

GOVERNING AUTHORITY MEETING

**Minutes of meeting of Wednesday 19 June 2024
2.00pm, AG01, Albert college, Glasnevin Campus.**

PRESENT:

Ms. Brid Horan (Chair)
Prof Daire Keogh
Prof Yvonne Daly
Ms Aoife Butler
Ms Carol Hanney
Ms Fiona Naughton
Mr David Harney (Zoom)
Prof James O'Higgins Norman

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

APOLOGIES:

Mr Cathal Marley
Ms Marian Corcoran
Mr John Darby

Mr Anubhav Anandind
Mr Seamus Walsh

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr John Kilcoyne
Dr Declan Raftery
Prof Anne Sinnott

Prof Lisa Looney
Mr Gareth Yore
Ms Lorraine Meaney (recording secretary)

WELCOME

The Chancellor welcomed members and noted the apologies.

The Chancellor also welcomed incoming student members Karl Ormsby, Student Union President, and Aoife Butler, Vice President of Academic Life. She congratulated them on their recent election success and wished them luck in their new roles. The Chancellor expressed thanks for their participation and input into university life. The Chancellor also welcomed the rotating academic representative, [Audrey Bryan](#), back to the Governing Authority.

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.

- 1. MINUTES OF GOVERNING AUTHORITY MEETING OF 24th April 2024**
Approved by the Authority.

2. REPORT OF MEETING OF 24th April 2024 FOR WEB PUBLICATION

Approved by the Authority subject to review by Senior Management.

3. REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS

Action 1: Presentation on AI - Ongoing

Action 2: Circulate Organisation Diagram - Ongoing

It was noted that a top level organisation diagram is due to be circulated at September's Governing Authority meeting.

Action 3: Ongoing: Update from the DCU Educational Trust Advisory Group -

It was noted that an update from the DCU Educational Trust Advisory Group is to be arranged for the September meeting.

Action 4: Update on DCU's Climate Action Plan - Complete

See item 7.

Action 5: Evaluation of GA - Ongoing

It was noted that an external evaluation of the Governing Authority is planned for later in the year.

Action 6: Presentation on HR strategy and risks - Ongoing

It was noted that the Director of HR is due to Present at September's meeting.

Actions to be tracked:

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

It was noted that the Strategic Risk Register is due to be presented at the October meeting.

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

It was noted that locations for meetings are to be agreed in advance.

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

Action 4: Strategy meetings - Ongoing

It was noted that the Governing Authority should have at least one meeting per year focused on the University's strategy. It was suggested that January would be a suitable time to hold this meeting.

Action 5: Deans to present in rotation - Ongoing

It was noted that Prof. Dominic Elliot, Executive Dean of the DCU Business School, will be asked to present at the September meeting.

4. MATTERS ARISING

DCU President, Daire Keogh began by highlighting the ongoing issue of the shortfall in core funding. This is compounded by accumulated inflationary pressures. Any additional state funding which had been provided, was effectively wiped out by the recent public sector pay restoration. A manifesto has been prepared by the IUA, with support from Communications and Marketing, which members are urged to promote in order to keep funding of third level institutions on the government agenda, communicating through their networks and with politicians “at the doorstep” as the date for a general election seems likely in the autumn.

5. GOVERNANCE

5.1 Governing Authority meeting dates 2024/2025

The Chancellor requested that the dates approved for 2024/25 be recirculated to the Governing Authority members following the meeting.

The dates were **approved** by Governing Authority

5.2 The Chancellor informed the members that the Honorary Doctorate Committee met and that there are three recommendations to be brought forward to the Governing Authority for approval.

The Chancellor shared the nominees names and an outline of their nomination submissions.

The Chancellor reminded members that the nomination details are confidential and not to be shared outside of the Governing Authority discussions. Following these discussions, it was agreed that the Governing Authority support the nominations and DCU President, Daire Keogh will now contact the nominees to ask if they would like to accept their nomination, thereafter a formal invitation will be sent.

The nominations were **approved** by Governing Authority

FOR APPROVAL

6. Morton Stadium II - Design Team tender

This item was removed from the agenda. It will be referred to the University Executive.

