EDUCATION COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Wednesday 10 February 2021

2.00 p.m. – 3.40 p.m. via Zoom

Present: Dr Sarahjane Belton, Dr Claire Bohan, Professor Mark Brown, Professor Michelle Butler, Dr Brian Corcoran, Professor Barbara Flood, Professor Derek Hand, Ms Margaret Irwin-Bannon (Secretary), Mr Billy Kelly, Professor Lisa Looney (Chair), Ms Aisling McKenna, Ms Pauline Mooney, Professor Joseph Stokes, Mr Lucien Waugh-Daly and Dr Blanaid White

Apologies: Professor Anne Looney and Professor Greg Hughes

SECTION A: AGENDA, MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

The Chair welcomed Prof Derek Hand, Acting Executive Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Science, and Dr Blanaid White in her new capacity of Dean of Strategic Learning Innovation.

1.   Adoption of the agenda

Item 6 was deferred and the amended agenda was <u>adopted</u>.

2.   Minutes of the meeting of Education Committee, 13 January 2021

The minutes of 13 January 2021, were <u>approved</u> and it was noted the final version would be formally signed at a later date.

3.   Matters arising from the minutes of 13 January 2021

3.1   The Deputy Registrar/Dean of Teaching and Learning confirmed that he had completed a report for Senior Management on the University-level issues raised through the Annual Programme Review process in 2019-2020 (Item 3.4).

3.2   It was <u>noted</u> that the proposed paper on Dual and Joint Awards would be submitted for the consideration of Education Committee at its April 2021 meeting (Item 3.1a).

3.3   It was <u>noted</u> that the employability statements currently being progressed by the Deputy Registrar/Dean of Teaching and Learning with the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning would be submitted for the consideration of Education Committee at its May 2021 meeting (Item 3.1b).

3.4   The Chair reported that she had met with the Director of Quality Promotion to discuss statistical reporting to Education Committee. She indicated they had agreed that the focus of the reporting should be to identify and monitor action to be taken in response to statistical outcomes. The Chair indicated that she would like future data presented to Education Committee to support the measurement of the achievement of strategic goals. This data in turn would inform future strategy development. It was noted that due to resourcing in the Quality Promotion Office immediate action would not be taken and it was agreed to close off this item until such time as there was capacity to re-activate it in the context of the strategy (Item 3.1c).

3.5   It was <u>noted</u> that the Chair and Director of Student Support and Development had met to discuss widening participation, and further discussions were planned (Item 3.9).

3.6   The Deputy Registrar/Dean of Teaching and Learning reported on developments to date on the accreditation process for HCI funded programmes. He informed Education Committee that having reviewed the documentation with the Academic Secretary and Secretary of Education Committee the documentation template would, in the main, remain broadly the same, however he acknowledged not every programme would have the detail on later years of programmes, but it would be expected that they should be mapped out as envisaged, in as far as possible.

        He reported that he had met with the Dean of Strategic Learning Innovation and the Transversal Skills Programme Director and it had been agreed that additional guidance would be given in particular areas of the proposal development. It was noted that the guidance provided to the programme proposers would also be mirrored in the bespoke information provided to the Accreditation Board.

        In response to a query on whether or not UK-based nominees could be considered for membership of an Accreditation Board for the HCI Pillar 3 programmes, it was agreed that Education Committee would be prepared to consider their suitability on a case-by-case basis, however it had been originally intended that the composition of the Boards should be more international in nature (Item 4.2).

3.7   It was <u>noted</u> that Faculties were due to submit Further Education essential components entry equivalents, where applicable, by 26 February 2021. This exercise arose from the decision made by Education Committee at its meeting of 7 January 2021 to adopt a more standardised and University-wide approach to Further Education entry (Item 5.1).

3.8   It was <u>noted</u> that the process by which Education Committee would maintain oversight of its strategic commitments and activities was on the agenda (item 4) of this meeting (Item 3.1).

3.9   It was <u>noted</u> that a discussion paper to examine ways to strengthen Further Education (FE) partnerships and attract motivated students through the FE route was on the agenda of this meeting (Item 3.8).

3.10   It was <u>noted</u> that the process for the academic approval of HCI Pillar 3 funded programmes had been prepared and submitted to Academic Council for approval. The proposed validation of all new HCI funded programmes had also been submitted (Item 3.6/4.2).

