

GOVERNING AUTHORITY MEETING

Minutes of meeting of Wednesday 16 October 2024 2.00pm, AG01, Albert College, Glasnevin (and via Zoom)

PRESENT:

Ms. Brid Horan (Chair)
Prof Daire Keogh
Prof Yvonne Daly
Ms Carol Hanney
Ms Fiona Naughton
Mr Seamus Walsh
Mr Cathal Marley (Zoom)
Ms Aoife Butler
Ms Marian Corcoran
Mr John Darby

Mr Karl Ormsby
Dr Audrey Bryan
Ms Michele Pringle
Ms Marie Sinnott (Zoom)
Mr Brian J. Smyth (Zoom)
Mr Justin Doyle
Mr Josh King (Zoom)
Mr David Harney (Zoom)

APOLOGIES:

Prof Anne Sinnott

Prof James O'Higgins Norman

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr John Kilcoyne
Dr Declan Raftery
Ms Lorraine Meaney (Recording secretary)
Patrick Downes (Governance Ireland, observing via Zoom)
Paul White (Governance Ireland, observing via Zoom)

Prof Lisa Looney
Mr Gareth Yore

WELCOME

The Chancellor welcomed members and noted the apologies.

The Chancellor introduced Patrick Downes and Paul White from Governance Ireland, who are attending via zoom to observe today's meeting as part of the Governing Authority external review.

1. Conflict of Interest Declarations

The Chancellor enquired if there were any conflicts of interest in relation to any item on the agenda that required a declaration on the part of a member(s) – None were declared.

2. MINUTES OF GOVERNING AUTHORITY MEETING OF 11th September 2024

The minutes were **Approved** by the Authority.

3. REPORT OF MEETING OF 11th September 2024 FOR WEB PUBLICATION

Approved by the Authority.

4. REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS

Action 1: Presentation on AI -

Prof. Lisa Looney and Dr. Monica Ward presenting at today's meeting.

Action 2. Proposal for the process of selection for the next Governing Authority.

Item 6.1 on today's agenda.

Action 3: Evaluation of GA - Ongoing

Governance Ireland are conducting surveys, interviews and attending today's meeting in addition to attending meetings of Governing authority sub-committee's.

Actions to be tracked:

Action 1: Quarterly progress reports on each risk in the Strategic Risk Register - Ongoing

Action 2: Meetings of GA to be held at different locations - Ongoing

Action 3: Update on changes to the Universities Act 1997 - No changes to report

Action 4: Strategy meetings - Ongoing Q1 2025 proposed for next Strategy meeting.

Action 5: Deans to present in rotation - Ongoing

Prof. Dominic Elliot, Executive Dean of the DCU Business School, presenting at today's meeting.

Action 6: VP for research to present annually - Scheduled for the December meeting

Action 7: Follow up with CRA -Ongoing

5. MATTERS ARISING

It was agreed to reschedule the April 9th meeting of the Governing Authority Meeting to 16th April 2025.

The chancellor reminds members that they should by now have received a time for their zoom interview with Governance Ireland and a link to a survey. Members are requested to engage fully and to complete the survey.

DR advised that the updated objects for the two campus companies (Campus Residences DAC and Campus Property DAC) have been drafted and will be presented to the respective boards for approval. There has been no further update from the CRA to date.

The HEA space utilisation survey is due to take place during the week commencing 4th November. This is an expensive exercise for DCU. It is noted that we await the report on the outcome of the previous year's surveys. DCU will continue to engage positively. There are challenges in resourcing this survey. The return for this survey does not fully capture the nature and nuance of the university model sufficiently. On compiling the return, there is work, where possible, to include context for room usage.

DCU recently received written feedback from the HEA on the University's Annual Governance Statement for 2022/23, which was very positive. Their report has been reviewed by the Chancellor and there are no issues of concern. The Governing Authority Risk and Audit Committee's will add their feedback and circulate this to the Governing Authority.

6. GOVERNANCE

For Approval

6.1 Draft process for the formation of a new Governing Authority in July '25

There was a discussion on the formation of the next Governing authority reflecting the changes from the HEA Act 2022. The draft process document for the formation of that new Authority was circulated with the meeting papers. The members agreed the preference is for an "election" rather than "selection" of staff representatives. It was agreed that the VPAA/Registrar would be secluded as one of the staff members and that the remaining four seats would be determined by an election.

Governing Authority members were asked to reflect on the draft process for the formation of the new Authority and bring suggestions to the next meeting, for example a nomination may be required to have one or two signatures of endorsement for the staff elections.

The formation of a Selection Committee chaired by an external member it is proposed will consist of the following:

- Chancellor (Chair)
- The five Governing Authority Sub-committee chairs (Cathal Marley, Marie Sinnott, Marian Corcoran, Shay Walsh and Brian Smyth)
- DCU President
- Internal member
- Student Union member

The search for a new Chancellor will require a separate process. The revised proposal will be circulated to the Governing Authority for noting, to keep the process moving forward.

It was also agreed that this proposed process document would be forwarded to the Minister of Further and Higher Education for his approval, as is required under the HEA Act 2022.

For Discussion / Noting

7. DCU Business School

(Presentation by Prof. Dominic Elliot, Executive Dean)

Prof. Dominic Elliot, Executive Dean of DCU Business School, made a presentation to the Governing Authority. The presentation outlined the strategic goals and priority objectives for the Business school. There was discussion on strategic industry partners and opportunities for the same, overcoming obstacles for international students and mentorship. The initiative for January intakes has proved successful and is being expanded to other faculties.

