

## GOVERNING AUTHORITY MEETING

Report of meeting of Friday, June 26<sup>th</sup> 2020  
3.00pm, Video Conference.

### **PRESENT:**

Dr Martin McAleese, Chancellor (Chair)  
Mr Michael Burke  
Mr James Corcoran  
Mr Pat Gilroy  
Ms Bernie Gray  
Cllr Jimmy Guerin  
Prof Eithne Guilfoyle  
Ms Brid Horan  
Ms Rachel Hussey  
Prof Dorothy Kenny  
Mr Fearghal Lynch  
Prof Brian MacCraith  
Ms Sharon McCooey

Ms 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

### **IN ATTENDANCE:**

Ms Marian Burns  
Mr Ciaran McGivern

Prof Daire Keogh  
Ms Marie Mellett (recording secretary)

### **WELCOME**

The Chancellor welcomed members and noted the apologies. He also noted that this was Professor Brian MacCraith's last Governing Authority meeting as his term as President of DCU ends on 13 July.

The agenda was adopted, subject to considering the Honorary Doctorate Committee Terms of Reference under agenda item 5 and not agenda item 11 as circulated. As was the case for the April meeting the agenda is mainly focused on the impact on the university's operations of Covid-19. Some agenda items that were scheduled for this meeting have been deferred but will be considered at future meetings.

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 23<sup>RD</sup> APRIL 2020**

**Approved** by the Authority subject to minor corrections.

#### **2. REPORT OF THE GOVERNING AUTHORITY MEETING OF 23<sup>RD</sup> APRIL 2020 FOR WEB PUBLICATION**

**Approved** by the Authority

### **3 REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS**

Action 1: September's meeting

Action 2: Action now closed – awaiting publication of the programme for government.

Action 3: The COO and JG are having ongoing discussions. Action closed

Action 4: Agenda item 5

Action 5: The Vice-President of External Affairs has resigned. President elect will review the structure of this office before advertising for a replacement.

Action 6: Agenda item 5

Action 7: Agenda item 5

Action 8: Septembers' meeting

Action 9: Agenda item 7

Action 10: Agenda item 8

Action 11: Closed

#### **Actions to be tracked:**

Action 1: Agenda item 8 and ongoing

Action 2: Health restrictions permitting, the October meeting will be held in Matheson.

Action 3.1: Ongoing

Action 3.2: Ongoing

Action 4: Ongoing

Action 5: 2020/2021 dates and draft agenda items will be circulated at Septembers meeting.

### **4 MATTERS ARISING**

None

### **5 GOVERNANCE**

5.1 The Chancellor informed the Authority that the Governance and Nominations Committee is proposing the following membership for the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Sub-Committee of GA:

- Ms Rachel Hussey – Chair
- Ms Kara McGann
- Prof Gary Murphy

- Ms Orla Nic Aodha
- Councillor Jimmy Guerin
- Ms Marian Burns

The first task of the sub-committee will be to draw up its draft terms of reference.

**Approved** by the Authority

5.2. The Honorary Degree Committee has reviewed the Committee's revised Terms of Reference in consultation with Academic Council and is recommending them to Governing Authority for approval.

**Approved** by the Authority

5.3. The Chancellor reported that the Governance and Nominations Committee will propose a replacement for Lynette Fay on Governing Authority at its September meeting.

He further reported that Mary Shine Thompson had agreed to replace Lynette on the Governance and Nominations Committee subject to approval by GA.

**Approved** by the Authority

5.4. Governance responsibilities with respect to deficits (sect.37 Universities Act 1997)  
The President is required to inform the HEA of the anticipated deficit for the current financial year to 30 September 2020. This has been done and in any case the HEA is fully aware of the significant negative impact Covid19 is having on the forecasts of HEIs.

## FOR DISCUSSION

### **6 PRESIDENT'S REPORT AND UNIVERSITY OFFICERS' REPORTS**

The Chancellor informed the Authority that the Special Standing Sub-Committee along with the Chair of DCU Commercial had met on two occasions (via Zoom call) with the senior management team since the last Governing Authority meeting to be updated on the measures the university is implementing to mitigate the impact of Covid19. He also indicated that he continues to be in regular contact with the President and the Chief Operations Officer.

#### **DCU President**

The President reminded members that a Crisis Management Team (CMT) chaired by the COO had been put in place. It now meets every second day. Its initial focus was on crisis management. This subsequently shifted to scenario planning and associated decision-making and the current focus is now on the implementation of key decisions taken to adjust for a new reality in the coming academic year. He emphasized that the assumptions underpinning those decisions were based primarily on public health (HSE, DoH) guidance, especially with respect to social distancing.

