

GOVERNING AUTHORITY MEETING

Report of meeting of Friday, December 4th 2020 3.00pm, Video Conference.

PRESENT:

Dr Martin McAleese, Chancellor (Chair)
Ms Isabel Aust
Ms Zainab Boladale
Mr Michael Burke
Mr James Corcoran
Mr Pat Gilroy
Ms Bernie Gray
Cllr Jimmy Guerin
Ms Brid Horan
Ms Rachel Hussey
Prof Dorothy Kenny
Prof Daire Keogh
Mr Fearghal Lynch

Prof Lisa Looney
Ms Chloe McMorrow
Prof Caroline McMullan
Dr Jean-Paul Mosnier
Prof Gary Murphy
Dr Noel Murphy

Mr Terence O'Rourke
Mr John Power
Ms Kathy Quinn
Dr Declan Raftery
Dr Mary Shine Thompson

APOLOGIES:

Ms Deirdre O'Connor
Ms Sharon McCoey

Dr Kara McGann
Ms Orla Nic Aodha

IN ATTENDANCE:

Ms Marian Burns
Mr Ciaran McGivern

Prof Anne Sinnott
Ms Marie Mellett (recording secretary)

WELCOME

The Chancellor welcomed members and noted the apologies. He also noted that this was Isabel Aust's first Governing Authority meeting as the post graduate students' representative and indicated that the Chief Operations Officer would arrange an online induction for her in the near future.

The agenda was adopted. The Chancellor suggested that in relation to future meetings any member wishing to have an item place on the agenda should make contact with himself or the COO with the details at least fourteen days in advance of the meeting.

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

1. MINUTES OF GOVERNING AUTHORITY MEETING OF 29TH OCTOBER 2020

Approved by the Authority subject to minor corrections.

2. REPORT OF THE GOVERNING AUTHORITY MEETING OF 29TH OCTOBER 2020 FOR WEB PUBLICATION

Approved by the Authority

3 REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS

Action 1: Agenda item 8

Action 2: Complete

Action 3: Agenda item 11

Action 4: Agenda item 11

Action 5: All universities have now notified the HEA in writing

Action 6: Agenda item 7

Actions to be tracked:

Action 1: Agenda item 10

Action 2: Postponed until permitted by public health guidelines.

Action 3: Ongoing

4 MATTERS ARISING

None

FOR DISCUSSION

5 GOVERNANCE

The Chancellor informed members that the Chief Operations Officer would shortly circulate a self-assessment questionnaire on the effectiveness of Governing Authority and requested that all members complete this as soon as possible to allow time to collate the results for presentation at the February meeting.

The Chancellor also informed members that the process for how best to ensure succession in the composition of the next Governing Authority continues and the outcome will be presented at the June meeting.

6 PRESIDENT'S REPORT AND UNIVERSITY OFFICERS' REPORTS

DCU President

The President reported that a decision had been taken at the end of October to remain in hybrid mode for the second semester. Understandably this was disappointing for staff and students but was necessary to facilitate planning for the rest of the academic year, to minimise disruption and to allow for continuity during the pandemic.

The President reported that Minister Simon Harris had recently met with the Presidents of the Higher Education sector in preparation for an 'incremental and phased return to campus when appropriate'. The Minister expressed concern about the impact of Covid-19 on the student

experience and the potential consequences for their welfare and progression due to limited campus activities. When circumstances allow DCU will open additional services, including the sports facilities and increase its co-curricular activities.

The President informed members that there had been significant affirmation of the university's Covid-19 response in the course of two important reviews currently being carried out: the Quality Assurance of Registry and the AACSB re-accreditation review of the DCU Business School. A review panel from the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland will visit DCU next week to reaccredit the four undergraduate nursing programmes in the School of Nursing, Psychotherapy and Community Health.

The President referred to a virtual visit to DCU by the Global CEO of LinkedIn. The visit provided a valuable opportunity to discuss aspects of the 'skills agenda' and education and training more broadly.

At a recent seminar on University Governance, Minister Harris flagged imminent reforms to the Higher Education Authority Act (1971). Intended to enhance the accountability of the HEI sector, the proposed legislation will increase 'oversight and transparency while respecting institutional autonomy' It is envisaged that the size and composition of Governing Authorities will be revised to provide a greater 'skills focus and an increased external membership to reflect a more modern approach to governing boards'

Vice President of Academic Affairs

The Vice President of Academic Affairs reported that the publication of exam results had been deferred to allow students an extra week to hand in assignments.

