

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Wednesday 1 May 2013

2.00-4.30 p.m. in DG12

Present: Professor Eithne Guilfoyle (Chair), Dr Claire Bohan, Mr Aaron Clogher, Professor John Costello, Dr John Doyle, Mr Billy Kelly, Dr Lisa Looney, Ms Louise McDermott (Secretary), Professor Barry McMullin, Dr Ciarán Mac Murchaidh, Dr Anne Sinnott, Dr Sheelagh Wickham

Apologies: Professor Alan Harvey, Dr Sarah Ingle, Mr Martin Molony

In attendance: Professor Brian MacCraith (for Item 6.3), Ms Aisling McKenna, Mr Ciarán O'Connor

SECTION A: AGENDA, MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted subject to the deferral of Item 8 to the meeting of 29 May 2013 and the inclusion of one submission under Item 10.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 3 April 2013

The minutes were confirmed and were signed by the Chair.

3. Matters arising from the minutes

- 3.1** It was noted that the working group on academic collaboration with external institutions was due to meet for a third time and was considering proposals. (Item 3.4)

- 3.2** It was noted, with respect to recommendations about non-major awards, that discussions about issues relating to St Patrick's College were in progress and that the final proposals from the working group would be submitted for the consideration of the EC as soon as possible, ideally at its meeting of 29 May 2013, as well as being submitted to the University Standards Committee as soon as possible, ideally at its meeting of 30 May 2013. (Item 3.5)
- 3.3** It was noted that Business Intelligence was likely to be used for making available the proposed online repository of reports from the Institutional Research and Analysis Office. (Item 3.8)
- 3.4** With respect to the proposed MEng in Healthcare Technologies, it was noted that the accreditation report had been approved by DCU Academic Council at its meeting of 10 April 2013, that the approval process had also been completed in the National University of Ireland, Maynooth and that the approval process with respect to the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland was nearing completion. (Item 3.9)
- 3.5** It was noted that the HEA quality framework on PhD education would be circulated to the EC when it became available. (Item 3.11)
- 3.6** It was noted that Teaching and Learning strategic plan was nearing completion, that the final draft would be circulated to the EC membership before the meeting of 29 May 2013 and that some of the actions alluded to in the plan had already been undertaken. (Item 3.13)
- 3.7** It was noted that Ms McKenna had clarified with a Dean of Faculty a small number of queries relating to the figures on 'at-risk' students and would be happy to provide the other Deans with any further figures and/or analysis they might request. (Item 3.14)
- 3.8** It was noted that a protocol on the use of students' mobile telephone numbers was under development in the University and that it would be based on the principle that numbers could be used (for appropriate purposes) unless a student indicated during registration that he/she did not wish to have a number used. An issue relating to an associated memorandum is to be followed up with relevant colleagues. (Item 3.15)
- 3.9** It was noted that the issue of protecting the integrity of student data would be considered by the EC at a future meeting. (Items 3.16 and 3.17)
- 3.10** It was noted that the recommendation with respect to the BSc in Education and Training was under consideration in the School of Education Studies. (Item 7)

- 3.11** It was noted that the proposed pathway in Data Analytics on the MSc in Computing had been approved electronically by the EC on 25 April 2013 subject to the correction of all typographical errors and consideration being given to the inclusion of a research-focused learning outcome. (Item 8)

SECTION B: STRATEGIC MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION

4. Update on activities undertaken within the IUA

The following were noted as having formed part of recent discussions by the various IUA groups:

- there is some concern at the relatively low level of participation in the Irish National Student Survey (see also Item 5 below)
- it has been agreed that the title of the new two-year Level 9 consecutive programme in teacher education is to be ‘Professional Master’s in Education’
- concerns about the operation of SUSI (Student Universal Support Ireland) are being channelled through Mr Lewis Purser, Director (Academic Affairs) of the IUA, who is a member of the SUSI advisory group
- the first integrated call for funding submissions has been made by the Irish Research Council; current emphasis is on engagement with companies, including those working in the voluntary sector, and this fits well with DCU’s identity as the University of Enterprise
- discussion on intellectual property issues is forthcoming by means of a working group composed of representatives of technology transfer offices, including Invent in DCU
- discussion on the return on investment in PhDs is forthcoming
- discussions are in progress with the provider of online modules in research integrity and related issues with a view to taking a consortium-based approach to facilitate the sharing of good practice and reduce costs (it is recognised, however, that online provision must be supplemented by face-to-face interaction)
- discussions on joint awards are in progress in the Registrars’ group and the Deans of Graduate Studies group.

5. Update on the Irish National Student Survey

The results of the pilot survey, undertaken in Spring 2013, are under review. In terms of response rates, DCU, with a 17% rate, fared relatively well. This may be attributed to the range of publicity initiatives undertaken, including information at the Moodle login stage, e-mails to Programme Chairs and consistent activity by the Students' Union. There is, none the less, concern sector wide at the low level of engagement by students with the survey (see also Item 4 above) and at the possible implications of this for external perceptions of student engagement more generally and student satisfaction. It was noted that response rates to the Eurostat student survey, which the universities had recently also been asked to run and which had involved prizes/incentives to students, had been higher than in the case of the INSS. It was agreed that the results of the INSS would be discussed further by the EC at its meeting of 29 May 2013.

