EDUCATION COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Wednesday 6 February 2013

2.00-4.15 p.m. in A204

Present:	Professor Eithne Guilfoyle (Chair), Dr Claire Bohan, Professor John Costello, Dr John Doyle, Professor Alan Harvey, Mr Billy Kelly, Dr Lisa Looney, Ms Louise McDermott (Secretary), Professor Barry McMullin, Mr Martin Molony, Dr Ciarán Mac Murchaidh, Dr Anne Sinnott, Dr Sheelagh Wickham
Apologies:	Mr Aaron Clogher, Mr Jim Dowling, Dr Sarah Ingle
In attendance:	Ms Aisling McKenna

SECTION A: AGENDA, MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

1.   Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted subject to the inclusion of four submissions under Item 5.

2.   Minutes of the meeting of 9 January 2013

The minutes were confirmed and were signed by the Chair.

3.   Matters arising from the minutes

3.1   It was <u>noted</u> that 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' would be submitted to the 13 February 2013 meeting of Academic Council with a request for approval and, if approved, would be notified to the CAO.   (Item 3.1)

3.2   The importance of highlighting to students the existence of the Irish National Student Survey, to be made available in March/April 2013, and of encouraging them to participate in it was <u>noted</u>. Ms McKenna <u>noted</u> that she was working closely with the Students' Union in this regard and that Programme Chairs had been advised not to launch surveys of their own around the same time. In a more general sense, the risk of over-surveying students was <u>noted</u>. It was <u>agreed</u> that communication with staff and students, drawing attention to the INSS but also, as appropriate, referring to other surveys which it would be desirable for students to complete would be essential in the near term. The Chair, Ms McKenna and Mr Kelly will meet to discuss the arrangements for this communication; the advice of Ms Teresa Murray, Director of Communications and Marketing, will be sought in this regard also. It was <u>agreed</u> that Oscail students would be included in the communication but that it would be made clear to them that the INSS does not focus closely on distance education students. One standard survey – the first-year student experience survey – will, in fact, not be run this academic year on account of the INSS; however, it is hoped that the outputs of the INSS will provide information of the kind that would normally be yielded by this survey. (Item 3.2)

3.3   Ms McKenna summarised the findings of her analysis of the Leaving Certificate performance in Mathematics of DCU students taking degrees in non-quantitative areas, <u>noting</u> the definitional problems associated with such areas. It was <u>noted</u> that a number of issues bear on the findings, including the fact that the introduction of bonus points for Higher Level Mathematics is a very recent development, the significant changes made to Mathematics syllabi in schools in recent years, and the possibility that students may opt for Ordinary Level Mathematics for a variety of reasons, including but not confined to relatively weak ability in Mathematics. The importance of performance in English and Mathematics as predictors of academic success in higher education, far exceeding as it does the impact of factors such as gender or CAO preference, was <u>noted</u>. It was <u>agreed</u> that the type of analysis conducted by Ms McKenna would be done yearly, that its scope would be broadened to include performance in subjects other than Mathematics (especially English) and to cover all DCU programmes and that it would also incorporate a comparison between students who progress within their programmes and those who do not. (Item 3.3)

3.4   It was <u>noted</u> that the EC would be apprised, as appropriate, of progress/completion in respect of a range of ongoing issues. (Item 3.3)

3.5   It was <u>noted</u> that recommendations in respect of requests from external agencies to run DCU-awarded programmes would be submitted for the consideration of the EC at its meeting of 3 April 2013. (Item 3.4)

3.6 It was <u>noted</u> that the recommendations of the working group on HEA First Destinations information would be made to the EC at its meeting of 6 March 2013. (Item 3.6)

3.7 It was <u>noted</u>, 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 3.8)

3.8 The policy on ethical review of undergraduate research which had been developed by the Research Ethics Committee was <u>noted</u>. It was suggested that undergraduate students should actively be discouraged from undertaking projects needing ethical approval; however, an alternative perspective was also articulated on the basis that it is potentially helpful for undergraduate students to become familiar with the concepts and processes associated with such approval. It was also suggested that, to minimise workload in Schools, ethical approval could be sought, where necessary, for an outline assignment given to an entire class rather than having to be sought in respect of each student individually. It was <u>noted</u> that the distinction between high-risk and relatively routine projects applies not only to undergraduate research but to research at all levels. It was <u>agreed</u> to convey the outcome of the discussion to the Chair of the REC, for information. (Item 3.9)

