

GOVERNING AUTHORITY MEETING

Report of meeting of Wednesday, October 18th 2023
2.00pm, Ibec Boardroom, Ibec, Baggot St.



PRESENT:

Ms. Brid Horan (Chair)
Prof Daire Keogh
Mr Anubhav Anandind
Dr Audrey Bryan (on-line)
Ms Marian Corcoran (on-line)
Prof Yvonne Daly
Mr John Darby (on-line)
Mr Justin Doyle
Ms Sarah Fitzpatrick
Cllr Jimmy Guerin (on-line)
Ms Carol Hanney
Ms Rachel Hussey
Prof Lisa Looney

Mr Cathal Marley (on-line)
Dr Kara McGann
Ms Fiona Naughton
Ms Deirdre O'Connor
Mr Thomas O'Dowd
Prof James O'Higgins Norman
Dr Aisling de Paor (on-line)
Ms Michele Pringle
Dr Declan Raftery
Ms Marie Sinnott
Mr Brian J. Smyth
Mr Seamus Walsh

APOLOGIES:

Mr David Harney
Prof Ray Walshe

Ms Zainab Boladale

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr John Kilcoyne
Prof Anne Sinnott

Mr Gareth Yore
Ms Marie Mellett

WELCOME

The Chancellor welcomed members and thanked Kara McGann for hosting the meeting in the Ibec offices. She thanked everyone for their participation and noted the apologies.

The Chancellor noted that, arising from the re-constitution of GA as required by the new Universities Act, this was the last meeting for Ray Walshe, Rachel Hussey, Kara McGann, Deirdre O'Connor, Zainab Boladale and Jimmy Guerin and thanked them for their contribution over the years. She noted that GA and DCU had benefited enormously from their contributions and that they would be missed.

The agenda was adopted.

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 06TH SEPTEMBER 2023**
Approved by the Authority subject to minor amendments.
- 2. REPORT OF MEETING OF 06TH SEPTEMBER 2023 FOR WEB PUBLICATION**

Approved by the Authority subject to minor amendments.

3 REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS

Action 1: On agenda

Action 2: Ongoing

Action 3: December 2023

Action 4: December 2023

Action 5: On agenda

Actions to be tracked:

Action 1: December meeting

Action 2: Today and ongoing.

Action 3: Ongoing

Action 4: Ongoing

Action 5: Dominic Elliot will present at December meeting.

4 MATTERS ARISING

None

5 GOVERNANCE

5.1 Governing Authority transition on November 10th

DR informed the Authority that the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science has accepted our proposal for the transitional arrangements for the Governing Authority as required by legislation. The term of this current Governing Authority will now cease at midnight on November 09th. The new Governing Authority term will commence on November 10th and cease on 28th July 2025.

It was suggested that on this day, November 10th, a meeting (via zoom) will be held to nominate and appoint a Chancellor. This appointment must be ratified by 2/3 majority of Governing Authority members. DR will circulate details over the coming days.

It was noted that Carol Hanney, Cathal Marley and Marie Sinnott were reappointed by the Minister for Further and Higher Education.

FOR APPROVAL

6. FINANCE MATTERS

6.1 DCU Treasury Management Policy and Mandate update

DCU is a registered charity under the Charities Act 2009

DCU Charity Number: 20013653

The Director of Finance informed the Authority that this policy was presented to the Audit Committee and the Board of DCU Educational Support Services DAC.

Following discussion, The Authority **approved** the treasury management policy and changes to the existing treasury mandate with AIB, including authorised signatories and authorised dealers.

FOR DISCUSSION / NOTING

7. STUDENT SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT – students at risk overview of support structures and services at DCU

Dr Claire Bohan, Dean of Students, was welcomed to the meeting. Student Support and Development have 65 staff members across all DCU academic campuses. The three areas that focus on students at risk are:

- The Health Centre
- Student Counselling and
- Disability and Learning Support.

Strong structures are in place across these areas. Parents are informed at Open Days of our processes. SS&D reach out to a student three times before approaching the student's next of kin or emergency services, if there is believed to be an imminent risk to the welfare of the student.

The Student Health Centre sees up to 100 students per day, some 20% for mental health reasons. A mental health nurse was appointed last year who sees about 30 registered students each week.

These numbers are similar all over the world. CB presented the results of the My World Survey 2, where 8290 students between the age of 18 – 25 interacted. CB noted that the COVID 19 pandemic suited some students and not others. Some students like to have counselling on campus, while others prefer online.

