

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Wednesday 3 December 2014

2.00 - 4.10pm in A204

Present: Professor Eithne Guilfoyle (Chair), Dr Claire Bohan, Ms Valerie Cooke (Secretary), Professor John Doyle, Mr Gary Gillick, Mr Billy Kelly, Professor Lisa Looney, Professor Barry McMullin, Dr Mairéad Nic Giolla Mhichíl, Dr Anne Sinnott, Professor Fionnuala Waldron

In attendance: Ms Aisling McKenna

Apologies: Professor Mark Brown, Professor John Costello, Professor Alan Harvey, Dr Sarah Ingle

The Chair welcomed Dr Jennifer Bruen (the incoming nominee of Academic Council) to the committee. The outgoing nominee, Mr Martin Malony, was thanked for his participation and contribution to the committee over the past number of years.

SECTION A: AGENDA, MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 29 October 2014

The minutes were confirmed and were signed by the Chair.

3. Matters arising from the minutes

- 3.1 Discussions on grouping of marks on transcripts for students on the Joint Honours programme in the Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences are completed (Item 3.5)
- 3.2 Response to Faculty reports on the APR process in 2013/14 is an agenda item.
- 3.3 The e-Portfolio was launched on 2nd December 2014 by Dr Claire Bohan (Item 3.1)
- 3.4 The working group on Timetabling is on-going. The group will meet again soon (Item 3.2)
- 3.5 The implementation of non-SSOT elements of QuEST is under discussion. An email will be sent to staff advising that the SSOT for Semester 1 modules will go live to students next week (Item 3.7)
- 3.6 The launch of PhDireland.ie is complete (Item 3.6)
- 3.7 Uptake of training by research students is an agenda item.
- 3.8 ECSC membership to be determined for the second half of 2014/15 (Item 3.8)
- 3.9 Issues relating to student retention are on-going (Item 7.2).
- 3.10 Discussion of issues relating to external examiners at USC is on-going (Item 8.2)
- 3.11 Outstanding issues related to the proposed arrangement with Brock University have been completed (Item 10).

SECTION B: STRATEGIC MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION**4. Update on strategic activities undertaken within the IUA.**

Nothing to report at this time.

5. Report of the Irish Survey of Student Engagement

The National Report of the 2014 Survey was launched in early November and activities supported by DCU Students Union are taking place at local level. The 2015 Survey will be rolled out in DCU between March 9th and March 27th 2015. There was some discussion of incentives to encourage participation; these included a suggestion that a larger number of small prizes – such as Leap cards – would be preferable to a smaller number of large prizes. However, no decision has been taken yet.

6. Education Committee goals 2014/15: Alignment of goals – Teaching and Learning Mapped

The Teaching and Learning goals were mapped by Ms Aisling McKenna, against the overarching University Strategic Plan. It was noted that the goals relating to the Vice-President for External Affairs were also detailed and that it was very useful to see them. It was agreed that Education Committee will review the progress of annual goals in the New Year, to track progress.

7. University level APR Issues

The Chair and the Deputy Registrar led a discussion on responses to issues raised as part of the Annual Programme Review (APR) process.

7.1 External Examiner process

It was reported by Programme Boards that there can be a lack of access to external examiner feedback regarding programmes and/or modules. Noted, that this can be resolved locally by providing access to examiner reports to Programme Chairs.

7.2 Module “change of mind” process

Agreed, that flexibility needs to be retained where possible and it needs to be in-line with first year transfers as it ties in with registration. No changes to the current timelines are suggested at this time.

7.3 Lack of central marketing

This issue was raised by DCU Business School and the Faculty of Engineering and Computing. Communications and Marketing will be asked to work with Faculties to formulate marketing strategies (and operational plans) in particular in relation to recruitment of postgraduate students. It was noted that postgraduate income is non-exchequer income and that as our objective is to increase this intake, the balance of activity as between undergraduate and postgraduate recruitment should be re-evaluated. Currently, there is a mismatch between what we market and our strategic objectives. Agreed, that a budget is required urgently to develop web based marketing geared towards potential students.

