

## GOVERNING AUTHORITY MEETING

Minutes of meeting of Wednesday, February 14<sup>th</sup> 2024  
2.00pm, AG01, Albert College, Glasnevin Campus.

### **PRESENT:**

Ms. Brid Horan (Chair)  
Prof Daire Keogh  
Ms Marian Corcoran  
Prof Yvonne Daly  
Mr John Darby  
Ms Sarah Fitzpatrick  
Ms Carol Hanney  
Mr Cathal Marley

Ms Fiona Naughton  
Mr Thomas O'Dowd  
Dr Aisling de Paor  
Ms Michele Pringle  
Ms Marie Sinnott (on-line)  
Mr Brian J. Smyth  
Mr Seamus Walsh

### **APOLOGIES:**

Mr David Harney  
Mr Justin Doyle

Mr Anubhav Anandind  
Prof James O'Higgins Norman

### **IN ATTENDANCE:**

Mr John Kilcoyne  
Dr Declan Raftery  
Prof Anne Sinnott

Prof Lisa Looney  
Mr Gareth Yore  
Ms Marie Mellett

### **WELCOME**

The Chancellor welcomed members. She thanked everyone for their participation and noted the apologies.

The agenda was adopted.

The Chancellor enquired if there were any conflicts of interest in relation to any item on the agenda that required a declaration on the part of a member(s) – None were declared.

1. **MINUTES OF GOVERNING AUTHORITY MEETING OF 08<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2023**  
**Approved** by the Authority.
2. **REPORT OF MEETING OF 08<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2023 FOR WEB PUBLICATION**  
**Approved** by the Authority subject to review by Senior Management.
3. **REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS 08<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2023**  
Action 1: Ongoing  
  
Action 2: Ongoing

Action 3: Complete. The Chancellor and President discussed the membership and agreed that a small group of management should be involved, along with The Deputy President, the Director of HR, the Director of Finance and the COO. Outside assistance will be called upon if needed. The Authority have requested an update in 3-4 months.

The Students Union President, noted that the board of OSL has grown from a 6 person Board to a 10 person Board as a result of their review.

Action 4: on agenda

Action 5: Complete. SafeZone was promoted to staff and students leading to a significant uptake since January 2024.

Action 6: Complete

Action 7: On agenda

#### **Actions to be tracked:**

Action 1: ongoing

Action 2: as possible

Action 3: no changes

Action 4: Ongoing

Action 5: Prof Derek Hand is presenting today.

#### **4. MATTERS ARISING**

None

#### **5. GOVERNANCE**

##### **5.1 Governing Authority Code of Conduct**

The tracked changes were circulated in advance of the meeting. All changes are minor in nature. The Authority requested some further changes:

- The scope of the policy should be expanded to include subcommittees.
- Expand the text in relation to giving/receiving gifts.
- In section 13, acknowledge DCU respect and value diversity. Include links to policies.

Subject to the above amendments the Authority **approved** the Code of Conduct.

##### **5.2 Self-Assessment Evaluation Questionnaire Responses**

Overall the results were positive. The Chancellor discussed the comments, noting the following:

- Going forward The VP for Research will present on an annual basis. If there are any strategic issues within research throughout the year the President will provide an update to the Authority.

- Induction is an ongoing challenge. The Chancellor asked any member that has concerns to please contact the COO.
- It was agreed to invite staff for a coffee to meet Governing Authority members, prior to some meetings.
- The secretary will endeavour to keep the agenda concise however the agenda is determined by the complexity of the university. The secretary will also endeavour to rate approvals by level of importance on the agenda.
- It was agreed for a cover note, outlining the purpose of the presentation, to be circulated with the papers.
- The Authority are reluctant to remove a dial in option.
- The Director of Finance will delve into the idea of a financial dashboard.

The Chancellor noted that she is open to future suggestions. The Chancellor further noted that an external evaluation of the Governing Authority will be conducted later in the year.

#### FOR APPROVAL

##### 6. **HEA 2024 OVERSIGHT AGREEMENT**

The COO informed the Authority that this agreement is a formal agreement between DCU and the HEA. It is the HEA standard template, and the changes reflect the changes within the HEA Act. The secretary's group has reviewed the changes and has no issues to report.

**Approved** by the Authority

#### FOR DISCUSSION / NOTING

##### 7. **EUROPEAN CONSORTIUM OF INNOVATIVE UNIVERSITIES (ECIU) UPDATE**

Prof Lisa Looney, Vice President of Academic Affairs gave a presentation to the Authority. ECIU is a network of 13 partners across Europe and 1 in Mexico. These universities are united by a common profile and they map DCUs strategy. ECIUs view is building an alliance toward a European University. There is only one university per country, a university that has a distinct focus in their country, which is a very positive reflection on DCU. DCU has been a member of the consortium for 13 years.

There is particular value in fostering and developing specific deep bilateral relationships, alongside collective initiatives. Faculties have identified preferred partners and are currently updating plans of actions to deepen engagement. The wider EICIU network will make DCU more visible in Europe. Creating opportunities for our students and staff through CPD.

