

**ACADEMIC COUNCIL  
MINUTES**

**2 October 2024**

**2.00 p.m. – 3.15 p.m.**

**AG01**

**Present:**

C. Bohan	L. Boran	M. Breen
A. Brennan	A. Butler	O. Clarkin
E. Clinton	E. Conway	M. Coulter
B. Daly	M. Flynn	P. Flynn
J. Foster	Y. Freeney	C. Furlong
F. Gallagher	P. Gallagher	C. Gurrin
D. Hand	B. Harney	E. Healion
A. Heeney	C. Holland	A. Intizar
D. Keogh (Chair)	N. Kerrigan	V. Lambert
M. Leahy	A. Malliot	A. Matthews
U. McCabe	E. McNulty	P. Mooney
JP. Mosnier	N. Murphy	P. Murphy
W. Murphy	T. Ní Mhuirthile	B. Nolan
M. O'Brien	S. O'Brien	M. Pryce
M. Rocchi	G. Uí Laighléis	G. Visoka
A. Whelan (Secretary)	B. White	E. Whyte
X. Zheng		

**Apologies:**

M. Brown	J. Doyle	G. French
M. Freeley	T. Gans	M. Hinds
R. Keegan	A. Kirwan	A. Looney

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L. Looney	J. McDonough	R. McManus
S. Sambandam	A. Sinnott	M. Venker
M. Ward		

**In Attendance:**

V. Cooke	S. Hegarty (for Item 7)
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The President welcomed members to the first meeting of Academic Council of the 2024/25 academic year. He noted that all meetings for this academic year will take place in person on the Glasnevin or St. Patrick's Campus.

Apologies were recorded for Professor Lisa Looney, Vice-President for Academic Affairs / Registrar, who was travelling on university business.

**1. Adoption of agenda**

The agenda was adopted.

**A. Minutes and related issues**

**2. Minutes of the meeting of Academic Council of 4 June 2024**

The minutes were approved.

**3. Matters arising**

It was noted that there were no matters arising.

**4. Minutes of the meetings of the Strategic Learning Innovation Project Steering Group of 20 March 2024**

The minutes were approved.

**5. Minutes of the meetings of the Graduate Research Studies Board of 30 May 2024**

The minutes were approved.

**B. Policy and strategy issues****6. President's report (oral report)**

- 6.1 The President expressed his condolences on behalf of the University to the family and friends of Ms Antoinette Patton on their recent loss. Ms Patton was a highly regarded and valued colleague to many across DCU through her work on the DCU Access Programme.
- 6.2 The President informed members that the number of CAO offers for the 2024/25 academic year across all five faculties was very strong, particularly with regard to applicants who listed DCU as their first preference application. He expressed his thanks to all staff who enabled the successful onboarding of students across the Student Recruitment, Registration, Orientation and Faculty teams. The President acknowledged that the implementation of the new Student Information System (SIS), Banner, caused some disruption to the normal completion of registration. He thanked colleagues across the University for their patience and collaboration as this major milestone of the SIS Programme was reached.
- 6.3 The President acknowledged that the University recently attained the Athena Swan Silver Award, in recognition of its commitment to advancing gender equality and creating cultural change within the University. Thanks were extended to the wider team involved, particularly to Ms Joanne Mulligan, DCU People, who co-ordinated the application.
- 6.4 The President outlined that the Academic Promotions Committee recently confirmed the promotion of 15 colleagues to Associate Professor. He congratulated the successful candidates: Dr Shirley Coyle, Faculty of Engineering and Computing, Dr Julie Bertz, DCU Business School, Dr Marie Flynn, DCU Institute of Education, Dr Alicia Castillo Villanueva, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Dr Aoife Brennan, DCU Institute of Education, Dr David O'Connor, Faculty of Science and Health, Dr David Kinahan, Faculty of Engineering and Computing, Dr David Keane, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Dr Simon Dunne, Faculty of Science and Health, Dr Alessio Cornia, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Dr Mercedes Vazquez, Faculty of Science and Health, Dr Neil Kenny, DCU Institute of Education, Dr Marija Bezbradica, Faculty of Engineering and Computing, Dr Nessian Kerrigan, Faculty of Science and Health, and Dr Marta Rocchi, DCU Business School.
- 6.5 Attention was drawn to the University's Climate Action Roadmap. It was noted that significant improvements have been made in the reduction of energy consumption, and that continued focus and enthusiasm is required to further embed sustainability across the University.

- 6.6 The President noted that Internationalisation remains a priority for the University and drew attention to some recent strategic developments in this area. A new research initiative was established as part of the University's Biodesign Europe collaboration with Arizona State University. A Memorandum of Understanding with Rutgers University has been signed, consolidating both Universities' shared commitment to international academic and research collaboration. Thanks were extended to Professor Anne Sinnott for her leadership on this project. The 35<sup>th</sup> International Geographical Congress was hosted at the University in August, which was a milestone event in promoting the international reputation of DCU in this field. Congratulations were expressed to Dr Jonathan Cherry, School of History and Geography, who formed part of the organisation committee for the Congress. DCU hosted the 33<sup>rd</sup> Symposium on Fusion Technology in September, highlighting DCU's leadership in plasma and fusion research in Ireland. Professor Miles Turner was acknowledged for his leadership in ensuring the success of the Symposium. It was also noted that DCU will welcome the President of the College of Charleston, Dr Andrew Hsu, to DCU Business School and the Faculty of Engineering and Computing in the coming days.
- 6.7 The President called attention to the impending completion of the Polaris Building, which is expected to take place by the end of the month. The facility will further advance DCU's international reputation for excellence in science, computing and engineering disciplines.