7.4 Human Resources

The impact of a considerable loss of senior lecturing staff across a number of Faculties was discussed; these have arisen from staff retirements, movement to other roles and restrictions under the Employment Control Framework. Education Committee agreed that some of the core activities of the University are being compromised and that there is a critical threat to the quality of our academic programmes. Professor Eithne Guilfoyle will bring these issues to the attention of University Senior Management.

7.5 STEM

Concern was expressed by the Faculty of Engineering and Computing about the lack of Maths ability of Leaving Certificate students. Education Committee noted that the University has no power over this issue except through admissions criteria.

7.6 Infrastructure

Faculties expressed concern that the infrastructure is inadequate and is unable to cope with increasing student numbers and that there is a general lack of equipment investment.

7.6.1 Space audits/class rooms

It was noted that critical changes are required in the provision of space requirements. A space audit is being undertaken by the Chief Operating Officer to identify activity by room characteristics. In the first instance, we need to identify the number and type of rooms required, not what currently exists. There are too few rooms and we need more larger and smaller rooms, as 100-seater rooms are not very useful, for our current needs. Information on requirements needs to be gathered from Faculties. It was noted that the Deans would make that information available as part of the audit being conducted.

7.6.2 Maintenance of IT infrastructure

The University is building up an infrastructure deficit. Noted that Faculty budgets are set without reference to Faculty needs. A clear strategy is required in relation to provision, replacement cycles and budgeting. Faculties need to identify the costs and patterns over a number of years and prioritise that which is critical.

Agreed, that Education Committee will seek a response from Executive regarding human resources, new equipment and teaching spaces.

7.7 RPL

Most programmes have developed RPL policies but there is an issue as to whether this information is part of entry requirements of programmes or more general programme information.

7.8 Registration

Registration difficulties remain for programmes with greater flexibility and choice associated with them. The system has limitations regarding how it can be coded. Registry will work with Faculties before September 2015 to review and simplify registration schedules and how they are presented to students. It was suggested that first year students may need a workshop prior to engaging with the registration process. Noted, that it would be helpful if students could register at a basic level only (i.e. subject level rather than module level); a back office system could then register them for relevant modules.

7.9 External Examiner Reports

This is an agenda item for the current meeting.

8. Presentation on Graduate Research Performance Metrics

The Education Committee goal is to position DCU as provider of innovative structured postgraduate research programmes. Professor Lisa Looney reported that work over the last number of years is starting to show gains. The trend is positive in participation rates in accredited researcher education, Graduate Training Elements (GTEs), however, there is no funding for this system. The priority tasks for 2014/15 are to: refine and embed School-based structured pathways, introduce a QA mechanism for GTEs that are not part of an accredited award and explore certification to improve how it is presented to an external audience. Induction programmes are currently being run but the uptake by students is poor apart from within the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. It needs to be reinforced at school level at an early point in students' registration. This could be achieved through the PGR2 form.

9. Stand-alone module in Community Leadership

St. Patrick's College is introducing this partnership module which will build on leadership and recognise such students by providing additional academic credit. Education Committee welcomed this development and noted its wider future potential within DCU. Approved.

10. Taught External Examiner Response Rates

One quarter of external examiners did not submit reports in 2013/14. However, they are most likely engaging with Schools but are not following through by providing a formal report that confirms their engagement with the external examiner process. It was noted that there is less qualitative information being provided through the online system. A suggestion was made to conduct an analysis of examiners who did not attend the PAB and who did not submit a report.

Agreed, that USC should be asked to explore this issue and present a set of proposals as appropriate.

11. Request for approval of change of title of programme: Professional Cert/Diploma in Education (Special and Inclusive Education)

St Patrick's College sought approval for a change of title from *Professional Certificate/Diploma in Education (Special and Inclusive Education)* to *Professional Certificate/Diploma in Special and Inclusive Education*. This re-titling of what is currently a pathway within a broader programme is to give prominence to, what is in effect, a separate programme and to assist in targeted marketing of same. The proposal was approved.

12. Any other business

No items.

End.

Date of next meeting:

Wednesday 4 February 2015, 2.00 p.m. in A204

Signed: _____
Chair

Date: _____