In his presentation the President placed particular emphasis on the following:

- Importance of effective internal and external communications
- Hybrid delivery model of academic programmes
- Student mobility (Erasmus, Exchange)
- A new model of student accommodation
- Return to Campus protocol

- Timing for Leaving Certificate results and CAO offers
- Staff and student supports

He stressed that an important feature of DCU's plans for the 20/21 academic year involved incorporating sufficient flexibility to adapt in an agile fashion to evolving circumstances, e.g. to pivot towards predominantly face-to-face learning in the event of a positive healthcare development or to react swiftly to the re-imposition of government restrictions including the complete closure of campuses.

The President reported that DCU had recently established the DCU Covid-19 Research and Innovation Hub to support the national effort in tackling the pandemic. The Hub is leveraging DCU's research expertise, in collaboration with national and international stakeholders with a view to developing solutions that can be implemented and deployed within a three to six-month time-frame. With the generous help of DCU Educational Trust 15 excellent projects are being funded from across all five faculties.

The President noted that DCU held its first virtual graduation ceremony for graduates from the School of Nursing, Psychotherapy and Community Health on June 6<sup>th</sup>. Although successful with a very positive feedback it had been very expensive to organize and would not be a sustainable model for the main autumn graduation ceremonies.

The University held a very successful online interview with former President Mary McAleese on June 10<sup>th</sup> as part of its Women in Leadership Programme

In order to address the economic difficulties being faced by some students DCUET has set up an emergency fund sponsored by BT Ireland. BT agreed to match the first €25k raised by the Trust. To date the fund has raised just over €75k

At a sectoral level the Presidents of the seven IUA universities continue to meet on a regular basis and to advocate, along with IUA officers, for action on key issues by various government departments (e.g. DES) and agencies (e.g. HEA, SFI)

The first formal book on the history of DCU has been launched.

The establishment of a Chair in STEM will be announced over the coming weeks.

#### **Vice- President of Academic Affairs**

The Vice President of Academic Affairs informed the Authority that exams and assessments were completed with no significant incidents. Applications for postponement of exams from May until August did increase (311 compared to 111 in 2019) but there was a decrease (606 compared to 696 in 2019) in the number of students requesting consideration of extenuating circumstances. Exam results were published yesterday and subject to further analysis the results appear to be broadly in line with the previous year's results suggesting that students were not disadvantaged as a result of the online model for examinations.

Progression and Award Boards, and the Examination Appeals process are now largely working online.

Preparations are underway for the Autumn resit examinations and assessments. These will have the same format as those held in May and the Exam Support Centre will again be operating.

DCU will accept the Leaving Certificate results produced by the DES. A commencement date for first years has yet to be confirmed but it is hoped they will be able to come on campus the two weeks prior to the start of term on October 05<sup>th</sup>.

Preparations are underway to deliver all programmes through a hybrid delivery model using a combination of online and campus based learning. Lectures will be delivered online, other academic activities, such as laboratories, workshops and small group activities will be delivered on campus as permitted by social distancing restrictions. Social distancing guidelines are constantly being monitored to enhance the students on campus experience. There is ongoing collaboration with the SU to ensure that students have a good learning experience at DCU, and to review the student support services to ensure that they are available to students online and on campus.

DCU has been liaising with universities, both nationally and internationally and sharing best practice in terms of shaping the 'new normal'

#### **Chief Operations Officer**

The Chief Operations Officer noted that laboratory based researchers are back on campus. The Return to Campus Protocol is in place. Currently staff are working on risk assessments for 68 units across the campuses. These units will then be ready to bring staff back on a phased basis. Planning for students returning to campus, which is Phase 2 of the protocol, will begin next week. The focus is on Health and Safety and appropriate controls.

The Chief Operations Officer further noted that the university is more dependent on its IT infrastructure and with people working from home, there are greater concerns and risks around cybersecurity. SIEM has been rolled out which includes 24/7 monitoring, roll out of two factor authentication will begin next week and HEANet is delivering online training courses to staff.

The Chief Operations sought approval for phase two of the Library Refurbishment.

#### **Approved by the Authority**

In response to a question about the implications for the FutureTech building due to the impact of COVID 19 the COO indicated that the planning application has been submitted. DCU representatives are due to meet with the HEA to discuss funding before going to tender. This will be a natural stopping point if the project has to be paused.

#### **Director of Finance**

The Director of Finance noted that there is still significant uncertainty in relation to the operating results for the current academic year. The management accounts for the eight months ended 31 May 2020 reflect a deficit compared to a budgeted result of breakeven after allowing for depreciation and the transfer to capital to fund the University's capital development plan. The DCU Commercial Group of Companies has reported an operational loss before tax for the same eight months.

