

**ACADEMIC COUNCIL
MINUTES**

6 February 2019

2.00 p.m. – 3.10 p.m.

AG01, DCU Glasnevin Campus

PRESENT:

F. Blin	G. Jones	E. McNulty
J. Bruen	A. Kearns	P. Mooney
M. Butler	A. Kellett	E. Morgenroth
C. Commons	B. Kelly	J-P Mosnier
M. Crane	E. Kennedy	R. Murphy
E. Cunningham	L. Looney	F. Murphy
J. Doyle	J. Lovatt	B. Ní Áingléis
M. Farrelly	B. MacCraith (Chair)	D. Nic Mhathúna
L. Fitzsimons	C. MacMurchaidh	R. O'Connor
R. Gillanders	B. McConalogue	A. Parle-McDermott
E. Guilfoyle	E. McDonald	J. Rami
C. Gurrin	G. McGuinness	E. Regan
D. Hand	A. McKenna	P. Sharkey-Scott
S. Hegarty	D. McKeon	A Stalcup
M. Helfert	J. McManis	J. Stokes
G. Hughes	I. McMenamin	P. Tiernan
M. Irwin-Bannon (Secretary)	P. McMorrow	B. White

APOLOGIES:

S. J. Belton	M. Fitzpatrick	C. Loscher
C. Bohan	B. Flood	M. McAdam
J. Brunton	C. Furlong	A. McAuley
J. Bruton	L. Gallagher	B. Nolan
B. Corcoran	A Healy	N. O'Sullivan
E. Costello	C. Holland	M. Roantree
S. Cullen	J. Kelly	D. Robbins
D. Curran	S. Kelly	A. Simon
N. Dunne	P. Landais	J. Travers
K. Fay	A. Looney	

IN ATTENDANCE: Ms Karen Johnston, Item 9

1. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted.

A. Minutes and related issues

2. Minutes of the meeting of Academic Council of 5 December 2018

Approved

3. Matters arising

3.1 It was noted that a minor amendment was made to the Spring 2019 Progression and Award Board Report. An additional Progression and Award Board date was added to the formal report.

3.2 It was noted that a minor change to the Academic Calendar 2018-2019 was approved by Chair's Action on 13 December 2018. The spring conferring date was changed due to a schedule clash for the venue. The date was changed from 22 March to 21 March 2019.

4. Minutes of the meetings of the Education Committee of 14 November 2018 and 12 December 2018

Approved

5. Minutes of the meeting of the University Standards Committee of 15 November 2018

Approved

6. Minutes of the meetings of the Graduate Research Studies Board of 25 October 2018 and 29 November 2018

Approved

B. Policy and strategy issues

7. President's report (oral report)

7.1 The President noted that DCU currently holds the Chair of the Irish Universities Association (IUA). He informed Council that an IUA seminar had taken place on 29 January 2019 on Ireland's place in a new European University system, at which there was a presentation by Thomas Estermann, Director of Governance and Funding at European Universities Association. Mr Estermann presented figures which showed that Ireland had joined Serbia as one of two European countries with a third level system 'in danger' from a shortfall in funding. The President informed Council that in terms of academic autonomy, Ireland is second from the top in the EU. However, with respect to staffing autonomy, Ireland is in the bottom two, just ahead of Croatia.

The President noted that the IUA was briefed on the new European Universities Initiative by the EU Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, Dr Tibor Navracsics. The initiative is proposing a new model of European universities which would see a network of universities enabling students to seamlessly follow a pathway through combining studies in several EU countries. The President noted too that DCU is one of three Irish universities involved in proposals. DCU is a member of the European Consortium of Innovative Universities (ECIU) consortium seeking funding to explore the European Universities concept.

7.2 The President noted that he had almost completed meetings with Faculties and Units to discuss the DCU Strategic Plan 2017 - 2022 'Review and Renew' Process Year 1 Implementation Report and Prioritised Plans for Year 2. He noted the extensive range of activity currently in place with respect to academic developments, which includes *inter alia*:

- Ongoing curriculum review
- The development of Master's programmes for the FutureLearn platform
- The launch of Teaching Fellows Scheme
- The development of a Professional Development Framework for Teaching and Learning.

