

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Wednesday 5 October 2011

2.00-4.00 p.m. in A204

Present: Professor Anne Scott (Chair), Dr Claire Bohan,
Professor John Costello, Mr Jim Dowling,
Professor Eithne Guilfoyle, Dr Jean Hughes, Dr Sarah Ingle,
Mr Billy Kelly, Dr Lisa Looney, Ms Louise McDermott (Secretary),
Mr Martin Molony, Professor Richard O’Kennedy

Apologies: Dr Ciarán Mac Murchaidh, Dr Anne Sinnott

In attendance: Mr Ian Bell (for part of Item 3 (see Item 3.3 below))
Dr Joe O’Hara (for Item 4)

The Chair welcomed Professor John Costello and Dr Lisa Looney to their first meeting of the Education Committee.

SECTION A: AGENDA, MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted subject to the inclusion of two submissions under Item 8.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 7 September 2011

The minutes were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

3. Matters arising from the minutes

- 3.1** It was noted 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 3.1)
- 3.2** It was noted that information and guidelines for Programme Chairs would shortly be updated and made available. (Item 3.4)
- 3.3** Mr Ian Bell of Information Systems and Services made a presentation on Oracle Business Intelligence Enterprise Edition, which has been purchased by the University and is being implemented, as a reporting tool, in respect of student data and research data in the first instance. Twenty-two reports have been identified as forming the first phase of the roll-out of BI. It was agreed that, by 7 October 2011, each Faculty would identify a range of staff members who would be in a position to test the reports for usability, and let Mr Bell know their identities; to facilitate the identification of staff, it was agreed that Mr Bell would make the list of reports available. It was noted that, following this testing and the completion of any adjustments that might prove necessary, the system would go live, and that further developments of BI would take place in due course. The Chair noted that, at a future meeting, Senior Management would consider the issues relating to levels of access to BI with a view to making recommendations. (See also Item 5.1 below.) (Item 3.5)
- 3.4** It was noted that the interim report of the Virtual and Online Learning Group had been made available to the EC. The Chair summarised information about the likely costs attaching to the implementation of the recommendations of the VOLG (including pump-priming funding for developing blended/online versions of programmes, funding to pilot the proposed e-learning device, funding for e-portfolio development, and costs associated with the human resources that will be required). She noted that more detailed information on these matters would be made available to the EC at its meeting of 2 November 2011. A presentation on issues relating to the VOLG recommendations will be made at this meeting also. (See also Items 5.1 and 6 below.) (Items 3.7 and 4.2.2)
- 3.5** With respect to the issue of supporting incoming students in negotiating university life successfully, it was agreed that Dr Bohan and colleagues very familiar with this area (such as co-ordinators of modules which already cover many of the issues) would draft a brief document for the information of the Deans of Faculty. This would summarise the skills, competences and knowledge deemed necessary for students to complete first year successfully, and the structures and resources necessary to facilitate the meeting of their needs. It would then enable Faculties to put into place measures to bridge such gaps in provision as might become apparent.

- All this work will need to be completed by the end of 2011 to facilitate incorporation with other relevant tasks in Spring 2012, notably programme review. The relevance of the exercise to the roll-out of the Graduate Attributes initiative was noted (see also Item 3.7 below). It was noted too that, while the fact of supporting first-year students would not necessarily, of itself, reduce attrition rates, the exercise nonetheless had the potential to lead to valuable learning for the University. (Item 3.8)
- 3.6** It was noted that the Staff/Student Engagement Conference on 13 and 14 September 2011 had been a very considerable success and that a number of positive outcomes from it were becoming apparent, including the potential for wider use across the University community of the METIS system used in Mater Dei Institute of Education to manage teaching practice. The outcomes relating to feedback to students on assessment are to be factored into the deliberations of a working group on this issue which is being set up under the auspices of the University Standards Committee and will report to the EC as well as the USC. The achievements of the nominees for, and winners of, the 2011 President's Awards for Teaching and Learning, which in many instances included excellence in providing feedback, will be of relevance to the discussions of the group. (See also Item 5.1 below.) (Item 3.10)
- 3.7** It was agreed that the members of the original Graduate Attributes working group, if these individuals are willing to do further work on the issues, would be the best-placed people to work on the guideline document to be drawn up to facilitate the roll-out of the Attributes. Dr Bohan will contact the members of the group. It was noted that the regulations and guidelines in respect of validation and accreditation would be updated to provide programme proposers with the opportunity to indicate how their proposed programmes would be likely to facilitate the development of the Attributes. Detailed analysis of the employer feedback in terms of Graduate Attributes will be carried out in due course, and the relevant web pages will also be developed. The Attributes were launched formally on 8 September 2011. (Item 4.1)
- 3.8** It was noted that the development of e-portfolios would now be of relevance not only to Graduate Attributes but also to university readiness (see also Item 3.5 above). The potential relevance of e-portfolios to the active contribution module for research students was also noted. It was agreed that Dr Bohan, Dr Looney and the Programme Chairs most experienced in the use of e-portfolios would draw up a specification for what is likely to be required, in terms of human and technical resources, to develop the e-portfolio concept on a pilot basis in the near term. It was noted that the outcomes of the pilot exercise with the Mahara e-portfolio that had been carried out in DCU Business School had been made available to the EC. (See also Item 5.1 below.) (Item 4.1.2.5)

- 3.9** It was noted that programme review and the recommendations of the working group on non-major awards would feature on EC agendas at meetings in the near future. (See also Item 5.1 below.) (Items 4.2.3 and 5)
- 3.10** It was noted that the management of independent modules was under discussion in the Faculties and that their recommendations would be made available to the EC as soon as possible. Appreciation had been expressed to the DCU in the Community team for having initially stimulated discussion about this issue. (Item 6.2)
- 3.11** It was noted that a meeting to discuss issues relating to awards in the School of Education Studies and Oscail currently designated as being at Level 7 on the National Framework of Qualifications would take place on 6 October 2011. (Item 8)
- 3.12** It was noted that a proposal to add an optional year abroad on the Bachelor of Civil Law programme had been approved electronically by the EC on 14 September 2011.

