

ACADEMIC COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY, 11 April 2001

AT 2:00 PM IN AG01

PRESENT:

F von Prondzynski (Chairperson)	J Horgan	A Pratt
P Barker	J Hurley	B Richardson
J Barnett	B Kehoe	M Roantree
D Beirne	C Kenny	T Ryan
J Bruton	J Leyden	R Saunders
P Burke	L MacMathúna	M Shields
C Byrne	S McBride	M Shine-Thompson
J Carroll	B McMullin	A Smeaton
E Cassidy	A Maillot	M Smyth
F Corcoran	M Molony	R Verbruggen
T Coulson	K Monks	A Wickham
E Cunningham	A Morrissey	A Wood
A Daffy	T Moynihan	
U DeVries	G Murphy	
J Dowling	J Murray	
L Doyle	C NicPháidín	
M Drumm	S Ni Mhaolrúnaigh	
R Flynn	E O'Connell	
S Gaffney	W Ó Gormáin	
A Glynn	S Ó hAdhmaill	
K Grimes	C Petite	
S Hashmi	B Pierce	

APOLOGIES:

D Bancroft	J Kerrane	J Ryan
M Byrne	P Kinsella	A Scott
M Clynes	C Long	P Sheehan
L Davis	L Looney	W Tuke
A Foley	K McKeogh	A Sinnott
R Forster	C McDonagh	S Wickham
E Kennedy	B McNamara	

1. Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was adopted, subject to the inclusion of one additional item under 'any other business', tabled by the Students Union.

2. Minutes of Meeting of Academic Council 14 February 2001

The minutes of the meeting of 14 February 2001 were adopted and signed by the Chairperson, subject to the inclusion of the following amendment:

Item 13 Intra Report 2000:- The following phrase from paragraph 1 sentence 2 to be deleted: 'employer satisfaction with the students or'. The sentence now reads 'He noted in particular that certain programmes have more problems than others in terms of the non-visiting of students by academic staff'.

3. Matters arising from the minutes of Academic Council

3.1 Future of Irish Language in DCU

The Chairperson reported that the post of Irish Language Officer had been advertised and that Irish language policies will be developed in conjunction with the new officer.

3.2 Application Process for Students with Disabilities

Claire Byrne, the Disability Officer, and Joachim Barnett, the Admissions Officer spoke to the paper, which they had prepared jointly. The review of procedures was prompted by the introduction of the Equality Act 1999 and Equal Status Act 2000, and aims to introduce more objectivity and transparency into the system. The new proposals involve changes to the existing direct entry scheme for disabled students for the 2001 entry, including changes to the application forms and the provision of guidelines for the interview process. From 2002 onwards, it is proposed that the direct entry scheme will no longer operate. All applicants will be processed through the CAO. Additionally, the provisions relating to disabled students will apply to all students, including postgraduate taught and research students. The Disability Officer will assess the extent of the applicant's disability on the basis of information provided by him or her. Applicants will be ranked on the basis of their Leaving Certificate results, though this will be done as a separate exercise to the ranking of non-disabled students, to allow DCU to operate

special initiatives in the area. A Disability Committee will be appointed annually by Academic Council to make decisions on admission.

Academic Council considered the paper in detail and thanked and commended Joachim and Claire for their professional and excellent work. The Registrar also noted and thanked the School of Communications for its contribution during the review of procedures. The paper was adopted by Academic Council.

3.3 Draft Guidelines for assessment and project management and draft guidelines on minute writing

The Registrar reported that both sets of guidelines are now on the Registry's web-site and requested members of Academic Council to draw their colleagues attention to them. It was also agreed that the Registrar will append an action sheet to the draft guidelines on minute writing.

4. Minutes of Standing Committee of Academic Council 2 March 2000

The minutes were noted. It was agreed to amend item 3.4 to read 'Changes to Physics Year One'.