The Education Committee are currently discussing a more flexible delivery model and also reviewing assessment options in place of exams. SS&D have worked extremely well online and certain areas will not revert to the pre COVID 19 delivery model.

As part of the HCI Pillar 3 project a Strategic Learning and Development Dean will be appointed and the Governance Framework will be presented to Executive next week.

Chief Operations Officer

The Chief Operations Officer reported that the university had recently received a total of €2.3m in Minor Works funding for 2021 from the Department of Higher and Further Education. This will help address the backlog of maintenance and asset replacement needs of the University.

It was noted that the sports complex has reopened in line with Government regulations and will be providing extra co-curricular activities for students.

The handover of Woodlock Hall on the All Hallows Campus following extensive refurbishment works will take place next Wednesday 9th.

The National Digital Research Centre (NDRC)

The Chief Operations Officer reported that in 2006 the NDRC was established following a call for proposals from the then Department of Communications. DCU in conjunction with UCD, TCD, IADT and NCAD submitted the winning tender. The NDRC was set up as a company limited by guarantee with an independent board of directors and as a registered charity for the purposes of supporting start-up companies in the digital space. The recent re-tendering

process was won by another party and as a result the members of the NDRC will instigate a member's voluntary liquidation after all liabilities have been discharged. It is expected that after the discharge of all liabilities a cash surplus will remain from the proceeds of sale of small equity stakes in start-up companies. These funds will be distributed to other charities in accordance with the Charities Act.

In response to a question on the status of the DCU Ryan Academy Citywest property the COO reported the failure to agree on the value of the property with the Citywest holding company. The intention now is to enter into arbitration and dispose of the property.

Director of Finance

The Director of Finance reported that the focus for the finance office is currently on the results for the year ended 30 September 2020. KPMG have commenced their audit of the companies within the DCU Commercial Group. The audit of the university will commence in the New Year.

He also reported that company support schemes are now available for the Commercial Group of companies and that the Helix has moved its Panto online with 265 schools from around the county signed up. For 2021 this may be run in parallel with the live show.

Director of Human Resources

The Director of Human Resources reported that HR are finalising the Academic Promotions Call.

As the traditional staff Christmas Events cannot take place this year, HR are organising virtual Christmas Events such as Carol Singing, Panto and a greeting from the President.

A review of the 'Working from Home Policy' will be conducted in January to ensure that it fits with 'Our DCU'

7 STRATEGIC PLAN – ANNUAL REVIEW AND RENEW

The Chancellor reported that the Special Standing Sub-Committee of Governing Authority had met virtually just prior to the GA meeting with the President and members of the SMG to discuss the process for the 'renew' aspect of the Strategic Plan 2017-2020 priorities for year 4. He further reported that members of the Sub-Committee were satisfied that the 'renew' aspect, although still a work in progress, was being subjected to a robust and thorough scrutiny. The Deputy President then provided a comprehensive update with particular emphasis on the following:

SMG had a number of away days and had a focused strategy. SMG looked at the Strategic Plan in terms of COVID 19. On these away days three Strategic Intents were determined:

- People – to recognise value and contribution and to invest in their professionalism.
- Focus – what is our specific mission.
- Impact – deliver substantial meaningful change.

SMG also reduced the number of pillars to four:

- Provide a Transformative Student Experience.
- Advance our Research Reputation and Impact.
- Focused Institutional Impact.

- Value and Develop our Staff Community.

It was agreed that members will receive an update at each meeting and that the final Progress Report for year 3 with priorities for year 4 will form the foundation of the next Strategic Plan.

8 ACADEMIC QUALITY ASSURANCE

The Vice President of Academic Affairs reported under this heading. She noted that Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area have three extensive elements:

- Part 1: Standards for Internal Quality Assurance.
- Part 2: Standards for External Quality Assurance.
- Part 3: Standards for Quality Assurance Agencies.

All 23 Higher Education Institutes in Ireland are subject to an Institutional Review every seven years by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). This Body is responsible for the external quality assurance of further and higher education and training in Ireland. This review, the CINNTE review process, is in keeping with the above Standards and Guidelines.

Each review is carried out by an independent team of international experts and assesses how quality assurance is supported and enhanced within the institution.