The Chancellor congratulated Prof. Elliot for the recent EQUIS accreditation for the Business School, completing its 'triple crown' accreditation, and for the informative presentation to the Governing Authority.

8. Artificial Intelligence Update

(Presentation by Prof. Lisa Looney, VPAA/Registrar and Dr. Monica Ward, Dean of Teaching & Learning)

Prof. Lisa Looney, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Monica Ward, Dean of Teaching and Learning, delivered a presentation on Artificial Intelligence, "Teaching & Learning: response to developments in Artificial Intelligence (AI)". The presentation outlined the timeline of the history and development of AI in the teaching and learning space. It looked at the steps DCU have taken to adapt to the use of AI. The risks and opportunities that AI presents. A list of AI activity in T&L for DCU from November 2022 to October 2024 was circulated to members during the presentation.

Discussion followed on the risks and opportunities that AI presents for the higher education industry. Also discussed was the integrity of assessment, employability for graduates and training for use of AI for colleagues and students.

It is expected that the EU AI Act 2023, could have a similar impact to GDPR act on business operations. A policy on use of AI is required as a matter of urgency to provide guidance on appropriate use and restricted use for AI.

9. Risk Committee

9.1 Report of meeting of 25th September 2024

DCU is a registered charity under the Charities Act 2009

DCU Charity Number: 20013653

9.2 Minutes of meeting of 17th April 2024

The Minutes of the meeting of 17th April 2024 and the report of the risk committee meeting of 25th September 2024 were **noted by the Governing Authority**.

Marie Sinnott provided an update to the Governing Authority on the work being undertaken by the Risk Committee which included the revision of the child protection policy and procedures and the Risk Officer's 2024 report. The report focused primarily on the various analyses of risks as sourced from the twelve Functional Area Risk Registers (FARR) from this year's cycle, including six Unit level registers. The report was presented to senior management in July and will inform the first version of the Strategic Risk Register (SRR) for 2024-2025.

The Committee also noted that a tailored online risk management training course is to be rolled out to the authors of both Unit level and Functional Area risk registers in Q1 2025.

A review of the existing Risk Appetite Statement is underway and will inform future decisions under the lens of the new strategy implementation. The updated Risk Appetite Statement will be brought to the Governing Authority at a future date.

Director of ISS, Justin Doyle gave a presentation to the Committee on Cybersecurity 'Risk Mitigation Effectiveness'. The presentation outlined some of the complex cybersecurity challenges being experienced by the University, the risk mitigation measures in place and its performance when benchmarked against peers. The Committee thanked Justin for the presentation and the valuable work of the cybersecurity team.

For Approval

9.3 The Revised Terms of Reference for the Governing Authority Risk committee which were circulated to members prior to the meeting were **approved by the Governing Authority**

For Discussion / Noting

10. PRESIDENT'S REPORT AND UNIVERSITY OFFICERS' REPORTS

DCU President

DCU President, Prof. Daire Keogh provides an update to the Governing Authority on the Times Higher Education World University Rankings, representing the highest ever placing for DCU now ranked #4 in Ireland and #352 worldwide.

The Chancellor offers congratulations on DCU this ranking which sees a very positive trajectory.

The Governing Authority was briefed on the recent media articles published on the DCU Graduate Diploma in Social, Personal and Health Education/Relationships and Sexuality Education (SPHE/RSE), run by the DCU Institute of Education which misrepresented the DCU is a registered charity under the Charities Act 2009

programme content and has resulted in totally unacceptable intimidation and abuse of the academic staff concerned on social media.

In listing the honours and awards for DCU it was mentioned that DCU's Emerging Leaders programme won Best Coaching or Mentoring Initiative at the Excellence in Learning Awards. Congratulations are extended to many DCU colleagues' recent achievements.

With appreciation it is noted that the artist Richard Gorman is very kindly donating a large artwork for the new Polaris building.

Vice President of Academic Affairs

Lisa Looney, Vice-President Academic Affairs/Registrar, provided their officer's report with the meeting papers and was taken as read.

Chief Operations Officer

Dr. Declan Raftery, Chief Operations Officer updated the Governing Authority that the submission to Dublin City Council for DCU to be removed from the RZLT map was rejected. DCU has not received a copy of the DCC Planning inspectors report. The progress of the Finance Bill 2024 through the Oireachtas is being monitored to see if any legislative amendments will be tabled that would be beneficial to DCU in this regard. DCU is also seeking tax advice on existing legislative exemptions and evaluating the long-term financial risks to the University of this new tax.

The Polaris Building is scheduled to be handed over by the contractor on 29th October subject to Building Control Regulations (BCAR) sign-off by Dublin City Council.

Director of Finance

Director of Finance, John Kilcoyne, provided their update with the meeting papers, drawing the Governing Authority's attention to key items:

The finance office will commence field work with Mazars, the University's external auditors, before the end of November for the 2023/24 accounts.

Vice President for People, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

Vice President for People, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion , Gareth Yore, provided their officer's report with the meeting papers and was taken as read.

For Approval

11. PERSONNEL MATTERS

The Chancellor noted she had discussed the process of selecting the candidates being submitted for approval by the Authority with Gareth Yore, Vice President for People,

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (as previously agreed by GA). The Chancellor confirmed that she is satisfied that the processes followed were appropriate.

The Vice President for People, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion submitted the following candidates for approval:

- Professor Brian Tanner, Adjunct Professor, School of Electronic Engineering, Faculty of Engineering and Computing, 3 Year Fixed Term Contract

Approved by the Authority

For Discussion / Noting

12. Any Other Business

None.

13. Meeting without Management present

Management left the meeting to allow the Governing Authority members to meet without management present.