

## **EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

### **MINUTES**

Wednesday 9 January 2013

2.00-4.35 p.m. in A204

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

**Apologies:** Mr Jim Dowling, Dr John Doyle, Dr Anne Sinnott

**In attendance:** Professor Brian MacCraith (for Item 4),  
Ms Mairéad Nic Giolla Mhichíl, Ms Aisling McKenna

The Chair welcomed the President of Dublin City University, Professor Brian MacCraith, who joined the meeting to make a presentation on issues of current interest. She also welcomed Ms Mairéad Nic Giolla Mhichíl, who represented the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences since the Dean was unavoidably absent.

#### **SECTION A: AGENDA, MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

##### **1. Adoption of the agenda**

The agenda was adopted subject to the inclusion of a new Item 4 to summarise the presentation made by the President, and the renumbering of all subsequent items.

##### **2. Minutes of the meeting of 5 December 2012**

The minutes were confirmed and were signed by the Chair.

### **3. Matters arising from the minutes**

- 3.1** The proposed new title for the new programme to be offered by the School of Computing from September 2013, 'BSc in Computational Problem-Solving and Software Development' was approved. It was noted that the original title would remain listed on the CAO system pending approval of the new title by Academic Council (it will be submitted to the 13 February 2013 meeting of Council) and that applicants would apply under the original title but would subsequently be informed of the new title. (Item 3.1)
- 3.2** It was noted that the work associated with the pilot National Student Survey, to be conducted in March 2013, is in progress. The importance of clear and accurate communication to all stakeholders with respect to the outcomes was noted, as was the likelihood that it will be possible to determine the best means of doing this once the HEA's plans for publishing the outcomes are known. (Item 3.3)
- 3.3** It was noted that the EC would be apprised, as appropriate, of progress/completion in respect of a range of ongoing issues. (Item 3.4)
- 3.4** It was noted that recommendations in respect of requests from external agencies to run DCU-awarded programmes would be submitted for the consideration of the EC as soon as possible. (Item 3.5)
- 3.5** With respect to Annual Programme Review, it was noted that the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning/Education are planning to conduct a survey and hold a focus group to ascertain opinion about the effectiveness of the current system. The outcomes of these exercises are expected to be available in April 2013. (See also Item 6.2 below.) (Item 3.6)
- 3.6** It was noted that the recommendations of the working group on HEA First Destinations information would be made to the EC at its meeting of 6 February 2013. (Item 3.7)
- 3.7** With respect to the DCU Online Project Group, it was agreed that Mr Kelly would draft terms of reference and a list of potential members and submit these for the consideration of the EC at its meeting of 6 February 2013. (See also Items 4.2 and 6.2 below.) (Item 3.8)
- 3.8** It was noted, with respect to recommendations about non-major awards, that final proposals would be submitted for the consideration of the EC as soon as possible. (Item 3.9)

- 3.9** It was noted that recommendations on the role of the Research Ethics Committee vis-à-vis undergraduate research would be made to the EC as soon as possible. (Item 3.10)
- 3.10** It was noted that the situation with respect to updates to be made to the withdrawal form, to provide for more detailed feedback from students as to their reasons for withdrawing from the University, was being ascertained. (Item 3.11)
- 3.11** Ms McKenna noted that, of the total number of students who had deferred their places in DCU over the previous four years, 44% had subsequently taken them up. (Item 3.11)
- 3.12** It was noted that work to establish a single repository for all reports from the Institutional Research and Analysis Office was ongoing. (Item 3.12)
- 3.13** It was noted that the Semester 1 QuEST exercise was under way and that it was intended that the Semester 2 exercise would take place in accordance with the timeframe that had been envisaged for it. (See also Items 4.4 and 6.2 below.) (Item 3.13)
- 3.14** Dr Looney noted that she and the Deputy President, Mr Jim Dowling, intended to meet shortly to discuss the proposal on joint research supervision and awards and that it would then be resubmitted for the consideration of the Senior Management Group and subsequently (at the meeting of 6 February 2013) be considered again by the EC. (Item 3.14)
- 3.15** It was noted that the outcome of the discussions in the Faculties about the report and recommendations in respect of ‘at-risk’ students would be submitted for the consideration of the EC at its meeting of 6 March 2013. (Item 5.3)
- 3.16** Mr Kelly noted that significant progress was being made with respect to the proposed 3U Partnership Master’s programme in Healthcare Technology and that a lead programme proposer would be identified as soon as possible. (Item 7)

## **SECTION B: STRATEGIC MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION**

### **4. Presentation by Professor Brian MacCraith**

- 4.1** For DCU, the regional clustering to which the Government has committed, via the HEA, will manifest in terms of the 3U Partnership, the Institute of Education and enhanced Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, and the link with Dundalk

