

**MEETING OF HEADS**  
**Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2015**

**PRESENT:** Mr Steve Aiken, Dr Patrick Brereton, Prof Mark Browne, Mr Kenneth Brown, Ms Marian Burns, Mr Jim Dowling (Chair), Prof Barbara Flood, Dr Sarah Ingle, Prof Dorothy Kenny, Prof Brian Mac Craith, Dr Ciaran MacMurcaidh, Ms Barbara McConalogue, Prof Colette McDonagh, Mr Ciaran McGivern, Ms Phylomena McMorrow, Prof Barry McMullin, Prof Anne Mathews, Dr Rory O'Connor, Dr Sandra O'Neill, Dr Declan Raftery, Dr Colm O'Reilly, Ms Una Redmond, Prof Maria Slowey, Dr Joseph Stokes, Ms Danielle Montgomery (recording).

**APOLOGIES:** Dr Claire Bohan, Ms Alison Byrne, Prof John Carroll, Prof John Costello, Dr John Doyle, Mr Seamus Fox, Prof Eithne Guilfoyle, Mr Trevor Holmes, Mr William Kelly, Prof Patrick McNally, Ms Sylvia Schroeder, Dr Anne Sinnott.

**In Attendance:** Dr Mike Reid, Finance (for item 6)

Welcome and apologies. The Chair welcomed Heads and Deans to the first meeting of 2015, in particular Mr Steve Aiken (DCU Educational Trust) and newly appointed Heads of School, Prof Anne Mathews (School of Nursing) and Dr Sandra O'Neill (School of Biotechnology) all of whom were attending their first meeting. The Chair also took the opportunity to thank outgoing Heads, Dr Gerry Moore and Dr Ciarán Fagan for their contributions to these meetings.

**1. Minutes of Heads' meeting 20<sup>th</sup> November 2014.**

The minutes were approved. It was noted that the December 2014 meeting did not take place as there were no pressing agenda items.

**2. Minutes of Heads' meeting of 20<sup>th</sup> November 2014 – approval for posting on web**

The minutes were approved for posting on the web.

**3. Executive minutes of 11<sup>th</sup> November, 25<sup>th</sup> November and 9<sup>th</sup> December.**

Noted.

**4. Matters Arising**

None.

**5. President's Report**

**5.1 DCU Incorporation Programme**

The President gave Heads an overview of the current status of the DCU Incorporation Programme. He said that Incorporation Board continues to meet on a fortnightly basis and the project is proceeding now at pace. There are some 150 individuals from across the four institutions working directly on the Programme as well as those involved in consultations. The project is on target to achieve its main 2015 goal, which is the seamless registration of St Patrick's and Mater Dei first year undergraduate students and first year research students as DCU students. By 2016, all students from all four institutions will register as DCU students. The CAO process is being worked on at the moment and although it is a very complex exercise, it is proceeding well.

## **5.2 Faculty of Education and New Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences**

Agreement on structures for both the new Faculty of Education (Institute of Education) and the enhanced Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences has almost been finalised at Incorporation Board level. This is a significant milestone achievement particularly from an academic perspective.

## **5.3 Capital Infrastructure**

The Chief Operations Officer and his colleagues are working hard on the capital infrastructure needed to accommodate the new DCU. It was also noted that the work on the new library building in St Patrick's College, Drumcondra is now complete and this impressive structure will cater for the increased traffic of students and staff between the Glasnevin and Drumcondra campuses.

## **5.4 Communications**

The President said that clear all staff communications continues to be a priority of the Incorporation Board and he commended the Director of HR and Chair for their work regarding communications workstream. Staff have just received an electronic Incorporation update and the President said that he is cognisant of the fact that it is important that all viewpoints are taken on board during the operation.

## **5.5 Institute of Guidance Counsellors Ireland/Student Recruitment**

The President said that he had just come from a meeting with the Institute of Guidance Counsellors of Ireland and announced that DCU will sponsor their conference this year. He said that the Institute are very positive about the new DCU offerings and will be well placed to promote DCU in their respective schools. The President also said that although student numbers are rising, the entire area of student recruitment has become increasingly competitive in Ireland. This is being addressed by DCU with a number of initiatives, such as the one just mentioned. Also, a more focused approach to postgraduate recruitment will be taken.

## **5.6 Internationalisation and China**

The President and the Vice President for External Affairs (VPEA) had attended a meeting at the Department of Education and Science regarding internationalisation and China. Ireland has been designated as the 'Country of Honour 2015' for education by China. A large Chinese delegation will be visiting Ireland, and this will be a very positive opportunity for DCU. The VPEA is working closely on this project.

## **5.7 Compact Agreement**

The President referred to the Compact that DCU had signed with the HEA containing DCU's future objectives. A meeting with the HEA regarding same is due to take place on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> January. This will be a significant meeting in terms of strategic dialogue and will examine the broader issue of performance measuring. However, great confidence has been expressed in what has been delivered by DCU to date.