As per the scenario planning process the academic year 2020/2021 will end in May 2021, leaving the summer free for commercial activity which should benefit the operation of the commercial companies. All third level institutions have submitted cash flow forecasts to DES/HEA for calendar years 2020 and 2021. DCU's projection shows positive cash balances through to December 2021. Although it would appear that there are no immediate concerns the prevailing high degree of uncertainty makes cash flow predictions very difficult.

It was noted that there are very significant infrastructure costs arising from the Return to Campus Protocol along with resources to ensure the quality of the hybrid teaching and learning delivery model. The Director of Finance gave cleaning services as an example of increased costs. These normally cost in the region of €1.3m annually but now would amount to approximately €4m annually.

It was also noted that the RSA had rejected the university's claim under its business interruption policy. The view of the university's legal advisors however is that there is a strong case to be made.

It was noted that the government recovery fund is on hold until government formation.

#### **Director of Human Resources**

The Director of Human Resources reported that during the past two months the work of HR has been focused on finalising the 'Return to Campus' policy and the 'Working from Home' protocol. HR are heavily involved in the Scenario planning process.

HR are currently revisiting the 'Our DCU' programme with a view to building the culture for a post Covid DCU. This culture could be partly achieved by promoting integration through social engagement. Zoom has played a role in this but staff feedback had indicated that this is not a substitute for face-to-face interaction with colleagues. The ongoing engagement with the Barretstown fundraising project has helped staff to integrate, with a number of teams taking part in the 'Climb Every Mountain' campaign.

A number of training courses have moved online for staff and a selection of new ones developed to assist managers, in particular those who have to manage the return to work of staff members who are nervous about doing so. The potential disadvantages for women working from home needs to be monitored and assessed. This is being tracked regularly by the Vice President for Research and Innovation.

HR held its first online orientation for new staff, the President attended and it was very well received. This has been a great help in introducing the DCU community to new staff and making them feel at home.

The HR Covid 19 website is live and with the COO webpage is linked into the University's Health and Safety webpage. It is updated regularly as a result of issues raised by staff unions.

The President's Staff Recognition Awards were recently launched and will be available to view online from next week

The promotion scheme for academic staff (from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor) has been reopened. These promotions are important to ensure that the university not only continues to reward and retain excellent staff but that it also maintains the Senior:Junior staff ratios in positions across the university.

Engagement continues with the IUA and HEA regarding staff redeployment and ECF. HR and union representatives meet every two weeks.

### **Deputy President**

The Deputy President began by emphasizing that the ambition of the university is to maximise campus activity, student experience and quality of teaching and learning in accordance with public health guidelines. To this end focus groups have been held with staff, students, parents and guidance counsellors to gauge expectations for the autumn semester.

Three virtual open days were held last week and there has been a noticeable increase in CAO applications having DCU as a first choice. DCU announced a 10% discount for postgraduate programmes for students graduating this year and alumni.

Prof Anne Sinnott is leading the Student Experience working group along with colleagues from Student, Support and Development, Sport and Wellbeing, Office of Student Life and the Students Union. These areas are all working to put in place activities that students can expect next semester. The new Campus Residences model will support this.

The Teaching and Learning Working Group, led by Billy Kelly, is working to provide quality teaching and learning. This will require investment in infrastructure and upskilling of staff. A high level timetable will be available for returning students in early August and it was noted that the Erasmus programme will now be moved from third year to fourth.

## **7 AUDIT COMMITTEE**

### **7.1 Report of meeting of 18th June 2020**

Brid Horan, Chair of Governing Authority Audit Committee reported as follows:

- The Audit Committee reviewed the 2018/2019 Consolidated accounts. KPMG attended the meeting and noted that their audit is substantially complete and will issue a clean audit opinion. They are waiting on an outstanding report on pensions but this will be in line with previous years.
- The Chair of the DCU Commercial Board made a comprehensive presentation to the Committee, including an overview of the Campus Companies and the significant contribution that they make to the university's finances.
- DCU Finance is currently liaising with the C&AG on the 2018/2019 audit commencement date.
- The new Head of Internal Audit, Alison Byrne, started in her new role in January. She noted that there were no material issues in the Business Continuity and Crisis Management Audit.
- There has been significant progress in the reduction of outstanding audit issues – reduced to single figures.
- The external IT audit contract with Mazars has expired and the tendering process for a new contract will shortly commence.
- The Audit Charter and Terms of Reference will be brought to Governing Authority for approval at its September meeting.
- The Audit Committee has been very impressed with how seamlessly the Executive is managing the COVID 19 crisis.

