MINUTES

Wednesday 4 May 2011

2.00-3.40 p.m. in A204

Present:	Professor Anne Scott (Chair), Dr Claire Bohan, Mr Cillian Byrne, Mr Jim Dowling, Dr Jean Hughes, Dr Sarah Ingle, Mr Billy Kelly, Mr Martin Molony, Dr Ciarán Mac Murchaidh, Ms Louise McDermott (Secretary), Professor Bernard Pierce, Professor Malcolm Smyth
Apologies:	Professor Gary Murphy, Professor Richard O'Kennedy
In attendance:	Ms Aisling McKenna (for Item 4.3) Ms Morag Munro

SECTION A: AGENDA, MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

1.   Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted subject to the inclusion of three submissions under Item 11 (now renamed 'Issues relating to membership') and the addition of a new Item 12 ('Any other business') which includes one submission.

2.   Minutes of the meeting of 6 April 2011

The minutes were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

3.   Matters arising from the minutes

3.1   Noted that the online information on the due diligence process now includes a link to a form which programme proposers are requested to complete in situations where due diligence is necessary.
(Item 3.14 from the meeting of 8 September 2010)

3.2   Noted that timescales and deadlines with respect to the application system attaching to the new Recognition of Prior Learning policy are in the process of being worked

out and that the proposals on this will be made available to Programme Chairs in September 2011. (Item 3.1)

3.3 Ms Aisling McKenna summarised the overall results of the programme-level student survey conducted in April 2011, <u>noting</u> that programme-specific results would shortly be made available to Faculties. She undertook to break the information down by year of programme and to provide additional details (e.g. mean and standard deviation) to the extent possible, <u>noting</u> that such details would be more readily available once Business Intelligence had been introduced (see Item 3.7 below). The importance of including generic questions for all students was <u>noted</u>. Ms McKenna requested the views of the EC members on the suitability of the timing of the survey for students off campus such as those undertaking INTRA or nursing placements. She further requested opinions as to the overall usefulness of the information generated by the survey. (Item 3.2)

3.4 <u>Noted</u> that the results of the first-year student experience survey, and an overview of the current situation regarding students deemed to be at risk of failing to progress in their programmes, had been made available to Academic Council at its meeting of 13 April 2011. (Items 3.2 and 3.13)

3.5 <u>Noted</u> that an Erasmus Mundus funding application had been submitted by the School of Physical Sciences. (Item 3.3)

3.6 <u>Noted</u> that updated information for Programme Chairs, albeit delayed beyond the timeframe originally envisaged, would be made available shortly. (Item 3.4)

3.7 <u>Noted</u> that discussions were in progress with a view to embedding the programme review process into Business Intelligence, once this is purchased, and that BI can accommodate the use of the programme review template. The forthcoming quality review of the Faculty of Science and Health will provide an opportunity to avail of BI for programme review. <u>Noted</u> that it would be important for programme review to be regarded by all staff as an important and regular part of the work of the University, and <u>agreed</u> that, to facilitate this, the issue should feature on the agendas of relevant meetings across the University including, if it proved necessary, a future meeting of the EC. <u>Noted</u> that clarification would be provided by Executive as to the types of review (Faculty, School of programme) that should be prioritised by the University.   (Item 3.5)

3.8 <u>Noted</u> that a proposal on University definitions of non-major awards would be made to the University Standards Committee meeting of 26 May 2011 and that a proposal on approval mechanisms for such awards would be made to the Education Committee at its meeting of 7 September 2011. (Item 3.8)

3.9 <u>Noted</u> that some issues with regard to the R27 (notification of withdrawal from a programme) form would be discussed between Ms McKenna and the Registry. (Item 3.9)

3.10 <u>Noted</u> that work is in progress to ascertain both the proportion of deferred students who subsequently take up their places and the views of students who withdrew from the University some years ago. (Item 3.10)

3.11 <u>Noted</u> that the work aimed at embedding the Graduate Attributes is proceeding according to the timescale laid down in the project plan submitted to the EC meeting of 2 February 2011. (Item 3.11)

3.12 <u>Noted</u> that the Virtual and Online Learning Working Group is preparing an interim report which will be made available to the EC in Summer 2011. (Item 3.12)

3.13 <u>Noted</u> that work is in progress to analyse further the reasons for low performance in Level 8 programmes, particularly in Year 1. (Item 3.13)