3.9 It was <u>noted</u> that amendments would shortly be made to the withdrawal form (*R27 – Notification of Withdrawal from a Course*) with a view to eliciting more nuanced information than is available at present about students' reasons for withdrawing from the University. (Item 3.10)

3.10 With respect to the setting up of an online repository of reports from the Institutional Research and Analysis Office, it was <u>noted</u> that there were no technical obstacles but that further discussion was required, and would be conducted, about access rights given the sensitive nature of some of the data. (Item 3.12)

3.11 It was <u>noted</u> that the reworded proposal on joint research supervision and awards was under consideration by the Senior Management Group and would subsequently be considered again by the EC. (Item 3.14)

3.12 It was <u>noted</u> 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 3.15)

3.13 With respect to the proposed 3U Partnership Master of Engineering programme in Healthcare Technology, it was <u>noted</u> that Dr Noel Murphy, School of Electronic Engineering, was currently co-ordinating the programme team and that the meeting of the Accreditation Board would take place on 22 February 2013. It is possible that the EC will be asked to approve an additional external expert for the Board on an electronic basis in the near future. (Item 3.16)

3.14 It was <u>noted</u> that it might prove helpful to engage external expertise and/or apply learning analytics as a tool for measuring progress in respect of the development of the Graduate Attributes. (Item 4.3)

3.15 The revised validation proposal in respect of the proposed MSc in Chronic Disease Management was <u>approved</u>.[1] (Item 7)

3.16 With respect to the proposal to restructure and retitle the MA in Applied Christian Spirituality offered in All Hallows College (so as to have two pathways: MA in Christian Spirituality (Texts and Themes) and MA in Christian Spirituality (Applied)), it was <u>noted</u> that the explanatory memorandum had been provided by the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences and that the proposal had been approved electronically by the Education Committee on 22 January 2013. (Item 14)

SECTION B: STRATEGIC MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION

4. EC goals 2013

The final list of goals was <u>noted</u>.

4.1 DCU Online

The proposed terms of reference of the DCU Online Project Group were <u>approved</u> subject to the deletion of the first item on the list as being unnecessary, the reversal of the order of the second and third items to facilitate clarity, and the rewording of the third item to include reference to the improvement of the student learning experience through blended and online learning. The proposed membership was <u>approved</u> subject to the inclusion of Faculty/School/Unit affiliation in the case of each member as well as details about the length of term of office.

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[1] A query subsequently arose in respect of this revised proposal. The EC meeting of 6 March 2013 will consider it again.

It was <u>noted</u> that nominations to the membership would shortly be made by Dublin City University Business School and the Faculty of Science and Health. It was <u>noted</u> that one responsibility of the Group would be to identify and distinguish between initiatives that could be undertaken on the authority of the Group itself and initiatives that required approval at a higher level in the University.

4.2   Flexibility of access and provision

4.2.1   It was <u>noted</u> that the Academic Framework for Innovation initiative had been completed along a variety of dimensions, and the Chair, on behalf of the EC, expressed appreciation to all who had worked to make this possible. It was <u>agreed</u>, however, that a major problem with respect to flexibility of progression remained in that it was not amenable to being provided by the current management information system for student data.

4.2.2   A discussion took place on the merits and demerits of permitting students to progress while carrying failed modules (it was <u>noted</u> that, normally for pedagogical reasons, this facility is unavailable in many programmes). It was <u>agreed</u> that the provision of an IT system to enhance flexibility of progression, as noted at 4.2.1 above, would among many other likely advantages enable tracking and management of prerequisite modules, thereby potentially alleviating some of the problems associated with carrying modules. It was <u>noted</u> that the rewriting of Marks and Standards which had led to the version currently in use had been undertaken in the expectation that an IT system which would facilitate flexibility of progression would be available.