ECIU provides quality information and is pro-active in influencing policy. For example, they are looking into the legal status of a European Degree. Funding from a policy context is wrapped into Erasmus + funding. There is funding of €25m for Erasmus + project phase 2 covering November 2022 – 31 October 2026 with the option of extending for a further two years. This is being coordinated by the University of Twente in the Netherlands and there are 12 HEIs and one associate partner involved.

The Governance of ECIU is evolving and a new structure is due to come into place in spring 2024. DCU has appointed a ECIU Strategic Oversight Committee. This Committee provides information up to the Education Committee and Academic Council.

The Chancellor thanked LL for an informative presentation. It provided a good sense of how it links to DCUs strategy.

## 8. **FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES OVERVIEW**

Prof Derek Hand, Executive Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, was welcomed to the meeting. DH gave an overview of the faculty, noting there are seven schools in the faculty, showcasing the diversity within this faculty:

- School of Communications
- School of English
- School of Fiontar & Scoil na Gaeilge
- School of History & Geography
- School of Law & Government
- School of Applied Languages & Intercultural Studies and
- School of Theology, Philosophy and Music.

The Faculty currently has 3650 registered undergraduate students, 630 registered graduate taught students and 232 registered postgraduate research students.

Since 2017, the faculty has remained strong for students' top three applications and first choice preference within the CAO.

The flagship and biggest programme within the faculty is the BA Joint Honours. This is spread across the three academic campuses therefore offerings are limited due to timetabling. The BA in Climate and Environmental sustainability is a new programme. This year will see the first graduates.

DCU Connected is the faculties online learning offering This started a couple of years ago and continues to grow.

Many of the programmes include practical or experiential learning elements, with small group teaching and hands-on activities. Enhancing skills and employability.

A variety of assessment modes are used across the programmes, including Gen AI. Students used the Gen AI tool within the broader learning landscape to evaluate pros and cons.

One strategic goal of the faculty is to ensure that staff are engaging in ongoing professional development. Increasing numbers engaging with HEA fellowships are one indication of this commitment.

This faculty has the most diverse and interdisciplinary research community in DCU. Below are some of the faculty's outstanding research performance:

- 782 scholarly outputs published between 2020 and 2023.
- Field-Weighted Citation Impact: 1.74 (2020) to 2.17 (2023).
- 104 book monographs published by our staff between 2020 and 2024.
- Between 2021-2023, €19.6M of external funding was secured.

Research centers, such as Institute of Future Media, Democracy and Society, Centre for Climate and Society, Brexit Institute and Institute for International Conflict Resolution and Reconstruction, deal with real world issues. Deloitte sponsors the Centre for Climate and Society, and we in turn provided a course to Deloitte staff. This faculty maintains good working relationships with corporate entities though intra.

DH noted the following concerns:

- The cost of living especially for post graduate students.

- Being spread across three campuses makes collaboration more difficult. We do work hard at this but there is always a challenge. There are more opportunities that this faculty could explore however timetabling and space cause problems.

The Authority thanked DH for an excellent presentation from a complex faculty. This faculty's research makes a real-world impact and contributes to DCUs media present significantly. DH noted there is a lot to celebrate and thanked his colleagues for working hard to create a transformative experience for students along with readying them for the real world.

## 9. **AUDIT COMMITTEE**

### 9.1 **Report of meeting of 08<sup>th</sup> February 2024**

Cathal Marley, Chair of Audit Committee, gave an update to the Authority. The following items were noted:

- This meeting had a single item agenda to discuss the Annual Governance Statement.
- It was noted that this year's statement takes a new format that it is designed and formatted by the HEA. A cover note will be included in this year's submission on how DCU approached the new format.
- The statement was discussed by Audit Committee in detail and they believe that it is accurate and provides reasonable assurance that DCU are compliant.
- The Audit Committee are recommending the Annual Governance Statement for approval by Governing Authority.

## FOR APPROVAL

### 9.2 **Annual Governance Statement 2022 / 2023**

**Approved** by the Authority

## FOR DISCUSSION / NOTING

## 10. **RISK COMMITTEE**

### 10.1 **Report of meeting of 09<sup>th</sup> February 2024**

Marie Sinnott, Chair of Risk Committee, gave an update to the Authority. The following items were noted:

- The Committee were informed that SMG and the EMT conducted an emergency desktop exercise to test procedures and communications. The Committee asked for the lessons learned to be presented at the next meeting.
- The AGS was reviewed from a risk perspective.
- The Annual Health and Safety Report was reviewed. There were no catastrophic, very serious incidents, or serious incidents submitted to the HSA from October 2022 – September 2023. The Committee asked for next years report to give a more detailed analysis from previous years.
- An update to the initial stage of the risk process was proposed. The Committee requested clarity in a number of areas.
- The Executive Director of Engagement gave a presentation. There is a good understanding of risk and risk is embedded within the unit. There was concern about the impact of the removal of DCU email for life. There will be an impact on the university with the depletion of alumni contacts. Risk needs to be balanced between IT security and business/connection with alumni. It was also brought to the

Committees attention that recruiting in new markets has been impacted due to half the recruitment team leaving for other universities. There was no retention framework in place to assist with this.

