

GOVERNING AUTHORITY MEETING

Report of meeting of Thursday, September 10th 2020
3.00pm, Video Conference.

PRESENT:

Dr Martin McAleese, Chancellor (Chair)
Mr Michael Burke
Mr James Corcoran
Cllr Jimmy Guerin
Prof Eithne Guilfoyle
Ms Brid Horan
Ms Rachel Hussey
Prof Dorothy Kenny
Prof Daire Keogh
Mr Fearghal Lynch
Ms Sharon McCooey
Dr Kara McGann

Ms Chloe McMorrow
Prof Caroline McMullan
Dr Jean-Paul Mosnier
Prof Gary Murphy
Dr Noel Murphy
Ms Orla Nic Aodha
Ms Deirdre O'Connor
Mr Terence O'Rourke
Mr John Power
Ms Kathy Quinn
Dr Declan Raftery
Dr Mary Shine Thompson

APOLOGIES:

Ms Isabel Aust
Mr Pat Gilroy

Ms Bernie Gray

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 Professor Daire Keogh's first Governing Authority meeting as President of DCU and Professor Anne Sinnott's first Governing Authority meeting as Deputy President. He wished them both every success in their new roles.

The agenda was adopted.

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 23RD APRIL 2020

Approved by the Authority subject to a minor correction.

2. REPORT OF THE GOVERNING AUTHORITY MEETING OF 23RD APRIL 2020 FOR WEB PUBLICATION

Approved by the Authority

3 REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS

Action 1: Will be presented at October meeting

Action 2: Agenda item 5

Action 3: This took place on July 09th and five strategic risks were identified.

Action 4: Agenda item 8

Action 5: Agenda item 5

Action 6: Will be presented at October meeting

Action 7: Will be presented at October meeting

Actions to be tracked:

Action 1: Agenda item 9

Action 2: Postponed until permitted by public health guidelines.

Action 3.1: Ongoing

Action 3.2: Ongoing

Action 4: Ongoing

Action 5: Agenda item 5

Action 6: Ongoing

Action 7: Will be presented at October meeting

Action 8: Special group of external members to meet after the SMG away days next week to discuss outcome of the review and renew process prior to presentation at October meeting for approval.

4 MATTERS ARISING

None

5 GOVERNANCE

5.1 Governing Authority Workplan 2020/2021

The Chancellor presented the 2020/2021 GA workplan. He noted that this is a living document which will be adjusted in response to changes in the external and/or internal environments. The workplan gives an overview of what will be covered at each of the Governing Authority meetings.

5.2 The Governance and Nominations Committee are recommending the appointment of Zainab Boladale as a member of Governing Authority to replace Lynette Fay.

Approved by Governing Authority

5.3 The Chancellor informed the Authority that he has begun the process on how best to ensure succession in the composition of the next Governing Authority.

FOR DISCUSSION

6 PRESIDENT'S REPORT AND UNIVERSITY OFFICERS' REPORTS

DCU President

The President noted that this is his first GA meeting as President of the university. He regarded his appointment as a huge personal honour and thanked GA for placing its trust in him.

The President formally acknowledged the trojan work by colleagues across the university, in the very challenging environment created by Covid19. The work of senior management during the past six months had been concentrated on dealing with the difficult issues created by the global pandemic.

The President informed the Authority that at his first meeting of Senior Management shortly after his appointment, he had set out his vision for the university and ambition that by 2030 DCU would be recognized as:

Ireland's University of Enterprise and Impact – distinguished from other Irish Universities by its risk-taking, its quality student experience, its research impact, its people-focus and its positive impact on Irish life

He thanked GA for approving the appointments of Prof Anne Sinnott as Deputy President and Prof Lisa Looney as Vice President of Academic Affairs.

The President outlined in detail the measures being taken by the university under its Return to Campus Protocol together with the significant emergency supports being provided by Minister Harris to mitigate against the estimated €500m cost of Covid to the sector. As always the first priority of the university remains the health and safety of both staff and students.

The President provided an update on the status of each of the three Pillars of the Human Capital Initiative (HCI) noting that the outcome of the Pillar 3 competition, the most significant Pillar, was imminent.

The President reported that two away days had been set aside for the SMG to review the Strategic Plan, the impact of COVID 19 and how best to deliver his vision. He noted that the global nature of the crisis had prompted a reflection on the importance of science, education and university education in particular in responding to the major challenges that humanity faces. Investment in education is the key to global recovery.

