

ACADEMIC COUNCIL

Wednesday 12 December 2001

2.00-4.30 p.m. in AG01

PRESENT:

P Barker
D Beirne
P Brereton
J Bruton
A Burke
P Burke
J Carroll
E Cassidy
M Clynes
F Corcoran
E Cunningham
J Doyle
M Drumm
M Farren
D Gray
E Holt
P James
E O'Kennedy
P Kinsella

M Mac Conmara
K MacKeogh
L Mac Mathúna
P McNeela
L McDermott
C McDonagh
E McGlynn
B McMullin
G McNamara
S Marlow
K Monks
A Morrissey
T Moynihan
C Mulcahy
B Murphy
G Murphy
J Murray
C Nic Pháidín
E Ó Maoláin

B O'Connor
R O'Connor
J O'Hara
A Pratt
W Richardson
M Ryan
R Scaife
M Shields
M Shine Thompson
A Sinnott
A Smeaton
M Smyth
T Szecsi
B Trench
R Verbruggen
F von Prondzynski (Chairman)
P Walsh
A Wickham

APOLOGIES:

M Boland
M Brady
F Buckley
E Buffet
T Carey
B Carter
G Carty
R Costello
E Dubsy
J Kerrane

C Mac Murchaidh
B McNamara
A Maillot
R Morgan
S Ní Mhaolrúnaigh
E O'Connell
N O'Connor
R O'Kennedy
C Ó hÓgartaigh
C Petite

B Pierce
P Preston
H Ruskin
G Scalzo
A Scott
P Sheehan
D Vender
S Wickham
J Williams
P Willis

IN ATTENDANCE:

G Barry
B McGlynn
P McMorrow

The Chairman welcomed Gillian Barry, who will attend meetings of Academic Council in the capacity of observer to represent the Faculty Administration Peer Group.

1. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted.

2. Minutes of the meeting of Academic Council of 10 October 2001

The minutes were confirmed, with the addition of two names (D Beirne and P Sheehan) to the list of those present, and signed by the Chairman.

3. Matters arising from the minutes of Academic Council**3.1 Proposed foundation/access programme**

The Registrar reported that Dr Garrett McGuinness, School of Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering, was exploring the option of National Development Plan funding for such a programme and would convene a working group to progress this proposal once funding had been determined.

3.2 Proposal on post-examination information

The Registrar referred to the proposal which had been circulated and discussed at the October meeting of Academic Council. A decision had been deferred to permit consultation at School level. It was noted that other universities were introducing similar schemes and that such a scheme would give students a time period during which they could be certain of being able to contact examiners, especially following the Semester 2 examination diet. It was noted also that any requests submitted under Freedom of Information legislation should be dealt with through the Freedom of Information Officer.

Following discussion, it was agreed that the proposal would be considered again, and a decision made on it, at the next meeting of Academic Council on

13 February 2002. It was noted that, owing to the specific needs of Oscail students, a consultation framework to achieve the objectives of openness and good feedback had been developed and implemented by Oscail.

3.3 Issuing of incorrect results to students

The Registrar reported that the matter had been resolved to the satisfaction of the students. It had arisen because of an issue in relation to the academic structure, which could be dealt with under a proposal to be considered at Item 10 of the agenda.

4. Reports from Standing Committee of Academic Council

4.1 Minutes of the meeting of 4 October 2001

Noted. With regard to Item 4.1, the Registrar mentioned that the first publication from the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland, *Towards a National Framework of Qualifications – a Discussion Document*, was available online.

4.2 Minutes of the meeting of 1 November 2001

Noted. Following a query in relation to Item 4.9, the Registrar said that the proposals about the lengths of degree programmes made in the Bologna Declaration were still the subject of debate.

5. Matters arising from the minutes of Standing Committee

Noted.

The Registrar asked that it be noted, for the information of members, that the 6 December 2001 meeting of Standing Committee had approved a proposal to prioritise online publication of examination results and pass lists over hard-copy publication. From 2002, hard-copy transcripts will be printed only after Semester 2 examinations. They will not be printed after Semester 1 examinations (except on individual request in the normal way and subject to the normal fee).