Three Committees, Education Committee, Graduate Research Studies Board and University Standards Committee, report into Academic Council, who are ultimately responsible for academic assurance under universities' legislation.

An Annual Programme Review takes place based on student statistics, external examiner reports etc. A Periodic Programme Review is conducted every five years including the CINNTE Review.

Reviews of Academic Units are also conducted, focusing on strategy, programmes, teaching and learning. All outcomes from these three reviews feed into each other.

Statistics from the HEA website on student results indicates an increase in the number of students graduating with a 2:1 honours degree and a corresponding decrease in those graduating with a 2.2 honours degree. This is explained by the requirement of a 2.1 for admission to Masters programmes and more generally by an increase in teaching standards. It is not due to 'grade inflation as is sometimes commented on in the media.

9 AUDIT COMMITTEE

FOR NOTING

9.1 Minutes of meeting 14th October 2020

Noted by the Authority

FOR DISCUSSION

9.2 Report of meeting of 26th November 2020

Brid Horan, Chair of Governing Authority Audit Committee noted the following:

- The Committee focused on the 2018/2019 financial statements which are on today's agenda for approval.

- Internal Audit carried out a review of Health and Safety at the University with a particular focus on the response to Covid-19. This was a very positive report, with no recommendations.
- The Scholarships Audit recommendations are all actioned and an agile audit will be conducted on these towards the end of 2021.
- The competition for the IT co-sourcing requirements will begin mid-December. The tender process will take approx. 6-8 weeks.
- Interviews have begun for an Internal Audit Manager.
- The Audit Plan for 2021/2022 was agreed.
- It was agreed to align the Audit Plan to the academic calendar.
- The Estates Office Audit has commenced and initial findings are looking very positive. The Audit is focusing on the Estates Office reaction to COVID 19.
- A comprehensive presentation on Academic Quality Assurance was given by the Deputy Registrar/Dean for Teaching and Learning and the Committee noted that effective oversight of academic quality at module, programme, school, faculty and university levels.
- The Committee was informed that Trispace Catering have begun delivering pizzas in the locality. They have also developed a water carton that is 88% plant based. All revenue from the water carton sales goes to DCU to support education. The President noted that Trispace Catering have been phenomenal throughout this COVID 19 crisis.

FOR APPROVAL

9.3 Financial Statements FY Ending 30th September 2019

John Kilcoyne, Deputy Director of Finance was welcomed to the meeting. He provided a detailed summary of the audited financial statements for the year ending 30 September 2019 noting that they had been approved by the Audit Committee at its June meeting. The C&AG are currently reviewing these and plan to complete their audit by 31 December 2020. To facilitate final signing of the C&AG statements, approval is now being requested for delegated authority to the Chancellor and President to sign the C&AG audited financial statements provided there is no material change from those approved by Audit Committee at its June meeting. It noted that so far there has been nothing of significance raised by the C&AG.

It was agreed that a statement be prepared in advance of any potential negative media publicity due to the operating deficit for the year.

Delegated authority to the Chancellor and President to sign both the KPMG audited financial statements and the C&AG accounts subject to there being no material difference between them was **Approved**.

The KPMG financials for year ending 30th September 2019 was **Approved** by the Authority

9.4 Letter of Representation

It was noted that the Audit Committee is recommending for approval the Letter of Representation.

Approved by the Authority

FOR NOTING

10.1 Minutes of meeting 16th October 2020

Noted by the Authority

10.2 Minutes of meeting 12th November 2020

Noted by the Authority

FOR DISCUSSION

10.4 Report of meeting of 25th November 2020

Bernie Gray, Chair of the Risk Committee informed the Authority of the following:

- This meeting primarily focused on the Strategic Risk Register which is on today's agenda for approval.
- The Committee received an update on SafeZone and noted a significant increase in uptake among staff during the pandemic.
- The Annual Report from Health and Safety was reviewed and no significant issues were noted. The Committee was also informed of the significant work by the Health and Safety team during the pandemic.
- The annual review of the Committee's Terms of Reference has been concluded and they are on today's agenda for approval.
- The Committee had met with the Risk and Compliance Officer and the Head of Internal Audit independent of management.

FOR APPROVAL

10.4 Updated Terms of Reference

The Chair noted that the committee had made four minor changes to the Governing Authority Risk Committee's Terms of Reference.

