

EDUCATION COMMITTEE**MINUTES**

Wednesday 13 January 2021

2.00 p.m. – 3.45 p.m. via Zoom

- Present:** Dr Sarahjane Belton, Dr Claire Bohan, Professor Mark Brown, Professor Michelle Butler, Dr Brian Corcoran, Professor John Doyle, Professor Barbara Flood, Ms Margaret Irwin-Bannon (Secretary), Professor Anne Looney, Professor Lisa Looney (Chair), Ms Aisling McKenna, Ms Pauline Mooney, Professor Joseph Stokes, Mr Lucien Waugh-Daly and Dr Blanaid White
- In attendance:** Mr Martin Grehan
- Apologies:** Professor Greg Hughes and Mr Billy Kelly

SECTION A: AGENDA, MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**1. Adoption of the agenda**

The agenda as circulated was adopted.

2. Minutes of the meeting of Education Committee, 16 December 2020

The minutes of 16 December 2020, were approved and it was noted the final version would be formally signed at a later date.

3. Matters arising from the minutes of 16 December 2020

- 3.1 The Chair reported that she had met with the Academic Secretary, Deputy Registrar/Dean of Teaching and Learning and Secretary of Education Committee on 6 January 2021 to discuss the progression of Education Committee activities recorded under matters arising. The discussion took a broader view of Education Committee's commitments and activities as they relate to DCU Strategy (Teaching and Learning), the HEA Performance Compact, ECIU European University and the organisational development to support academic areas. The Chair proposed that all of these commitments and activities would be captured and collated in one document, and those relevant to strategic commitments or projects identified. These activities would then be tracked using a traffic light system which would provide Education Committee with a snapshot of the progress of longer term activities under its remit.

The Chair noted that some items on the matters arising list would be subsumed into an area that relates to an emerging Operating Model framework (Items 3.6, 3.9, 3.12).

She noted the following with respect to a number of existing ongoing items:

- a) A paper on Dual and Joint Awards is becoming a priority in the wider context e.g. Brexit. It was noted that some work has already been completed on this item and it would be prioritised over the coming weeks (Item 3.4)
- b) The Deputy Registrar/Dean of Teaching and Learning is currently progressing employability statements with the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning
- c) Statistical reporting should not only be about the provision of useful data but also about closing the loop on the implications of the data. The Chair noted she would be meeting with the Director of Quality Promotion, in this regard (Item 3.3)

Education Committee agreed the proposed approach. The Chair indicated that she would provide an elaboration on the information she had already presented, for the review of Education Committee at its 10 February 2021 meeting, and to agree a cycle of reporting on these activities (Item 3.1).

- 3.2 It was noted that work is ongoing on the project on student engagement funded through Strategic Alignment of Teaching and Learning Enhancement (SATLE) funding from the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching on Student Engagement, which will run as a pilot for a year or two and will involve investigation of what data can be extracted from Loop and how the data would be used (Item 3.2).
- 3.3 It was noted that teaching effectiveness, one of the key priorities of the Teaching and Learning Strategy would be included in the document which will track progress on strategic activities (Item 3.5).
- 3.4 It was noted that a memo was due to be sent to Senior Management outlining the University-level issues raised through the Faculty APR summary reports (Item 3.7).
- 3.5 It was noted that the external review process of the Graduate Diploma in Web Technologies which was approved by Education on 8 July 2020 had been completed (Item 3.8).
- 3.6 It was noted that a proposal on a revised accreditation process which should be applied to the DCU Futures new programmes funded under HCI, Pillar 3 is on the agenda (4.2) of this meeting (Item 3.10)
- 3.7 It was noted that the Dean of the DCU Institute of Education was working on the commission of a qualitative survey of staff and students on the changes to assessment made in the context of COVID-19 (Item 3.11).
- 3.8 It was noted that the Dean of the DCU Institute of Education was working on a discussion paper to examine ways to strengthen Further Education (FE) partnerships and attract motivated students through the FE route (Item 4a).

- 3.9 It was noted that Chair and Director of Student Support and Development are due to meet to discuss Widening Participation (Item 4b).
- 3.10 It was noted that work is ongoing on devising a method to seek systematic feedback from faculties on proposed changes to their modes of delivery, when planning for September 2021 (Item 6).