The President indicated that DCU will not become an online university but instead will offer a hybrid experience to its students. Enormous investments have been made across the university to support this and to provide a safe and secure working environment for students and staff alike. He also indicated that he is working very closely with the SU President.

The President reported that the Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science has spoken frankly about enhancing the framework for combatting sexual harassment across the sector. In relation to this Dr Claire Bohan will work with students and the Deputy President and the Director of HR will engage with staff. The Director of HR

noted that DCU is revising its Respect and Dignity Policy and accompanying processes. It will be launched together with guidelines for staff through webinars and will be embedded in the induction process for new staff. The intention is to make staff aware that they have a duty to disclose incidences of sexual harassment that they become aware of.

The President noted the following:

- DCU has moved up the in the Times Higher University Rankings.
- The European Consortium of Innovative Universities (ECIU) of which DCU is the only Irish member has received a funding award of €2m from the Horizon 2020 programme. This support will enable ECIU to strengthen its research and innovation mission and establish the SMART-ER: the ECIU University Research Institute for SMART European Regions
- Dr Kara McGann has been appointed to the ECIU external group of experts
- DCU has reached the semi-finals of the Enactus World Cup

Vice- President of Academic Affairs

The Vice President of Academic Affairs informed the Authority that under the hybrid model lectures will primarily be delivered online with practical's conducted on campus. The university will maximize insofar as possible student time on campus in accordance with prevailing health and safety guidelines. There have been significant enhancements in IT in classrooms and libraries. A Digital Design Unit has been created and has been staffed with expertise in digital production and design. This unit will support all faculties.

Timetabling has been a very important body of work recently with indicative timetables being released to give students an idea of how much time they will be on campus and to enable them to plan for their accommodation needs.

This year third level institutes will be working with Leaving Cert calculated grades for the first time. These are based on predicted leaving certificate grades from schools which have been adjusted by the Department of Education and Science to reflect trends in both national and individual school historic data. However, subsequently the impact of school based historic data was removed so as not to impact adversely on the grades from lower achieving schools. This has resulted in much higher overall leaving certificate results which in turn has resulted in an increase in course points. For example, in DCU 80% of courses will see a 10-40-point increase, 10% will increase by 50 points and 10% won't change. This is in line with the experience of other universities and may result in unintended consequences particularly for those who sat the leaving certificate in 2019 and deferred applying for a university course for a year. In order to address these consequences, the HEA requested third level institutions to make extra places available. DCU has agreed to create an additional 200 places across all five faculties.

Chief Operations Officer

The Chief Operations Officer noted that full planning permission has been granted for the FutureTech Building. This enables the process to move to the next stage of seeking approval from the HEA to go to tender. If approval is granted by the HEA to proceed to tender, the final decision on this will depend on the financials of the project will be reviewed internally prior to any recommendation to Governing Authority to proceed to public tender for the construction of the Future Tech building.

With the start of term approaching there is a significant body of work involved in reopening the university. The number of confirmed cases of Covid positive in the Dublin area will have to be taken into account and these numbers are being constantly monitored.

The return of all staff to campus, with modified working arrangements, is set for the 21st September. First year students to arrive on campus on the 28th and continuing students on the 5th October.

Physical distancing measures, signage and 'Sit Here' stickers will be in place across the more than 175 teaching spaces on campus by tomorrow.

Guidance documents for both staff and students are being finalized and will be circulated to Heads and Deans next week. The COVID 19 information webpage is being updated with clear and concise information. The €1m investment in IT infrastructure is being rolled out and will enhance the online learning capability.

All students will complete a health declaration on registering and will receive a video from the President and SU President emphasising what is required of all students on campus. Ongoing communication throughout the semester will take place to ensure that all staff and students remain vigilant and that no one becomes complacent.

The President is working with the IUA on a rapid response protocol to be in place in the event of a positive case of COVID 19 on campus. The Chief Operations Officer noted that there are isolation rooms on each campus and they will be listed in the guidance document.

In response to a question about supports for staff who are reluctant to come back on campus the COO explained that the guidance document outlines all the safety measures in place for staff and students. All rooms have been reviewed for ventilation and cleaning. Next week the wearing of face coverings will be mandatory in all university buildings. There will only be 20% of students on campus at any one time and since there will not be a full complement of staff on campus at any one time either there will not be a need for shared offices. HR personnel are dealing with staff who fall into the HSEs high or very high risk categories. The student bar has been reviewed by the DCU Health and Safety team and has a revised capacity. The Chief Operations Officer is in regular contact with the bar manager.

