

**ACADEMIC COUNCIL  
MINUTES****3 April 2024****2.00 p.m. – 2.40 p.m.****B103, St Patrick's Campus****Present:**

|             |                  |                       |
|-------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| P. Admirand | C. Bohan         | L. Boran              |
| A. Bourke   | A. Brennan       | J. Bruton             |
| P. Clarke   | C. Connelly      | E. Crossen            |
| Y. Crotty   | S. Cullen        | A. Daly               |
| M. Dunne    | P. Flynn         | G. French             |
| Y. Freeney  | C. Furlong       | P. Gallagher          |
| D. Hand     | B. Hayes         | S. Keating            |
| R. Keegan   | D. Keogh (Chair) | D. Kinahan            |
| A. Kirwan   | G. Lake          | M. Leahy              |
| L. Looney   | T. Lynn          | C. Mac an Bhaird      |
| U. McCabe   | J. McDonough     | R. McManus            |
| P. McMorrow | P. Mooney        | P. Murphy             |
| W. Murphy   | T. Ní Mhúirthile | B. Nolan              |
| K. Nolan    | N. O'Sullivan    | M. Pryce              |
| A. Sinnott  | G. Uí Laighléis  | A. Whelan (Secretary) |
| P. Young    |                  |                       |

**Apologies:**

|                  |                |              |
|------------------|----------------|--------------|
| J. Appleby       | C. Brennan     | M. Brown     |
| M. Brown         | D. Burke       | PJ. Byrne    |
| E. Clinton       | R. Connelly    | M. Coulter   |
| B. Daly          | J. Doyle       | J. Doyle     |
| N. Dunne         | M. Efthymiou   | B. Egan      |
| D. Elliott       | D. Fahy        | O. Feeney    |
| J. Foster        | F. Gallagher   | T. Gans      |
| C. Gurrin        | D. Harold      | C. Holland   |
| A. Intizar       | V. Lambert     | A. Looney    |
| C. Loscher       | J. Lynch       | A. MacNamara |
| A. Maillot       | C. McArdle     | A. McCarren  |
| K. McDonagh      | S.R. McGroarty | J. McMackin  |
| J. McManis       | A. Morrissey   | J.P. Mosnier |
| B. Murphy        | N. Murphy      | M. O'Brien   |
| S. O'Brien       | S. O'Brien     | R. O'Dwyer   |
| K. O'Sullivan    | P. Robbins     | M. Rocchi    |
| P. Sharkey Scott | G. Sinclair    | T. Szecsi    |
| L. Van der Werff | M. Ward        | B. White     |

**In Attendance:**

|                          |           |
|--------------------------|-----------|
| M. Crehan (for Item 8.1) | M. Howell |
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**1. Adoption of agenda**

The agenda was adopted, as circulated.

**A. Minutes and related issues**

**2. Minutes of the meeting of Academic Council of 7 February 2024**

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 24 January 2024 and 21 February 2024**

The minutes were approved.

**5. Minutes of the meeting of the University Standards Committee of 11 January 2024 and 22 February 2024**

The minutes were approved.

**6. Minutes of the meetings of the Graduate Research Studies Board of 18 January 2024 and 15 February 2024**

The minutes were approved.

The Chair congratulated the Dean of Graduate Studies Professor Sharon O'Brien who is due to be awarded an Honorary Doctorate in Philosophy by the University of Eastern Finland in early June.

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

- 7.1 The President remarked that recent news articles regarding several Irish universities have placed a spotlight on the importance of good governance. He reassured members that DCU has a stringent governance structure which is subject not just to internal and external scrutiny, but is embedded in the culture of the university.
- 7.2 The President noted that the Central Applications Office (CAO) cycle continues into July. There has been notable advertising by other Higher Education Institutions across the sector, aiming to attract undergraduate applicants. Thanks were extended to Faculties and the Student Recruitment Team for their ongoing work on the recruitment activities which have already taken place, as well as those due to take place in the coming weeks. It was noted that the recent inaugural Postgraduate Open Day and the first Parent/Guardian Information Evening were successful events. The undergraduate Spring Open Day will take place on 13 April. The Vice-President for Academic Affairs / Registrar remarked that although purposeful recruitment of non-European Union undergraduate students has not yet commenced, the availability of an online application has created a natural increase in the number of applications received. This is a demonstrable benefit of the Student Information System which has enabled the functionality to move away from paper-based applications.
- 7.3 Attention was drawn to DCU Researchers who were recently awarded five Marie Curie postdoctoral fellowships. This is a notable increase on the number of awards granted in previous years. The President also congratulated research colleagues on their success in securing funding from the Sustainable Energy Authority (SEAI) National Energy Research Development and Demonstration Funding Call and the Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) Discover Programme.
- 7.4 The President acknowledged the DCU Futures Student Showcase 2024 which took place on 21 March. This event allowed students the opportunity to present their work and network with an audience of graduates and industry leaders. The quality and creativity displayed by the student projects was impressive and demonstrated the talent of DCU Futures students.