Every three years DCU go to tender for external additional counselling services, and we work with an external body for out of hours counselling. We have a €400k budget from Government and DCU.

Online and in person training for staff on 'Identifying and Responding to Students in Distress or at Risk', was rolled out in September 2023. There has been a positive uptake. The whole university is taking responsibility for the wellbeing of students.

'Care and Connect', the new university wide response programme to mental and physical wellness, was launched this year. This includes supporting frontline staff along with identification of at-risk students. Care and Connect also supports healthy choices, healthy relationships and assistance academically. DCU rely heavily on DCU security staff for out of hour student support. The Governing Authority noted the important contribution of the Security Team in this regard and their willingness to be trained.

The Governing Authority thanked CB for her informative presentation and personal leadership, expressed their appreciation to all involved across the university for their

commitment to student welfare and supported the university leadership's approach to investing in the supports and systems in this essential aspect of university life.

8. AUDIT COMMITTEE

8.1 Report of meeting of 20th September 2023

Cathal Marley, Chair of Audit Committee, gave an update to the Authority. The following items were noted:

- An update on University high level risks was given by the Chair of Risk Committee. She noted that the Risk Committee received a presentation on Freedom of Information and it was well received. It was further noted that a culture of over reporting should be embedded around Data Protection.
- The Director of Finance presented the Treasury Management Policy.
- As of now, the OCAG have indicated that no material issues have arisen in relation to the audit on the consolidated accounts for FY 21/22.
- The Letter of Representation was reviewed. The language was discussed in detail especially around travel policy compliance. To the best of the Audit Committee's knowledge there are no material issues in relation to the travel policy assertion.
- An update from Internal Audit was received. There was concern over the impact that outstanding audit actions are having on the internal audit programme. The outstanding audit actions were reviewed, and the Committee believes some can be closed off by November. The Committee asked for a proposal to be presented at the November meeting on how to handle outstanding audit actions going forward.
- The Committee also received an update on three Internal Audit Reports:
 - Employee Relations – recommendations on data retention and security were made and controls are in place.
 - Londis – Glasnevin Campus – this was a follow up review from the audit and it highlighted several issues. These issues are currently being worked on, however as a result of the review an audit will be conducted on the Londis on the St Patricks Campus.
 - Campus Residences – Access Controls - the Committee were informed that there are very strong controls in place.

○ **Minutes of meeting of 08th June 2023**

Noted by the Authority

The Director of Finance presented the DCU Consolidated accounts 2021/2022. As per the last Governing Authority meeting, delegated authority for the President and Chancellor to sign the financials subject to no material issues, was approved. On 10th of October the OCAG issued clearance subject to certain matters. These matters were outlined in the memo presented by the Director of Finance. The Authority discussed them in detail.

The Authority proposed an amendment to the text under Clearance Item.

Subject to this change the Authority **approved** the matters and approved signing the financial statements 2021/2022.

9. RISK COMMITTEE

9.1 Report of meeting of 11th October 2023

Marie Sinnott, Chair of Risk Committee, gave an update to the Authority. The following items were noted:

- The Risk Committee's inputs to the Strategic Risk Register (SRR) are to be reviewed by SMG. The Risk Committee asked for SMG to also consider the external environment and ensure risks are specific to DCU, not the sector as a whole.
- The Dean of Teaching and Learning gave a presentation on artificial intelligence (AI). The Committee agreed that AI and Gen AI are a risk but the bigger risk is not to embrace them. The Committee agreed that it was a very informative presentation and will ensure this contributes to the SRR.
- The DPU report was presented and noted that they are trying to improve the uptake of data protection training by staff.

9.2 Minutes of meeting of 06th September 2023

Noted by the Authority

10. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE

10.1 Report of meeting 09th October 2023

Rachel Hussey, Chair of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee, gave an update to the Authority. The following items were noted:

- An update on the university's public sector duty was received. No non-compliance items were identified.
- Very good progress is being made on the Athena Swan Application.
- Rachel Power, EDI Manager, gave a presentation on the upcoming priorities for the EDI unit over the coming months.
- As this was the last meeting for the current chair, a handover was given to Shay Walsh.

The Authority thanked Rachel for her dedication in establishing and promoting this Committee. The Chancellor noted that there is a position vacant on this Committee and the Authority offered it to Carol Hanney. CH gladly accepted.

11. REPORT OF ACADEMIC COUNCIL 2022 / 2023

A detailed report had been circulated.