The Chief Operations Officer noted there will not be Covid testing on campus and that any testing required will be done by the referral to the HSE. Staff and students will be asked to self-isolate until test results are known.

It was noted that the source of guidance in relation to Covid19 should be clearly identified and communicated. It was further noted that the sector is awaiting guidance from the HSE on what is deemed as constituting close contacts. The university will comply with this guidance in an appropriate and timely manner.

Director of Finance

The Director of Finance will give his update under agenda item 7.

Director of Human Resources

The Director of Human Resources reported that HR is working on completion of the SALI appointments and the internal academic promotion scheme for 2020.

HR has been focusing on drafting the Return to Work Policy and its communications. Senior Management and Executive expect all staff and students to return to campus. However, it is not expected that staff will be back full time during this academic term. There has been great support from Health and Safety regarding open plan offices. An email with all policies will be sent to management tomorrow. Management will also be given the points of contact in HR that will be dealing with high and very high risk staff members.

HR has revisited the issue of equality within the university. It was agreed that the Deputy President would also be the lead for Diversity and Inclusion. In addition, there will be a HR point of contact for both staff and students.

HR will shortly be launching the Gender Identity Policy.

The President paid tribute to the HR Director and her team along with the COO and his team for their support of staff throughout the crisis. Thanks was also expressed to Marie Mellett for her contribution in helping members of the DCU Community in addressing the many issues that arose as a result of the pandemic during the summer months.

Members of the Authority suggested that the university acknowledge the pressure that staff have been subjected to and to be aware of the impact of fatigue on them.

FOR DECISION

7 UNIVERSITY BUDGETS 2020/2021

Forecast for year ended 30 September 2020

The forecast outcome for the university shows a net deficit compared to a break-even budget for 2019/2020 after allowing for depreciation and transfer to capital. The deficit is mostly driven by a lower than expected transfer of funds and lower rental income from the DCU Commercial Group due to the impact of Covid-19 on the profitability of the commercial companies. These companies are dependent on campus footfall which was significantly reduced in the last six months of trading. The turnover for the group is down on the previous year and the group is forecast to show a loss compared to a budget profit. Other negative factors contributing to the overall deficit are lower exam fee and miscellaneous income, higher operational non-pay costs due to the necessary upgrading of IT and teaching infrastructures to support the move online of both academic and administrative activities and costs associated with health and safety requirements for staff and students. A support package of €160m for the sector has been put in place by the Department but to date no agreement on its allocation has been reached.

Budget for year ended 30 September 2021

The Director of Finance presented the draft University and DCU Commercial Group budgets for 2020/21. The latter with a projected loss to give Governing Authority full visibility of the overall DCU consolidated budget position. He reported that the preparation of the 2020/21 budget has been extremely challenging in the context of the continuing significant uncertainty surrounding the Covid-19 crisis with the resultant negative growth in projected international student numbers, increases in the pay cost base, additional non-pay costs due to requisite Covid-19 operational requirements and the continued restraints on Government funding. The budget provides for the interest and capital repayments in respect of the DCU Campus Development Plan, for the increase in depreciation arising on new buildings and ensures that

the financial covenant requirements of the loans can be met. The budgeted capital spend for the year on committed projects including the SIS programme is €18m. No account has been taken in the budget of any financial support measures the Government might implement to meet the costs of the pandemic.

The Governing Authority is asked to approve the draft University budget for 2020/21.

Approved by the Authority

8 AUDIT COMMITTEE

8.1 Internal Audit Charter (update)

Brid Horan, Chair of Governing Authority Audit Committee presented the revised Internal Audit Charter with some minor revisions.

Approved by the Authority

8.2 Audit Committee Terms of Reference (update)

Brid Horan, Chair of Governing Authority Audit Committee presented the revised Audit Committee Terms of Reference with some minor revisions.

Approved by the Authority

The Chancellor asked if there were any implications for the internal audit function as a result of Covid-19 in relation to:

- Reliance on operating internal controls which may have changed
- Inability to access sufficient and appropriate internal audit evidence to form judgements and opinions
- Inability to access staff due to remote working and to get sight of original documents
- Increased risk of fraud and breaches of cybersecurity

In response the Director of Finance noted that internal controls continue to operate successfully and that at the beginning of the pandemic DCU put a number of controls in place in relation to cybersecurity. An online central repository has been put in place which is accessed by the external auditors. The DCU Internal Auditor is checking to ensure all internal controls are in place and operating as intended.