SECTION B: STRATEGIC MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION/NOTING

4. Human Capital Initiative (HCI) Pillar 3: Innovation and Agility

4.1 *Project Update on DCU Futures*

The Chair updated Education Committee on the DCU Futures project as follows:

- The first report to the HEA was due for completion by Friday 15 January 2021
- Faculties have been working hard on developing the programmes
- The recruitment team has been promoting the new programmes with Open Day talks and provision of information on the DCU website. The CAO has been provided with the relevant information highlighting the new programmes, and the Chair completed a podcast to promote the programmes
- Interviews have taken place for the two leadership roles on the DCU Futures project as follows: Dean of Strategic Learning Innovation and Transversal Skills Programme Director
- An additional programme, which met the HCI Pillar 3 criteria has been added to the list of DCU Futures new undergraduate programmes, and will contribute to delivering the additional student numbers committed to under HCI Pillar 3. The new programme is entitled BA in Climate and Environmental Sustainability and will be offered by the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
- Industry partners have been contacted and a series of meetings has been arranged involving the DCU President, Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Deputy Registrar/Dean of Teaching and Learning and faculty nominees
- The governance framework has been agreed by DCU Executive and Terms of Reference are due to be developed
- The next group of HCI related appointments will be arranged shortly.

The following was clarified with respect to industry engagement:

- Engagement with industry partners would focus heavily on transversal skills
- It was noted that in preparation for meetings with industry partners it was agreed that a 'mind map' of the places where industry might have interaction throughout the new programmes would be completed. Once each programme has completed this task, it would be intended to review the mind-maps and examine if there are common threads that can be linked to multiple programmes and/or if there would also be discipline specific requirements.
- It was noted that it would be important to retain and acknowledge existing industry relationships and establish how this is done in the project structure.

4.2 *Approach to Accreditation*

The Chair presented to Education Committee on a proposed approach, on an exceptional basis, to the validation and accreditation of the HCI Pillar-3 funded new undergraduate programmes.

The proposed approach was outlined as follows:

- To recommend to Academic Council that the following named five new undergraduate programmes would be validated on the basis that the key University validation criteria in terms of strategic fit and feasibility were addressed through our focus in the funding call and the awarding of funding:
 - BEng in Sustainable Systems and Energy
 - BSc in Digital Business and Innovation
 - BSc in Global Challenges
 - BSc in Psychology and Disruptive Technologies
 - BA in Climate and Environmental Sustainability
- Programme proposers would proceed directly to developing accreditation documentation, subject to approval of validation by Academic Council
- The Accreditation process would be a modified one which would require detailed academic outcomes, award title, high level structure and pedagogy (with the expectation that year one would be most developed in this regard). It would be accepted that detail on assessment and pedagogy would evolve
- The Accreditation Board would be comprised as follows: International disciplinary experts for each programme and representative national industry body input (which could be common across some/all programmes). It would be intended for the Accreditation Board to be comprised of three members
- Education Committee would approve the nominees for Accreditation Boards and conduct an interim review of the development of the programmes towards accreditation
- An International Advisory Panel of experts in pedagogy/disciplinary pedagogy would be appointed to review all DCU Futures Programmes at least annually over the four years of roll-out.

In the discussion which followed the following points were noted:

- The Accreditation Board would be provided with bespoke contextual accreditation guidance as accreditation would not necessarily follow usual norms
- It would be important that the HCI funded new specialisms would be linked to the development of the new programmes
- It would be important that individual programmes are not developed in isolation and there is a collective element to their development in terms of the integration of transversal skills and pedagogical approach
- A bespoke HCI accreditation template would be developed within the next number of weeks
- It would be important that programme teams provided an update on process in March, prior to accreditation.

The approach to the validation and accreditation of the DCU Futures, HCI Pillar 3 funded programmes was approved.

The Chair requested that Committee members give due consideration to their contacts in relevant pedagogical areas for nomination to the Advisory Panel.