## 7. DCU Futures Update

*Dr Susan Hegarty, Institutional Lead for DCU Futures, joined the meeting for this item.*

An overview of DCU Futures was provided, highlighting that it is the largest and most ambitious teaching and learning programme for the University and should be used as a blueprint for undergraduate education in DCU. The creation of DCU Futures was enabled by significant Higher Education Authority funding which allowed for a major change initiative; ten new programmes were created, and five existing programmes were retrofitted. The emphasis of this task was to create or revise programmes with a direct focus on the active pedagogies of online learning, transversal skills, industry engagement and strong student partnership. It was noted that the creation of the new programmes was hugely successful, and the first graduates of these programmes are due to be conferred later this month.

The Institutional Lead for DCU Futures outlined that two key drivers of the DCU Futures programmes are to create a reconceptualised curriculum and to transform the student experience by enthusing both the students and staff involved in the programmes. These drivers are strongly linked to the DCU Strategy 2023-2028 pillar which strives to 'pioneer a transformative student experience'.

Attention was drawn to the three pillars around which DCU Futures is structured, which are the evolution of what students will learn, transforming how students learn, and embedding and evidencing transversal skills to thrive. It was stated that there is a commitment to online learning and to enable students to thrive as lifelong learners.

It was noted that there was a bespoke approval process agreed for DCU Futures programmes. The degree of flexibility enabled by this approval process allowed input from students and industry stakeholders to be considered as latter years of the new programmes were being developed. Education Committee will oversee the completion of the DCU Futures programme approval process in the coming months.

DCU Futures has architected a unique Transversal Skills Competence Framework, ensuring that these skills are embedded, assessed and evidenced in a rigorous and transparent way across programmes. Internal collaboration was a key factor in developing this framework, which was also reviewed externally. As part of the framework, 'discipline agnostic competencies' will be assessed within modules, and the level of competency for each skill will be recorded on Loop. A dedicated transversal skills platform, 'My Skills', will be available for students to view their discipline agnostic competencies scores and self-reflect on them, scores will also be available to output into a Skills Report. The Skills Report is an innovative product that will allow students to showcase the acquired skills to potential employers.

The President thanked the Institutional Lead for DCU Futures for her insightful presentation and reminded colleagues that DCU Futures should be adopted as a philosophy, rather than being viewed as a project. He remarked that the ethos of Futures programmes has also been embraced by other non-Futures programmes. He noted that the retrofitting of existing programmes can be viewed as future proofing them, and strongly links with the DCU Strategy 2023-2028: Transformation for an Unscripted Future.

The President congratulated Dr Ciaran Dunne, DCU Transversal Skills Director, who was recently appointed to the newly constituted National Skills Council, affirming his leadership of DCU's Transversal Skills programme and the DCU Futures philosophy more broadly.

*Dr Susan Hegarty, Institutional Lead for DCU Futures, left the meeting after this item.*

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

**8. Register of Academic Council Members 2024/25**

Noted

**9. Register of members of Subcommittees and Boards 2024/25**

9.1 Education Committee

Noted

9.2 University Standards Committee

Noted

9.3 Examination Appeals Board

Noted

9.4 Graduate Research Studies Board

Noted-

9.5 GRSB Appeals Standing Committee

Noted

**10. Report from Autumn 2024 examinations, Progression and Award Boards**

## 10.1 Examination Report: DCU

Approved

Academic Council conferred awards on those candidates who demonstrated the required standard and were duly approved for award by the relevant Progression and Awards Boards.

## 10.2 Examination Report: Ballyfermot College of Further Education

Approved

Academic Council conferred awards on those candidates who demonstrated the required standard and were duly approved for award by the relevant Progression and Awards Boards.

**11. Report from DCU Autumn 2024 Faculty Awards Boards for Research Degree**

Approved

Academic Council conferred awards on those candidates who demonstrated the required standard and were duly approved for award by the relevant Faculty Awards Boards for Research Degrees.

**12. Research Student Awards Report: Dundalk Institute of Technology**

Approved

Academic Council conferred awards on those candidates who demonstrated the required standard and were duly approved for award by the relevant Faculty Awards Boards for Research Degrees.

**13. DCU Placement Report 2022/23**

Noted

**14. University Disciplinary Committee Report 2023**

Noted

**15. Report to Academic Council on the Accreditation of Programmes during the 2023/24 Academic Year**

Noted

**16. Report on the Activities of Academic Council for the 2023/24 Academic Year**

Noted

**17. Terms of Reference of Research Strategy Committee**

Approved

**18. EU Qualifications Framework**

Approved



**19. Any other business**

There was no other business.

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

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

**Date of next meeting:**

<p><b>27 November 2024</b></p> <p><b>2:00 pm</b></p> <p><b>B103, St. Patrick's Campus</b></p>
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