FOR NOTING

9 RISK COMMITTEE

9.1 Minutes of meeting 05th June 2020

Noted by the Authority

FOR DISCUSSION

9.2 Report of meeting of 17th July 2020

In the absence of the Chair of Governing Authority Risk Committee, The Chief Operations Officer gave the following update:

- The COVID 19 plan for a Return to Campus for the start of the academic year and scenario planning was discussed in detail.

- A sub group of Governing Authority were involved in a risk exercise to help draft the IRR.
- Prof Lisa Looney gave a presentation on the SIS Project.
- The Head of Assurance Services from Heriot Watt University in Scotland gave an informative presentation on how they handle risk.. Heriot Watt is also a multi campus university of similar scale to DCU.
- The August meeting was rescheduled and will take place after the review of the Strategic Plan and when the IRR is at a more advanced stage.

FOR NOTING

10 ACADEMIC COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT

The Vice-President of Academic Affairs reported on the main activities of Academic Council and its three sub-committees for the academic year 2019-2020 This report provides Governing Authority with assurances that the academic reputation of the university is safeguarded by ensuring that appropriate measures are in place for the conduct and review of all academic activity across the university.

The Council and sub-committees continue to meet on a regular basis. Their responsibilities include: the introduction and accreditation of new programmes, restructuring of existing programmes, retitling of existing programmes, approval of academic calendar 20/21 and various regulatory matters.

11 STUDENT INFORMATION SYSTEM UPDATE

The Director of Finance reported that the Project is progressing satisfactorily and continues to remain on time and on Budget.

FOR DECISION

12 PERSONNEL MATTERS

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

- Prof Finian Buckley for appointment as Full Professor, DCU Business School.
- Prof Edel Conway for appointment as Full Professor, DCU Business School
- Prof Yseult Freeney for appointment as Professor, DCU Business School.
- Prof Claire Gubbins for appointment as Professor, DCU Business School.
- Prof Brian Harney for appointment as Professor, DCU Business School.
- Dr James Walsh for appointment as Adjunct Professor, Faculty of Science and Health.

13 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chancellor noted that this was Eithne Guilfoyle's last meeting and on behalf of all members thanked her for the outstanding way she had served the university in her role as Vice-President of Academic Affairs. He thanked her for the professionalism, courtesy and respect she had extended to all members in her dealings with them. He concluded by wishing her every best wish for the future.

14 NEXT MEETING

Thursday October 29th

The Chair

Date

Action Items:

Action	Person responsible	Deadline
1. Presentation on Academic Affairs approach to academic quality assurance.	Vice-President Academic Affairs	Oct 2020 meeting
2. Any additions / comments to the GA workplan please inform the Chancellor or COO	All members	Ongoing
3. Once established and the Terms of Reference are agreed - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Sub-Committee will be a standing item on the GA agenda	COO	ASAP
4. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Sub-Committee to draw up draft terms of Reference	COO and Rachel Hussey	October 2020 meeting
5. QPO Annual Report 2018/2019	Aisling McKenna	October meeting
6. Special group of external members to meet SMG to discuss proposed review and renew of Strategic Plan	Chancellor and President	Before October meeting

Items to be tracked:

Action	Person responsible	Deadline
1. Quarterly progress reports on each risk in the Institutional Risk Register	President	Overview of Risk at Sept 2020 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
3.1	Review of QuIPs in the second year of implementation and each Quality Review Summary Report to highlight recommendations in tabular form	Deirdre O'Connor	After one year of implementation at February Meeting
3.2	Each quality review self-assessment be accompanied by a view on the extent to which it is aligned with the strategic principles of the University	Deirdre O'Connor	On-going
4.	Brief dialogue on how the Quality Reviews are aligned with Risk and Audit	Director of Quality Promotion and Institutional Research	Annually at February meeting
5.	New VPEA to present on International Affairs - within 3 months of appointment	COO	Ongoing
6.	Updates from the Denominated Education Centres	Gareth Byrne Anne Lodge	October meeting
7.	Strategic Plan – Annual Review and Renew	President	October 2020 meeting