

ACADEMIC COUNCIL**MINUTES****4 October 2017****2.00 – 3.00 p.m.****C104, DCU Glasnevin Campus****PRESENT:**

F. Blin
C. Bohan
M. Brown
J. Bruen
J. Brunton
J. Bruton
M. Butler
P.J. Byrne
E. Conway
B. Corcoran
O. Farrell
M. Fitzpatrick
G. French
C. Furlong
E. Guilfoyle
C. Gurrin
S. Hegarty
C. Holland

M. Irwin-Bannon (Secretary)
A. Kearns
J. Kelly
S. Kelly
P. Landais
A. Looney
L. Looney
B. MacCraith (Chair)
A. Matthews
K. McDonagh
E. McGlynn
C. McGonagle
D. McKeon
P. McMorrow
E. McNulty
P. Mooney
A. Morrin
G. Murphy

F. Murphy
B. Ní Áingléis
D. Nic Mhathúna
B. Nolan
M. O'Brien
J. Rami
E. Regan
R. Sadleir
A. Simon
G. Sinclair
J. Stokes
M.R. Sweeney
P. Tiernan
J. Travers
P. Willis
E. Williams Doran
P. Young

APOLOGIES:

D. Collings
E. Costello
S. Cullen
D. Curran
P. Davis
N. Dunne

G. Hughes
B. Kelly
Q. Liu
J. Lovatt
M. McAdam
S. McGovern

N. Moyna
R. O'Connor
E. O'Riordan
B. Power
M. Roantree
A. Sinnott

B. Flood
O. Forde

C. McHugh
C. McMullan

A. Stevenson

IN ATTENDANCE:

Ms Karen Johnston (item 6)
Ms Annabella Stover (item 7)

1. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted, subject to brief discussion of items 8 and 14.3 and one item of information under AOB.

A: Minutes and related issues

2. Minutes of the meeting of Academic Council of 19 June 2017

Approved

3. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

4. Minutes of the meetings of the Graduate Research Studies Board of 18 May 2017 and 22 June 2017

Approved

B. Policy and strategy issues

5. President's report (oral report)

5.1 With respect to activity in the Higher Education sector, the President reported that updates on the following were awaited:

- Cassells Report *'Investing in National Ambition – A Strategy for Funding Higher Education'*
- A new Funding Allocation Model
- National Performance Framework

5.2 With regard to Capital Development the President noted that DCU has been short listed for a public/private partnership which hopes to develop the vacant site near the front entrance to DCU. In addition it is anticipated that the Government will announce a Capital Development programme shortly.

5.3 The President noted the recent launch of the University Strategic Plan 2017-2022, *Talent, Discovery and Transformation*, and thanked all those who attended the event in such great numbers. He outlined that the nine strategic goals at the heart of the strategic plan are each assigned to a member of senior management who will lead on his/her goal and prepare a prioritised implementation plan on an annual basis

In parallel with the implementation of the nine strategic goals, the constituent strategies will be developed in the following thematic areas, by the end of February 2018:

- Teaching and Learning
- Research and Innovation
- Engagement
- Internationalisation
- Student Experience

In addition, it was noted that each Faculty and major unit will develop a strategic plan in line with the university strategic plan over the coming months.

5.4 The President announced that 3,700 new undergraduate students registered for the 2017-2018 academic year. It was a major undertaking to admit so many students and he expressed his thanks to all those who ensured that the process ran smoothly. It was noted too that a record number of online students had registered in 2017-2018 (400).

5.5 The President noted the very successful honorary conferring ceremony which took place on 12 September 2017. He noted too the upcoming conferring of honorary degrees on Dr Martin Naughton, KBE, Sr. Stanislaus Kennedy and President Bill Clinton scheduled to take place on 17 October 2017.

6. Presentation on Examination Results 2016-2017, Performance in first year versus CAO Attainment (2013-2017), Ms Karen Johnston

Ms Karen Johnston presented on the examination performance of first year students and related their first year university performance to their CAO attainment on entry to DCU. The presentation also focused on attainment in Mathematics and student performance in general.

