

ACADEMIC COUNCIL**MINUTES**

9 December 2020
2.00 p.m. – 3.40 p.m.

Zoom Meeting**Present:**

| | | |
|------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| B. Anderson | SJ. Belton | F. Blin |
| C. Bohan | L. Boran | M. Brown |
| J. Brunton | J. Bruton | M. Butler |
| PJ Byrne | B. Corcoran | E. Costello |
| M. Coulter | M. Crane | D. Curran |
| T. Downes | J. Doyle | H. Esmond |
| O. Farrell | D. Fitzpatrick | L. Fitzsimons |
| B. Flood | Y. Freeney | G. French |
| C. Furlong | L. Gallagher | P. Gallagher |
| S. Giordani | C. Grant | P. Guasoni |
| C. Gurrin | D. Hand | S. Hegarty |
| G. Hughes | J. Kearney | R. Keegan (Secretary) |
| W. Kelly | E. Kennedy | D. Keogh (Chair) |
| D. Kinahan | P. Landais | A. Logan |
| T. Lokot | A. Looney | L. Looney |
| C. Mac Murchaidh | M. McAdam | K. McDonagh |
| E. McGlynn | A. McKenna | J. McManis |
| P. McMorrow | M. McSharry | P. Meleady |
| P. Mooney | A. Morrissey | E. Morgenroth |
| J.P. Mosnier | G.M. Muntean | R. Murphy |
| F. Murphy | C. Ni Mhurchú | M. O'Brien |
| S. O'Brien | A. Parle-McDermott | D. Robbins |
| P. Robbins | P. Sharkey Scott | G. Sinclair |
| A. Sinnott | J. Stokes | M. R. Sweeney |
| J. Travers | G. Uí Laighléis | J. Usher |
| L. Waugh-Daly | B. White | |

In attendance:

V. Cooke

Apologies:

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| P. Anandarajah | S. Blott | D. Collings |
| R. Gillanders | C. McArdle | E. McDonald |
| P. Rosati | | |

1. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted.

A. Minutes and Related Issues**2. Minutes of the meeting of Academic Council of 14 October 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 23 September 2020 and 21 October 2020

Approved

5. Minutes of the meeting of the University Standards Committee of 10 September 2020

Approved

6. Minutes of the meeting of the Graduate Research Studies Board of 31 August 2020

Approved

B. Policy and Strategy Issues**7. President's report****7.1** The President reiterated DCU's priority to safeguard the health and safety of students and staff during the pandemic and thanked the Office of the Chief Operations Officer and the Health and

Safety Office for their efforts this year. He also thanked the Students Union for their responsible and supportive engagement with DCU students and staff throughout the year.

- 7.2** The President informed Council of the planned social programme for December which will allow the DCU community to re-connect and celebrate this year's achievements. He acknowledged the impact of the pandemic on mental health and thanked Student Support & Development (SS&D) for the ongoing supports offered to students. The President drew attention to the DCU Student Assistance Fund and the Student Laptop Scheme. Dr Claire Bohan informed Council that SS&D has arranged 24/7 online counselling for students over the Christmas period.
- 7.3** The President informed Council that plans for Semester 2 are well underway. He highlighted the early decision to continue with hybrid delivery so to avoid disruption and allow students and staff to plan for the semester well in advance. He advised Council that DCU will seek to maximise co-curricular and on-campus activities in Semester 2.
- 7.4** The President drew attention to recent government calls for contributions to the 2021-2023 strategy. He highlighted, in particular, public consultation on the new Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science. He also drew attention to the public invitation to contribute to the review of the National Development Plan. The President informed Council that DCU is working with the IUA on a sectoral response to this call.
- 7.5** The President drew attention to the recent government announcement of a 'Shared Island Fund' with a planned €500m to be made available to 2025. The IUA is working with Universities Ireland and bodies such as the British Irish Chamber of Commerce, to ensure that the R&D strand addresses a broad disciplinary agenda. The President thanked Prof. Greg Hughes, Prof. Anne Sinnott, Prof. John Doyle and Dr Sally Smyth for their work on this to date.
- 7.6** The President congratulated the following staff members who were recently promoted to Associate Professor and informed Council that he expected a further round will be advertised in early 2021:
- Dr Martin Brown, Policy & Practice
 - Dr James Gallen, Law & Government
 - Dr Ann Largey, DCUBS
 - Dr Tanya Lokot, Communications
 - Dr Lampros Nikolopolous, Physics
 - Dr Shivaun O'Brien, Policy & Practice
- 7.7** The President congratulated Prof. Maura Conway on her recent appointment as the new Paddy Moriarty Professor of Government and International Studies. The Moriarity Chair was previous held by the late Prof. Robert Elgie.
- 7.8** The President congratulated Mr William Kelly on his recent DCU Educational Trust, Staff Leadership Award. The award recognises Mr Kelly's insight, integrity and immense contribution to the transformative learning experiences of DCU students.
- 7.9** The President commended those who have recently engaged in reviews including the ACCSB re-accreditation of DCU Business School, the Quality Review of the Registry and the Nursing and

Midwifery Board of Ireland review of the new School of Nursing, Psychotherapy and Community Health.

