

ACADEMIC COUNCIL**MINUTES****5 April 2023****2.00 p.m. – 3.00 p.m.****Zoom Meeting****Present:**

C. Bohan	L. Boran	A. Bourke
A. Brennan	MK. Brown	Mt. Brown
J. Bruton	D. Burke	M. Butler
P.J. Byrne	P. Cahill	B. Corcoran
M. Coulter	S. Cullen	D. Elliott
O. Feeney	J. Foster	G. French
C. Furlong	P. Gallagher	T. Gans
S. Giordani	D. Hand	S. Hegarty
C. Holland	A. Initizar	J. Kearney
D. Keogh	D. Kinahan	M. Kirwan
V. Lambert	A. Logan	A. Looney
L. Looney	C. Mac an Bhaird	A. McAuley
U. McCabe	D. Mc Carthy	J. McDonough
E. McGlynn	P. McGorman	J. McMackin

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J. McManis	R. McManus	P. McMorrow
P. Mooney	A. Morrissey	G.M. Muntean
C. Ní Mhurchú	M. O'Brien	K. O'Sullivan
N. O'Sullivan	M. Pryce	P. Sharkey Scott
A. Sinnott	J. Stokes	T. Szecsi
G. Uí Laighléis	M. Ward	P. Young

Apologies:

E. Clinton	E. Crossen	C. Gurrin
P. Landais	A. Maillot	S. McGovern
S. O'Brien	P. Robbins	M. Rocchi

In Attendance:

V. Cooke	M. Howell
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1. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted.

A. Minutes and related issues

2. Minutes of the meeting of Academic Council of 8 February 2023

The minutes were approved.

3. Matters arising

It was noted that there were no matters arising.

4. Minutes of the meetings of the Education Committee of 25 January 2023 and 22 February 2023, and minutes of the meeting of the Strategic Learning Innovation Project Steering Group of 12 December 2022

The minutes were approved.

5. Minutes of the meeting of the University Standards Committee of 12 January 2023

The minutes were approved.

6. Minutes of the meetings of the Graduate Research Studies Board (GRSB) of 19 January 2023

The minutes were approved.

B. Policy and strategy issues**7. President's report (oral report)**

- 7.1 The President noted the announcement by Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science Simon Harris of a State investment of €40 million to support the delivery of 405 beds on DCU's Glasnevin campus. This subsidy is key, as the project would not have delivered affordable accommodation if built by the university on its own. The President expressed his thanks to Minister Harris and to Minister for Housing Darragh O'Brien for this commitment. The President noted that the University will provide an annual subvention to ensure that there will be a discounted rate available to SUSI grant recipients for a portion of the new capacity.

- 7.2 The President noted that DCU continues to engage with the Higher Education Authority (HEA) regarding the provision of additional places in specific disciplines. He informed members that, in regard to a recent announcement by Minister of Education Norma Foley, DCU will be providing additional places on the Professional Master of Education (Primary Teaching) (PME) programme. The President noted that these additional postgraduate places are consistent with the University's growth model.
- 7.3 The President informed members that the DCU has submitted two proposals to the Higher Education Authority (HEA) as part of Phase 2 of its process to identify options for programme creation and expansion to build capacity in Dentistry, Pharmacy, Medicine, Nursing, and Veterinary. These proposals include two new Level 9 Nursing programmes, a post-registration General Nursing programme and a graduate-entry General Nursing programme, and a five year integrated Level 9 Pharmacy programme.
- 7.4 The President informed members that Dr Jonathan Halloway, President of Rutgers University, recently visited DCU. The President welcomed the opportunity to showcase DCU's innovations in research and curriculum design and to explore future teaching and research collaborations in Biodesign, Communications, Education and Global Business.
- 7.5 The President congratulated the School of Physical Sciences on achieving the Athena SWAN Bronze Award. He expressed his particular thanks to Prof Deborah O'Connell and Dr Eilish McLoughlin for their work in preparing the School's application.
- 7.6 The President called attention to the email issued by the EDI Unit regarding the all-staff Athena SWAN consultation survey. He informed members that the deadline for completing the survey is 21 April 2023 and encouraged members to promote the survey amongst all staff in their respective faculties as it forms a key part of the self-assessment process towards a Silver Athena Award for the University.
- 7.7 The President thanked the Student Recruitment Team and Prof Anne Looney for their work in organising the QQI FET Open Day on 3 March 2023. The President explained that this was the first Further Education Open Day organised by DCU and reflects the University's commitment to the national priority of diversifying access routes to higher education.

- 7.8 The President expressed his thanks to the Student Recruitment team and staff and students from across the University for their work preparing for and during Spring Open Day on 1 April 2023. He informed members that approximately 1,000 prospective students attended, with many attendees expressing their awareness of DCU's reputation as a university known for its community engagement and provision of pastoral care to students.
- 7.9 The President congratulated Fiontar & Scoil na Gaeilge, which celebrated its thirty year anniversary on 25 March 2023. The President informed members that this special occasion was marked by an event in DCU's 1838 Restaurant, which saw Cormac O'hEadhra, Fiontar alumni, host a panel discussion with founding director Finbarr Bradley and former Head of School Caoilfhionn Nic Pháidín.
- 7.10 The President called particular attention to the ongoing threat posed to the University from cyber-attacks and reminded members that three Higher Education Institutions in Ireland have been victims of significant cyber-attacks since April 2021. The President also reminded colleagues of the importance of completing the Essential CyberSecurity Awareness Training (CSAT).

