EDUCATION COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Wednesday 20 September 2017

2.00 – 4. 20 pm in A204

Present: Dr Claire Bohan, Dr Jennifer Bruen, Professor Michelle Butler, Professor John Doyle, Eithne Guilfoyle (Chair), Ms Margaret Irwin-Bannon (Secretary), Mr Billy Kelly, Dr Anne Looney, Professor Lisa Looney, Dr Garrett McGuinness, Ms Aisling McKenna**,** Ms Pauline Mooney, Mr Brendan Power, Professor Anne Sinnott, Dr Joseph Stokes

Apologies: Professor Mark Brown, Professor Greg Hughes

In attendance: Ms Karen Johnston

The Chair welcomed Mr Brendan Power of the Student's Union to his first meeting of Education Committee.

SECTION A: AGENDA, MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 31 May 2017 (approved electronically)

The minutes were <u>noted</u>, and signed by the Chair.

3. Minutes of extra-ordinary meeting of Education Committee Standing Committee 22 August 2017

<u>Approved</u>

4.   Matters arising from the minutes of 31 May 2017

4.1   It was <u>noted</u> that the Deputy Registrar/Dean of Teaching and Learning had met with staff from the Communications and Marketing Office and informed the Committee that a static report of First Destination survey information would be made available on the DCU website for an external audience. Should faculties require additional detailed information they will be able to obtain that information through the Careers Service, in the short-term. It was suggested that some investment should be made to improve this process in the interim until the new student system is introduced.

It was suggested and agreed that a sample of the report to be made available online would be circulated for the next meeting of Education Committee (Item 3.1).

4.2   It was <u>noted</u> that the Vice-President Academic Affairs/Registrar and the Dean of Teaching and Learning/Deputy Registrar had reviewed the issues contained in the APR Faculty summary reports. With respect to the items raised, two categories of issues remained to be addressed: Resources and infrastructure and communication with External Examiners.

During the discussion which followed, it was agreed it was important that issues were addressed in order to close the loop on the cycle of review. It was agreed that a document outlining the issues would be submitted for the consideration of Education Committee.

It was <u>noted</u> too that a document for the guidance of External Examiners is under preparation currently (Item 3.4).

4.3   It was <u>noted</u> that an update with respect to the strategic planning process and the two key enabling initiatives are on the agenda of this meeting (Item 3.5/11).

4.4   It was <u>noted</u> that the development of a protocol for the cessation of arrangements with those external examiners who do not engage in the examining process is being assimilated into the guidance document for external examiners (Item 3.3).

4.5   It was <u>noted</u> that a revised proposal with respect to a streamlined validation process including collaborative provision is on the agenda of this meeting (Item 3.2).

4.6   It was <u>noted</u> that the addition of a part-time mode to the MSc in Biomedical Diagnostics and the MSc in Financial Mathematics had been approved, following electronic circulation, on 8 June 2017.

4.6   It was <u>noted</u> that, as advised by Education Committee, the programme proposers for the Doctor of Education (flexible delivery) had notified the Graduate Research Studies Board of the advance arrangements required for the conduct of remote research and supervision agreements for students on the programme (Item 8).

4.7   It was <u>noted</u> that the documentation with respect to the EdD/MPhil (Education) had been revised to reflect feedback provided by Education Committee (Item 9).

4.8   It was <u>noted</u> that a request to amend the title of the PNU programme, MSc in Advanced Nursing Practice to MSc in Nursing: Advanced Practice was considered under Chair's Action and approved on 2 August 2017.

SECTION B: STRATEGIC MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION/NOTING

5.   Update on strategic activities undertaken within the IUA

Dr Joseph Stokes reported on the following items, which had been discussed by the IUA Deans of Graduate Studies at their meeting of June 12th 2017:

- The Irish Survey of Student Engagement is being extended to the research community. Dr Stokes indicated that he is a member of the working group which is drafting potential questions for the survey. It is planned that a pilot survey will be launched in March 2018.
- The possibility of making stipend provision within scholarships for maternity and parental leave for funded research students is currently being explored.
- A review of masters by research across the sector was presented to the Deans of Graduate Studies. It was noted that in general, there was alignment in terms of entry requirements, supervision, annual review and examination process.
- It was agreed to collate material relating to regulations specific to the Professional Doctorate. It was anticipated that gathering this information would take time and a full report will be presented in October 2017.
- The Deans Group was updated on feedback received from the HEA and QQI regarding the Advisory Forum for the National Framework for Doctoral Education. Dr Stokes is a member of a volunteer informal planning group to draft a proposal on the structure and possible agenda items for the Forum.

