

ACADEMIC COUNCIL MINUTES

**3 February 2021
2.00 p.m. – 2.50 p.m.**

Zoom Meeting

Present:

B. Anderson	SJ. Belton	F. Blin
S. Blott	C. Bohan	L. Boran
J. Brunton	J. Bruton	M. Butler
PJ Byrne	P. Cahill	B. Corcoran
E. Costello	M. Coulter	S. Cullen
R. Devery	T. Downes	H. Esmonde
O. Farrell	O. Feeney	B. Flood
Y. Freeney	G. French	C. Furlong
P. Gallagher	R. Gillanders	S. Giordani
C. Grant	C. Gurrin	D. Hand
S. Hegarty	G. Hughes	G. Jones
J. Kearney	R. Keegan (Secretary)	W. Kelly
D. Keogh (Chair)	D. Kinahan	P. Landais
A. Logan	T. Lokot	L. Looney
C. Mac Murchaidh	M. McAdam	K. McDonagh
E. McDonald	J. McDonough	P. McGorman
J. McManis	P. McMorrow	M. McSharry
P. Meleady	P. Mooney	E. Morgenroth
A. Morrissey	J.-P. Mosnier	G.-M. Muntean
R. Murphy	F. Murphy	C. Ni Mhurchú
S. O'Brien	E. Quinn	P. Rosati
P. Sharkey Scott	G. Sinclair	A. Sinnott
M. R. Sweeney	T. Szecsi	J. Travers
G. Uí Laighléis	J. Usher	L. Van Der Werff
P. Van Kampen	L. Waugh-Daly	B. White

In attendance:

V. Cooke

Apologies:

M. Crane	E. Kennedy	A. McKenna
B. Nolan	D. Robbins	J. Stokes

The President welcomed new members to Academic Council, noting in particular, the presence of:

Prof. Paul Cahill, Acting Head, School of Biotechnology

Dr Sandra Cullen, Head of School, School of Human Development

Prof. Derek Hand, Acting Dean, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Mr John McDonough, University Librarian

Mr Peter McGorman, Director of ISS

1. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted.

A. Minutes and Related Issues

2. Minutes of the meeting of Academic Council of 9 December 2020

The minutes were approved. It was noted that formal minutes would be signed once on-campus activity resumes.

3. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

4. Minutes of the meetings of the Education Committee of 18 November 2020 and 16 December 2020

The minutes were approved.

It was noted that fieldwork for the 2020/21 Irish Student Survey of Engagement (StudentSurvey.ie) would commence on 22 February 2021.

It was noted that Education Committee focus would include widening participation in the coming months with particular attention to further education routes into DCU.

It was noted that the basis upon which DCU gathers and uses data in relation to academic activities, which is currently being done in the context of a health emergency, has been reviewed by Education Committee.

5. Minutes of the meeting of the University Standards Committee of 19 November 2020

The minutes were approved.

It was noted that the University Standards Committee has reviewed the academic regulatory changes made in 2019-20 in response to COVID-19. The continuation or otherwise of various aspects into 2020-21 has been agreed upon in light of that review.

It was noted that the University Standards Committee is recommending an amendment to the regulations for external examiners to allow examiners to take maternity, paternity or adoptive leave (item 10 on today's agenda).

6. Minutes of the meeting of the Graduate Research Studies Board of 29 October 2020 and 10 December 2020

The minutes were approved.

It was noted that the DCU-DKIT collaborative arrangement for graduate research awards has been renewed to the end of June 2022. The President acknowledged the importance of DCU's partnership with DkIT as significant research collaborators.

