EDUCATION COMMITTEE

**MINUTES**

Wednesday 31 March 2021

2.00 p.m. – 4.00 p.m. via Zoom

**Present:** Dr Sarahjane Belton, Dr Claire Bohan, Professor Mark Brown, Professor Michelle Butler, Dr Brian Corcoran, Professor Derek Hand, Ms Margaret Irwin-Bannon (Secretary), Mr Billy Kelly (Chair), Professor Anne Looney, Dr Ken McDonagh, Ms Aisling McKenna, Ms Pauline Mooney, Professor Colm O’Gorman, Professor Joseph Stokes, Mr Lucien Waugh-Daly and Dr Blanaid White

**Apologies:** Professor Lisa Looney and Professor Greg Hughes

**In attendance: Item 7:** Dr Emma Coyle. Prof Paul Cahill, Dr Karsten Fleischer, Dr Greg Foley, Prof Silvia Giordani, Dr Jean-Paul Mosnier, Assoc Prof Brien Nolan, Dr Kieran Nolan, Dr Niamh O’Sullivan and Dr Monica Ward

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

1. **Adoption of the agenda**

The agenda as circulated was adopted.

1. **Minutes of the meeting of Education Committee, 10 March 2021**

The minutes of 10 March 2021 were approved and it was noted the final version would be formally signed at a later date.

1. **Matters arising from the minutes of 10 March 2021**
   1. It was noted that the proposed paper on Joint, Double and Dual Awards would be submitted for the consideration of Education Committee at its April 2021 meeting (Item 3.1).
   2. It was noted that the Deputy Registrar/Dean of Teaching and Learning had an initial meeting with the Head of the Careers Service with respect to employability statements. The item is scheduled for consideration by Education Committee at its May 2021 meeting (Item 3.2).
   3. It was noted that the Chair and Director of Student Support and Development had met to discuss widening participation, and further discussions are ongoing (Item 3.3).
   4. It was noted that work is ongoing on a process by which Education Committee would maintain oversight of its strategic commitments and activities. The item is scheduled to be considered by Education Committee at its May 2021 meeting (Item 3.4).
   5. It was noted that work on guidance documentation (to include additional contextual information on the vision for the DCU Futures programmes) for the DCU Futures Accreditation Boards is ongoing (Item 3.6).
   6. It was noted that the decision by Education Committee at its meeting of 31 March 2021 to apply the revised FE entry requirements to entry September 2021 may not be possible to implement. The Chair noted that it was intended to hold discussions with the Central Applications Office in this regard (3.7).
   7. It was noted that actions with respect to Further Education and Widening Participation are ongoing (Item 4).
   8. It was noted that the Deputy Registrar/Dean of Teaching and Learning had circulated a document to programme chairs with respect to student assessment workloads and schedules and had asked programme chairs to give it due consideration in the context of the review of academic structures (Item 5).
   9. It was noted that the ‘Curriculum Approval and Management and Related Quality Assurance—Future Model’ document had been referred to the Academic Council meeting of 7 April 2021 (Item 6).
2. **Minutes of Education Committee Standing Committee, 16 March 2021**

The minutes of 16 March 2021 were approved and it was noted the final version would be formally signed at a later date.

**SECTION B: STRATEGIC MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION/NOTING**

Due to the volume of submissions in Section C, there were no items for consideration in Section B.

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

1. **Request to extend COVID-19 student mobility provisions on Bachelor of Business Studies International (INTB)and Bachelor of Business Studies Exchange (BSE) programmes to 2021-2022**

DCU Business School requested approval for the continuation of the previously approved student mobility provisions on the Business Studies International (INTB) and Bachelor of Business Studies Exchange (BSE) programmes for an additional year. These provisions allow for both a 180 credit alternative version of INTB and the reversal of years three and four on the four-year version of INTB and BSE, to allow student to complete their final year modules in

advance of undertaking a year abroad. The extension was requested to facilitate situations where students may be unable to travel due to Covid-19 restrictions.

The request was approved for the 2021-2022 academic year.

1. **Springboard award: Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences: Graduate Certificate in Charity Management and Governance**

The programme was approved subject to the following corrections:

* To amend section 1 of the documentation to reflect a ‘Special Purpose’ rather than ‘Minor Award’ and amend the section ‘what is being proposed’ i.e. delete ‘linked to the existing MSc in Public Policy’.

The following was noted in the discussion on the programme:

* The programme was very timely as this was a significant growth area
* There could be significant interest from charity trustees and members of boards of charities, given their legal responsibilities as board members. This offering would also link well with DCU’s age friendly university initiative.
* It was suggested, given the profile of those involved in this sector, that they may not want to commit to a one-year 30 credit graduate certificate (it was acknowledged that for Springboard this is a requirement) but the offering of some of the modules as micro-credentials might also suit a certain cohort
* It was noted that colleagues in Open Education had not been consulted about the offering of the Career Transitions and Success module, but it was clarified that they are happy to offer the module to this cohort.

1. **Progress Updates: HCI Pillar 3 funded existing programmes with new specialisms**

Programme proposers and Faculty representatives attended the meeting (as recorded above) for the discussion of the proposed programmes.

The Chair outlined to each programme team in turn that he expected to see that plans for the programme would develop over both the shorter and longer term and he acknowledged that there is an expectation that the programme would change and adopt as the roll-out of the programme progresses. He outlined that most of the programmes being developed are logical developments of existing programmes and the innovation DCU hopes to achieve in the development of these programmes would be reflected in the following programme characteristics:

1. Deep engagement with industry
2. Innovative in the way DCU students would learn, and innovative in that the DCU Futures project is a pilot and programme proposers can experiment and assess as the programme progresses what may and may not work.