6.   Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE)

It was noted that the ISSE national report for 2017 is currently being drafted and it is expected that the final report will be published in November 2017.

The dates for conducting the survey for 2018 were proposed to Education Committee as follows: 12 March 2017 – 30 March 2017. It was noted that the timeframe, while not ideal, was the best choice from the options available. This was <u>agreed</u>.

Ms. Aisling McKenna informed the Committee that all Programme Chairs have now received programme specific ISSE data, both quantitative and qualitative.

7.   (i) Proposed revised and streamlined validation procedure (ii) proposed approach to DCU responsibilities as a Designated Awarding Body (iii) proposed revisions to Education Committee Terms of Reference and Standing Orders

(i)   Proposed revised and streamlined validation procedure

Ms. Pauline Mooney introduced this item noting that the outline proposal sets out to streamline the validation procedure, which will integrate the validation of all new DCU programmes along with those which involve collaborative provision. It proposes a 'hub and spoke' type model, where there is provision of information core to all programmes and then depending on the nature of the proposal under preparation, additional specific proposal-relevant information will be required.

In the discussion which followed the following were noted/suggested:

- To explore the stages of approval to see if the process of approval could be expedited, while adhering to the University's statutory responsibilities
- In the case of a joint programme offering, to explore at validation stage an agreement to adhere to the regulations of the 'administrative lead' university, similar to the 3U model
- That Academic Affairs considers utilising the expertise available through the European Consortium for Accreditation
- With respect to the related forms, create a 'core form' for collaborative provision proposals
- That the Approval Form for Revised Academic Offerings will remain in place.

It was <u>noted</u> that it is intended to continue work already completed through Guru Connect and in the interim to revise hard-copy forms to reflect the agreed process. It was requested and agreed that the revised forms would be submitted for the consideration of Education Committee.

(ii)   Proposed approach to DCU responsibilities as a Designated Awarding Body

Ms Aisling McKenna provided some background on a meeting held with Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) with respect to universities' responsibilities as Designated Awarding Bodies. It was noted that the definition of 'linked provider' is not yet fully formulated within QQI and furthermore other institutions have redefined their relationships and have moved away from the Linked Provider concept.

It was noted that proportionality is important to the definition of relationships e.g. with any of DCU's existing relationships, it accredits only a small proportion of the overall offering in the delivering institution, e.g. Ballyfermot College of Further Education, one programme: Dundalk IT, research programmes only.

Following a brief discussion on the matter the following suggestions were made in terms of areas to be addressed.

DCU should:
- define its current relationships and identify areas of responsibility that need to be addressed through existing MOUs and ensure that quality assurances procedures are in place in order for DCU to ensure that its responsibilities are discharged adequately
- establish its responsibilities with respect to enrolled learners
- build in risk assessment and procedures around withdrawal from a 'linked' relationship
- consider under what circumstances the University wants to enter into these relationships.

It was agreed that a short paper on DCU's responsibilities as a Designated Awarding Body would be prepared for the consideration of Education Committee at its next meeting.

(iii)   Proposed revisions to Education Committee Terms of Reference, Membership and Standing Orders (see item 8)

8.   **Proposed revisions to Education Committee Terms of Reference, Membership and Standing Orders**

It was <u>noted</u> that the substantive changes made to the Terms of Reference of Education Committee relate to broadening the remit of Education Committee Standing Committee. The proposed amendments were <u>approved</u> and referred to Academic Council for approval.

9.   **Year-end summary of programme level pass rates in undergraduate programmes 2016-2017**

Ms Karen Johnston presented on the summary analysis of undergraduate programme level results for 2016-2017 with a focus on first year performance. The following were noted:

- DCU's overall pass rate is at 91.1%
- First year pass rates have increased slightly, from 87.5% in 2015-2016 to 88.9% in 2016-2017
- Pass rates in all years have seen an increase with fourth year pass rate at a five-year high of 94.5%
- For students repeating their academic year in 16-17 pass rates have increased to 69% overall compared to 66% in 15-16.
- The number of students repeating an academic year has increased from 137 (15-16) to 215 (16-17) representing an increases of 57%
- Average precision grades overall have continued to increase over the five-year period from 58% in 2013 to 60% in 2017.
- The 'at risk' statistics are provisional, as at the time of preparation registration was not complete.
- 135 out of 262 students identified as 'at risk' in January 2017 received a fail grade at the end of the academic year, representing 51% of the 'at risk' students
- 2015-16 'at risk' students who repeated first year had a pass rate of 58%
- Analysis remains to be done on the impact of the supports provided to 'at risk' students in February 2017