5. Matters arising from Minutes of Standing Committee

5.1 Sports Scholarship Places

Standing Committee's recommendation that John Kerrane's proposal to set aside two places on the BSc in Sport Science and Health for elite athletes or coaches was approved by Council. It will come into operation as a pilot scheme in the next academic year.

5.2 Transitional adjustment to Marks and Standards for Summer and Autumn Examination diets 2001

Barry McMullin spoke to this paper. He outlined a series of proposed revisions to the University's marks and standards to ameliorate the current difficulties concerning candidates who perform well across a range of modules but fail a small number at a level below the compensation threshold, and who are thus delayed in progressing or graduating. His proposals were:

- To amend the existing paragraphs on compensation to allow compensation in modules totalling 20 credits
- To introduce a sliding scale of compensation thresholds, depending on the total credits of the modules involved, ie, up to 5 Credits, 25%; up to 10 credits, 30%; up to 20 credits, 35%.
- To clarify the interpretation of the rule governing the carrying of a single failed module, so that the term 'exceptional circumstances' is supported by special case evidence when applied to individual students.

Council considered and debated the proposals in detail. It voted against the proposal to allow compensation in modules totalling 20 credits (11 for, 20 against). It accepted the proposal to introduce a sliding scale of compensation thresholds, based on the total credits of the modules involved, i.e., up to 5 Credits, 25%; up to 10 credits, 30%; up to 15 credits, 35%. It also accepted the proposal to clarify the interpretation of the rule governing the carrying of a single failed module. Supporting, special case evidence will now have to be supplied when the term 'exceptional circumstances' is invoked to allow students to progress while carrying a failed module.

5.3 Formal approval of External Examiners for Taught Programmes

Noted and approved.

5.4 Formal approval of External Examiners for Research Students

Noted and approved.

5.5 Formal approval for transfer to PhD Register

Noted and approved.

5.6 Recommendation relating to regulations for transfer to PhD Register

The results of Jennifer Butler's survey regarding the question of whether an oral examination should be compulsory for students wishing to transfer to the PhD register were considered by Council. The result, 8 to 1 in favour of a compulsory oral, was considered by Council. After a full debate on the issue, Council voted 15-9 in favour of making it a compulsory part of the transfer procedure.

6. Validation Committee Recommendations

6.1 MSc/GD in Nursing

The Validation Committee's report and recommendation was adopted by Council.

7. Accreditation Board Recommendations

7.1 Masters in Religious Education (Primary) - Mater Dei Institute of Education & St Patrick's College

The report of the Board was considered and discussed by Council. Some members raised concerns over what they perceived to be an over emphasis on Roman Catholic religious education within this programme, as opposed to the broader, non-denominational emphasis implied by the programme title. These concerns were partly addressed by the leader of the programme development team, who highlighted the fact that the suite of modules to be offered on the programme cover a wide-range of religious and philosophical themes and engage with more than one religious tradition. On this basis, the recommendation of the Accreditation Board was adopted by Council, although it was agreed that the aforesaid concerns would be noted in the minutes.

7.2 BSc in Nursing Studies - School of Nursing Studies

Adopted.

7.3 Certificate in Computing - School of Computer Applications & Colaiste Ide

Adopted.

7.4 Graduate Diploma/MSc in Information Technology (Upgrade to Masters) - School of Computer Applications

Adopted.

7.5 BSc in Nephrology Nursing (extension of one year) - School of Nursing Studies

Adopted.

7.6 Certificate in Information & Internet - School of Communications & Centre for Lifelong Learning

Adopted.

8. Proposals from the Students Union

8.1 Proposal re Programme Boards

Deferred

9. AOB

9.1 Proposal from SU re Incoming SU Education Officer

Approved

9.2 Proposal from SU re: IML/IBL 4 oral/Aural Schedules

Council agreed that this item was a management issue and that the Registrar should facilitate discussions between the relevant parties to resolve it.

Date of Next Meeting:

<p>Wednesday, 13 June 2001</p>

Signed: _____
Chairperson

Date: _____