The following summarises the items discussed/topics raised. It was agreed that detailed notes would be provided to the individual programme proposers.

* 1. ***BSc in Chemistry with Artificial Intelligence***

The Chair noted that the additional documentation circulated in advance of Education Committee was very helpful in assessing progress from the initial update submitted.

Following a presentation by Dr Emma Coyle, programme proposer, the Chair congratulated the team on the detailed and clear presentation, and on the ambition shown in the updated documentation.

The following items were raised for further consideration/discussion:

* To consider collaboration with relevant DCU research centres
* The 50% passing mark for the first year mathematics module, MS146 on the DCU Futures programmes. It was noted that there may be some IT technical issues in implementing the changes to maths assessment, and it would be flagged in programme regulations. The system issues were also being explored.
* The Director of Student Support and Development commended the module CS150 and noted how positive it was to see elements such as emotional intelligence and mental health

elements within a chemistry module. She offered the expertise of staff in her unit to support the development of these elements.

* It was queried whether a module on transversal skills in second year was the correct approach, in that it was expected that transversal skills would be integrated throughout the programme
* The provision of choice to students in fourth year was queried. The programme proposer noted that the aim in providing choice would be to allow students to personalise their degree and to ensure that all specialisations across the School are embedded with the AI Stream.
  1. ***BSc in Bioprocessing***

The following items were raised for further consideration/discussion:

* The difference between this programme and the existing BSc in Biotechnology:

The programme proposer outlined that the Bioprocessing degree would change the emphasis of the Biotechnology programme. The aim would be to enhance graduate skills in areas such as data analysis, data acquisition and modelling automation and to expand their employability not just in Biopharma but also across the food and beverage sectors.

* In terms of student intake, it was clarified that the challenge would be converting students to progress to Bioprocessing in second year.
* The opportunity for collaboration with the Faculty of Engineering and Computing for challenge-based learning was noted.
* Planned touch-points with industry in this programme: The programme proposer indicated that as yet he had not yet had an opportunity to work on this aspect of DCU Futures however he was due to meet with Alltech over the coming weeks. He also indicated that it was planned to set up an Advisory Panel within the School.
* The blend of virtual labs and the hands-on laboratory experience: The programme proposer indicated how the experience over the last year had been enlightening with respect to the adaptations to Covid-19 restrictions. He found that fewer in-person laboratories coupled with well-designed virtual labs can improve the learning experience.

With respect to a comment made by the programme proposer about the need for training in Challenged-based Learning the Chair noted that funding had recently been secured to enable the provision of training.

***7.3 BSc in Physics with Data Analytics***

The programme proposer provided a brief outline of the intention of the programme and its differentiation from the other three physics programme pillars. The School of Physical Sciences has been steadily developing the physics programmes so that physicists can be employed outside of the traditional settings and the proposed programme will be an augmentation of the existing physics programmes. He indicated that the intention of this project is to look at new developments on the horizon, particularly machine learning and quantum computing and work on how the programme team can integrate these with existing core physics teaching so they can recruit students who would have an interest in physics, but who do not yet see the alternative employment opportunities.

He indicated that they have identified the skill set in terms of increasing computational integration. They also intended to change the types of assessment and to integrate the changes into all of their modules. He noted they would have to revise a lot of the existing laboratory modules and develop completely new modules for machine learning which will be co-delivered with industry. He noted in this context that he has commenced his engagement with Intel.

The following items were raised for further consideration/discussion:

* Areas of recruitment for physics graduates**:** In making a distinction in terms of graduates from this programme and others, the programme proposer clarified that the graduates from Physics with Data Analytics would bring added value to the workplace not only in their understanding of a core process but in being able to analyse its outputs, for example with automated predictive codes --the graduate will not only get the number from the computer but will be able to understand and quantify how reliable that number is and how it can be applied across the board. He indicated that part of the programme will involve joint challenge-based assessment with business and chemistry students.
* Consideration of the target audience for student intake**:** The programme proposer was asked, in the context of DCU’s strategy of widening participation to give future consideration to establishing an introductory programme in partnership with a Further Education institution to further enhance student intake. The programme proposer noted that the common entry structure addressed some of the issues of intake in bringing potential students up to speed. The Head of School added that the general entry pathway takes in students taking physics *ab initio* and provides additional assistance with maths and computing. He felt that the broadening of the topics in itself within this programme would be a factor of growth for Physics.
* Intra placement specific to the programme:The programme proposer noted that he had had initial discussions with Intel and they had discussed first year guest lectures and site visits. He noted that when engaging with Intel he was not only looking at the semi-conductor industry side, but also at the software for machine learning, with which Intel is also engaged. He anticipated that it would provide both sets of opportunities for Intra. He also indicated that they are developing relationships with Accenture.
* Commonality of approach with industry partners**:** It was noted that many of the programmes are engaged with the same companies and there needed to be a commonality of approach to these industry partners

In the discussion which followed on the programmes as presented, the following were noted:

* The ethos of DCU Futures was clearly visible in the revised plans for the BSc in Chemistry with Artificial Intelligence as circulated in advance of Education Committee, but was not as evident in the BSc in Bioprocessing and the BSc in Physics with Data Analytics in their original documentation.
* It was agreed that the feedback to programme proposers should indicate that the ideas and plans discussed with Education Committee should be included in the documentation submitted for the final approval of the programmes. It was noted that there appears to be a disconnect between the programme plans as discussed, and the documentation.
* It was suggested that it might be useful if the BSc in Chemistry with Artificial Intelligence documentation could be shared with Faculty colleagues on other DCU Futures development teams.

1. **Any other business**

There were no items of business.

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

**Date of next meeting**:

Wednesday, 28 April 2021

at 2.00 pm via Zoom