7. DCU Climate Action Plan

Dr Declan Raftery, Chief Operations Officer, gave a presentation on the DCU Climate Action Plan. He explained the DCU Sustainable Development Framework, the legal obligations relating to climate action and the greenhouse gas emission (GHG) reduction measures being taken at DCU. The Public Sector Climate Action Mandate 2024 requires public sector bodies to show leadership in climate action and to demonstrate how they are taking the required actions.

DR outlined the metrics for reporting that DCU submits to the HEA and SEAI each year. It was noted that DCU is required to submit data only on Scope 1 and 2 emissions. However for transparency, comprehensiveness, and to demonstrate leadership in sustainability, DCU calculates its total GHG emissions, including Scope 3, annually.

DR explained many of the challenges faced due to the high building retrofit costs for and the commitment to the installation of sustainable heating systems in all new building projects. For example on completion, Polaris will achieve an A2 energy rating.

In summary, DCU is performing well in the terms of the 2023 Climate Action Report submitted to the SEAI. However, the challenge of meeting a 51% reduction in GHG's by 2023 is enormous.

The Chancellor thanked DR for his presentation and noted the action to arrange climate action leadership training for the Governing Authority members.

8. Audit Committee

a. Report of meeting of 13th June 2024

John Kilcoyne, Director of Finance gave an update on the Comptroller and Auditor General's audit of the 2022/2023 financial statement.

Alison Byrne, Head of Internal Audit updated members that Internal Audit has engaged Integrity 360 and SmartTech to carry out IT audits. These firms provide consultancy services and possess more technical IT expertise than otherwise available through traditional Audit firms. Integrity 360 are due to commence a Business Continuity / Disaster Recovery audit in July/August. SmartTech have already been onboarded and are due to carry out a Remote Access Security / Virtual Private Network (VPN) audit in October-December.

The audit of Staff Expenses has been completed. This received a Category 3 audit opinion. Findings related to updating relevant policies, improving the understanding of Claimant and Claim Approver responsibilities and escalation of issues, and greater clarity around the mandatory use of Club Travel (DCU's centrally contracted travel management service provider). It was stressed the importance of the wording in the updated Expenses policy must reduce any ambiguity regarding the claiming of expenses and any acceptable exceptions must

be clearly documented. The achievement of value-for-money also needs to be stressed further.

Noted by the Authority

a. Minutes of the meeting of 16th April 2024.

Noted by the Authority

9. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee

a. Report of meeting of 4th June 2024

Carol Haney provided an update on the meeting which took place on 4th June 2024. At this meeting [Joanne Mulligan](#) provided an update on EDI activity, Athena Swan, anti-racism measures and disability. The Deputy COO, Martin Ward, provided a Public Sector Duty update.

b. Minutes of meeting of 9th April 2024

Noted by the Authority

For Approval

10. Quality Promotion Office – Annual Report

11.1 Memo to Governing Authority (attached)

11.2 PRG reports for Library, OVPAA and IoE

11.3 QuEP reports for Library, OVPAA and IoE

Carol Hanney referred to the memo circulated to the Governing Authority. CH explained the 4 phases for internal quality review, and the outcomes from these reviews.

DCU has well-established reporting and approval procedures in place for internal quality reviews. It is timely, however, that these be reviewed to ensure they continue to effectively support the Governing Authority in carrying out its responsibilities and following a review, there are proposed changes to this approval process as outlined in the memo.

- Peer Review Group Report (PRG): Full document should be sent to the Governing Authority for noting and approval for publication.
- Quality Enhancement Plan (QuEP): This should be approved by the University Executive and then sent to the Governing Authority for noting and approval for publication.

These changes were discussed and it is agreed that the proposed changes should be made.

This was approved by Governing Authority

The reports for Library, OVPAA and IoE were circulated prior to the meeting and it is noted that the reports for DCU Business school will be included in the September 2024 meeting.

Noted and approved for publication by the Governing Authority

DCU is a registered charity under the Charities Act 2009

DCU Charity Number: 20013653

The Chancellor thanked Carol Hanney and Rachel Keegan for their hard work in overseeing the well run internal review.