6. Report from Appeals Boards (Autumn 2001)

Approved. It was noted that the University's legal advisors had approved the document entitled *Changes to Examination Regulations with regard to the Appeals Process*, presented to Academic Council in draft form on 13 June 2001.

The proposal to invite Ms Helen Kilroy, partner in McCann Fitzgerald, Solrs, to sit as a member of the University's Appeals Boards for taught programmes was approved. It was agreed that the Registrar should write to Ms Kilroy.

The commencement of the publication of the lists of precedents arising from the decisions of the Appeals Boards was noted. There was a query as to whether or not the publication of precedents would lead to possible inequities in regard to future appellants; the Chairman stated that this would not be the case.

The Registrar thanked the members of the Appeals Boards which had sat in Summer and Autumn 2001. The outcomes of the Appeals Boards held on 11 October 2001 and 7 November 2001 were noted. Proposed changes to the dates of Appeals Boards meeting in 2002 were approved; the Boards will now take place on 11 February 2002, 26 July 2002 and 17 October 2002.

7. Report from Appeals Board – St Patrick's College (Autumn 2001)

The outcomes of the Appeals Boards held on 24 July 2001, 8 October 2001 and 30 October 2001 were noted.

8. Validation Committee recommendations:

BA in Irish Studies and Religious Studies (Mater Dei Institute)
BSc in Education and Training (School of Education Studies)

Approved for progression to application for approval by Executive and consideration by an Accreditation Board.

9. Quality review process – background and guidelines

Approved. In response to queries about the absence of specific performance indicators in the guidelines, Dr Walsh said that the Universities Act, 1997 had emphasised a quality improvement approach over an audit approach to the quality review process. Dr Walsh was congratulated by the Chairman for his work to date, and thanked by

Dr Mac Mathúna for providing assistance on quality issues to St Patrick's College, Drumcondra.

10. Measures for improving the administration of DCU's academic structures

Approved. It was noted that, while some structure problems are a result of budgetary uncertainties, many are unrelated to budgets so that it should be possible to manage them within the proposed timescale. It was also noted that the Registry expected, in implementing the measures, to have extensive discussions with Dr McMullin about the proposed revisions to the modular structure. The fact that all module descriptors would shortly be available online was welcomed. The Chairman urged that all Programme Boards co-operate as fully as possible with the implementation of the measures.

11. Report from anonymous marking working group

A report was presented by Ms P McMorrow, Chairman of the Academic Council working group on the implementation of anonymous marking. A proposal for a scheme based on student ID number was discussed. Several issues were raised, including the possibility that the proposal from the working group would lead to increased time pressures before Progression and Awards Boards and increased error rates, a suggestion that using a system of fold-down flaps (with pre-printed ID numbers) on answer books would be a preferable option, and a suggestion that using examination numbers would ensure anonymity in a way that using ID numbers might not. The proposal was approved for implementation on a pilot basis, as suggested by the working group, and in accordance with the timescale suggested by the group. It was agreed that the group would review the working of the pilot scheme and report back to Academic Council following its application in a full academic year. The Chairman thanked Ms McMorrow's group for its work in researching the area and coming forward with the proposal.

12. Admissions: proposal on recording of decisions and Freedom of Information Act, 1997

It was noted that revised application forms would be needed early in the New Year in order to cope with the Freedom of Information Act. Several issues were raised in discussion. It was agreed that any further concerns and suggestions should be conveyed to Joachim Barnett, Admissions Officer, as soon as possible but in any event no later than 25 January 2002.

13. Proposal on internal and external transfer applications

Approved. It was noted that, for the moment and until a pattern emerges, all transfer applications to St Patrick's College, Drumcondra, Mater Dei Institute of Education and All Hallows College would be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

14. Proposal on Graduate Diploma/MSc in Nursing pathways

Approved.

15. Any other business

None.

Date of next meeting:

<p>Wednesday 13 February 2002 2.00 p.m. in AG01</p>
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Signed: _____

Chairman

Date: _____