## **7.2 Minutes of meeting of 22nd April 2020**

**Noted** by the Authority

## **7.3 Audit Committee 2019 Annual Report**

**Noted** by the Authority

### FOR DECISION

## **7.4 2018/2019 Annual Governance Report**

The Annual Governance Report was reviewed and agreed subject to one amendment under Risk. The HEA have agreed to accept this document unsigned at present.

**Approved** by the Authority subject to the amendment.

### FOR DISCUSSION

## **8 RISK COMMITTEE**

### **8.1 Report of meeting 05th June 2020**

Bernie Gray, Chair of Governing Authority Risk Committee reported as follows:

- The meeting focused on updates on the impact COVID-19 and an outline of the financial risks as a result of COVID 19 from the Director of Finance.
- The Director of ISS presented on cybersecurity.
- It had been agreed that a top down risk exercise would take place at the June meeting of Governing Authority but given the significance of this meeting, being the President's last GA meeting, it was agreed instead to convene a special sub-group of GA to carry out the exercise. This sub-group would meet in early July. In the meantime all members of GA would be asked at the June meeting to reflect on their personal assessment of how Covid-19 is impacting on the university. The outcome of the sub-group's deliberations would be reflected in the final Institutional Risk Register (IRR) presented to GA for approval.
- The Risk Committee will engage in an external benchmark review by a UK University to assess how well DCU has managed COVID 19 and its approach generally to crisis management.

### **8.2 Minutes of meeting of 07th February 2020**

**Noted** by the Authority

## **9 STUDENT INFORMATION SYSTEM UPDATE**

The Director of Finance reported that the project remains on time and on budget.

## **10 PERSONNEL MATTERS**

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

- Prof Deborah O'Connell for appointment as Full Professor, Faculty of Science and Health.
- Dr Michael Dowling for appointment as Full Professor, DCU Business School



- Prof Verena Rieser for appointment as Professor, Faculty of Engineering and Computing.
- Prof Jim Gleeson for appointment as Adjunct Professor, institute of Education.
- Mr Paul Price for appointment as Adjunct Professor, Faculty of Engineering and Computing.
- Prof Philip McDonagh for appointment as Adjunct Professor, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences.
- Ms Lorraine Twohill for appointment as Adjunct Professor, DCU Business School.

## 11 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

All members were afforded an opportunity to thank the President for the manner in which he exercised his stewardship of DCU over the past decade. Many referred to his many achievements, how he enhanced the university's reputation, its culture of inclusivity and diversity, its focus on equal access to education and opportunity for all, its emphasis on the student experience and the welfare of both staff and students alike. Others referred to his tireless efforts in ensuring that DCU is widely accepted as the University of Enterprise and the fastest growing university on the island of Ireland. All expressed thanks to him for the professionalism, courtesy and respect he showed in all his dealings with them as members of Governing Authority.

The Chancellor concluded by thanking the President for honouring in full the commitments he made to the DCU community in his inauguration address in July 2010 and on behalf of all members wished him and Catherine every best wish for the future

## 12 NEXT MEETING

Thursday September 10th

\_\_\_\_\_  
The Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

### Action Items:

<i>Action</i>	<i>Person responsible</i>	<i>Deadline</i>
1. Presentation on Academic Affairs approach to academic quality assurance.	Vice-President Academic Affairs	Oct 2020 meeting
2. GA work plan for 2020/2021 Meeting dates and agenda items	COO	Sept 2020 meeting

3.	Organise a sub-committee to partake in the risk exercise	COO / BG	ASAP
4.	Audit Charter and Audit Committee Terms of Reference to be approved	Chief Operations Officer	Sept 2020 meeting
5.	Identify a suitable replacement for Lynette Fay	Governance & Nominations Committee	Before Sept 2020 meeting
6.	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Sub-Committee to draw up draft terms of Reference	COO and Rachel Hussey	October 2020 meeting
7.	QPO Annual Report 2018/2019	Aisling McKenna	October meeting

**Items to be tracked:**

<b>Action</b>		<b>Person responsible</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
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	From October 2020 every 2 <sup>nd</sup> 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.	Update of GA Annual Work Plan – transferred to action 2, Action Items	COO	Sept 2020 meeting
6.	New VPEA to present on International Affairs - within 3 months of appointment	COO	Ongoing
7.	Updates from denominated Education Centres	Gareth Byrne Anne Lodge	Sept 2020 meeting
8.	Strategic Plan – Annual Review and Renew	President	October 2020 meeting