

ACADEMIC COUNCIL

MINUTES

10 June 2015

2.10 – 3. 15 p.m. in AG01

PRESENT:

C. Bohan
M. Brennan
P. Brereton
J. Bruen
J. Brunton
P. Byrne
J. Carroll
K. Casey
B. Corcoran
J. Dowling
J. Doyle
N. Gaynor

G. Gillick
M. Glynn
E. Guilfoyle
S. Ingle
M. Irwin-Bannon (Secretary)
W. Kelly
D. Kenny
A. Lodge
L. Looney
C. MacMurchaidh
B. MacCraith (President/Chair)
A. Matthews

C. McDonagh
P. McMorrow
G. Murphy
M. Nic Giolla Mhichíl
R. O'Connor
S. O'Neill
A. O'Regan
J. Rami
M. Roantree
J. Stokes
A. Stover

APOLOGIES:

S. Belton
C. Brennan
M. Brown
M. Byrne
J. Costello
E. Costello
Y. Crotty

H. Esmonde
B. Flood
G. Foley
S. Fox
T. Furlong
P. Landais
A. McGrady

B. Nolan
C. O Ciardubhain
J. O'Hara
A. Sinnott
M R Sweeney
T. Szecsi

The President opened the meeting welcoming members and noting that this would be the final meeting for Student Education Officer, Mr. Gary Gillick. He thanked him for his contribution to Academic Council and wished him well in his future career.

The President extended his thanks to Dr Sarah Ingle, who has served on Academic Council for nine years, initially as a DCUBS elected representative and latterly as Director of Quality Promotion. He extended his congratulations to her on her new appointment and thanked her for her engagement and significant contribution to Academic Council.

1. Adoption of agenda

The agenda as circulated was adopted.

A: Minutes and related issues

2. Minutes of the meeting of Academic Council of 15 April 2015

The minutes of 15 April 2015 were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

3. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

4. Minutes of the meeting of the Education Committee of 1 April 2015

The minutes were approved.

5. Minutes of the meeting of the University Standards Committee of 2 April 2015

The minutes were approved.

6. Minutes of the meeting of the Graduate Research Studies Board of 5 March 2015 and 16 April 2015

The minutes were approved.

B: Policy and strategy issues

7. President's report

- 7.1 With respect to Incorporation, the President noted that the project was continuing apace and was on track to achieve its target of the registration of incoming first year students from St. Patrick's College and Mater Dei Institute as DCU students in September 2015.

It was noted that An Taoiseach, Enda Kenny, TD will officially open the St. Patrick's Campus Development at a ceremony on 11 June 2015.

As part of the ongoing communications around Incorporation for staff, the President indicated that an e-mail would issue shortly inviting DCU staff to an event to provide them with an update on Incorporation and an opportunity to pose any queries they might have. It was noted that such an event would also be held in each of the incorporating institutions.

- 7.2 The President noted that negotiations for the purchase by DCU of All Hallows College are entering the final stages. The President noted his thanks in particular to Dr Andrew O'Regan, Dean of Academics, All Hallows College and acknowledged his significant contribution to this wind-down process in ensuring that students were supported appropriately.

- 7.3 With respect to new investment, the President indicated that it was hoped to announce new developments on campus towards the end of the calendar year. Discussions are ongoing with the European Investment Bank and the outcome may be known by autumn 2015.

- 7.4 With respect to DCU's regional cluster, an event took place in late May in Dundalk Institute of Technology where presentations were made on various ongoing Strategic Innovation and Development (SIDF) funded projects, including a new mapping for Further Education and Higher Education pathways within the cluster, and development of an online portal.

- 7.5 The President's Award for Teaching and Learning ceremony took place on 6 May 2015 and proved to be an impressive and uplifting event. The President noted in particular the highly positive nature of the feedback which had been received from students.
- 7.6 The President noted Professor Oliver Dolly's recent success in winning the prestigious, inaugural US-Ireland Research Innovation Award. This award is a joint initiative between the Royal Irish Academy and the American Chamber of Commerce.
- 7.7 The President noted that the 2015 Times Higher Education Young Universities Summit (YUS) which had taken place in DCU on 29 and 30 April 2015 and had been a significant success. The announcement of the THE top 100 under 50 rankings had taken place during the summit. The President noted DCU had moved up 17 places and also noted the value of rankings, particularly in discussions around international strategic alliances.
- 7.8 With reference to DCU's engagement with the Athena Swan Charter and the Aurora Initiative, the President noted that the Human Resources Office would shortly announce a range of measures in the university as part of its commitment to address gender imbalances in academia.

8. Presentation by Ms. Aisling McKenna on Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE)

The item was deferred to the meeting of 22 June 2015.

9. Presentation by Prof. Eithne Guilfoyle on adopting the common points scale to broader grade bands

Professor Eithne Guilfoyle presented on the proposal from the Irish Universities Association to address the impact of the recent change to the Leaving Certificate grade bands revised by the Department of Education and Skills. The change in the grade bands would impact on students entering the Leaving Certificate cycle in September 2015. She outlined that the decision to be made by Academic Council was to agree the principles to apply to the common points scale and agree to delegate the task of reaching sectoral agreement to the Chief Academic Officers, with the parameters set by these agreed principles.

The principles were outlined as follows:

- (i) The relationship between the points awarded for achievement at higher level and the points awarded for achievement at ordinary level should remain as close as possible to the current relationship.
- (ii) The points scale should be non-linear, especially at higher level, with each increment in grade receiving a slightly greater increment in points, to reduce the use of random selection
- (iii) Points should be awarded for H7, to increase the incentive and decrease the risk of taking the higher level examination whilst providing an appropriate level of recognition for the level achievement represented by H7. Furthermore, H7 should be recognised as satisfying basic matriculation requirements.
- (iv) Bonus points will be awarded for higher level mathematics (at grades H6 and above) in a manner similar to the present scheme.

In the ensuing discussion the following issues were raised:

- The risk that additional points and incentives for students to take on and continue with honours level subjects may result in students taking on honours subjects where they may be more suited for the ordinary level curriculum
- The need to address assessment within the senior cycle as a whole
- The need to address matriculation requirements in the medium term

Following further brief discussion, the four principles as outlined above were agreed. It was also agreed to delegate the task of reaching sectoral agreement to the Chief Academic Officers.

C: Items for formal approval/noting

10. Items from recent subcommittees of Academic Council

Approved.

11. DCU Academic Integrity and Plagiarism Policy

Approved

12. Revised model for converting A-level grades to Leaving Certificate points

Noted.

13. Proposed amendments to Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis

Approved

14. Accreditation report: Bachelor of Education, Church of Ireland College of Education

Noted: Corrections to Accreditation Report: credits of 245 amended to 240 (page 1), module 14, Year 2, module credits amended from 15 to 10 (page 5).

Approved.

15. Accreditation report: Graduate Diploma in Learning Support and Special Educational Needs, Church of Ireland College of Education

Approved.

16. Any other business

- 16.1 In light of the difficulty in reaching a quorum for the meeting, and previous discussions around the nature of decision-making at Academic Council a discussion took place on attendance in general at Academic Council and the possibility of reviewing its membership. The President indicated that he would welcome a proposal in this regard. It was noted too that Incorporation would have an impact on the membership of Academic Council over the coming year.

Date of next meeting:

**Monday, 22 June 2015
2.00 p.m. in AG01**

Signed: _____
President

Date: _____