

ACADEMIC COUNCIL

MINUTES

12 October 2016

2.00 – 2.40 pm in AG01

PRESENT:

M. Brennan
P. Brereton
J. Bruen
R. Condon
B. Corcoran
E. Costello
J. Doyle
B. Flood
G. Foley
R. Forster
G. French
M. Glynn
E. Guilfoyle
D. Hand
C. Holland
M. Irwin-Bannon (Secretary)
A. Kearns
B. Kelly
E. Kennedy
D. Keogh

Q. Liu
J. Lovatt
T. Lynn
B. MacCraith (Chair)
C. MacMurchaidh
A. Matthews
S. McArdle
C. McDonagh
K. McDonagh
C. McGonagle
S. McGovern
G. McGuinness
A. McKenna
D. McKeon
B. McMullin
E. McNulty
A. Morrin
F. Murphy
D. NicMhathúna

L. Nikolopoulos
K. Nolan
P. Ó'Duibhir
Maeve O'Brien
Mark O'Brien
R. O'Connor
N. O'Reilly
E. O'Riordan
C. Pressler
Ethna Regan
M. Roantree
R. Sadleir
A. Simon
A. Stevenson
J. Stokes
J. Travers
B. Walsh
P. Willis
P. Young

APOLOGIES:

F. Blin
C. Bohan
C. Brennan
M. Brown
J. Bruton
M. Crane
S. Cullen
P. Davis

J. Donoghue
N. Dunne
S. Fox
C. Gurrin
G. Hughes
J. Kelly
L. Looney
E. McGlynn

P. McMorrow
C. McMullan
N. Moyna
B. Nolan
A. Sinnott
P. Tiernan
C. Tighe
D. Walls

The President opened the meeting, noting that it was the first Academic Council meeting of the post-Incorporation DCU and an occasion of historic significance. He welcomed all new representatives to Academic Council, and in particular the representatives of the DCU Institute of Education, now the university's fifth Faculty. He noted too the central role of the newly expanded Academic Council (106 members) in shaping the academic future of the expanded University.

The President extended a vote of thanks to staff across all institutions who were involved in the incorporation project. In particular a vote of thanks was extended to the following colleagues who have represented their institutions on DCU Academic Council over the years: Dr Andrew McGrady, Dr Anne Lodge, Professor Fionnuala Waldron, Dr Patricia Flynn, Dr Padraig O'Duibhir and Ms Annabel Stover. He also thanked Dr Andrew O'Regan of All Hallows College.

The President noted the significant and valuable contribution made by Ms Louise McDermott with respect to the former linked colleges. He extended a vote of thanks to her for her work in representing DCU on their Academic Councils, Examination Boards and at their graduation ceremonies.

In order to mark the importance of the historic occasion the President extended an invitation to Council members to a reception in the Seed Room, Albert College Building, immediately following the Council meeting.

1. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted.

A: Minutes and related issues

2. Minutes of the meeting of Academic Council of 20 June 2016

The minutes of the meeting of 20 June 2016 were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

3. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

4. Minutes of the meetings of the Graduate Research Studies Board of 19 May 2016 and 23 June 2016

The minutes were approved.

5. President's report

5.1 With respect to Incorporation, the President noted that the legal agreements underpinning incorporation were signed on 30 September 2016 and the new status of the expanded University commenced on 1 October 2016. The signing of the agreements, which included ministerial input, involved a wide range of parties including the Governing Body of each institution and DCU's Governing Authority. This complex process was completed on time and according to the planned schedule.

5.2 The President drew Council members' attention to the publication of the *Action Plan for Education* by the Government in September 2016. He noted the emphasis in the document on breaking the cycle of disadvantage and that DCU is well placed to address this challenge. He noted too that the development of DCU's strategic plan will need to take account of the *Action Plan for Education*.

5.3 The budget announced by the Government on 11 October 2016 was the first in a long period to include an increased investment in Higher Education. An investment of €36.5 million was announced for the Higher Education and Further Education sector. In addition, €10 million was set aside to cover the costs of the Lansdowne Road Agreement. A commitment of €160 million investment over 3 years was also announced.

