EDUCATION COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Wednesday 7 September 2011

2.00-3.30 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), Dr Anne Sinnott,
                        Professor Malcolm Smyth

Apologies: Professor Eithne Guilfoyle, Professor Gary Murphy,
                        Professor Richard O'Kennedy

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
9.

2.   Minutes of the meeting of 4 May 2011

The minutes, which had been confirmed electronically on 27 May 2011, were
confirmed and signed by the Chair.

3.   Matters arising from the minutes

3.1   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   Noted, with respect to the policy on Recognition of Prior Learning, that a process is
           under way to ensure the alignment of existing local policies with this policy.
           (Item 3.2)

3.3   <u>Noted</u> that the results of the programme-level student surveys undertaken in 2010/11 had been made available on a programme-specific basis, with analyses by year and information on standard deviations included.   <u>Noted</u> that some information had been provided by Faculties on the suitability of the timing of the programme-level student surveys for off-campus students and on the general usefulness of the information yielded by the survey. (Item 3.3)

3.4   <u>Noted</u> that information and guidelines for Programme Chairs would shortly be updated and made available. (Item 3.6)

3.5   <u>Noted</u> that the implementation of Business Intelligence is progressing to schedule. The Chair undertook to make further details available to Dr Ingle and to the EC more generally. (Item 3.7)

3.6   <u>Noted</u> that a revised R27 (withdrawal) form, modified on the basis of the results of the first-year student experience survey in 2010/11, is now in use in the Registry. (Item 3.9)

3.7   <u>Noted</u> that the interim report of the Virtual and Online Learning Group would be made available to the EC very shortly. (See also Item 4.2.2) (Item 3.12)

3.8   <u>Noted</u> that the mapping exercise involving the outcomes of the proposed University Readiness Module and the learning outcomes of existing modules on the first years of undergraduate programmes is being continued. <u>Agreed</u> that Dr Bohan, Dr Hughes and Mr Kelly would report to the EC on this issue at the meeting of 5 October 2011. (Item 3.14)

3.9   <u>Noted</u> that the recommendations on the assessment of INTRA had been agreed by Academic Council at its meeting of 8 June 2011 and that this same meeting had considered the summary of INTRA activities 2010, which on this occasion had included an overview of the diversity of INTRA provision. (See also Item 4.1.3) (Item 4.2.1)

3.10 <u>Noted</u> that the Staff/Student Engagement Conference, to take place on 13 and 14 September 2011, would incorporate consideration of the links between assessment and feedback. <u>Noted</u> that these issues were of relevance to the work of the Disciplinary Committee (for example, with respect to plagiarism) and that discussions with the Secretary's Office were ongoing.   (Items 4.3.3 and 4.3.4)

3.11 <u>Noted</u> that relevant points in the discussion about assessment are being factored into the revision of the Learning Innovation Unit's online assessment resources. (Item 4.3.5)

3.12   Noted that initiatives in respect of flexible learning are being piloted in DCU Business School. (Item 4.4.3)

3.13   Noted that the Memorandum of Understanding in respect of the pathway in Regulatory Affairs on the MSc in Bioprocess Engineering had been completed, and the pathway had therefore been deemed approved. (Item 5)

3.14   Noted that the Chair had contacted the Deans about the implications of the free fees initiative for Faculties. (Item 12)

3.15   The following were noted with regard to validation and accreditation issues:
- Certificate in Nurse/Midwife Prescribing: a replacement member of the Accreditation Board had been approved electronically by the EC
- Graduate Certificate in Sustainable Finance: the final membership of the Accreditation Board had been approved electronically by the EC
- BA in Procurement and Supply Management: to be re-submitted for accreditation on 28 September 2011
- Biology and Science Education on the BA and BEd programmes in St Patrick's College: to be resubmitted for accreditation.