5. Widening Participation

5.1 Further Education (FE) Entry Routes to DCU undergraduate programmes

The Chair provided the context to the document prepared by the Deputy Registrar/Dean of Teaching and Learning on DCU undergraduate Further Education entry routes, which reflected a range of approaches. She noted that it had been agreed in a discussion on widening participation at the Education Committee meeting of 16 December 2020 that DCU should set a target date by which FE entry routes are reviewed and confirmed so that by April/May 2021 DCU would be in a position to plan to accept students by September 2022.

The approach proposed in the document was as follows:

In the interests of facilitating widening participation and to allow DCU to better meet national targets on the transition from FE to HE, DCU should

- (i) Provide for FE entry to those programmes where no such entry route currently exists;
- (ii) Have general requirements that applicants have completed any FE Award and achieved at least five Distinctions;
- (ii) Only in cases where programmes currently have specific entry requirements over and above general entry requirements, require that applicants have met FE Essential Component(s) equivalent to those specific entry requirements. Those Essential Components can be drawn from any FE Award.

For each programme, DCU can set quotas on places to be offered and where there are more qualifying applicants than allocated places, applicants are admitted on the basis of a [points system](#).

In the discussion which followed, Education Committee welcomed the proposal and indicated that it should be progressed as promptly as possible. It was noted that there would be some programmes where there may be a divergent approach due to the requirements of professional accrediting bodies, and others where the management of numbers for entry onto specialist programmes with very small numbers of students would be important. It was noted too that there is a requirement for primary school teaching that Maths and Irish must be from the Leaving Certificate examination rather than an FE equivalent.

It was agreed that the default entry would be five distinctions on any FE level 5 course and that each Executive Dean and Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning would review their faculty FE entry in the context of the University approach and specify 'essential components', where required.

Education Committee commended Mr Billy Kelly, Deputy Registrar/Dean of Teaching and Learning in his absence, on the work completed on the proposal.

SECTION C: PROGRAMME AND MODULE-SPECIFIC ISSUES**6. Faculty of Science and Health: Validation proposal: MSc in Elite Sport Performance**

The Education Committee granted the proposed programme approval for further development towards accreditation, subject to the following recommendations/ considerations being addressed:

- Education Committee requested that consideration would be given to provision for additional academic resources in the planned finance statement to support a programme at NFQ level 9 and to provide for the amount of new material to be developed. On a related point, it was also noted there is no incremental increase in funding to take account of additional cohorts as the programme cycles progresses and it was recommended that financial provision should be made. This may impact on the financial return of the programme.
- It was recommended that programme proposers revise the Accreditation Board nominees to aim to ensure greater gender mix and a more international profile. It was noted that one nominee to the Accreditation Board had been involved in the accreditation of a related programme and the programme proposers were asked to ensure that members of the Board have sufficient professional distance from the University. It was requested that additional Accreditation Board nominees would be submitted for the approval of Education Committee at its next meeting.
- It was recommended that the detail of RPL as outlined in the proposal documentation would align with the DCU RPL policy and reference should be explicitly made to the DCU policy in that section. In addition, it was recommended that the programme proposers align RPL requirements with the standard entry route in terms of 'disciplinary knowledge and know-how'.
- Programme proposers were asked to give consideration to reviewing the number of places on offer in the programme in the longer term, in light of the University intention to grow its postgraduate numbers.
- In the list of modules provided, only one module specifically mentions 'elite' in its title. As it is an MSc in Elite Sport Performance, it was suggested that consideration be given to including 'elite' in individual module titles, where relevant and appropriate.
- It was noted that the programme proposal information is not always clear as to whose 'performance' is the focus of the programme i.e. the individual performance of the student on the MSc programme or the sport professionals they may work with. It was recommended that should be made clear throughout the documentation.
- It was requested, to ensure that it is clear in the documentation that the programme targets early career professionals and those intending to enter that field, wherever it is mentioned.
- It was requested that a structure is provided that includes the semesters in which modules will be taught.

7. Any other business**7.1 Thank you to Prof John Doyle, Executive Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences**

The Chair noted that this was Prof John Doyle's last meeting of Education Committee, following nine years of membership, as he was stepping down from his role as Executive Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. She thanked him most sincerely for his unique and well-informed contribution to Education Committee which invariably had a focus on the student perspective. She wished him well in his future endeavours.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

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