

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Wednesday 29 October 2008

2.00-3.30 p.m. in A204

Present: Professor Maria Slowey (Chair), Mr Jim Dowling,
Professor Eithne Guilfoyle, Dr Mike Hopkins, Ms Susan Hurley,
Ms Louise McDermott (Secretary), Dr Kay MacKeogh,
Professor Bernard Pierce, Professor Anne Scott,
Dr Mary Shine Thompson

Apologies: Dr Claire Bohan, Professor Malcolm Smyth

SECTION A: AGENDA, MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 1 October 2008

The minutes were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

3. Matters arising from the minutes

3.1 Noted that the Academic Director of the Academic Framework for Innovation was working on the provision of a range of financial scenarios to take account of possible differing SIF funding levels for a new management information system. (Item 4)

3.2 With reference to the HEA's proposal in respect of RGAM weightings for students on work placement, the Chair noted that it was intended to submit a response early in the week beginning 3 November 2008. This response is to consist of a general statement outlining the university's position on the issue followed by detailed information provided by Faculties to support this position. The Deans and other

relevant members of staff will be consulted in the formulation of the response, and the Chair thanked Mr Dowling for undertaking to provide initial information in respect of the Faculty of Engineering and Computing. Noted that it was unlikely any response on the part of the university would generate additional funding.

A number of general issues in respect of INTRA were noted: the fact that a model is now in operation in the Faculty of Engineering and Computing whereby students get a specific grade for INTRA (this grade is not yet factored into the overall grade for the year in which INTRA takes place or the overall degree, though there are plans to do both); the importance of ensuring consistency for students in terms of grading given the broad range of types of placements available; the desirability of incorporating INTRA learning outcomes into overall programme learning outcomes (it was noted that an opportunity currently exists in this regard given that all learning outcomes for all taught programmes are currently undergoing revision in the context of the Academic Framework for Innovation). The Chair noted consideration of INTRA as a possible agenda item for a future meeting of the EC.

(Item 5)

4. Draft terms of reference

- 4.1** Approved subject to the renumbering of Section 2 and the inclusion of a statement that the EC, in taking decisions about whether or not to recommend programme proposals for further development, should take account of the likely financial viability of the proposals. A revised version of the terms of reference will be circulated electronically to the EC with a request for approval of the changes. The terms of reference will then be submitted for approval to Executive and Academic Council.
- 4.2** Noted that the draft template for the provision of financial information in respect of validation proposals would require the approval of the EC before it could be used. Agreed to request Mr Eamonn Cuggy, Finance Officer, to make a presentation on the template to the 3 December 2008 meeting of the EC. Agreed also that Mr Cuggy would be requested to ensure that the necessity for a 3% reduction in payroll costs was factored into the template.
- 4.3** The implications of the difficult economic circumstances facing the university for the launch of new programmes were noted. It was noted that it was possible to validate and accredit a programme even if economic circumstances prevented it being launched in the year originally intended, though the possible adverse consequences of this, particularly for a programme involving application through the CAO, were noted also.

It is expected that more detailed information about the budgetary constraints applicable to higher education will be made available by late November 2008.

SECTION B: STRATEGIC MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION

5. Proposal regarding exchange programmes

Approved. Agreed that the International Office would be requested, when liaising with relevant staff members in Schools, to discuss ways in which DCU students might be encouraged to avail of placements abroad. Noted that the Students' Union would be very willing to discuss ways in which they might assist in this matter. Noted that students were sometimes deterred from participating in arrangements involving one semester abroad because of the need to complete all the requirements for the academic year (many of which can be fulfilled only from the home institution) in the remaining semester.

6. IQUB quality review report

Noted that, since the publication of the report, the Government had indicated that the functions of the IUQB would undergo major change, and that this matter would be discussed by the Governing Authorities of the universities. Noted, as a related matter, that it was also intended to merge HETAC, FETAC and the NQAI, though the details of how the merger would be implemented were not yet available. A discussion took place on the various possible national trends in terms of quality assurance and quality enhancement over the coming years.

7. Validation proposal: BA in International Business and Languages (English +1 other language: French/German/Spanish)

Approved. Agreed that there would be no need for the proposal to be considered by the Validation Subgroup, and no need for accreditation since all the modules, and the IBL framework, are already accredited. Agreed that it would be helpful to consider the addition of other languages to the framework in due course, though accreditation would be required if a suite of modules in a new language, not previously accredited, were to be introduced.

8. Any other business

Noted that discussions were taking place between the School of Nursing and other Schools in the university, St Patrick's College and All Hallows College with a view to establishing an inter-institutional undergraduate degree in Psychology. Noted that the model for this, if successful, could be applied to other subject areas in due course.

Date of next meeting:

<p>Wednesday 3 December 2008, 2.00 p.m. in A204</p>
--

Signed: _____
Chair

Date: _____