

EDUCATION COMMITTEE**MINUTES**

Wednesday 16 December 2020

2.00 p.m. – 3.30 p.m. via Zoom

Present: Dr Sarahjane Belton, Dr Claire Bohan, Professor Mark Brown, Dr Brian Corcoran, Professor John Doyle, Professor Barbara Flood, Ms Margaret Irwin-Bannon (Secretary), Mr Billy Kelly, Professor Anne Looney, Professor Lisa Looney (Chair), Professor Joseph Stokes, Mr Lucien Waugh-Daly and Dr Blanaid White

Apologies: Professor Michelle Butler, Professor Greg Hughes, Ms Aisling McKenna and Ms Pauline Mooney

SECTION A: AGENDA, MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**1. Adoption of the agenda**

The agenda as circulated was adopted.

2. Minutes of the meeting of Education Committee, 18 November 2020

The minutes of the meeting of 18 November 2020 were approved and it was noted the final version would be formally signed at a later date.

3. Matters arising from the minutes of 18 November 2020

3.1 The Chair indicated, as previously noted, that a meeting is planned in early January 2021 to review the outstanding matters arising from Education Committee meetings and to reshape and reprioritise the project list so that it is aligned with strategic priorities. The outcome of the meeting will be reported to Education Committee (Item 3.1).

3.2 The Deputy Registrar/Dean of Teaching and Learning reported that the proposed measurement of the engagement of students on Loop was being progressed. He had had further discussions with the Head of the Teaching Enhancement Unit and the Head of Student Support and Development and as a result, resourcing for a project had been included in a submission to the Strategic Alignment of Teaching and Learning Enhancement (SATLE) funding from the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching. Funding was awarded and the project will run as a pilot and will involve investigation of the data that can be extracted from Loop, and exploration of how that data would be used. He indicated that he would continue to update Education Committee as the matter progressed (Item 3.9).

- 3.3 It was noted that discussions on the cycle of presentations and provision of statistical reports to Education Committee by the Institutional Research and Analysis Officer are ongoing (Item 3.2).
- 3.4 It was noted that work on a position paper on double and dual awards will be ongoing over the coming months (Item 3.3).
- 3.5 It was noted that teaching effectiveness, one of the key priorities of the Teaching and Learning Strategy will be discussed by the Director of Quality Promotion and the Chair (Item 3.4).
- 3.6 It was noted that work is ongoing on adaption of the PPR process with a view to ensuring there is a process for the quality assurance of the creation of 'new programmes' where the existing programme has changed substantially since its initial accreditation (Item 3.5).
- 3.7 It was noted that a memo was due to be sent to Senior Management outlining the University-level issues raised through the Faculty APR summary reports (Item 3.6).
- 3.8 It was noted that an external review of the newly approved programme, Graduate Diploma in Web Technologies had been completed and the programme response to that feedback was now awaited. It was requested by the Chair that this matter would be expedited (Item 3.7).
- 3.9 It was noted that work on the update of the Revised Academic Offering form to take account of the creation of new major programmes as a response to funding calls will be completed in the context of a more in-depth review of academic approval processes (Item 3.8).
- 3.10 It was noted that further discussion would take place with respect to the accreditation process which should be applied to the DCU Futures new programmes funded under HCI, Pillar 3 (Item 3.10)
- 3.11 It was noted that the Executive Dean of the DCU Institute of Education was working on the commission of a qualitative survey of staff and students based on the outcomes of examination results in semester 2, 2020 and the impact of changes to assessment (Item 3.11).
- 3.12 It was noted that work has commenced on the collation of PPR data across the University (Item 3.12).
- 3.13 It was noted that the dates of the survey, StudentSurvey.ie, for 2021 had been finalised, following consultation with the Students' Union, as follows: 22 February – 14 March 2021.

SECTION B: STRATEGIC MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION/NOTING**4. Widening Participation in DCU, presentation by Dr Claire Bohan, Director of Student Support and Development**

The Chair introduced this item noting that as DCU enters the last two years of implementation of the strategic plan there has been a renewed focus on the area of widening participation.

Dr Bohan's presentation provided an overview of widening participation and the activities and support involved and highlighted where DCU is meeting its targets and where it may need to shift its focus. She informed the Committee that an appointment had been made to a specific role focusing on widening participation and the appointee had completed a report on the totality of activities throughout the University, over the last year.

Dr Bohan highlighted the main challenges as follows:

- Data collection for Further Education (FE) / identification of FE students
- Support Framework for FE students
- Mature Student admissions (consistency and transparency)

The following issues were discussed and clarified following the presentation:

- It was confirmed that DCU sets its own targets for widening participation in the context of the Performance Compact agreement and the National Access Strategy
- It was noted that although DCU is on target in its widening participation goals, the challenge it faces is accommodating mature student who would prefer part-time rather than full-time provision
- DCU's Further Education entry routes historically have been driven by programme specific requirements. It was suggested that DCU considers a more general standard of entry from FE (e.g. 5 distinctions), with additional requirements specified as appropriate exceptions for particular programmes
- It was noted that historically DCU FE entry was governed by a quota and the level of uptake was not high
- The Deputy Registrar/Dean of Teaching and Learning outlined that a national project on the recognition of prior learning involving all the universities, technological universities and Institutes of Technology has been funded under HCI Pillar 3 funding. One of its goals is to establish a national framework so that every Higher Education institution adheres to the same rules in terms of recognition of prior learning.