SECTION B: STRATEGIC MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION

4.   Education Committee goals

4.1   Updates on goals:

4.1.1   Teaching Quality Evaluation and Enhancement

Noted that the Working Group on Teaching Quality Evaluation and Enhancement was in the process of finalising its report and recommendations and that these would be submitted for the consideration of the EC at its meeting of 5 October 2011.

4.1.2   Graduate Attributes

4.1.2.1 Noted that very considerable engagement with employers had taken place, that they had expressed positive views about the development and embedding of the Graduate Attributes, and that further analysis of the results of the surveys undertaken among them would be carried out as soon as possible.

4.1.2.2 Noted that, while the mapping of Graduate Attributes to programme outcomes had been undertaken across many programmes, work remained to be done on some other programmes. Agreed that this work needed to be undertaken as a matter of

priority and that the Deans would highlight this within their Faculties. <u>Agreed</u> that, to assist Programme Chairs, a brief guideline document would be drawn up by the working group, submitted to the EC for consideration at its meeting of 5 October 2011, and then (revised if appropriate) made available to Chairs. <u>Noted</u> that it would be important to facilitate the tailoring of the mapping exercise on the basis of the needs of the various disciplines and that different attributes might be differently weighted depending on the discipline. <u>Noted</u> that, at this point, it might be necessary to focus on any gaps between Graduate Attributes and programme outcomes, whereas as time went on it would be possible to place the emphasis more proactively on alignment. <u>Agreed</u> that it would be important for those undertaking mapping to take an open and flexible approach and bear employers' views in mind on a consistent basis.

4.1.2.3 <u>Noted</u> that Dr Bohan had undertaken an exercise to ascertain how the range of non-academic activities might facilitate the students in developing the attributes, as a complementary measure to their programmes of study, and that information on this would be available on the website which is being developed. The annual programme-level student survey will also, as it yields results over time, give a useful indication of the ways in which students see their learning developing and what initiatives might be helpful in supporting them to develop the attributes.

4.2.1.4 <u>Agreed</u> that it would be necessary to draw up a detailed project plan, in consultation with relevant staff members, to operationalise the various later stages of the embedding of the attributes across the University's activities. <u>Agreed</u> that a reference to validation and accreditation would be incorporated into the current outline project plan and the forthcoming detailed plan.

4.2.1.5 With respect to the e-portfolio to be completed by students in the context of reflecting on their development in the course of their studies, it was <u>noted</u> that the intention is to pilot it with one programme per Faculty, with advice on its development being made available by the Learning Innovation Unit and relevant staff members in the School of Education Studies. Members of DCU Business School will also be in a position to share their experience of having used the Mahara system. Dr Sinnott undertook to make available to the EC the results of a survey of Mahara undertaken in the Business School in 2009. Consideration may need to be given to an alternative, more user-friendly, system. <u>Noted</u> that any such system, even when implemented on a pilot basis only, would necessitate resources and training. The importance of establishing in advance exactly what the aim of an e-portfolio is, ensuring it is tailored appropriately per discipline, and maintaining communication with students to ensure full understanding of why it is needed, was <u>noted</u>. <u>Agreed</u> that Dr Bohan would undertake further consultation with colleagues and report the outcome to the EC.

4.2.1.6 <u>Noted</u> that the Graduate Attributes would be launched formally by
Mr Ruairí Quinn, Minister for Education and Skills, on 8 September 2011.

4.1.3 Other goals

<u>Noted</u>, in respect of other goals previously set by the EC, that very considerable
engagement with the development of learning outcomes and the alignment of
assessment strategies for INTRA had taken place (see also Item 3.9 above). <u>Noted</u>
that two goals previously under the remit of the EC, i.e. research-led teaching and
the Researcher Career Framework, were now being further discussed in Faculties
and by Executive respectively. <u>Agreed</u> that, at its meeting of 5 October 2011, the
EC would briefly review all goals set to date to determine whether or not any issues
remained unaddressed and, if so, to agree a course of action.

4.2   Establishment of further goals for 2011/12

4.2.1 <u>Agreed</u> that the further goals would be determined by the EC at its meeting of
5 October 2011. <u>Noted</u> that it would be important to determine only such goals as
could be implemented within a reasonable timeframe.