6. Presentation on Examination Results 2015-2016 by Ms Karen Johnston, Institutional Research and Analysis Officer

Ms Karen Johnston presented on an analysis of examination results for 2015-2016 and the following points made were noted:

- First year pass rates have remained similar to last year at 89%
- Although overall pass rates remain high, pass rates have fallen in three faculties and the fall is particularly significant in the Faculty of Engineering and Computing which has seen a fall of 7% on last year
- Final precision marks remain steady at the high H2.2 end (increased 5% over the five year analysis).

With respect to the ‘at risk’¹ students the following were noted:

- 146 out of 221 students identified as ‘at risk’ in January 2016 received a fail grade at the end of the academic year
- At risk students represented 41% of all students who failed 1st year at their first attempt
- 2014-2015 ‘at risk’ students who repeated first year had a pass rate of 51%

In the brief discussion which followed, the following viewpoints were noted:

- The need to review the correlation of the nature of the intake and fail rates. It was noted however, that while there is a correlation between entry points and precision marks, in terms of progression rates it is not a good predictive measure.
- It would be useful to review continuous assessment marks in semester 1 so that an intervention for ‘at risk’ students could be organised earlier in the academic year
- Those who have to repeat and are not able to remain with their peer group appear to struggle more than those who just pass, but are able to stay with their peer group.
- The need to have an early and targeted intervention process for those identified ‘at risk’.

7. Proposed amendment to the nomination process for the award of the Chancellor’s medal

The Vice President for Academic Affairs/Registrar outlined the background to the Chancellor’s medal which is awarded to candidates who have achieved excellence both in the academic and extra-curricular domains. She indicated that numbers of nominations have declined over the years and it is intended to increase awareness of the award and to provide increased opportunity for the nomination of candidates, particularly in light of the increased student population.

¹ At risk” is defined as: instances where an undergraduate entrant fails 2 or more modules in the January diet of exams, or Where an undergraduate entrant completes 2 or less modules after Semester 1, that student fails 1 of these modules.

To address the issues as outlined above, the Chancellor's Medal Review Group recommends that a second nomination process is extended to the March conferring ceremonies bringing to four the number of medals to be awarded. The proposal was approved.

It was noted that Progression and Award Boards will be reminded to consider potential candidates for nomination at each diet of examinations.

C: Items for formal approval/noting

8. Register of Academic Council members 2016/17

Noted

9. Register of members of the Education Committee, the University Standards Committee, the Graduate Research Studies Board and the Examination Appeals Board

Noted

10. Updated Terms of Reference 2016/17: Academic Council and its subcommittees

Approved

11. Proposed Chair of Examination Appeals Board

The nomination of Ms Pauline Willis as Chair of the Examinations Appeals Board was approved. Ms. Willis' term of office will be from 4 October 2016 – 30 September 2019.

12. Update to the Examination Appeals Board Regulations and Terms of Reference

Approved

13. Updated Marks and Standards (2016.1)

Approved

14. Updated Regulations and Guidelines, External Examiners for Taught Programmes/Modules (V1.4)

Approved

15. Update on committee activities 2015-2016

Noted

16. Items from recent sub-committees of Academic Council

Approved

17. Report from autumn 2016 examinations, Progression and Award Boards**17.1 Dublin City University**

Approved

17.2 Royal Irish Academic of Music

Approved

17.3 Ballyfermot College of Education

Approved

17.4 Mater Dei Institute of Education

Approved

17.5 St. Patrick's College²

Approved

² The autumn 2016 Examination Report from St. Patrick's College was circulated on 14 October 2016 and deemed approved

17.6 Church of Ireland College of Education

Approved

17.7 All Hallows College

Approved

18. Report from autumn 2016 Faculty Awards Boards for Research Degrees

Approved

19. Report on completion of Accreditation process 2015-2016

Noted

20. Validation Recommendation: BA in Jazz and Contemporary Performance

Approved

21. Any Other Business

There were no items.

Signed: _____
President

Date _____

Date of next meeting:

<p>Wednesday, 7 December 2016 2.00 p.m. in AG01</p>