3.11   It was <u>noted</u> that a method to seek systematic feedback from faculties on proposed evolution to their mode of delivery post COVID restrictions had been devised and the item was completed (Item 3.10).

SECTION B: STRATEGIC MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION/NOTING

4.   Education Committee: strategic commitments/projects reporting

The Chair provided a brief presentation of progress to date on bringing together all the strategic related activities and projects over which Education Committee should have oversight, and a mechanism and schedule for reporting on those activities and projects.

She indicated that she had categorised the activities into the areas of Teaching and Learning Practice, which included Teaching Effectiveness and Curriculum Renewal, Institutional Development, and academic policies, regulations and frameworks. She outlined that once this exercise was completed ownership of particular projects would be assigned and a schedule of reporting to Education Committee would be agreed, depending on the type of project or activity involved.

5.   Update on Human Capital Initiative (HCI) Pillar 3: Innovation and Agility

The Dean of Strategic Learning Innovation provided a presentation on the work that had been completed to date on the HCI Pillar 3 project in respect of the development of the new and existing programmes and their approval, transversal skills development, industry engagement, resourcing and planning of the project.

The following was <u>noted</u> from the presentation:

Programmes
- The existing BSc in Psychology and Mathematics is now included as a DCU Futures programme
- Additional staffing resources have been progressed
- The Futures leadership team is now in place, and the initial focus has been to meet individual development teams to offer support. In response to feedback, the Futures team is also providing presentations on the vision of DCU Futures to any development team that requests it
- Programme development teams are currently working on the progress update for Faculty Teaching and Learning Committees, and for Education Committee on 10 March 2021.

Traversals Skills
- The Transversal skills Programme Director has begun work on transversal skills identification and development by identifying existing expertise and good practice in DCU with respect to transversal skill development
- He has also begun discussions with relevant parties, both internal and external, on the languages components.

Industry Engagement
- There has been further recent engagement with industry partners, all of whom are still committed to the project. The next step will be the identification by the industry partners of personnel to work with programme teams to co-design industry input.

Resourcing
- A mechanism is in place for the allocation of resources, to be rolled out in Phase II, following the Education Committee meeting of 10 March 2021.

The Chair thanked the Dean of Strategic Learning Innovation for her presentation on the first two weeks in post, and also reminded Education Committee of the following HCI-funded projects with which DCU is involved:

- IUA Project: *Towards a multi-campus micro-credentials system*: Mairéad NicGiolla Mhichíl has been representing DCU at the IUA meetings and the project is progressing, having already appointed a programme director
- Maynooth University: *Virtual Laboratories in higher education as an innovative pedagogical tool*. An MOA to underpin this programme is under way
- The Institute of Technology Carlow, *Postgraduate Certificate in Innovative Materials for Industry 4.0.* Discussions have commenced on an MOA.

In the brief discussion which followed it was noted that there was a convergence of different aspects of current and ongoing normal business in addition to adaptions to hybrid delivery for 2021 and the development of programmes under the DCU Futures project. It was felt that the timeframe was condensed and the convergence of these items was putting pressure on academic colleagues. As a result, the opportunities to fully embrace and adapt to this new DCU Futures approach were not ideal, and concern was expressed that there might be a temptation to revert to more familiar approaches.   It was noted that the DCU Futures Champions had a very important role to play in supporting programme development teams.

It was acknowledged that the changes wrought by the need to adopt to online delivery due to the health emergency and the later than anticipated notification of the funding award had contributed significantly to the shortened timeframe.

It was noted that there was commitment on behalf of faculties to the project and acknowledged that more resources are now in place to support it.

6.   Widening Participation

6.1   Stronger Connections with Further Education; a strategic priority for DCU

This item was deferred and will be discussed at a later date.

7.   Update on ECIU European University

The Director of the National Institute of Digital Learning presented on micro-credentials, emphasising in particular DCU work within the ECIU University, why there is a focus on micro-credentials in the project and the factors that are driving the move towards micro-credentials.