## **5.8 Events**

The President asked Heads to take note of some important, upcoming events the first of which is the President's Research Awards Day 2015 which will take place on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> January and two awards will be made in recognition of research excellence.

On 7<sup>th</sup> February, a TEDx event will take place in the Helix. A range of speakers, mostly from DCU, will present under the umbrella topic, 'Changing Lives, Challenging Perceptions'.

On 26<sup>th</sup> February, honorary doctorates will be presented to Brian Cody, Pearse Lyons and Sr Margaret MacCurtain at a 1pm ceremony in the Helix.

On 13<sup>th</sup> April, Leymah Gbowee will give a Nobel Laureate lecture in the Helix. Ms Gebowee is a peace ambassador and was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for her work in the area of conflict resolution in Liberia. She is also noted for her contribution to women in leadership.

### **5.9 Times Higher Education Conference at DCU**

The President said that he was very pleased to announce that *Times HE* will hold their Global Summit for Young Universities in DCU in April. It is only the second such conference of its kind and the DCU brand will feature strongly on all of the literature and coverage.

### **5.10 DCU Educational Trust and DCU Alumni**

It was noted that the DCU Educational Trust will be enhancing its communication with Heads and Deans via regular updates. The President said that the Educational Trust had recently had a number of significant successes, which will be made public shortly. One of these relates to the funding of a new student centre. Alumni Relations have also undergone a restructuring and the project leader, Mr Pdraig McKeon, will be making a public announcement shortly regarding a range of new initiatives.

### **6. Presentation on DCU Procurement, Dr Mike Reid, Finance**

Dr Reid attended Heads to give an presentation on DCU procurement. He said that a review of the procurement process was recently conducted across the University and some of the feedback received was quite negative. However, Dr Reid and his colleagues have sought to improve the procurement process overall with a number of initiatives designed to implement best practice. Some of these are:

- Establishing a working partnership with clear processes and controls
- Setting out the strategic procurement strategy clearly for all
- Establishing key supplier alliances
- Managing compliance and risk effectively
- Gathering information on a timely basis

It was noted that public sector procurement process is regulated by the Office of Government Procurement. EU law also informs Ireland's regulations and any act that DCU carries out is closely scrutinised by the Comptroller and Auditor General and the findings sent to the Public Accounts Committee.

Dr Reid stressed that he and his colleagues are on hand to assist staff with any queries they may have and that they are happy to work with Schools, Faculties and Units to advise on what is both permissible and possible.

The Chair thanked Dr Reid for his presentation. The President commended Dr Reid and his Procurement colleagues for the work done to date and positive outcomes achieved, which are to the benefit of all in DCU.

### **7. National Quality Assurance Developments – Dr Sarah Ingle, Director of Quality**

Dr Sarah Ingle provided Heads an overview of recent national quality assurance developments in particular, in relation to the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 and items relating to Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). A one page summary was made available in hard copy at the meeting outlining same. Dr Ingle said that she would be happy to meet with individuals or groups who would like to discuss the relevant issues in more detail.

Dr Ingle advised that many of the requirements of the QQAI Act 2012 will have implications for on-going quality assurance at DCU, particularly in relation to Linked Provider responsibilities. Quality Assurance guidelines are currently being developed by QQI and it is expected that DCU will have to revise its quality structure somewhat to meet these guidelines. Once the DCU structures have been approved by QQI, the university will be eligible to apply for the International Education Mark (IEM), demonstrating DCU's continuing capacity and competence to deliver a high quality student experience to international students.

The University is obliged to provide an Annual Institutional Quality report (AIQR) which informs the Annual Institutional Dialogue (AID). The AIQR provides detailed information regarding DCU's quality review and accreditation activities, indicating to QQI that all processes meet and exceed national standards.

Linked Provider and other collaborative arrangements are key factors in the sectoral and national quality assurance environment and QQI is monitoring the development of related policies with collaborating partners. Quality assurance in relation to the Incorporation Programme is also, concurrently, being carefully considered by DCU.

Revisions have recently been made to the ESG – Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area - which will be formally approved in May 2015. There is now a more explicit focus on teaching and learning.

It was noted that there has been some confusion in the sector due to a lack of a clear line of responsibility for quality matters between the HEA and QQI. Following the implementation of the recently developed MOU, these and other matters should become clearer in due course and will be addressed in DCU's AID with QQI.

The President thanked Dr Ingle for navigating and contextualizing all of these issues for DCU.

## **8. Any Other Business**

### **8.1 Undergraduate Awards**

The Chair reminded Heads that the 2015 Undergraduate Awards are now open for submissions. Last year, students from five continents and 29 different countries participated and gathered in Dublin for three days. Also, last year, DCU's submissions increased threefold and DCU had one winner and two students were highly commended for their work. Faculties and schools are asked to encourage students to submit a piece of work, which may be an essay or a project. As agreed last year, recent graduates will be allowed submit a project completed in their final year. Mr Ross Munnely from Student Support and Development will be working with the student body to promote the awards, which have strong branding and are a very positive achievement on a student's CV.

**Next Meeting: 19<sup>th</sup> February 2014**