4.2.2 <u>Noted</u> that two goals that appeared to be both very relevant in the near term and
related to one another were the carrying out of a detailed analysis of the
University's assessment systems, from both an operational and a strategic
perspective, with a view to making recommendations for improvement, and the
implementation of the recommendations of the Virtual and Online Learning Group
(which are currently available in interim form; see Item 3.7 above). With regard to
these recommendations, it was <u>noted</u> that it would be strategically important for the
University to take the initiative although this would require financial, human and
technical resources. The Chair undertook to let the EC know, as soon as possible,
the extent to which budgetary considerations would be likely to facilitate the
implementation of the recommendations in 2011/12. She <u>noted</u> also the
importance of ensuring the research and pedagogical base necessary to the
implementation of the recommendations. <u>Agreed</u> that, at either the 5 October or the
2 November 2011 meeting of the EC, a presentation would be made on behalf of
the VOLG.

4.2.3 <u>Agreed</u> that, at its meeting of 5 October or 2 November 2011, consideration would
be given to the current systems for programme review with a view to making
recommendations for development, as appropriate (taking account of the
importance of minimising the burden of reviews for staff while ensuring that
awareness of the ongoing need for review is maintained).

5.   Approval procedures for non-major awards

Noted that the University Standards Committee had, at its meeting of
26 May 2011, approved the proposals on regulatory matters which are required to
underpin the development of non-major awards and that Academic Council had
approved the proposals (subject to two changes to Marks and Standards) on
27 June 2011. Noted that the working group would submit proposals on the
approval of non-major awards to the EC at its meeting of 2 November 2011.

6.   Management of independent modules

6.1   In the course of the discussion, the following points were made:
- it will be very important to establish and implement a rigorous process for the
  development and approval of credit-bearing modules which do not originate in a
  School, if the University decides that such modules are to be made available
- such modules, if made available, should be grounded in a specific discipline
  area.
- any modules should be developed only in the context of the University's
  strategic priorities; they should not be permitted to proliferate
- it may become necessary to give consideration to the way in which Graduate
  Training Elements are currently approved to ensure that the processes are fully
  fit for purpose.

6.2   It was agreed that the paper on the management of independent modules should be
sent to Faculty Teaching and Learning/Education Committees, on behalf of the EC,
together with a summary of the EC discussion, and that the Faculty committees
would be requested to submit feedback to the EC. Appreciation is to be expressed
to the DCU in the Community team, which had submitted the module proposal
which had given rise to the discussion, for having prompted the identification of
important strategic issues requiring consideration and decision.

SECTION C: PROGRAMME- AND MODULE-SPECIFIC ISSUES

**7.   Proposal to add a Mathematics pathway to the current BSc in Physical
            Education with Biology**

Approved.

8.   Proposal on the NFQ level of the Diploma awards in Oscail

Decision deferred pending discussion between the Chair and Dr Joe O'Hara, Head of the School of Education Studies, about the implications of the proposal for the Certificate and Diploma in Education and Training.

9.   Any other business

9.1   Tribute to Professor Malcolm Smyth

The Chair, on behalf of the EC, expressed appreciation to Professor Smyth for his very significant contribution to the work of the committee since its inception, and wished him every success in his future endeavours following the close of his term of office as Dean of the Faculty of Science and Health.

9.2   Proposal on an exceptional validation opportunity

The EC agreed to consider, on an electronic basis, a validation proposal which it had not been possible to submit for consideration at the meeting, and to give more detailed consideration then, if required, by means of a meeting of the Validation Subgroup to be organised for 20 September 2011.

9.3   Proposal to consider a request electronically

The EC agreed to give electronic consideration to a proposal for a restructuring of a programme which it had not been possible to submit for consideration at the meeting.

Date of next meeting:

Wednesday 5 October 2011, 2.00 p.m. in A204

Signed: _____   Date: _____
          Chair