8. Strategic academic initiatives

Prof. Lisa Looney informed members that she and the director of finance will soon meet with the Executive Deans to review progress toward delivering the student growth/profile plan and consider the portfolio of programmes. L. Looney called particular attention to the potential of offering options of a five year integrated master's programme to grow postgraduate student numbers. This model was pioneered by the School of Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering and has since been implemented in the School of Electronic Engineering and in the School of Health & Human Performance.

8.1 Academic Integrity

Dr Monica Ward, the Dean of Teaching and Learning, provided an update to Academic Council on academic integrity, calling particular attention to the University's emerging Teaching and Learning Strategy, how DCU is deploying funds allocated as part of Strategic Alignment of Teaching and Learning Enhancement (SATLE) Funding 2020, and the specific challenges posed by AI-generated content being submitted for assessment.

M. Ward informed members that, as part of the vision informing DCU's Teaching and Learning Strategy, the University aspires toward a shared culture and understanding of academic integrity and will work with the National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN) to ensure its policies and procedures are aligned with best practice in the sector. M. Ward informed members that, in preparation for the 2023/24 academic year, DCU's Academic Integrity Policy and Academic Misconduct procedures are currently under review, taking into consideration the Academic Integrity Guidelines published by NAIN.

M. Ward explained to members that the purpose of the Strategic Alignment of Teaching and Learning Enhancement (SATLE) Funding 2020 is to establish best practices across the sector in upholding and cultivating academic integrity, in particular, facilitating effective engagement with challenges to academic integrity and developing national resources and tools for addressing these challenges.

M. Ward informed members that SATLE Funding has been allocated to specific faculty and school-level projects and also used to secure centralised resources in the Teaching Enhancement Unit (TEU). Regarding the latter, M. Ward explained that TEU is currently in the process of securing an Academic Integrity Officer, who will support colleagues in their redesign of assessments and in leveraging national resources, and an Academic Integrity Support Officer, who will explore digital means to assist with the identification of instances of academic misconduct. M. Ward informed members that these resources will be in place for the commencement of the 2023/24 academic year.

M. Ward informed members that submitting AI-generated content for assessment poses a particular challenge to higher education and that the National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN) is working to identify international best practices for addressing this unique challenge.

M. Ward explained the importance of mitigating the above challenge by teaching staff reviewing their respective assessment instruments to determine their vulnerability to generative artificial intelligence and introducing more authentic and/or specific assessment instruments when a high level vulnerability is detected. M. Ward recommended that the University should avoid completely reverting to closed-book, time-bound invigilated assessments and encouraged colleagues to instead utilise the resources provided via the Teaching Enhancement Unit to reduce the vulnerability of specific assessment instruments to generative artificial intelligence.

Prof Lisa Looney welcomed the allocation of SATLE Funding to both faculty and school-level projects and central resources. L. Looney noted that a robust strategy on assessment of students who are predominantly off campus will be required in particular, in light of the commitment to deliver to such students.

L. Looney informed members that DCU Students' Union has been involved in the development of policies and procedures to protect academic integrity and that the student body remains very supportive of the University's different initiatives in this important area.

C. Items for formal approval/noting

9. Accreditation Report: MSc in Biotherapeutics

Approved

10. DCU Placement: Report on INTRA Activities 2021-22

Prof Lisa Looney expressed her appreciation to employers for continuing to hire DCU students as interns and to INTRA Officers for supporting the delivery of the internship programme, especially in the context of increased national competition as all universities are now replicating the industry placement model first pioneered in Ireland by DCU.

L. Looney informed members that an integrated report will be submitted to Academic Council for the 2022-23 academic year onward to reflect the new configuration of placement at DCU. This report will provide information on DCU Placement, including International Mobility, INTRA and professional placements.

Noted

11. Quality Promotion Annual Report 2021-2022

Noted

12. GRSB Appeals Standing Committee Report to Academic Council

Prof Joseph Stokes informed members that the GRSB Appeals Standing Committee was convened to consider three appeals on 1 November 2022. These appeals included two appeals against the outcome of an examination and one appeal against the decision not to confirm the candidate on the PhD Register. J. Stokes informed members that none of the three appeals were upheld by GRSB Appeals Standing Committee on the grounds cited by the candidate.

Noted

13. Any other business

Prof Lisa Looney informed members that the deadline for nominations for the President's Awards for Excellence in Teaching is 1 May 2023. L. Looney requested members to promote this important initiative amongst staff and students in their respective faculties.

Date of next meeting:

6 June 2023

2:00 pm

Zoom

Signed: _____

Date: _____