The following were <u>noted</u> from the presentation:

● Micro-credentials are high on the agenda of the European Commission and ECIU University:
    o The European Commission produced a report in December 2020 entitled *A European Approach to Micro-credentials*
    o The ECIU University launched a white paper entitled *Paving the Road ahead for the Micro-credentials Movement* on 28 January 2021
    o The drivers for micro-credentials, which are very much recognised by the European Commission, are as follows:
        ▪ The change in emphasis in hiring for skills, not necessarily for degrees
        ▪ Private providers entering the market and the CPD certification space
        ▪ Recognition that the world of work is changing due to automation and that workers will continually need to upskill
        ▪ Micro-credentials can afford the opportunity to develop and recognise transversal skills
        ▪ The need to increase the uptake of life-long learning
        ▪ Micro-credentials may serve Higher Education Institutions by enabling them to become more agile in response to new developments.
● The issue for universities with this new approach is the tension between bundling and unbundling. From a Higher Education perspective, it is essential that we clearly differentiate 'badging' and non-accredited courses from formal and semi- formal accredited and stackable micro-credentials
● DCU is, and needs to continue to be, very actively involved in the conversation about micro-credentials
● It was noted that DCU has launched a new MOOC on FutureLearn entitled *Higher Education 4.0 –Certifying your Future*, which deals with the new skills agenda and new pedagogies.

The Chair noted that from her point of view micro-credentials raise fundamental questions about what a degree will be in the future and the role of the University, and the quality assurance of smaller elements of learning. She noted that DCU is well positioned in terms of its involvement both with the ECIU and the IUA projects and it would be important to ensure that expertise is developed throughout the University.

The Deputy Registrar suggested that the University has to strategically take a position e.g. DCU may not go down the route of accrediting a range of micro-credentials that are stackable, rather that DCU could look at its programmes and create micro-credentials from them, that in turn could stack back up again. Also there may be micro-credentials available to DCU on the various platforms that could be used as additional resources.

It was noted that the European Commission's approach is to incorporate micro-credentials formally into the European Qualifications Framework, therefore making it a more main-stream approach.

SECTION C: PROGRAMME AND MODULE-SPECIFIC ISSUES

8.   **Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences: Proposal to restructure and re-activate the MA i Léann na Gaeilge (MAHG) programme from 2021/22**

Education Committee commended the proposal and recognised the amount of work that had gone into its preparation.

It was recommended that the proposal should be subject to the validation and accreditation process as the programme had changed so substantially (75 new credits--including the internship).

The following comments and recommendations were <u>noted</u> with respect to the proposal:

- The long-term sustainability of providing module options on a programme that has such a small target cohort and the type of learning environment created with very small numbers was questioned, as was the feasibility of that approach into the future.
- The positive feedback from the external examiner was noted and attention was drawn to the fact that the reviewer mentioned the importance of maintaining strong relationships with employers for the internship. It was noted that it would be important to enshrine the longevity of those relationships to ensure there are internship opportunities for the students.
- It was recommended that where internships are being proposed, the feasibility of offering placements should be discussed in advance with the INTRA placement office.
- It was recommended that the module learning outcomes for the Internship module should be changed to reflect NFQ level 9 outcomes. It was felt that the outcomes as presented reflected level 8 outcomes. The Translation Studies parallel for internships was noted, however it was felt that there was a particular context to those internships and it would be more difficult to achieve NFQ level 9 outcomes without a specific context in this programme.

9.   **DCU Business School: Proposal to amend the structure of the Bachelor of Business Studies (Exchange) programme**

The proposal to facilitate six students currently registered as BSE3 students in the current academic year 2020-21 to take their Study Abroad next year in 2021-2022 was <u>approved.</u> As outlined in the proposal those students will take their Study Abroad year out of sequence as follows: BS1 -> BS2 -> BSE4(2020-2021) -> BSE3 (2021-2022) (Business Studies (Exchange)).

It was agreed as the situation for current BSE2 students entering 3rd year in September 2021-2022 is not clear in terms of travel for their exchange in their third year, that should it be necessary, this situation could be replicated for an additional year, without having to return to Education Committee for approval, as follows: BS1 -> BS2 -> BSE4 (2021-2022) -> BSE3 (2022-2023) (Business Studies (Exchange)).

10.   Accreditation Board nominees for the MSc in Elite Sport Performance

The nominees for the Accreditation Board for the MSc in Elite Sport Performance were <u>approved</u> subject to a minor correction to the affiliation of one of the nominees.

11.   Any other business

Clarification was sought on the approval of academic structures for 2021-2022 and the changes that may or may not be necessary for semester 1 depending on whether or not a hybrid delivery model has to be followed. It was <u>noted</u> that an outline sequence of dates is being prepared by Registry which will be discussed and agreed with the Executive Deans.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Date of next meeting:
Wednesday, 10 March 2021
at 2.00 pm via Zoom