B. Policy and Strategy Issues

7. President's report

- 7.1 The President informed Council that the Crisis Management Team continues to meet twice a week to address immediate issues and to plan ahead. He reiterated DCU's commitment to prioritising the health and safety of staff and students while ensuring we deliver the best experience to students within the allowed parameters.
- 7.2 The President advised Council that DCU is working with the IUA, at a sectoral level, to mitigate the impact of COVID on the sector. He highlighted the importance of the new dedicated Ministry for Further and Higher Education and noted the recent Department call for input into their new strategic plan. DCU has made a submission under this call and the IUA has made a sectoral submission. The President informed Council that the IUA has also made a presentation to the Department calling for a renewed PRTL scheme and he acknowledged Mr Robbie Sinnott's significant contribution in shaping that proposal.
- 7.3 The President noted the importance of the Brexit trade agreement and the United Kingdom's decision to remain within the research frameworks. He noted UK's withdrawal from the Erasmus programme but noted the Irish government's guarantee that students in Northern Ireland will continue to participate in the scheme.
- 7.4 The President informed Council of progress made in the renewal of the current strategic plan, led by Prof. Anne Sinnott. The strategy has been reviewed and renewed and will be brought to Executive shortly before being rolled out to the University.
- 7.5 The President congratulated Dr Blánaid White on her recent appointment as the new Dean of Strategic Learning Innovation and Dr Ciaran Dunne as the new Transversal Skills Programme Director. He noted the importance of these appointments in demonstrating the significant emphasis DCU places on providing the very best student learning experience.
- 7.6 The President informed the Council that initial meetings have taken place with HCI industry partners and Student Recruitment has begun promoting the new undergraduate programmes in recent weeks.
- 7.7 The President noted the significance of DCU's involvement in the European Consortium of Innovative Universities (ECIU). He advised the Council that the VPAA/Registrar has recently

joined the ECIU University Board in place of the President. He noted the Registrar is best placed to represent DCU as the academic elements of the project progress. The President also noted the many possibilities arising from the ECIU network and informed Council that he has held bilateral meetings with several of the Rectors to explore how these might be realised in the interest of DCU.

- 7.8 The President congratulated DCUBS on the recent reaccreditation by AACSB for a further five years. He noted the significance of this prestigious achievement.

8. COVID-19

Prof. Lisa Looney informed Council that in light of extended restrictions, the decision has been made to extend current DCU arrangements for programme delivery until the end of Semester 2. This decision has been communicated to staff and students. The University recognises that a small number of programmes require on-campus access for specific students, to facilitate access to specialist equipment or activities that cannot be done remotely. Prof. Looney advised Council that Faculties are working to ensure that these cohorts can meet all the requirements of their programmes.

Prof. Looney acknowledged that significant work required in pivoting to extended online delivery has been particularly intensive in recent weeks. She noted that Semester 1 results would give an objective view of how students are performing during extended restrictions and informed Council that results would be reviewed by the University once available.

Prof. Looney noted the difficulties in forward planning in the context of ongoing uncertainty. She advised Council that the Education Committee has begun to seek feedback from colleagues on what processes and activities might be retained in the post-COVID era.

9. Strategic Academic Initiatives

9.1 (a) HCI Pillar 3 funded new undergraduate programmes approval process

Prof. Lisa Looney briefed Council on recent Education Committee discussions on the most effective and appropriate approach for the validation and accreditation for the new HCI3-funded programmes. Education Committee is proposing an integrated approach to accreditation, recognising that many aspects of the validation criteria have already been addressed through the HCI submission process.

It is furthermore proposed that the accreditation process would be slightly modified with the expectation that the documentation would address academic outcomes and high-level structure and pedagogy. The Accreditation Board would be comprised of international disciplinary experts for each programme and would have representative national industry body input. Ongoing input will also be provided through an International Advisory Panel.

Academic Council approved the programme approval process.

9.1 (b) Validation recommendation for the following HCI Pillar 3 funded programmes:

- **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

Approved

C. Items for Formal Approval/Noting

- 10. Regulations and Guidelines, External Examiners for taught programmes/modules**

Approved

- 11. Academic Calendar 2020-21, Autumn dates**

Noted

- 12. Validation report: MSc in Elite Sport Performance**

Approved

- 13. Recommendations from Progression and Awards Boards for March 2021 conferring**

Approved

- 14. Recommendations from Spring 2021 Faculty Awards Boards for Research Degrees for March 2021 conferring**

Approved

- 15. Proposed amendment to the Terms of Reference of Academic Council and Education Committee**

Approved. It was noted that the Terms of Reference are being amended to include the new role of Dean of Strategic Learning Innovation.

16. Any other business

There was no other business.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Date of next meeting:

7 April 2021
2:00 pm
Zoom