- 7.5 The President congratulated Professor Gary Murphy, School of Law and Government, on his recent election to the Royal Irish Academy.
- 7.6 The President invited members to raise any relevant items for discussion. The Students' Union Vice-President for Academic Life referred to the date of the Transition Year Open Day that is due to take place during the Semester 2 examination period, and the potential disruption this might cause to students undertaking their examinations. The Director of Registry advised that measures are being put in place by the Head of Student Recruitment and the Student Awards Manager to minimise any disruption to students. She noted that it is challenging for the Student Recruitment Team to secure a suitable date during term to host this event but agreed that the examination period should be taken into consideration when planning for the next academic year.

## **8. Strategic academic initiatives**

### **8.1 *Education for Sustainable Development***

*Dr Martina Crehan, Head of the Teaching Enhancement Unit, joined the meeting for this item.*

The Vice-President for Academic Affairs / Registrar introduced this item, noting that sustainable development is one of the four key drivers of the University's Strategy 2023-2028. She introduced the Head of Teaching Enhancement Unit, who has been working alongside the Dean of Teaching and Learning and the Deputy Dean of DCU Institute of Education, on progressing the embedding of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) within the curriculum.

The Head of the Teaching Enhancement Unit (TEU) outlined that sustainable development was defined in its current context in recent years, and encompasses many components including the consideration of environmental, time and space factors but also the primary concern of justice. The United Nations lists 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This Agenda captures the totality of sustainable development and is an urgent call to action for the Member States that have adopted it, including Ireland.

The Head of the TEU drew attention to the importance of critical pedagogy and transformative teaching and learning approaches which are key factors of ESD, with both methods supporting the DCU Strategy 2023-2028 tagline of preparing students for an 'unscripted future'. It was outlined that Education for Sustainable Development can assist students in conceptualising their learning and aligns closely with Challenge Based Learning (CBL). This was evident at a recent Interdisciplinary Science 'Hackathon' event which enabled students to work collaboratively on challenges and present solutions as elevator pitches.

It was noted that ESD is informed by national and international policy, with the '*ESD to 2030: Second National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development*' creating an actionable plan for Higher Education Institutions. Funding has been awarded to the University by the Higher Education Authority via the Strategic Alignment of Teaching and Learning Enhancement (SATLE) Funding initiative, which has funded 18 DCU ESD projects to date. An ESD Officer has been appointed within TEU, enabling progress on a number of related initiatives across the University. These initiatives include professional development such as creating an ESD Hub on Loop and initiating the development of a DCU version of the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning (NFTL) Digital Badge in ESD. Curriculum mapping and development is also underway at School level with tailored workshops and consultations being provided by TEU for guidance. Activities are underway in some schools and faculties to identify where ESD is already embedded in local practices.

The Vice-President for Academic Affairs / Registrar thanked the Head of Teaching Enhancement Unit for her presentation on behalf of those colleagues leading on this agenda. She noted that ESD is not specific to particular disciplines and is relevant to the full suite of DCU programmes. She also highlighted that the ESD agenda is not so much separate, as integral to other work we already do; specifically, that on transversal skills and in DCU Futures. Resources within the TEU Team are in situ to build on this, which colleagues are encouraged to avail of.

*Dr Martina Crehan, Head of the Teaching Enhancement Unit, left the meeting after this item.*

**C. Items for formal approval/noting**

**9. Validation Report: MEd in Arts Education Practice**

Approved

**10. Accreditation Reports**

10.1 *Graduate Certificate in Women's Health*

Approved

10.2 *MA in Music, Sound, Culture and Media*

Approved

**11. Review of Admissions Appeals Policy**

Approved

It was noted that the Admissions Appeals Policy was reviewed and there were no changes recommended.

**12. Recent Items from sub-committees of Academic Council**

Approved

**13. Review of the Terms of Reference for the Examination Appeals Board**

Approved, subject to the word “representative” being replaced with “nominee” in the composition of the Examination Appeals Board.

**14. Quality and Institutional Insights Annual Report 2022-2023**

Noted

The Director of Quality and Institutional Insights noted that the current Quality and Qualifications Ireland CINNTE review cycle has been extended to Spring 2025, which will delay the date for the next review of DCU.

The Director of Quality and Institutional Insights also advised that a sub-group has been established by the Irish Universities Association to explore the governance and impact of the annual National Student Survey. DCU is represented on this sub-group. As a result of this exercise, the survey will not be issued this year.

**15. Any other business**

There was no other business.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of next meeting:**

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| <p><b>4 June 2024</b><br/><b>2:00 pm</b><br/><b>Via Zoom</b></p> |
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