimately agreed and implemented
there could be local discretion as to the use, or otherwise, of the personal tutor

system in tandem with it. <u>Agreed</u> that the Deans would discuss the proposals in their Faculties and submit recommendations to the Chair by the end of February 2011 so as to facilitate discussion of the issue by Senior Management in early March. The importance of working closely with Student Support and Development and the Students' Union in devising and implementing policies and procedures in relation to this matter was <u>noted</u>.

SECTION C: PROGRAMME- AND MODULE-SPECIFIC ISSUES

6.   **Proposal to extend the current four-year Level 8 BEng Mechatronic Engineering programme to a five-year Level 9 MEng programme with a Level 8 BEng exit award after four years.**

        <u>Approved.</u>

7.   **Proposal to replace the MSc in Education and Training Management with two qualification titles:**
                MSc in Education and Training Management (eLearning)
                MSc in Education and Training Management (Leadership)

        <u>Approved.</u>

8.   **Any other business**

        None.

Date of next meeting:

Wednesday 2 March 2011, 2.00 p.m. in A204

Signed: _____   Date: _____
                Chair