4.2.3   It was <u>agreed</u> that the Chair would write a report for the Senior Management Group which would note the completion of a number of AFI objectives (see Item 4.2.1 above) and highlight the fact that, to complete the remainder, especially those relating to flexibility of provision, a significant upgrading of the University management information system would be required. It was <u>noted</u> that the discussions about upgrading the system would need to encompass a number of issues including Coursebuilder, the aims of DCU Online and the information system requirements with respect to research students. With respect to the last-named issue, Dr Looney undertook to provide the Chair with the feedback she had received from Faculties about the proposals for an information system for research students. Dr Wickham undertook to provide the Chair with the documentation provided to the AFI Steering Group which outlined the need for an enhanced MIS system.

4.3   **Business Intelligence**

It was <u>noted</u> that developments with respect to this issue were being monitored.

4.4   **Generation 21 and e-portfolios**

4.4.1   Dr Bohan reported on developments with respect to e-portfolios. Work is in progress to develop a Google-based portfolio system which will encompass a career development module and a tool to facilitate demonstration of skills and activities relating to the Graduate Attributes. Training it its use will be provided for staff and students by means of YouTube videos being developed in the Learning Innovation Unit. The Students' Union will identify a group of students who will pilot the use of the system. The intention is to have it available to all who wish to use it from September 2013 (in this connection, it was <u>noted</u> that Student Support and Development is to prepare a QuID-funded booklet on developing the Graduate Attributes for inclusion in first-year information packs in September 2013).

4.4.2   A discussion took place on the optimum means of making students aware of the value of e-portfolios and encouraging them to use them. It was <u>agreed</u> that it would be helpful to make the use of e-portfolios mandatory in the Uaneen module, though not with respect to students who are currently undertaking this module (in this connection, it was <u>noted</u> that it was intended to make the Uaneen module available to students from Year 1, rather than only in the final year of undergraduate study as is currently the case). The potential to integrate the use of e-portfolios with INTRA placements was <u>noted</u>, as was the importance of ensuring flexibility in its use for students generally (especially in view of the wide variety of personal and professional development modules available across the University) and the need to ensure a feedback mechanism with respect to the system currently under development. It was <u>noted</u> that a pilot e-portfolio system is currently under way in the School of Physical Sciences.

4.4.3   The Chair thanked Dr Bohan for her work towards developing e-portfolios.

4.5   **Updates on other goals**

4.5.1   Discussions with respect to the Academic Calendar are under way in the Senior Management Group and Executive.

4.5.2   The policy on assessment is under development and will be available by the end of April 2013.

4.5.3   The Semester 2 QuEST exercise will be undertaken.

4.5.4   The feedback from the survey and focus group with respect to the effectiveness of Annual Programme Review is being collated by the Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning/Education and will be available by April 2013.

SECTION C:PROGRAMME- AND MODULE-SPECIFIC ISSUES

No items.

5.   Any other business

5.1   It was <u>noted</u>, following discussion about proposals relating to collaboration by Dublin City University Business School and the Faculty of Engineering and Computing with overseas institutions (though the discussion could apply to any Faculty) that some further clarity was required about the role of the EC in the approval processes with respect to external institutions. It was <u>agreed</u> that Dr Looney and Ms McDermott would meet to discuss matters of relevance to this issue. Dr Mac Murchaidh undertook to make a relevant document from St Patrick's College available to Dr Looney.   It was <u>agreed</u> that the Chair would raise the issue with Senior Management and Executive and that, in parallel, the proposals from DCUBS and FEC could be submitted to Executive.

5.2   It was <u>noted</u> that the draft Teaching and Learning policy would be made available to the EC for consideration at its meeting of 6 March 2013.

5.3   It was <u>agreed</u> to include as a standing item on the EC agenda an update on activities undertaken within the IUA.

5.4   It was <u>noted</u> that Dr Lewis Purser of the IUA is conducting an exercise to collate a range of quantitative data in respect of Engineering degree programmes nationally.

Date of next meeting:

Wednesday 6 March 2013, 2.00 p.m. in A204

Signed: _____   Date: _____
           Chair