The Vice President of Academic Affairs noted that Academic Council is made up of over 100 members from across the university who provide academic quality assurance. New academic degree programmes go through a rigorous process before they are approved by Academic Council. A report from the Graduate Research Studies Board gets presented to Academic Council including any appeals brought through the Graduate Research Studies Board Appeals Committee.

Noted by the Authority.

12. PRESIDENT'S REPORT AND UNIVERSITY OFFICERS' REPORTS

DCU President

The President gave an overview of his report which had been circulated to GA and highlighted the following:

- The reduction in costs for students and core funding for the sector of €60m in Budget 2024 was welcomed.
- The new DCU Strategic Plan was launched and was positively received.

- DCU have been ready for the last number of weeks to proceed to tender for the new Student Residences, however we have not yet received approval from the Department. This could potentially impact a completion date of September 2026.
- DCU maintained its position in the top 500 of the World University rankings. The B Ed for Irish Sign Language (ISL) was also shortlisted in the Widening Participation or Outreach Initiative of the Year category and STEM internship programme, STInt, was shortlisted in the Knowledge Exchange/Transfer Initiative category in the Times Higher Education Awards 2023.
- Research stipends were increased for SFI and IRC programmes.

Vice President of Academic Affairs

The Vice President of Academic Affairs informed the Authority that student retention data post COVID-19 is being monitored. Trends have moved to a pre-Covid normal and there has been a great vibrancy across campus since the beginning of semester one.

Included in the report is an update on ECIU. It details the approach DCU/ECIU are taking and how it is governed. The Authority asked for a presentation on ECIU at a future meeting.

Chief Operations Officer

The Chief Operations Officer informed the Authority that the Standing Committee of Governing Authority had approved the commencement of two High Court judicial reviews against An Bord Pleanála regarding the residential zoned land tax decisions for the DCU North Lands and the DCU Griffith Avenue lands. The application for leave to take the judicial reviews is listed in the High Court for October 23rd.

Since issuing the judicial review proceedings, Dublin City Council (DCC) have indicated its intention to carry out a public consultation process regarding the rezoning of the DCU North Lands from z12 to z15. If the rezoning was successful this would make North Lands exempt from the existing Residential Zoned Land Tax. The Government announced in Budget 2024 that it was delaying implementing this tax until February 2025.

The Chief Operations Officer further noted that the Marlet case was listed in the High Court last week and a settlement was agreed between the two parties. The case has now been struck out.

Director of Finance

The Director of Finance noted the Finance Office are engaging with PWC on the implementation of new revenue reporting requirements. From 01st January 2024 employers will be required to provide additional information to Revenue relating to travel and subsistence payments made to staff for business journeys.

DCU is engaging with the IUA and other stakeholders in relation to the implementation of the Budget 2024 initiatives, such as reductions in the student contribution and the increased research stipend for SFI and the IRC.

The COVID-19 Business interruption Insurance claim is ongoing.

Director of Human Resources

The Director of Human Resources informed the Authority that a key pillar of the Strategic Plan is to develop the staff community and create a sense of belonging. Therefore, HR are rebranding to 'DCU People'. The HR Team are currently working on this and it will be launched in 2024.

13. PERSONNEL MATTERS

The Chancellor noted that Kara McGann discussed the process of selecting the candidates being submitted for approval by the Authority (as previously agreed by GA) with the Director of Human Resources. Kara confirmed to the Chancellor that she is satisfied that the process followed was appropriate.

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

- Prof Derek Hand for appointment as Full Professor in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences.
- Prof Yseult Freeney for appointment as Full Professor in the DCU Business School.
- Paul Keogh for appointment as Adjunct professor in the DCU Business School.

Approved by the Authority

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The President invited members of Governing Authority to attend the Honorary Degree Conferring and the Graduation ceremonies that are taking place during the week commencing 23rd October.

Chancellor

Date

Action Items:

Action		Person responsible	Deadline
1.	Presentation on AI	Dean of Teaching & Learning	Early 2024
2	Circulate Organisation Diagram	Deputy President	When complete
3.	Report on DCU Educational Trust.	Marie Sinnott, Marian Corcoran, Cathal Marley	Dec 2023
4.	EICU Presentation	VP of Academic Affairs	Dec 2023

Items to be tracked:

Action		Person responsible	Deadline
1.	Quarterly progress reports on each risk in the Strategic Risk Register.	President	SRR to be presented at December meeting
2.	Meetings of GA to be held at different locations.	COO	Ongoing
3.	Update on any changes to the Universities Act.	COO	As they arise
4.	Strategy only meetings.	Deputy President	Annually
5.	Deans to present on rotation	COO	Dominic Elliot to present at December 2023 meeting