8. Proposals for DCU Conferring Practices

The Vice President Academic Affairs/Registrar and the Director of Registry proposed a number of changes to conferring practices for the consideration of Academic Council. The proposals had arisen in the context of a larger review of the Academic Calendar. A sub-group of the Academic Calendar had reviewed the current operation of DCU conferring ceremonies and proposed changes which could be considered on a standalone basis, for implementation in 2019.

The proposals and outcome of discussions of Academic Council are as below:

- 8.1 Proposed: **Early conferring of award:** Once an award has been approved by Academic Council, it can be officially conferred on a graduand and a parchment issued on request, following promulgation of results, and in advance of the next scheduled public ceremony for that award.

This proposal was approved.

- 8.2 Proposed: **Such graduates** (described under 8.1 above) **would not be invited to a subsequent public conferring ceremony for that programme.** The proposal not to invite those who had already been conferred and received their parchments to attend the formal public graduation ceremony was not agreed. It was the view of Academic Council that in the main, graduands require the parchment for employment purposes and there was consensus that this requirement should not preclude them from attending the public ceremony.

The Director of Registry indicated that she would have to explore the logistical and quality implications of providing the parchment in advance and then inviting those graduates to a conferring ceremony. She indicated that she would revert to Academic Council in this regard.

- 8.3 Proposed: **Degree only Ceremonies. Only Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral degrees should be conferred at public conferring ceremonies.** This proposal was not agreed. Academic Council expressed the view that it wished to maintain DCU's inclusivity and reflect its extensive community engagement, and to offer the opportunity to those who have succeeded at certificate and diploma level to be involved in a public conferring ceremony.

To address low attendance at conferring ceremonies for some cohorts of certificate and diploma graduands, it was advised that a strict cut-off deadline should be imposed.

8.4 Proposed: **A graduation ceremony should not extend beyond 1.75 hours.**

In order to facilitate the shortening of ceremonies the following was agreed:

- (a) That the names of those to be conferred *in absentia* would not be called out at the ceremony
- (b) That the PhD titles called out would be an abridged version of the thesis title. It was noted that the full titles would be provided in the graduation booklet.

It was suggested that the alternative abridged title would be captured at the stage of thesis submission.

9. Presentation on Leaving Certificate performance and subsequent DCU examination performance, presentation by Ms Karen Johnston

Ms. Karen Johnston made a presentation on the Leaving Certificate performance of entrants and subsequent DCU examination performance for the years 2014 – 2018.

The following was noted from the presentation:

- The majority of DCU first year entrants have achieved between 471 and 495 CAO points.
- The first-year mean precision mark has increased from 56.74 to 60.70 over the five years examined.
- The first year precision mark standard deviation continues to decrease and with a greater proportion of outliers.
- There is a weak correlation between CAO points as a predictor of the first year precision mark (14% variation).
- The HEA Non-Progression Report 2018 showed that achievement at Leaving Certificate is more relevant at the lower level of points when it comes to being a predictor of first year examination results.
- 53% of DCU first year entrants in 2019 had taken honours maths at Leaving Certificate level as compared to 47% in 2014.
- DCU's percentage of first class honours remains relatively stable at 15% and the award of second class honours grade I has increased to 64% up from 53% in 2014.

C. Items for formal approval/noting

10. Items from recent subcommittees of Academic Council

Approved

11. Accreditation Report: MA in Choral Studies

Approved

12. Accreditation Report: MA in Data Protection and Privacy Law

Approved

13. Recommendations from Progression and Awards Boards for March 2019 conferring

It was noted that the report originally circulated was updated to reflect that Progression and Awards Boards were held on 6 February 2019

Approved

14. Recommendations from Spring 2019 Faculty Awards Boards for Research Degrees for March 2019 conferring

Approved

15. Report from the Research Committee 2017-2018

Noted

16. Any other business

The Vice-President Academic Affairs/Registrar informed Council that she anticipated that proposals with respect to changes to the Academic Calendar would be submitted for the consideration of Academic Council later in the semester. Consideration was currently being given to the interaction between the new Student Information System and the academic year.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Date of next meeting:

10 April 2019

2:00 pm in B103

DCU, St. Patrick's Campus