3.14 <u>Noted</u> that work on the University Readiness Module, including the mapping of the module learning outcomes against the learning outcomes of some existing modules, is ongoing and that the EC will be kept informed of developments. (Item 3.17)

3.15 <u>Noted</u> that the Accreditation Board for the proposed Certificate in Nurse/Midwife Prescribing had met on 15 April 2011 and had recommended that the programme be launched as planned (subject to some recommendations). (Item 3.18)

3.16 <u>Noted</u> that Accreditation Board for the proposed BA in Procurement and Supply Management would meet on 19 May 2011. (Item 3.19)

3.17 <u>Noted</u> that proposals on a new BEng/MEng structure for some programmes in the Faculty of Engineering and Computing had been approved by the University Standards Committee on 6 April 2011 and by Academic Council on 13 April 2011. (Item 5.1)

SECTION B: STRATEGIC MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION

4. Review of progress to date on EC goals

4.1 Teaching Quality Evaluation and Enhancement

<u>Noted</u> that the Working Group on Teaching Quality Evaluation and Enhancement is continuing its deliberations and will make recommendations to the EC as soon as possible.

4.2 INTRA

4.2.1 Progress to date on the development of recommendations in respect of INTRA, particularly with regard to how it is assessed, were <u>noted</u>, as was the fact that these recommendations would be made to Academic Council at its meeting of 8 June 2011 in tandem with the standard annual report on INTRA activities in the previous calendar year. It was <u>noted</u> that there is considerable diversity in the models of INTRA that exist and <u>agreed</u> to request Ms Maeve Long, Director of INTRA, to include in the annual report an overview of this diversity.

4.2.2 The following points were also <u>noted</u> in discussion:
- the Working Group on INTRA has benefitted from considerable enthusiasm and engagement on the part of the range of INTRA co-ordinators who have contributed to its discussions
- INTRA module descriptors, including learning outcomes, are being rewritten to ensure that, notwithstanding the variation in types of placement that exists, all students are assessed on an equitable basis
- minimum hours of work will be specified in the descriptors, though it is recognised that some placements will involve longer hours than this minimum
- when revisions have been completed, the module descriptors will be signed off by the Heads of School
- consideration is being given to dividing the INTRA report completed by the student into standard sections, related to the module learning outcomes, to facilitate assessment and ensure that staff workloads are manageable
- staffing resources available to manage INTRA vary across Schools, and it is possible that issues such as this may be alluded to in the course of programme review
- there may be scope for learning (e.g. by means of a dedicated workshop) from the teaching practice tool which is used successfully in Mater Dei Institute of Education
- the Entrepreneurship track which is being developed will function as a possible alternative to INTRA where required and appropriate.

4.2.3 The Chair <u>noted</u> that the fact of having INTRA discussed in depth by the Working Group and in other arenas such as the EC, and the opportunities this afforded for assessing strengths and weaknesses on a comparative basis across programmes, were very helpful in ensuring that INTRA remains a continuing source of competitive advantage for the University.

4.3 Student progression and persistence: impact of assessment methodologies on failure rates

4.3.1 The outcomes of recent research into this issue were presented by Ms Morag Munro, Acting Head of the Learning Innovation Unit. The main conclusions that emerge are: (a) the specific type of assessment used is less significant in influencing student performance than is the constructive alignment

between learning outcomes and the assessment methodologies used to evaluate the extent to which they have been achieved (the indication being that such alignment must be undertaken notwithstanding the fact that it is resource intensive); (b) effective feedback on performance is a very important factor in influencing future performance (with self-generated feedback being perhaps even more important than lecturer feedback).

4.3.2 The importance of streamlining assessment so as not to overload students, and of timing it so that it does not occur too late in the semester to be useful, was noted in discussion, as was the fact that students may sometimes choose elective modules on the basis of the kinds of assessment involved in them. It was noted that, since modules are managed by individual academic staff members, there may be situations in which it is difficult to take an overview of a suite of modules from the perspective of the volume and timing of assessment.

4.3.3 Concern was expressed at the ubiquity of commercial services which undertake to write assignments for students and the consequent tendency of some students to avail of this option. It was noted in this regard that approaches to setting assignments may sometimes not take sufficient account of the capabilities of 21st-century technology. It was agreed that the broad issue of assessment – how it is approached, what it is intended to achieve, and the extent to which it can demonstrate that students have actually learnt – would feature on the agenda of the EC at one of its meetings early in the academic year 2011/12. The Chair requested the members of the EC to submit questions on the issue to her, and undertook to commission working papers to inform the future discussion. It was noted that a number of resources – e.g. in the Learning Innovation Unit, the School of Education Studies and St Patrick's College – could potentially be drawn upon in the preparation of the working papers.