8. COVID-19

8.1 COVID arrangements being continued into 2020-21

Prof. Lisa Looney briefed Council on the COVID arrangements which are being continued into 2020-21:

1. Admissions:
 - Duolingo English testing is being retained for admission purposes for non-native English speakers.
 - The deferral of conditional offers will be permitted for the February 2021 intake.
2. Examinations:
 - No on-campus examinations will take place in Semester 2 or August except possible by exception.
 - Anonymous marking is suspended for 2020/21.
 - The standard duration for examinations has been amended to support online formats.
 - The Examination Support Centre will be retained for 2021 examinations.
3. External Examiner Roles:
 - External Examiners will have visibility of planned assessment for 2021, in line with previous years.
4. Student Processes:
 - Supporting professional documentation was not required for extenuating circumstances, postponement requests and examination appeals in 2019/20 and this is being retained for 2020/21.
5. Processing of Examination Outcomes:
 - PABs will continue to be conducted via Zoom with revised, smaller membership.

Prof. Looney expressed her thanks to the Executive Deans, the Dean of Teaching and Learning and the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning for their responsiveness and engagement in working on the planned arrangements.

Prof. Looney informed Council that work is underway to try to facilitate students who do not have an appropriate workspace at home for examinations.

9. Academic Integrity Awareness in DCU, Presentation by Dr Fiona O’Riordan and Dr Gillian Lake

Dr Gillian Lake and Dr Fiona O’Riordan presented to Council on recent and forthcoming initiatives in the area of academic integrity in DCU.

Dr O’Riordan summarised some of the recent academic integrity initiatives in DCU including the Teaching Enhancement Unit’s (TEU) involvement in the Erasmus+ funded INTEGRITY project. As part of this project, the TEU has developed a resource toolkit for academics in designing assessment with academic integrity protection elements. Dr O’Riordan also drew attention to the Academic Integrity Week which took place in October.

Dr Lake provided an overview of DCU’s involvement in the National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN) which has committed to the creation of two key documents; (1) principles and lexicon and (2) guidelines. Dr Lake highlighted the importance of hearing from the DCU community before these guidelines are adopted. Dr Lake summarised the planned DCU project to determine DCU stakeholders’ perceptions and awareness of processes, procedures and policy concerning academic integrity. The project will involve a fact-finding phase which will be followed up by a series of workshops and discussions in response to the needs of the DCU community.

10. Strategic Academic Initiatives

10.1 HCI Pillar 3

Prof. Lisa Looney gave a summary presentation on the five Human Capital Initiative projects in which DCU is involved. The projects include DCU Futures, an IUA led Microcredential project, a THEA led project on recognition of prior learning, a Maynooth University led virtual labs project and a Carlow IT led project for a Postgraduate Certificate in Innovative Materials.

DCU Futures is the largest of the five and will transform the learning of DCU’s undergraduate students. Prof. Looney drew attention to DCU’s current focus on curriculum renewal, indicating that DCU Futures is a blueprint of what we want to achieve in this space. The project will see a significant re-imagining of our curriculum and the building on existing industry partnerships. Prof. Looney summarised key features of the project including a new Transversal Skills Framework, new innovative programmes and new ways of learning including immersive and challenged based learning, online learning and virtual labs.

Prof. Looney informed Council that a project governance framework has been developed and approved by DCU Executive and a steering group is being established. 22 initial posts have been approved with recruitment underway for 2 academic leadership roles. Work on validation of the new programmes is underway and Academic Council will be briefed as the project progresses.

10.2 Revised Academic Calendar

Mr William Kelly presented the proposed revised academic calendar to Academic Council, highlighting the key features previously approved by Academic Council. Mr Kelly brief Council on the key dates of the new calendar and highlighted the recommendation, on an exceptional basis, that Semester 1 in 2021 commences later to facilitate the transition from the old to the new calendar. Mr Kelly informed Council that the Academic Calendar Implementation Group (ACIG) is aware of feedback from students and staff on the proposed 10-week semester and plans are underway to address the issues raised.

Mr Kelly drew attention to the proposed resit period which will start no earlier than after the August bank holiday weekend. This change will shorten the timeframe for resit processing and further work is required to facilitate this. Mr Kelly informed Council that there are several other matters to be considered and a number of working groups have been established by the ACIG to address these.

It was noted that the proposed changes to the Academic Calendar will have far-reaching implications for other work areas and the University business calendar. Mr Kelly informed Council that the ACIG is developing a project implementation plan which will capture interdependencies and other areas not directly associated with the academic calendar.

The Academic Calendars for 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24 were approved.

C. Items for Formal Approval/Noting

11. Report on the Professional Diploma in Teaching Physics, level 8 award

Approved

12. Report from Winter 2020 Examinations/Progression and Awards Boards

Approved

13. Research Students Awards Report, Dundalk Institute of Technology

Approved

14. Report from Examination Appeals Boards for taught programmes 2020

Noted

15. Report on outcome of the Graduate Research Studies Board Standing Committee to consider research appeals

Noted

16. Report from the Disciplinary Committee 2020

Noted

17. Report from the Research Committee 2020

Noted

18. Any other business

There was no other business.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Date of next meeting:

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|-----------------|
| 3 February 2021 |
| 2:00 pm |
| Zoom |