

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Wednesday 17 February 2016

2.00 – 3.50 p.m. in A204

Present: Mr Billy Kelly (Chair), Professor Mark Brown, Dr Jennifer Bruen, Ms Valerie Cooke (Secretary), Professor John Costello, Professor John Doyle, Professor Lisa Looney, Ms Aisling McKenna, Professor Barry McMullin, Dr Anne Sinnott, Professor Fionnuala Waldron

Apologies: Dr Brian Corcoran, Professor Eithne Guilfoyle, Ms Margaret Irwin-Bannon

SECTION A: AGENDA, MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted with the inclusion of an item under any other business.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 13 January 2016

The minutes were approved and signed by the Chair, subject to a correction under item 3.10 from *December 2016* to *December 2015*.

3. Matters arising from the minutes of 13 January 2016

3.1 It was noted that issues with respect to external examiners were currently under consideration (Item 3.1).

- 3.2** It was noted that a meeting was held with respect to publication of First Destination Survey outcomes on the web, to draft a set of rules in relation to publication. These are likely to involve a three-year rolling average and be subject to a minimum number of responses. A further meeting will be arranged to finalise matters (Item 3.2).
- 3.3** It was noted that Professor Eithne Guilfoyle has identified members of a working group to audit activities in the University to integrate research opportunities into undergraduate programmes (Item 3.3).
- 3.4** It was noted that the update of the *Validation and Accreditation of Programmes: Regulations and Guidelines* document to include space requirements for new programmes was awaiting confirmation of the process to be put in place from the Office of the Chief Operating Officer (Item 3.3).
- 3.5** Professor Barry McMullin reported that the space requirement for the first year of the BSc in Data Science programme can be met within existing resources but that subsequent years will require additional space. Education Committee will be kept informed of developments (Item 3.5).
- 3.6** It was noted that financial elements of the Validation proposal for the Masters in Literacy have been completed (Item 8).

SECTION B: STRATEGIC MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION/NOTING

4. Update on strategic activities undertaken within the IUA

4.1 Deans of Graduate Studies

Professor Lisa Looney reported that the Deans of Graduate Studies group met on 25 January 2016. The National Framework for Doctoral Education advisory group has not yet met due to a change in personnel in the HEA, but the group requested of HEA that they be kept informed of developments.

The international panel undertaking QQI's *Review and Enhancement of Quality Assurance Resources for Research Degree Programmes* has been working on its draft report and publication is expected in the coming months.

To address the drop in PhD numbers, the Innovation 2020 Research Strategy document envisages an increase in new PhD enrolments each year from 1,750 to 2,250 with an emphasis in the ICT, PharmaChem and business services areas. It is not yet clear how the additional funding required will be channelled.

4.2 *Quality Officers*

Ms Aisling McKenna reported on discussions within the IUA Quality Officers group on current QOI consultation documents about statutory guidelines on quality assurance. There is concern about the overly prescriptive nature of the draft statutory guidelines particularly as they are of a compliance-based nature and there are over 200 of them. The draft guidelines do not recognise the autonomy of the universities in developing their own procedures. An additional concern is the very large number of proposed requirements vis-à-vis linked providers and processes of appeal. The approach taken is not tailored to suit each specific sector.

5 **Report on the Irish Survey of Student Engagement**

Field work surveying first year and final year undergraduates and taught postgraduates will commence on 29 February 2016 for three weeks. It was noted that DCU, MDI and SPD will operate as a single institution for the purposes of the survey.

6 **Education Committee Goals**

This item was deferred to the next scheduled meeting of Education Committee.

7 **Analysis of withdrawals at DCU**

Ms Aisling McKenna presented the report and noted that there was no major difference from previous years' data.

- First year students represent 60% of total withdrawals with the majority related to programme issues; these represent three-quarters of first year withdrawals. A further 15% are related to broad personal issues such as health and financial reasons.
- There are a significant number of internal transfers of first year students.
- The reported numbers include a small number of research students who have left to follow supervisors who take up employment in other institutions.

- It was noted that some students who drop out do not formally withdraw and are not captured in this analysis. The Chair indicated that he would follow up on the issue of the capturing of this data.

8 Presentation on results of the 2015-2016 first year student experience survey

The survey took place in November 2015 and the response rate was 26% compared to 20% for the previous year. The following issues were noted as being of particular interest:

- In choice of institution Higher Options and Open Days were rated as important, with the latter tending to be part of the confirming decision.
- Parents are reported as the most important influence in choice of institution, with Career Guidance Counsellors considerably less important.
- An opportunity to meet other students in their class and lecturers, before the start of semester, was rated as a high priority. Ice breakers such as the scavenging hunt and the BEST programme were regarded as important for bonding. Students also value being able to meet and talk with approachable staff and would welcome feedback on their progress in the first six weeks.
- There are few substantive activities early in the semester. The timetable could be structured to engage the students, particularly with regard to 2-3 hour gaps.
- More support and guidelines on referencing were requested.

In discussion, the Committee noted the following:

- The importance of inclusivity in the orientation process and the effectiveness or otherwise of the current large format events in the orientation process.
- The increased complexity in communication with potential applicants, the increased importance of digital channels and a continued downward trend in the importance of printed materials.
- Postgraduate students are not invited to partake in the survey. As the web is very important to this cohort it could be used and further developed for this purpose.

SECTION C: PROGRAMME AND MODULE-SPECIFIC ISSUES**9 Request for approval of change of title of programme: BSc in Environmental Science and Health**

The Faculty of Science and Health sought approval for a change of title from *BSc in Environmental Science and Health* to *BSc in Environmental Science and Technology*. The new title will address the issue of confusion with programmes in the health sciences and will reflect the programme content and emphasis more clearly.

Approved.

10 Request for approval of change of title of programme: BSc in Nursing (Psychiatric)

The Faculty of Science and Health sought approval for a change of title from *BSc in Nursing (Psychiatric)* to *Bachelor of Science (Mental Health Nursing)* in order to better represent the current programme curriculum and to bring it in line with contemporary nomenclature in this area.

Approved.

11 Request for approval of change of title of programme: MA in Development

The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences sought approval for a change of title from *MA in Development* to *MA in International Development, Environment and Conflict*. It is hoped that the change will distinguish the programme from others in a crowded area and attract higher numbers of applications; further, it will reflect the teaching and research strengths of the School of Law and Government.

Approved.

12 Any other business*12.1 Collaborative provision of academic programmes*

Professor Lisa Looney stated that a proposal involving collaborative provision will be submitted for the consideration of the next meeting of EC. As she will not be in attendance, she wished to highlight it in advance.

She reminded the Committee that it had approved a set of definitions and approval protocols for types of collaborative provision and that the next steps would be to set out the information sought when considering each type of arrangement. As this will be the first proposal using the new approval framework she asked that Committee members consider not only the proposal itself but also the specific questionnaire and its fitness for purpose for this model of academic collaboration.

Signed: _____
Chair

Date: _____

Date of next meeting:

Wednesday, 16 March 2016
at 2.00 in A204