11. PRESIDENT'S REPORT AND UNIVERSITY OFFICERS' REPORTS

DCU President

The President spoke about a recent visit to the partner universities of Notre Dame and Charleston South Carolina, USA as well as a visit to China. These were his first trips since the COVID-19 pandemic. The President highlighted how important these relationships are for DCU in advancing the University strategy. He also referred to the positive feedback on the reciprocal student research internships and how this gives a unique opportunity to participants.

The Times Higher Young University Rankings place DCU at their highest ever position. 1st in Ireland and 59th Worldwide. DCU continues gaining ground on research which is very positive.

The President noted that the Seanad vote has been extended to include all universities. While this is welcome, there will be challenges in drafting the register of the electorate.

CAO numbers are higher than the same time last year with "change of mind" preferences steadily increasing.

The President noted and welcomed the number of students and staff who ran for local and European elections.

The Chancellor added her congratulations on the positive updates and agreed with the importance of face-to-face engagement with partner institutions to build lasting relationships. Congratulations were also extended for the success of DCU student athletes in the European Athletics Championships in Rome this month.

The Chancellor added that the success of placing 80 DCU Access and neurodivergent students in paid internships is to be commended and speaks to the commitment of DCU to diversity and inclusion.

Vice President of Academic Affairs

Lisa Looney, Vice-President Academic Affairs/Registrar updated Governing authority on the SIS project, which continues to progress well. The 2024/2025 curriculum has been built in Banner and is being validated in the new structure. The impact of this data on registration, timetabling and other services is recognised as a huge volume of work. Integration efforts in resolving bugs and testing are ongoing. On July 1st, testing in the School of Nursing will go-live, following that, on 15th July Student data will be live.

The SIS steering group continues to navigate the complexity of managing integration with system areas which are outside of their remit. It was noted that there is a very busy period

ahead for the team and it was acknowledged that there continues to be operational risks for the coming academic year.

Chief Operations Officer

Dr Declan Raftery, Chief Operations Officer, informed members that he had written to the Charity Regulatory Authority (CRA) a second time to express concern about the lack of clarity since the CRA raised questions of the charitable status of Campus Residences DAC and Campus Property DAC. A response acknowledging this email was received, however there is no definitive decision at this stage and DCU is awaiting further correspondence from the CRA before submitting a comprehensive reply to the CRA and DR will update members in due course.

The Special Standing Committee of the Governing Authority approved (electronically) on May 22nd the signing of a new 5 year (with options for two further 1 year extensions) facilities management contract with Mitie Facilities Management, after a public tender process.

Director of Finance

John Kilcoyne, Director of Finance circulated the management accounts for the seven months ended 30 April 2024 prior to the meeting. The University is projected to achieve break even for the 2023/24 financial year in line with the budget.

DCU and the other IUA universities are engaging through the IUA with the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS) in relation to the public sector pay award funding shortfalls. Given the experience in previous years, any outcome from this engagement will not be known until probably December.

DCU Educational Support Services (ESS) DAC has recorded an operational profit. This was driven by continued strong revenues and costs being less than budgeted. From the DCU ESS Group perspective, summer business is an important trading cycle for the group, and confirmed summer bookings to date are strong. The overall financial position of DCU ESS DAC remains strong with significant cash reserves on hand.

The budget cycle for the University for the forthcoming financial year 2024/25 is in progress. It will conclude with the presentation of the draft budget for 2024/25 to the Governing Authority for approval at its September meeting.

Director of Human Resources

Gareth Yore, Director of Human Resources, explained that the current focus is on resource planning and organisational effectiveness. There is an acute awareness that there is much being asked of colleagues with little additional resources. GY continues to engage with Deputy President Anne Sinnott on organisational structure and with John Kilcoyne, Finance Director on organisational resources in order to navigate the current challenges.

12. PERSONNEL MATTERS

DCU is a registered charity under the Charities Act 2009

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The Chancellor noted she had discussed the process of selecting the candidates being submitted for approval by the Authority with Gareth Yore, Director of Human Resources (as previously agreed by GA). The Chancellor confirmed that she is satisfied that the processes followed were appropriate.

The Director of Human Resources submitted the following candidates for approval:

- Ms Fiona Brennan Director of DCU Research Support, DCU Research Support Services, Permanent Contract.

Approved by the Authority

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

14. Meeting of Authority members without management present

The formal meeting ended and the Governing Authority members met together without any members of management present, as agreed previously.