6. EC goals 2013

6.1 Rationalisation of provision

- 6.1.1** In the course of the discussion of the proposal document on this issue, it was noted that a distinction needs to be drawn between programme viability from the financial perspective and programme viability from the range of other perspectives, many of which are amenable to discussion/analysis at the level of the programme itself (which is not the case with the financial considerations).
- 6.1.2** A number of suggestions were made with respect to the proposed viability criteria. It was noted that rationalising programmes and rationalising modules are not the same and that it would be important to maintain the distinctiveness of the DCU offering while also allowing for analysis of the cost of running 'flagship' programmes and the current sector-wide initiative to reduce significantly the number of programme choices through the CAO system. The importance of including reputational issues among the criteria was noted.
- 6.1.3** The Chair noted that, following discussion with her, the Director of Finance and the Finance Officer had undertaken to develop a new model to facilitate the identification of costs, to the University and to Faculties, on a per-programme and a per-module basis. It was agreed to submit the viability criteria for the consideration of the Senior Management Group but to note to the SMG that this model was under development.

6.2 Trends in collaborative awards

6.2.1 Following her presentation on this issue, Dr Looney noted that the extensive documentation on which she had based it would be made available to the EC for more detailed consideration, following the meeting. Among the issues she noted were the following:

- some programmes lead to both joint and double awards, which adds a measure of further complexity to an already challenging national and, particularly, international scenario
- the emergence of MOOCs has added yet further complexity and raised a number of issues, including the need to evaluate the appropriateness of generic mass provision vis-à-vis the specific cultural and other advantages of local provision
- it will be essential for DCU to have a clear and detailed policy on engagement with external partners in terms of the provision of collaborative awards.

6.2.2 The importance of establishing close and cordial professional relationships with providers in other institutions, often over years, to ensure a firm base for collaborative awards was noted.

6.2.3 The Chair expressed appreciation to Dr Looney, on behalf of the EC, for her work in relation this issue.

6.3 Graduate Attributes/e-portfolios

6.3.1 In the course of their presentation on these issues, Dr Bohan and Mr Kelly noted the following:

- the focus will be on providing standardised rather than individualised means of evaluating the development of the attributes
- consideration is being given in the University to the provision of a single listing of events which, if available, would assist students in identifying opportunities for developing the attributes
- further consideration will need to be given to developing staff awareness of the attributes and the variety of means by which they may be developed
- it may be useful to distinguish between aptitudes and proficiencies, with the former having a more significant reflective element and the latter being more amenable to being quantified and mapped
- Google is the platform to be used for the e-portfolios.

6.3.2 The President expressed appreciation to Dr Bohan and Mr Kelly and all others involved in the work on the attributes and the e-portfolios, noting that it will be necessary to decide on one or other of the two current terms, 'Graduate Attributes' and 'Generation 21' and use it exclusively in future.

6.3.3 In the ensuing discussion, the following were noted:

- the Uaneen module is becoming ever more relevant to the attributes
- the year abroad, on programmes which offer it, can be conceptualised as a significant opportunity to develop the attributes
- evaluation of attributes using measurement tools provided by external organisations is possible, but expensive
- consideration had been given to using Moodle rather than Google as the platform for the e-portfolios, particularly in view of student and staff familiarity with Moodle, but Google was chosen on the basis that it allows for portability of e-portfolios in a way that Moodle does not
- the e-portfolio will be available to all students from September 2013, but the emphasis will initially be on ensuring its use by incoming first-year undergraduate students
- the use of an e-portfolio formed part of the recommendations of the working group on INTRA which reported to Academic Council at its meeting of 10 April 2013
- it will be important to include in the e-portfolio opportunities for students to plan and reflect on, as distinct from recording, their experiences
- the development of the attributes, and the population of the e-portfolio, are not intended to form part of the formal assessment of any student, though consideration will need to be given to the possibility of linking the e-portfolio with the downloadable transcripts which have begun to be available.

6.4 Feedback from Faculties on the effectiveness of Annual Programme Review

Dr Wickham, in presenting the feedback, noted that perceptions of APR were largely positive though issues arose as to the ownership of it and, particularly, as to the ownership of Periodic Programme Review and the related issue of responsibility for the resources needed to conduct reviews. The Chair undertook to discuss ownership issues with the Deputy President. She thanked Dr Wickham and the other Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning/Education for their work in gathering the feedback.

SECTION C: PROGRAMME- AND MODULE-SPECIFIC ISSUES**7. Proposed Erasmus pathway on BBS programme**

Approved.

8. Two proposals: Professional Diploma in Education (current students) and Professional Master's in Education (2013/14)

Deferred to the meeting of 29 May 2013.

9. Proposed pathway on BSc in Horticulture

Decision deferred pending the submission of revised documentation. The programme proposers are requested to consider the appropriateness of the concept of 'pathway' given what is proposed, to reconceptualise the entry mechanism in terms of transfers and exemptions and to ensure that the programme learning outcomes relating to what is proposed match those relating to the existing BSc.

10. Any other business

Curricula vitae for two external experts for the Accreditation Board for the proposed MSc in Chronic Disease Management (to replace two previously-approved external experts who are not free to take part in the accreditation) were approved.

Date of next meeting:

Wednesday 29 May 2013, 2.00 p.m. in A204

Signed: _____
Chair

Date: _____