Approved by the Authority

10.5 Strategic Risk Register 2021

The Chair informed members that the current draft is a combination of the following:

- A Sub Committee of Governing Authority conducting a top down analysis of risk.
- The GARC conducting a top down analysis of risk.
- SMG actively reviewing these results and each units operating risk registers.

This draft had been reviewed jointly by the Authority's Risk and Audit Committees who are now recommending it to Governing Authority for approval.

The title change from the 'Institutional Risk Register' to the 'Strategic Risk Register' was an outcome from the recent Heriot Watt University presentation on how it manages institutional strategic risk.

Approved by the Authority subject to a minor amendment in the preface.

11 TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR NEW EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION SUBCOMMITTEE

Rachel Hussey, Chair of this new Committee presented the draft Terms of Reference. She thanked Anne Sinnott and Marian Burns for their input. The first meeting of the Committee will take place in January at which members will consider the Terms in more detail. Any revisions will be presented to the GA at its February meeting.

It was agreed that the Terms of Reference should include a clause allowing the Chair to add two external members at her discretion.

Approved by the Authority subject to the above amendment.

12 ALL HALLOWS CAMPUS SITE TRANSFER TO DEPT. OF EDUCATION

The Department of Education had provided financial support to DCU during the incorporation project to help purchase the All Hallows Campus subject to the development of an Educate Together primary school on the All Hallows campus. A transfer of land for the school site to reflect this is now required. If approved, legal agreements will conclude over the coming weeks.

Approved by the Authority.

13 PROPOSAL TO PROCEED TO TENDER FOR FUTURE TECH BUILDING

The Chief Operations Officer informed members that the HEA has approved tendering for the Future Tech Project. The HEA will issue its letter next week. The Chief Operations Officer is seeking approval from Governing Authority to go to tender in January. By that time there should be more clarity on Brexit and vaccines for COVID 19.

There has been a slight delay in receiving the relevant fire certificates and the tendering process will not proceed until these have been issued.

The Chief Operations Officer noted that when tenders are received they will be brought to Governing Authority for consideration and approval. At that point there will be no obligation to proceed.

Approved by the Authority.

FOR DISCUSSION

14 STUDENT INFORMATION SYSTEM UPDATE

The Vice President of Academic Affairs noted that the project has reached a very important milestone with the launch of the Student Application Portal, CRM Recruit, the first deployment of a product under the SIS Project. The portal has started to receive applications for post graduate courses. Over the coming weeks the focus will be on lessons learned and a design forum of up to 24 representatives from across the university will take part. A further focus on finalising the roadmap will then take place.

FOR DECISION

15 PERSONNEL MATTERS

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

- Prof Maura Conway for appointment as Full Professor, School of Law and Government.
- Prof Christian Kaurert for appointment as Professor, School of Law and Government.

Approved by the Authority

16 GOVERNING AUTHORITY MEETING DATES 2021

The following dates for 2021 were agreed:

- February 11th
- April 15th
- June 24th

All meetings will begin at 3pm.

17 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chancellor thanked members for their contributions to the work of the Authority during the past very challenging year as a result of Covid-19. He singled out the President, members of the SMG and elected staff members of GA and thanked them for their loyalty, commitment and dedication to the university during 2020. This was evident in the way they had managed all the complex issues arising from the pandemic. He asked them to convey his thanks and appreciation to all staff members for the sacrifices that they had made both at home and in the workplace to ensure the effective functioning of the university in very trying and difficult times and to especially say that their efforts have been acknowledged and applauded by GA.

In conclusion the Chancellor wished everyone a very happy and safe Christmas celebrated in the company of close family

The Chair

Date

Action Items:

Action		Person responsible	Deadline
1.	Update on the Renew Process to be a standing item on the agenda	COO	From February 2021
2.	Induction for Isabel Aust to take place in the New Year	COO	ASAP
3.	Statement to be prepared in advance of any negative media publicity due to the deficit reported in the Financial Statements for the Y/E 30 September 2020.	Director of Finance	ASAP
4.	Self-Assessment Questionnaire to be circulated	COO	ASAP
5.	Update on Strategic Plan review and renew	Deputy President	Each meeting

Items to be tracked:

Action		Person responsible	Deadline
1.	Quarterly progress reports on each risk in the Strategic Risk Register	President	April 2021 meeting
2.	Meetings of GA to be held at different locations	COO	Every 2 nd meeting will be held off campus subject to public health guidelines
3	New VPEA to present on International Affairs - within 3 months of appointment	COO	Ongoing