

## ACADEMIC COUNCIL

### MINUTES

Wednesday 8 June 2011

2.00-3.00 p.m. in AG01

#### PRESENT:

L Barry  
F Blin  
O Bree  
P Brereton  
J Brunton  
J Bruton  
C Byrne  
PJ Byrne  
M Clynes  
E Cunningham  
B Daly  
I Farragher  
M Farren  
N Gathergood  
Y Gao  
S Hashmi  
C Holland

G Hughes  
J Hughes  
M Humphrys  
S Ingle  
B Kelly  
P Kinsella  
S Knowlton  
A Leahy  
J Lynch  
C Mac an Bhaird  
B MacCraith (Chair)  
L McDermott (Secretary)  
A McGrady  
C Mac Murchaidh  
G Murphy  
M Nic Giolla Mhichíl

R O'Connor  
P Ó Flatharta  
J O'Hara  
J O'Higgins-Norman  
M Parkinson  
A Pearson Evans  
D Raftery  
R Sadleir  
A Scott (Deputy President/Registrar)  
A Sinnott  
M Slowey  
R Tobin  
S Wickham  
J Williams  
P Willis  
C Woods

#### APOLOGIES:

A Armstrong  
J Bosak  
M Brady  
J Carroll  
B Casey  
L Caul  
J Connolly  
J Costello  
J Dowling  
T Draper  
B Flood  
P Flood

J Fox  
D Ging  
D Gray  
M Kelly  
J Kerrane  
M Kirwan  
C Long  
L Looney  
B McConalogue  
C McDonagh  
I McGlynn  
C McGonagle

P McMorrow  
D McMullin  
M Molony  
K Moran  
R O'Kennedy  
D Reynolds  
P Sheehan  
P Smith  
M Smyth  
A Stover  
A Way

**IN ATTENDANCE** (for Item 7.1):

M Long

**1. Adoption of agenda**

The agenda was adopted subject to the deferral of consideration of Item 10 to the meeting of 27 June 2011 and the inclusion of one submission under Item 12.

**A: Minutes and related issues****2. Minutes of the meeting of Academic Council of 13 April 2011**

The minutes were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

**3. Matters arising**

**3.1** Agreed that, in the Academic Calendar 2011/12, previously approved by Academic Council (at its meeting of 8 December 2010), the dates of the June 2012 Progression and Awards Boards and publication of results would be indicated as being provisional. The reason for this is to allow for further consideration of issues relating to external examiner attendance at PABs and to the timing of the input of results prior to PABs. Noted that the dates of PABs and the publication of results in June 2012 would be discussed by Council at its meeting of 12 October 2011. Meanwhile, the views of Programme Chairs on the appropriateness of the dates proposed for June 2012 will be ascertained. (Item 6 from the meeting of 8 December 2010)

**3.2** Noted that work was progressing to schedule on the implementation of the project plan relating to the Graduate Attributes. This includes discussion by the Heads' and Deans' group and Faculty Teaching and Learning/Education Committees as well as the mapping of the attributes against programme learning outcomes. Where this mapping exercise indicates gaps, appropriate action will be taken by the relevant programme board. Noted that a very relevant presentation had been made by a representative of the University of Aberdeen at the *Realising Bologna: connecting policy and practice* conference on 7 June 2011 and that the related slides would be made available on the OVPLI web pages. (See also Items 4 and 6.7 below.) (Item 3.3)

**3.3** Noted that the Working Group on Teaching Quality Evaluation and Enhancement had made a summary report to the Education Committee at its meeting of 4 May 2011. The working group is continuing its deliberations and will, as soon as possible, make its recommendations available to the EC and, subsequently, to Academic Council. (Item 3.4)