4.3.4 It was agreed to raise the issue of assessment with the Chair of the Disciplinary Committee (from the perspective of disciplinary matters relating to assessment, such as plagiarism) and to factor the outcome of this discussion into the discussion at the EC. With regard to plagiarism, it was noted that the online detection tool, Turnitin, is in use in some areas of the University and that the discussion at the EC would incorporate consideration of the various aspects of plagiarism management such as prevention and detection.

4.3.5 Ms Munro undertook to factor the points made in discussion, as outlined above, into the revision of the LIU's online assessment resources which is currently being carried out.

4.3.6 The Chair noted the relevance of the discussion to some of the ongoing work of the University Standards Committee.

4.4   Other goals

4.4.1   On the issue of student persistence and progression, it was <u>noted</u> that lists of 'at-risk' students from both the current academic year and 2009/10 had been made available to Faculties, with attention having been drawn to the fact that those who repeat Year 1 of a programme appear to be particularly vulnerable to failing to complete the programme as a whole. It was <u>noted</u> that the work of identifying 'at-risk' students and developing methods of supporting them is ongoing and that it will be important to situate it in the context of the information yielded by the first-year student experience survey (see Item 3.4 above).

4.4.2   It was <u>noted</u> that the programme 'health check' procedure had been incorporated into programme review and that the introduction of Business Intelligence would enhance the effectiveness of the procedure.

4.4.3   It was <u>noted</u> that there are plans – e.g. in Dublin City University Business School – to introduce mechanisms, in 2011/12, to facilitate flexible learning for students, and that the Working Group on Virtual and Online Learning would shortly gather University-wide data on the extent of use of online resources. It is intended that a situation will be reached, following decisions to be taken by Senior Management, whereby a certain proportion of all programmes will be offered on a flexible basis (with due account taken of the needs of programmes which must meet professional accreditation requirements). The importance, for the University, of being in a state of readiness to avail of the possibilities offered by emerging technologies was <u>noted</u>.

4.4.4   <u>Noted</u> that a number of initiatives with respect to the integration of teaching and research were under way in Faculties and that discussions were in progress at Executive about the implications of the Researcher Career Framework for the involvement of researchers in teaching.

SECTION C: PROGRAMME- AND MODULE-SPECIFIC ISSUES

5.   Proposed new pathway in Regulatory Affairs on the MSc in Bioprocess Engineering

<u>Approved</u> subject to the successful completion of the Memorandum of Understanding.

6.   Proposed new pathway on the BA/Diploma in Humanities towards a BA/Diploma in English and History

<u>Approved.</u>

7. **Proposed new pathway on the Diploma/BSc in Information Technology towards a Diploma/BSc in the Management of Information Technology/Information Systems**

<u>Approved.</u>

8. **Proposed Certificate in Business Innovation**

<u>Approved.</u>

9. **Proposed new pathway in Vocal Studies on the BA in Music in Performance, Royal Irish Academy of Music**

<u>Approved.</u>

10. **New Professional Focus Strand on the Adult Learning BA, All Hallows College**

<u>Noted.</u>

11. **Issues relating to membership**

11.1 The Chair <u>noted</u> that Professor Gary Murphy had joined the Education Committee consequent upon his recent appointment as Dean of Graduate Studies.

11.2 The Chair, on behalf of the Education Committee, congratulated Mr Cillian Byrne on his re-election to the Students' Union Executive for 2011/12 (one outcome of this being his continued membership of the EC for 2011/12).

11.3 The Chair <u>noted</u> that this present meeting was the last that Professor Bernard Pierce would attend in his capacity as Dean of Dublin City University Business School. On behalf of the Education Committee, she expressed appreciation to Professor Pierce for his very significant contribution to the work of the EC since its inception and wished him every success in his future endeavours.

12. **Any other business**
The implications of the free fees initiative for programmes now offered on a four-year plus one-year basis such as the BEng/MEng programmes in the Faculty of Engineering and Computing (see Item 3.17 above) were <u>noted</u>. The Chair undertook to contact formally the Deans of the other Faculties to apprise them of these implications.

Date of next meeting:

Wednesday 7 September 2011, 2.00 p.m. in A204

Signed: _____   Date: _____

      Chair