In the discussion which followed, the following points were noted:

- The introduction of a system of identification of students who are at risk of failure prior to February needs to be considered
- There is a need to capture data on students who fail in Semester 2 but for whom there is no intervention

- That the information provided is very useful however it is important that action is taken at institutional level to respond to the data
- Some further analysis will be completed to assess the effectiveness of the intervention by Student Support and Development in February 2017 and also to review the data related to students who fail in semester 2.

10.   Update on DCU Strategic Plan

The Chair updated Education Committee on the new Strategic Plan. Work will commence shortly on a Teaching and Learning Strategy and a working group is currently being formed. A draft strategy will then be brought back to Education Committee for its consideration.

With respect to the enabling initiatives it is intended that a working group will be formed to consider the Academic Calendar.

It was noted that the Student Information System project is in Phase I and well underway.

SECTION C: PROGRAMME AND MODULE-SPECIFIC ISSUES

11.   New entry route and pathway on the Bachelor of Education through the medium of Irish

The proposal was approved subject to the following clarifications and amendments to the documentation

- Clarification on whether or not there can be a transfer between the proposed entry pathway and the existing BEd Gaeltacht entry (i.e. can they apply for the Gaeltacht entry programme and transfer to the BOid trí Ghaeilge)?
- Include the A-level equivalent results for entry (to take account of NI and UK applicants)
- Ensure adequate distinction between the Gaeltacht entry programme and the new proposed entry.

12.   Validation Proposal: MSc in Climate Change: Policy, Media and Society, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Education Committee recommended the proposed MSc in Climate Change: Politics, Media and Society for further development towards accreditation, subject to the following:

- As the emphasis on the programme is not on the sciences, the wording of the first aim of the programme (listed on page 2 of the validation proposal) 'strong grounding in the science of climate change'...should be replaced with an alternative wording such as 'contextual understanding of'...
- To include 'science' amongst the list of disciplines to which the programme should be promoted (page 9)
- To explore with colleagues in the DCU Institute of Education, who have expertise in the area, the addition of Environmental Education content to the programme.

There was some discussion on the consistency at faculty level of entry requirements for taught postgraduate students and it was suggested that the Faculty review its entry requirements for taught Master's programmes.

13.   Validation Proposal: MA in European Law and Policy, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

The proposed programme was <u>not approved</u> in this instance however it was recommended that the following items would be addressed and the proposal re-submitted for the further consideration of Education Committee:

- On page 16 correct the error in the table of classifications
- On page 19 of the document it states that the proposers 'will return to the Dean and Budget Committee before launching or advertising the programme to discuss availability', however there is no provision for additional academic staff in the financial impact statement.
- Page 8: ' The programme will be provided on an open ended basis'. It is requested that this phrase is explained.
- The title of the exit Diploma should reflect the Master's programme title i.e. Graduate Diploma in European Law and Policy rather than Diploma in Law
- Provide clarity on whether there is an exit Certificate or not. The criteria should be made clearer in the documentation.

- The programme as presented is not distinctive enough (depending on the pathway students take, they can do a full 80 credits of the current LLM while on this programme)
- Clarity is required with respect to the allocated credits for the modules LG557 and LG528. It appears that they are each weighted at 5 credits rather than 10; therefore the students would be short 5 credits.
- Under 3.1 it is stated that 'this programme will be of particular value to those interested in pursuing a career in the private sector in legal practice'. There was concern expressed that the impression could be given to graduates that they could 'practise' however the programme does not equip graduates to be in legal practice.
- The programme proposers are asked to provide information in its entirety related to both full-time and part-time students.

14.   Any other business

The Secretary noted that Dr Jennifer Bruen has served her 3-year term as the nominee of Academic Council and it was noted that Academic Council will be notified of a call for nominations to issue following its 4 October 2017 meeting.

Signed: _____Date_____
            Chair

Date of next meeting:

Wednesday, 18 October 2017
at 2.00 in A204