- 3.4** Noted that the optimum student profile for the university, particularly in view of the current very challenging economic situation, was under discussion in the Senior Management Group and that the issue would feature on the agenda of Academic Council at a future meeting. (Item 6.3)
- 3.5** Noted that the finalised approved version of the revised *Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis* had been circulated to Council on 30 May 2011. (Item 8)
- 3.6** Noted that the possibility existed, if the members of Council wished, for the agenda and papers to be made available electronically (on Google Docs) rather than in hard copy. Noted that, again subject to the preference of the members, Google Docs could be used on pilot basis (e.g. from Autumn 2011) to ascertain its suitability, or otherwise, in practice. Agreed that Ms McDermott would e-mail Council to ascertain, prior to the meeting of 27 June 2011, the overall preference in respect of the method of circulation. (Item 10.1)
- 3.7** Noted that the programme-level student survey had been conducted in April 2011 and the results made available in May. All Faculties now have results from one iteration of the survey, with Oscail and DCUBS having the results from two iterations, having piloted the survey in Spring 2010. The data yielded by the survey are expected to become richer on a progressive basis as the concept of the survey becomes embedded in the University. (Item 10.2)

**4. Minutes of the meetings of the Education Committee of 2 March 2011, 6 April 2011 and 4 May 2011**

Approved. Noted that there is considerable reference in the minutes to the progress towards the achievement of the Education Committee's goals. Among these are Graduate Attributes (see also Items 3.2 above and 6.7 below) and INTRA (see Item 7 below). Another goal is well on its way to being fulfilled in that Business Intelligence is being made available to the University, according to the previously-agreed schedule, and will shortly be in use to facilitate, *inter alia*, the process of programme review. Another goal, the production of a report and recommendations by the Virtual and Online Learning Group (see also Item 6.6 below), is also progressing rapidly and has involved very stimulating discussions and demonstrations (e.g. of Wimba Suite).

**5. Minutes of the meetings of the University Standards Committee of 3 February 2011 and 7 April 2011**

Approved.

**5.1 Minutes of the meeting of the Graduate Studies Board of 13 January 2011**

Approved.

**B: Policy and strategy issues****6. President's report**

- 6.1** It is expected that the discussions with the National University of Ireland, Maynooth, and the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland will regain momentum following the inauguration of the new President of NUIM and the establishment of the new Governing Authority in DCU (see also item 6.5 below). The commitment to dialogue across the three institutions is an ongoing one and is continuing on an informal basis at a number of levels.
- 6.2** The address by the Minister for Education and Skills, Mr Ruairí Quinn, at the Royal Irish Academy on 30 May 2011 included a commitment to implementing the National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 on the basis of a timeline to be published shortly as well as an emphasis on lifelong learning as an element of Government policy. The full text of the Minister's address will be made available on the University website. The evaluation criteria for a technical university are expected to be made available soon. The HEA has been requested to conduct an analysis of the sustainability of current funding models and to present its findings by September 2011.
- 6.3** Details of the revised Employment Control Framework are expected to be made available shortly. Some flexibility with respect to the employment of non-exchequer-funded research staff may be expected.
- 6.4** The Minister has requested the IUA to make recommendations, by September 2011, for the reform of the current system for admission to undergraduate programmes, and the IUA Registrars' Group will be particularly active in this matter. The challenge for the universities will be to identify a system that retains the advantages of the CAO points system, while facilitating change where required.
- 6.5** The new Governing Authority of the University is expected to be established shortly, the previous Authority having reached the end of its term of office on 10 May 2011. Some staff positions are still free, and these will be filled. The new Authority will meet by the end of June 2011 or, if this proves not possible, by the end of July 2011.
- 6.6** With respect to the advisory groups established during the past year:
- the Cultural Advisory Group has completed its work
  - the Enterprise Strategy Group is due to report very shortly