**10.2 Minutes of meeting of 11<sup>th</sup> October 2023**

**Noted** by the Authority

**11. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE**

**11.1 Report of meeting 01<sup>st</sup> February 2024**

Seamus Walsh, Chair of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee, gave an update to the Authority. The following items were noted:

- The gender balance of the Committee has reduced to 33%. Two female members need to be appointed.
- It was noted that the Gender Pay Gap Report highlighted that the national average has moved from 8.81% to 11%. This is moving in the right direction. DCU are benchmarked well within the sector. The Authority asked for the report to be circulated.

**11.2 Minutes of meeting of 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2023**

**Noted** by the Authority

**12. PRESIDENT'S REPORT AND UNIVERSITY OFFICERS' REPORTS**

**DCU President**

The President gave an overview of his report which had been circulated to GA and highlighted the following:

- The President regretted to inform the Authority of the passing of two colleagues. Prof Paddy McNally and Mr David Kelly. The Chancellor will send a letter of condolence to both families on behalf of the Authority.
- DCU are currently out to tender for Phase I of its Campus Residences project.
- The DCU Business School had a visit from EQUIS last week. The outcome will be known in May. The President thanked all those involved.
- An MOU was signed with Accenture and recognises the two parties' shared commitment to strengthening university-industry partnership.
- The President noted that DCU have advanced into the worlds top 150 in the new QS Sustainability Rankings. This progress reflects the efforts of DCU staff and students in addressing the challenge of Climate Change.

**Vice President of Academic Affairs**

The Vice President of Academic Affairs informed the Authority that an AI Survey intends to be circulated to establish a baseline in terms of knowledge about its impact. A review is also being conducted across all disciplines to assess what changes will be needed to programmes to meet the future impact of AI.

The Vice President of Academic Affairs noted that a series of 'go-lives' will take place throughout 2024. The first 'go-live' will have curriculum data will be uploaded to the new system, Banner. The Authority asked for a presentation on the governance of the SIS programme at the next meeting.

**Chief Operations Officer**

The Chief Operations Officer informed the Authority that the north land has been rezoned and is no longer subject to residential land tax. Given this information DCU will be seeking legal advice on agreeing a cessation of the judicial review case for the north land. The Griffith Ave land is still subject to the Residential Land Tax and the judicial review remains active.

The closing date for tender submissions in relation to Campus Residences was February 09<sup>th</sup>. It will take 4-5 weeks to review these.

The Chief Operations Officer is seeking delegated authority be given to the Strategic Finance Advisory Committee in relation to the Griffith Ave land. If DCC approve planning permission for an access road, discussions need to take place regarding the clause within the 2000 Land Purchase Agreement.

The Authority **approved** delegated authority to the Strategic Finance Advisory Committee.

The Chief Operations Officer is also seeking delegated authority be given to the Strategic Finance Advisory Committee to negotiate a new lease with the Educational Research Centre (ERC).

The Authority **approved** delegated authority to the Strategic Finance Advisory Committee.

#### **Director of Finance**

The Director of Finance noted the university has a small surplus of €246k for the first quarter, against a budgeted breakeven. For the same period, the DCU Commercial Group of companies recorded €1.8m against a budgeted profit of €1.3m. The DCU group remains strong with significant cash reserves.

The Director of Finance further noted that the Mazars audit should be completed by the end of this month. This report will be presented to Audit Committee and Governing Authority at their April meetings.

The COVID-19 Business interruption Insurance claim is ongoing.

The Director of Finance is seeking delegated authority be given to the Strategic Finance Advisory Committee in relation to the HEA Financial Projection submission.

The Authority **approved** delegated authority to the Strategic Finance Advisory Committee.

#### **Director of Human Resources**

The Director of Human Resources informed the Authority that in conjunction with Cornmarket, DCU have launched a cardiovascular screening programme for all members of the DCU Income Protection Plan. This has been designed to enable colleagues to manage their heart health. Large numbers attended the launch.

### **13. PERSONNEL MATTERS**

The Chancellor noted she discussed the process of selecting the candidates being submitted for approval by the Authority (as previously agreed by GA) with the Director of Human Resources. The Chancellor confirmed that she is satisfied that the process followed was appropriate.

The Director of Human Resources submitted the following candidates for approval:

- Prof Nicola Cornally for appointment as Full Professor in the Faculty of Science and Health.
- Prof Janine Bosak for appointment as Full Professor, DCU Business School.
- Dr Julie Byrne for appointment as Full Professor, DCU Business School.
- Dr Marina Efthymiou for appointment as Professor DCU Business School.
- Mr Justin Doyle for appointment as Director of Information System Services in the Office of the Chief Operations Officer.
- Mr Joesph Bonham for appointment as Adjunct Faculty Member in the Faculty of Science and Health.
- Dr Austin Waters for appointment as Adjunct Faculty Member, in the Faculty of Science and Health.

The Authority gave a special congratulations to their fellow Authority member, Justin Doyle, on his appointment as Director of ISS.

**Approved** by the Authority

14. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

None