- Institute of Technology. NUI Maynooth, one of the members of the 3U Partnership, will in its turn link with Athlone Institute of Technology. It is expected that the EC will be involved in articulating the operating principles and criteria which will underpin such issues as rationalisation of programme provision, alignment of approval procedures and delineation of progression pathways for students, though the detailed work will need to be carried out in Schools and Faculties.
- 4.2** It will be essential for the University to maintain and enhance its leading position with regard to the provision of online education in the context of the rapidly changing business model of higher education consequent upon rapid technological development. The forthcoming Institute of Education will be critically important in this respect (particularly in relation to research and new knowledge generation in the field of digital learning) as will the implementation, as appropriate, of the recommendations of the Virtual and Online Learning Group, including the setting up of the DCU Online Project Group (see Item 3.7 above). (In this connection, Mr Kelly mentioned the importance of the Project Group in providing a steering and filtering mechanism with respect to online learning developments.) It is also planned to advertise the position of Chair of Digital Learning in the near future. The advisory role of the EC is likely to take a number of forms and to include the making of recommendations with respect to infrastructural issues such as new types of learning spaces. The University will also need to consider its position with regard to MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses), including the extent to which it might be strategically desirable to deliver content on one or more MOOCs and/or to use content available via MOOCs. It is likely that some funding will be forthcoming from the HEA with respect to online education developments, and there may be a sectoral call for proposals for funding.
- 4.3** The Generation 21 initiative speaks to recent priorities as outlined by the programme of the Irish Presidency of the Council of the European Union. In addition to having articulated the initiative and taken steps to implement it, however, it will be essential to evaluate the extent to which it is successful in practice, and to this end it may prove helpful to engage external expertise and/or apply learning analytics as a tool for measuring progress. The e-portfolio initiative which is being developed in conjunction with Generation 21 will result in a pilot programme in the School of Physical Sciences in Semester 2.
- 4.4** The development of QuEST (see also Item 3.13 above) and Annual and Periodic Programme Review are other EC-related developments that are consonant with DCU's strategic plan 2012-2017, *Transforming Lives and Societies* and have the potential to position the University favourably with respect to encouraging high achievement in teaching and learning.

- 4.5** In the context of the difficult economic climate, it is proving helpful to consider partnership and sponsorship arrangements with private companies.
- 4.6** In the discussion following Professor MacCraith's presentation, the following points were made:
- it will be important for the University to maintain its high standards and rigorous procedures with respect to the development and approval of new programmes
  - in terms of partnership arrangements, it will be helpful to proceed on the basis that DCU has strengths in various areas while partners may be relatively stronger in others, and to leverage as wide a basis of expertise across partners as possible
  - the importance, for the EC, of taking a consistently strategic approach (e.g. to developments with partner institutions) and avoiding involvement in operational issues needs to be kept in mind.
- 4.7** The President expressed his appreciation to the members of the EC for their ongoing engagement with a range of matters of strategic importance to the University, and requested their feedback on the above or any related issues.

## **5. Training activities in respect of Business Intelligence**

- 5.1** Ms McKenna noted a number of ongoing developments, including the series of training workshops being held and the work to create a new type of report which will allow Programme Chairs to identify the second-level schools from which the students on their programmes come. She confirmed that proposals for new reports should first be mentioned to her and that the discussion would then widen to encompass relevant colleagues in Information Systems and Services.
- 5.2** It was agreed that the broad range of issues relating to Business Intelligence would be discussed in the context of EC goals (see Item 6.2 below).

## **6. EC goals 2013**

- 6.1** In introducing the list of potential goals, the Chair referred to the relevance of the President's presentation (see Item 4 above) and to the fact that the goals are, necessarily, all interrelated with one another (the close relationship between goals 3., 4. and 5., as outlined in Item 6.2 below, was noted in particular).

**6.2** The list of goals as outlined below was approved, with a range of observations being made with respect to the items on the list, again as outlined below:

1. Oversight of issues/opportunities/challenges with respect to partnerships with other institutions, including oversight of quality-related mechanisms such as those for approving and evaluating programmes:
  - the EC is likely to have an important role to play in anticipating and identifying potential blockages in systems, although solutions will need to be worked out at local level
  - duplication of programme provision will need to be examined in the context of discussions about partnerships, as will differences in the NFQ levels typically offered by different institutions (e.g. universities and institutes of technology) and the potential consequences to an institution as a whole of reducing provision in specific subject areas (e.g. with regard to interdisciplinary programmes)
  - in the event that programme provision is concentrated in fewer institutions than is the case at present, online learning will become increasingly important; it will need to be conceptualised as being regionally based and not simply DCU based
  - it will be important to define what is meant by the concept of collaboration.
2. Encouragement of developments with respect to DCU Online:
  - there is scope for expanding the description of this goal to encompass consideration of the opportunities afforded by developments elsewhere; Dr Looney undertook to propose relevant wording.
3. Oversight of developments with respect to undergraduate education, including the identification of new and emerging subject areas, the discontinuation of programmes where appropriate and the relationship between teaching and research:
  - the description of the goal would benefit from the inclusion of a reference to the quality of student learning
  - it may be more accurate to refer to rationalising rather than to discontinuing programmes
  - it will be important to articulate the criteria for rationalising programmes and to recognise that these may vary from one discipline area and campus to another; data on potential competitor programmes will be needed
  - the relationship between teaching and research is particularly important in the context of the proposed development of technological universities