- the Age-Friendly University Group will shortly be holding its last meeting prior to submitting its report
  - the Virtual and Online Learning Group (see also Item 4 above) has produced a very comprehensive draft interim report which will be very helpful in terms of enabling the University to maintain a strategic advantage in this rapidly-developing area.
- 6.7** External reaction to the Graduate Attributes initiative (see also Items 3.2 and 4 above) has been very positive to date.
- 6.8** Of twenty-three joint India-Ireland research initiatives recently announced by the Indian government, eight were awarded to DCU, making it the most successful Irish university in this respect. The India Group is now chaired by Mr Ciarán Ó Cuinn, Executive Director of External and Strategic Affairs.
- 6.9** Fruitful discussions have taken place with Dr Anne Looney, Chief Executive Officer of the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, during which the significant resonance between the work of the NCCA in reforming the second-level curricula and many of the University's current initiatives in respect of teaching and learning were very apparent. It is intended to continue the dialogue with Dr Looney.
- 6.10** Appreciation is expressed to all the members of the University, including the members of Council, for continuing to make very significant efforts to further the work of the University notwithstanding the adverse external environment.

## **7. INTRA**

### **7.1 Report on INTRA activities 2009/10**

- 7.1.1** Ms Maeve Long, Head of INTRA, presented the report. In the ensuing discussion, the following were noted:
- notwithstanding the very difficult external environment, the rate of placement of students remained as high in 2009/10 as it had been in 2008/09
  - employers are, however, using more rigorous selection procedures than heretofore and, of necessity, are being conservative in terms of the salaries offered
  - variations across Schools in the success rate, in terms of having students placed, tend to be reflective of variations in employment opportunities across different sectors rather of internal University factors
  - employer evaluation of student performance tends to be consistently high, though communication skills tend to get somewhat lower ratings than do other skills
  - the identification of placements for non-EU students remains a challenge notwithstanding the removal of legal obstacles to employing such students and the efforts made by the students themselves to source placements in their home countries.

- 7.1.2** The use of pie charts, to display finding from the Employers Survey, in the report was noted as being very helpful to the members of Council.
- 7.1.3** The Chair noted that the Government internship scheme, to be launched shortly, would involve the creation of 5,000 unpaid placements for graduates, and that it would therefore be likely to have significant implications for the identification of paid INTRA placements for students.

## **7.2 Proposals relating to INTRA**

Noted that the working group consisting of Dr Jean Hughes, Ms Maeve Long and Dr Derek Molloy had focused on assessment methodologies for INTRA placements, with particular reference to the importance of developing mechanisms for allowing students to be evaluated on the basis of their own performance regardless of the type or quality of placement. The group was also very conscious of the importance of maintaining the very strong value base which has made INTRA a very significant contributory factor to the quality of the DCU student experience. The INTRA co-ordinators in all the Schools were also involved in the discussions. The main recommendation is that, henceforth, the INTRA report will be restructured to facilitate students in identifying the extent to which they have achieved the module learning outcomes. These outcomes are themselves now clearly specified in revised module descriptors for all INTRA placements, which were all recently signed off by the relevant Heads of School and are available on Coursebuilder. The Deputy President/Registrar expressed appreciation, on behalf of Council, to all those who had contributed to these recent developments in respect of INTRA.

### **C: Items for formal approval/noting**

#### **8. Report from the Director of Quality Promotion**

Noted.

#### **9. Report from the Research Committee**

Noted.

#### **10. Provisions and regulations: higher doctorates**

Deferred to the meeting of 27 June 2011. Noted that the paper would shortly be circulated to Council.

**11. Accreditation recommendations****11.1 Certificate in Nurse/Midwife Prescribing**

Approved.

**11.2 Master of Teaching (MTeach)**

Approved.

**12. Any other business**

A number of issues relating to plagiarism were noted, including the extent to which the existence of the word 'deliberate' in the policy on plagiarism might have a bearing on the defence offered following an alleged breach of regulations, the importance of equity of treatment of students and of members of Programme Boards and the importance of having appropriate sanctions (in this connection, it was suggested that a tariff of such sanctions be established and publicised). It was agreed to include an item on matters relating to plagiarism on the agenda of the meeting of 27 June 2011. Mr Patrick Kinsella, Head of the School of Communications, undertook to prepare a brief paper for this meeting, summarising his own concerns and any others of which he might be made aware on foot of submissions from Council members.

**Date of next meeting:**

**Monday 27 June 2011  
2.00 p.m. in AG01**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
President

Date: \_\_\_\_\_