The following summarises the findings from the analysis of the results:

- There is some correlation between CAO points attained and precision marks obtained in first year, however CAO attainment is not a strong predictor of the likelihood of failing in first year
- Prior mathematics attainment is not a strong predictor of first year performance however, this finding can be different, depending on the discipline involved
- Overall there is a narrowing in the spread of results in all years

In the discussion which followed the following questions and suggestions were made:

- That DCU would review a longer time series to assess the impact of the new Mathematics curriculum
- That DCU would review, for a second time, attainment in English, particularly the correlation to specific disciplines

The President noted that bonus points for honours mathematics will be an item for discussion over the coming months and that feedback in this regard would be sought from colleagues. The issues to be considered are: whether or not maths bonus points should be targeted, i.e. for those who want to study in the STEM areas; and should bonus points for maths be used for points optimisation.

It was noted in the discussion that bonus points for mathematics has had some very positive effects e.g. female students are more actively pursuing honours mathematics and, Engineering is gaining a wider pool of students with honours maths.

It was noted too that the introduction of the bonus points has also been hugely successful in achieving its aims. From the figures to date it appears that the National Council for Curriculum Assessment (NCCA) target of 30% of Leaving Certificate students pursuing honours mathematics in 2020 will be achieved (27% in 2014 and 2015).

Some concerns were noted with respect to the tightening of results bands in general.

It was agreed that consideration of the effectiveness/impact of honours mathematics bonus points would be placed on the agenda of a future Academic Council meeting.

7. Presentation on Discover DCU, Ms Annabella Stover

Ms Annabella Stover presented on Discover DCU, a programme of eight interactive courses designed to assist new students settle into university life. The programme was developed due to concerns about transition and retention of first year students. Running on a pilot basis in 2017-2018, Discover DCU, which is fully integrated with Loop, brings together existing and newly developed supports on a centralised platform. It aims to assist students to transition into third level, and to be an accessible and flexible platform. Academic Council was requested to: engage with the content of the programme and provide feedback for its improvement; encourage students to engage with the courses and encourage colleagues to integrate elements of the courses into modules on Loop.

The President thanked Ms K. Johnson and Ms A. Stover for their interesting and informative presentations.

C. Items for formal approval/noting

8. Register of Academic Council members 2017/8

Approved, it was noted that some additional amendments to the register of Academic Council members remained to be completed.

9. Register of members of the Education Committee, the University Standards Committee, the Graduate Research Studies Board, Standing Committee of GRSB to consider Appeals, the Examination Appeals Board

Approved

10. Updated Terms of Reference 2017/2018: Academic Council and subcommittees

Approved

11. Update on committee activities 2016/2017

Noted

12. Items from recent subcommittees of Academic Council

Approved

13. DCU Academic and Plagiarism Policy-(minor amendment for noting)

Noted

14. Reports from Autumn 2017 examinations, Progression and Award Board**14.1 Examination Report: Royal Irish Academy of Music**

Approved

14.2 Examination Report: Ballyfermot College of Further Education

Approved

14.3 Examination Report: DCU

Approved

It was noted that a Progression and Award Board is due to take place on 6 October 2017 and permission was sought from Council for the results to be approved by Chair's Action. This was agreed.

15. Report from Autumn 2017 Faculty Awards Boards for Research Degrees

Approved

16. Research students award report, Dundalk Institute of Technology

Approved

17. Report on completion of Accreditation process 2016-2017

Approved

18. Validation recommendation: MSc in Climate Change: Politics, Media and Society

Approved

19. Any other business

The President informed Council that the term of office of the Academic Council nominee to Education Committee was coming to an end and a call would issue shortly for an Academic Council nominee to serve on Education Committee for a 3-year term. The President thanked Dr Jennifer Bruen for her valued contribution to Education Committee.

Signed: _____

Date _____

Date of next meeting:

6 December 2017

2:00 pm in B103

DCU, St Patrick's Campus