- the EC has by now got well-established systems for maintaining an overview of student engagement and retention issues, and it will be important to maintain this focus – possibly, where considered appropriate, by means of specific projects
  - it would be helpful to articulate principles that should underpin collaborative ventures.
4. Encouragement of flexibility of access and provision:
- flexibility is likely to be enhanced by developments with respect to the Academic Calendar, and it is likely that such developments will, before long, be discussed and agreed by Senior Management and Executive and conveyed to the EC and the wider University community
  - consideration of the way forward with respect to the Academic Framework for Innovation will be very important.
5. Enhancing developments with respect to postgraduate education:
- discussions about a sustainable model of graduate researcher education are ongoing in the University and are being steered by the Graduate Studies Office
  - it will be increasingly important to ensure that the taught Master's programmes offered by the University are appropriately reflective of research strengths and reputation in specific disciplines.
6. Monitoring developments with respect to Business Intelligence:
- the BI initiative focused originally on research metrics and a range of reports containing various types of student data; there is now scope for specifying a wider range of uses to which BI might be put
  - the structures and access model attached to BI will also need consideration to ascertain ongoing fitness for purpose
  - it will also be necessary to determine the extent to which University information systems which are not currently incorporated into BI might usefully be so incorporated.
7. Monitoring developments with respect to Generation 21 and e-portfolios:
- the presentation by the President covered a number of relevant issues in this regard (see Item 4.3 above)
  - it will be very important to ensure that both current and future students are aware of Generation 21 and the potential the initiative holds for them.

8. Developing the policy on assessment:
  - the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning/Education are leading developments on this, with a view to having a draft policy ready for consideration by the end of April 2013.
9. Review of QuEST:
  - this matter is ongoing (see Items 3.13 and 4.4 above)
  - it is important to bear in mind that the current QuEST initiative is a pilot, and the learning derived from it will need to be collated and utilised.
10. Broad oversight of Annual Programme Review and Periodic Programme Review:
  - as noted above (see Item 3.5), feedback on the effectiveness of APR is being collected
  - as agreed previously by the EC (at its meetings of 4 April 2012 (Item 4.3) and 2 May 2012 (Item 4.3)), the EC will be apprised on an annual basis of the ongoing implementation of PPR.

**6.3** It was agreed that the Chair would write a revised version of the list of goals to incorporate the points made in discussion.

**6.4** It was agreed that the EC should give particular consideration, in the first instance, to goals 2. and 4. above and that these would therefore feature on the agenda of the meeting of 6 February 2013. It was noted that discussion of both these and many of the other goals would be likely to be influenced by sectoral developments in the coming months. It was agreed also that the 6 February 2013 meeting would include consideration of goals 6. and 7. above.

## **SECTION C: PROGRAMME- AND MODULE-SPECIFIC ISSUES**

### **7. Validation proposal: MSc in Chronic Disease Management**

- 7.1** It was agreed that it would not be necessary to hold a meeting of the Validation Subgroup to consider this proposal in detail. It was also agreed that approval of the proposal would be subject to receipt by the EC of a revised document which would address the following:
- the proposed award should be indicated as being at one specific NFQ level (in this instance, Level 9)
  - in the context of DCU's Marks and Standards, the proposed exit award of Graduate Certificate cannot be composed of Level 8 modules



- with respect to the proposed members of the Accreditation Board, it is noted that there is a possibility that an additional, fifth, individual may be nominated; this is good practice and is encouraged; however, one individual is named as both a member of the proposed programme team and a member of the proposed Accreditation Board, and while he may be one or the other he cannot be both
- a clear justification for the inclusion of the last-named nominee to the Accreditation Board needs to be provided, along with confirmation, if appropriate, that she is not a client/commissioner of the proposed programme
- two issues with regard to wording on page 8 of the proposal require correction.

7.2 It was suggested that, outside the context of this particular validation proposal, discussions might take place, as appropriate, about the optimum distribution of taught postgraduate programmes across Schools/within Faculties.

**8. Restructuring proposals: BSc in Science Education; BSc in Physical Education with Biology; BSc in Physical Education with Mathematics**

Approved.

**9. Proposed stand-alone module: Haemovigilance in Practice**

Approved.

**10. Proposed restructuring and retitling (to ‘MA in Critical Communication Studies’): MA in Communication and Cultural Studies**

Approved.

**11. Proposed restructuring and retitling (to ‘MA in Social Media Studies’): MA in International Communication**

Approved.

**12. Proposed new pathway in International Theatre Studies on the MA in Humanities, St Patrick’s College**

Approved.

**13. Proposed amendments to the Bachelor of Religious Education programme, Mater Dei Institute of Education**

Approved.

**14. Proposed new pathway, and renaming, in respect of the MA in Applied Christian Spirituality, All Hallows College**

The proposals were noted with interest. It was agreed to defer formal approval pending confirmation of the proposed titles of the two awards and confirmation that the proposed 15-credit modules had been substantially reconfigured to differentiate them appropriately from the existing 5-credit modules.

**15. Any other business**

None.

**Date of next meeting:**

**Wednesday 6 February 2013, 2.00 p.m. in A204**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chair

Date: \_\_\_\_\_