SECTION B: STRATEGIC MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION

4. Report and recommendations: Teaching Quality Evaluation and Enhancement

- 4.1** In the course of discussion, the following points were made:
- given that it is expected that universities will, in the foreseeable future, be required to implement systems to evaluate teaching, it is highly desirable that DCU move at this point to develop a system
 - the current recommendations might very usefully be considered as forming the basis for a pilot project, to be implemented as soon as possible and the benefits of which are likely to include familiarising the University community with the concept of evaluation as a standard practice
 - it is also likely to be helpful to consider teaching quality evaluation and enhancement in the context of the full range of quality-related initiatives currently being undertaken by the University
 - consideration should be given to the appropriateness of the content and outcomes of the modules in respect of which teaching is evaluated as well as to other factors such as whether a module is core or non-core for students
 - full use should be made of existing supports such as the two modules in online teaching and learning approved in 2010/11 and now being offered to academic staff.

- 4.2** It was agreed that the report and recommendations should be amended slightly to indicate that the proposed evaluation relates to 20% of lecturers per year and not 20% of modules per year. It was further agreed that the amended document should be circulated to Faculties, on behalf of the EC, with a request that it be discussed and that feedback be submitted to the Chair as soon as possible. The document will then be modified, as appropriate, and further discussion will be undertaken by the Heads' and Deans' group and Academic Council.
- 4.3** The Chair thanked Dr Joe O'Hara, who chaired the working group which developed the recommendations, and his colleagues on the group for their very considerable work in relation to this issue.

5. Education Committee goals:

5.1 Progress on goals to date/outstanding issues

The following were noted in terms of progress to date on goals previously set by the EC:

- The high-level data gathered in respect of students deemed at risk in 2010/11 will be analysed in detail in early 2012, and the work of tracking students deemed at risk will continue to be undertaken.
- The programme 'health check' has been subsumed into the programme review procedures, with the latter due for detailed consideration at a meeting of the EC in the near future (see also Item 3.9 above).
- Programme review, and a range of other initiatives, will be facilitated by the roll-out of Business Intelligence. Costs associated with BI include implementation, licensing and preparation for the next phase (this next phase being likely to be of particularly relevance to the work of the Quality Promotion Office). (See also Item 3.3 above).
- The optimum student profile for the University is under discussion by Senior Management in the context of the impact of the very challenging economic environment and the financial implications of this, especially as these relate to student fees. It is possible that this issue will need to be discussed again by the EC at a future date.
- The work relating to Graduate Attributes and e-portfolios is in progress (see Items 3.5 and 3.7 above).
- The development of initiatives designed to promote research-led teaching is now the responsibility of the Faculties.
- The development of detailed and specific assessment procedures for INTRA placements has been completed and is now mainstreamed into standard procedures for the management of INTRA.

- The issue of feedback to students is under discussion by a working group which will report to the EC and the University Standards Committee (see also Item 3.6 above).
- The work of the Virtual and Online Learning Group is leading to a range of initiatives (see also Item 3.4 above).

5.2 Confirmation of goals for 2011/12

The Chair noted that the confirmation process would be completed at the meeting of the EC of 2 November 2011, that the making of recommendations relating to assessment might well be added as a goal and that a decision about the addition of any further goals would be taken in the context of the remaining work to be done in respect of existing goals.

6. Presentation on behalf of the Virtual and Online Learning Group

Deferred to the meeting of 2 November 2011.

7. Proposal in respect of programme titles in Dublin City University Business School

Approved. The importance of appropriate titles in the context of student recruitment, including international student recruitment, was noted.

SECTION C: PROGRAMME- AND MODULE-SPECIFIC ISSUES

There were no programme- or module- specific issues.

8. Any other business

- 8.1** The Chair noted that a number of consultation documents based on elements of the National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 were in the process of being made available to higher-education institutions. The first of these, on the proposed National Academy for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning, is available on the HEA website, and the Chair urged the members of the EC to advert to it and also to ensure that it would be discussed at School and Faculty level, with feedback being made available to her as soon as possible.

- 8.2** Again on the basis of an element of the National Strategy, work is in progress to establish an annual national student survey. The current representative on the relevant working group is Dr Jean Hughes; Dr Hughes undertook to make available to the EC the draft minutes of the last meeting of this group. Whereas it had originally been intended to base the survey on a pre-existing questionnaire, it has now been decided to design a customised one. Dr Hughes will provide further details about progress on the development of the survey to the EC at its meeting of 2 November 2011.

Date of next meeting:

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

Signed: _____
Chair

Date: _____