There was a general discussion on student recruitment and widening participation and it was suggested that it would be timely to revisit the goals of Student Recruitment in the context of undergraduate recruitment, to examine ways to grow numbers and to attract motivated students through the FE route. The Chair indicated that it will be an area of focus and that further work needs to be done to distil the information and formulate a plan. She indicated that she would meet with the Director of Student Support and Development to plan and explore how best to use resources in this regard.

Prof A. Looney joined the meeting at this juncture and outlined her work with the Further Education sector as a way to recruit a more diverse students. She indicated that she had completed some initial scoping with the sector and themes had emerged as follows:

- In terms of a model of interface between Further Education and Higher Education, SOLAS was examining a common points scale, rather than the current arrangement of the requirement for specific modules, and was looking for an institution to take the lead in its exploration
- Building arrangements within a specific hinterland of the Education Training Boards: Louth/Meath, Cavan/Monaghan and North Dublin, to explore closer links between FE and specific DCU programmes. Three areas for consideration are emerging:
 - designating pathways from designated FE programmes to specific DCU degrees
 - exploring the possibility of first year being undertaken in an FE setting
 - Thematic links: one of the themes SOLAS would be interested in DCU leading would be primary teacher education.

Prof Looney indicated that she was in the process of preparing a discussion document which would be circulated shortly.

It was suggested and agreed that DCU should set a target date by which FE entry routes are reviewed so that by April/May 2021 DCU would be in a position to plan to accept students by September 2022.

5. Student Information System (SIS) Project Update

The Chair provided a brief update on the SIS project, the main focus of which over the last number of months was the introduction of CRM recruit, a student application portal, to replace the existing PAC system. The CRM recruit system has recently been launched and had involved a large range of university units in very extensive efforts. Work is continuing on the roll-out phase.

The Chair indicated that the priority over the next period with respect to SIS would be to refine and finalise the project road-map and reflect on lessons learned in the first deployment. It was intended that this would take place early in the New Year and a resource plan would also be developed in parallel.

The Chair reported that all SIS related work streams have been making steady progress, but that ramp up has been slower than planned.

6. Processing of student data for academic purposes

The Deputy Registrar/Dean of Teaching and Learning summarised the context of the memo, as circulated, on the processing of student data for academic purposes. He outlined that DCU's approach to data protection as it relates to academic activities has been developed and is framed in the context of traditional delivery, and more recently, with the change to remote

learning and assessment and 'hybrid' delivery in the context of the ongoing Covid-19 public health emergency. He noted that there are elements of the recent change to delivery that DCU would like to retain and the basis on which the University gathers, uses and retains data should be updated to accommodate this change. He also noted that significant changes to delivery methods are likely to come with the development of the DCU Futures programmes.

Education Committee endorsed the following approach:

'To update the basis on which the University gathers, uses, processes and retains data. This should primarily be based on the contract the University has with students to deliver programmes. On enrolling with the University through registration, a contract is formed between the student and the University and, it is appropriate that student data is gathered, used, processed and retained where this is necessary for the performance of that contract.

Within that contract, academic activities which generate data that may be processed and retained for academic purposes include but is not limited to

- Teaching activities, including but not limited to lectures, tutorials, laboratories, seminars
- Research and practical exercises
- Engagement in online learning and assessment environments and with online learning technologies including the University's virtual learning environment, Loop
- Recordings of teaching and learning or research activities to facilitate learning.'

A discussion followed on planning for the academic year 2021-2022 and how successful adaptations to delivery of programmes made due to the public health emergency might be carried forward into the new academic year, in terms of assessment design, timetabling, access to systems, etc.

The Executive Deans reported that discussions have already begun to take place on planning programmes for September 2021. Assessment methods and an increase in online teaching had been raised by colleagues for discussion. It was suggested by the Chair that it would be useful to systematically elicit feedback from schools and faculties early in the New Year to begin to plan for an evolving DCU delivery and to assess how it might impact on timetabling. This work would also link with planning changes associated with the amendment to the academic calendar.

The Chair indicated that a plan would be drawn up on how this information would be gathered and would be presented to Education Committee.

SECTION C: PROGRAMME AND MODULE-SPECIFIC ISSUES

There were no items for consideration.

7. Any other business

The Chair extended her thanks on behalf of the President to all those on Education Committee, and to all Faculty Committees for all the incredible work that has been done over the last nine months in particular. She hoped that at some stage in the new future, there

would be an opportunity to recognise and acknowledge how staff, together with the students, responded to the health crisis. She wished everyone a quiet and restful Christmas.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Date of next meeting:

13 January 2021
at 2.00 pm
Via Zoom