

ACADEMIC COUNCIL

MINUTES

30 June 2014

2.00-3.05 p.m. in AG01

PRESENT:

J Bruen
J Brunton
P J Byrne
E Costello
J Costello
M Crane
J Dowling
H Esmonde
B Flood
P Flynn
S Fox
G Gillick
E Guilfoyle (VPAA)

S Ingle
P James
B Kelly
D Kenny
L Looney
B MacCraith (President)
L McDermott (Secretary)
C McDonagh
E McGlynn
A McGrady
P McMorrow
B McMullin

C Mac Murchaidh
P McNally
K Moran
M O'Brien
N O'Reilly
K Rafter
J Rami
A Stover
R Tobin
A Way
S Wickham
P Willis

APOLOGIES:

S Belton
M Brennan
P Brereton
M Byrne
J Carroll
B Corcoran

Y Crotty
J Doyle
A Harvey
P Landais
Á McGillicuddy
C McMullan

G Murphy
M Nic Giolla Mhichíl
P Ó Duibhir
J O'Hara
C Renahan
A Sinnott

IN ATTENDANCE

M Brown
A McKenna (for Item 4)
C Jameson (for Item 7)

1. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted subject to the inclusion of one submission under Item 13.

A: Minutes and related issues**2. Minutes of the meeting of Academic Council of 11 June 2014**

The minutes were confirmed and were signed by the Chair.

3. Matters arising

Dr Looney confirmed that all the final editing had been carried out in respect of the revised *Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis*, due to come into effect in 2014/15, and that all that remained to be done was to insert hyperlinks in the document as appropriate. Appreciation was expressed to Professor John Carroll for his advice and assistance in relation to the editing. (Item 9.2)

4. Minutes of the meetings of the Education Committee of 7 May 2014 and 4 June 2014**4.1 Approved.**

- 4.2** In the presentation on the outcomes of the Irish Survey of Student Engagement 2014, and the ensuing discussion, the following were noted:
- it had been agreed that the 2014 institutional results would not be made available nationally; while the differences between institutions are statistically insignificant, there would have been a risk that such differences as exist would be interpreted tendentiously by commentators
 - the relatively low response rates make it difficult to analyse the results at Faculty and School levels, which are the levels at which the outcomes are likely to prove most useful
 - the 2014 survey was long, with over 100 questions; this type of length makes comparison with other systems (notably in Australasia) more accurate but may militate against engagement by students
 - the University has provided feedback on its experience of ISSE 2014

- the Education Committee has established a working group to consider issues relating to the potential over-surveying of students and make recommendations as to how they might be addressed
- it will be important, in future iterations of ISSE, to ensure that questions relating to work placements are worded in such a way as to provide the most accurate information possible
- the practice of surveying students in the first and final years of programmes is likely to continue in future iterations
- experience in relation to longer-established surveys indicates that outcomes tend to become more positive over time, possibly indicating that improvements to systems tend to be made on the basis of feedback.

The Chair, on behalf of Council, expressed appreciation to Mr Kelly and Ms Aisling McKenna, Institutional Analysis and Research Officer, for their work on ISSE 2014.

5. Minutes of the meetings of the University Standards Committee of 3 April 2014 and 29 May 2014

Approved.

B: Policy and strategy issues

6. President's report

- 6.1** The document entitled *A New Vision of Education for all the Children of Ireland* was launched on 20 June 2014 and will be placed on the Incorporation website, which is due to be made available very soon. All the Incorporation workstreams are in a position to re-engage fully with their work following successful discussions with the unions. There will also, in the near future, be engagement with the School of Health and Human Performance in respect of the concurrent teacher education programmes with which it is closely involved.
- 6.2** A document is to be signed in Belfast on 2 July 2014, by DCU and the University of Ulster, which will establish a cross-border strategic partnership. This is consistent with DCU's commitment to the development of the Eastern corridor.
- 6.3** Congratulations on behalf of Council are extended to Dr P J Byrne, Programme Chair for the BSc in Aviation Management with Pilot Studies, and to the Programme Board on the award to the programme of the Irish Aviation Authority's Aviation Academic Education Award 2014.

7. Task Group on Reform of University Selection and Entry: summary briefing paper and progress report

7.1 In the discussion about this paper, the following were noted:

- formal feedback on the paper has already been provided by the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences and the Faculty of Science and Health
- there appears to be broad approval in the sector for the proposal to raise minimum entry requirements
- issues relating to Irish have been raised in the sector
- the Institutes of Technology have committed to engaging with the paper
- the Minister for Education and Skills intends to seek feedback from a range of stakeholders outside higher education institutions
- the Chair intends to invite Professor Philip Nolan, President of the National University of Ireland, Maynooth and Chair of the Task Group, to DCU to discuss the paper
- the paper has, to date, been discussed by the Academic Councils of two of the other universities.

7.2 Concern was expressed that some of the proposals relating to denominated programmes would detract from the distinctiveness of the University's suite of offerings and potentially complicate discussions with external professional accrediting bodies (in that the members of such bodies might find it more difficult than has been the case hitherto to satisfy themselves that entry requirements and the treatment of required subject areas are fit for purpose). The Chair suggested that it would be helpful if representatives of the professional bodies could express their concerns to the University in writing. He noted that the proposals which the Task Group would eventually make would have to be approved by the Academic Councils of all the universities.

7.3 The Chair requested the members of Council to re-read the paper and submit any further comments they might have to Professor Guilfoyle or to Ms Celine Jameson, Student Enrolment Manager. He also expressed appreciation to Ms Jameson, on behalf of Council, for her work as DCU representative on the Task Group.

8. Proposed amendments to Marks and Standards

8.1 It was noted that the working group charged with making recommendations on issues to do with resit categories and continuous assessment was continuing its work and would submit these recommendations to Council in due course. It was agreed that, henceforth, the definitions of resit categories would be included in Marks and

Standards. The Chair expressed appreciation, on behalf of Council, to the working group and to its Chair, Mr Kelly.

- 8.2** The problem created by term-time contracts in respect of the availability of relevant staff members to engage with resit examinations was noted, and the Chair undertook to discuss it with the Director of Human Resources. The challenge of re-categorising modules in terms of resits, as suggested by the working group, was also noted in the context of increasing workloads generally.

C: Items for formal approval/noting

9. Examination and Progression and Awards Boards reports, Summer 2014

Approved.

10. Accreditation report: BA Social and Human Services

Approved.

11. Accreditation report: MSc in Public Policy

Approved.

12. Inclusion of dates relating to research student appeals on the Academic Calendar 2014/15

These proposed dates were noted as being Friday 24 October 2014 and Friday 27 February 2015. They were approved, and will be included in the Academic Calendar 2014/15.

13. Any other business

The Chair reiterated his appreciation to the members of Council for their significant engagement with the work of Council in 2013/14.

Date of next meeting:

<p>Wednesday 8 October 2014 2.00 p.m. in AG01</p>

Signed: _____
President

Date: _____