

ACADEMIC COUNCIL

MINUTES

7 October 2015

2.00 – 2.50 in AG01

PRESENT:

M. Brennan
C. Brennan
P. Brereton
J. Bruen
M. Byrne
J. Carroll
B. Corcoran
J. Costello
E. Costello
Y. Crotty
J. Donoghue
J. Doyle
B. Flood
P. Flynn
G. Foley
S. Fox
J. Gallen

E. Guilfoyle
C. Gurrin
M. Helfert
M. Irwin-Bannon (Secretary)
G. Jones
D. Kenny
P. Landais
L. Looney
B. MacCraith (Chair)
C. MacMurchaidh
A. Matthews
K. McDonagh
E. McGlynn
S. McGovern
A. McGrady
P. McMorrow

B. McMullin
N. Moyna
G. Murphy
K. Nolan
B. Nolan
M. O'Brien
M. O'Hagan
A. O'Regan
N. O'Reilly
J. Rami
M. Roantree
R. Sadleir
A. Sinnott
S. Stan
M.R. Sweeney
Pauline Willis

APOLOGIES:

S. Belton
M. Brown
J. Bruton
D. Collings
M. Crane
P. Davis

M. Loftus
C. McMullan
P. O'Duibhir
R. O'Connor
J. O'Hara

S. O'Neill
K. Rafter
C. Renehan
A. Stover
A. Way

IN ATTENDANCE

A McKenna (Item 6)

1. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted.

It was noted that the St. Patrick's College September 2015 Exam Report would be made available after 12 October 2015.

A: Minutes and related issues**2. Minutes of the meeting of Academic Council of 22 June 2015**

The minutes of 22 June 2015 were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

3. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

4. Minutes of the meetings of the Graduate Research Studies Board of 21 May 2015 and 25 June 2015

The minutes were approved.

B: Policy and strategy issues**5. President's report****5.1** With respect to the growth of the University (including Incorporation) it was noted that a significant Project milestone had been reached with the registration of over 3,400 first year students as DCU students in September 2015. The President noted the significant contribution of Registry and Information Systems and Services in managing the process in such an efficient manner.

The publication of the 2016 undergraduate prospectus, containing entries from all three of the incorporating institutions and launched at the Higher Options event in September 2015 was noted.

With respect to the purchase of All Hallows College it was noted that the legal contract has been signed and approval from Rome is awaited. Some preliminary work on the site has already begun.

Arrangements with respect to the completion of programmes for All Hallows students were agreed, to the satisfaction of all those concerned.

- 5.2** DCU CAO offers in 2015 were at the highest level to date and amounted to circa 4,000. The median points of entry were strong with a good performance across the whole university. The orientation sessions for first year entrants were also very well attended.
- 5.3** The recently published QS World University rankings saw DCU jump thirteen places (to 353rd) which is the greatest increase for any Irish university, with a steady improvement in almost all assessed categories. Early indications with respect to The Times Higher Education rankings are that DCU will be ranked in the early 400s and confirmation of this is awaited.
- 5.4** Congratulations were extended on behalf of the Council to two undergraduate students for their successes at the 2015 Undergraduate Awards: Cleo Harvey (School of Physical Sciences) was programme winner in the Mathematics and Physics category and Guilia Luzi (School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies) was programme winner in the Media and Journalism category.
- 5.5** The announcement by the Government of the re-launch of the Metro North plan is welcome news. The proposed development could provide up to three stops for DCU which would be a very significant development for the university.
- 5.6** A meeting was held recently with the HEA with respect to the application of performance based funding, the outcome of which appeared positive. It was noted that the HEA can withhold up to 7% of funding, depending on delivery against the Key Performance Indicators.
- 5.7** Details of events to launch the public phase for the Campaign for DCU will be announced shortly. With respect to the Campus Development Plan, negotiations with the European Investment Bank are almost complete and an announcement in this regard will be made in the near future.

6. Presentation by Ms. Aisling McKenna, Examination Performance 2014-2015

In the presentation on examination performance 2014-2015 Ms. McKenna drew attention in particular to the following:

- The focus of the data analysis was on first year pass rates
- The average pass rate for 2014-2015 was 89%
- The pass rate has remained stable, despite an increase in the undergraduate population
- There has been a considerable improvement in pass rates in the Faculty of Engineering and Computing
- The pass rates for 2nd, 3rd and 4th years have remained consistent since 2013.
- Over the past 15 years, the final year award classification spread has remained consistent
- Students ‘at risk’¹ of academic non-progression in first year have been tracked since 2010. In a given year approximately 9-10% of a cohort fall into this category. The student profile usually reflects a lower point attainment in Leaving Certificate Mathematics and lower overall Leaving Certificate points.
- In a given year, one third of those who resit pass, one third repeat and one third leave the university
- It would be better if identification of ‘at risk students’ happened at an earlier point in the academic year to ensure measures are put in place which might assist those students.

In the discussion which followed the following points were raised:

- It was noted that the work currently underway using PredictEd may assist in the earlier identification of ‘at risk’ students
- The improvement in the pass rates for the Faculty of Engineering and Computing reflects the impact of the work of the Maths Learning Centre
- It was noted that summary statistics which focus on Leaving Certificate points are available on IRIS and Ms. A. McKenna offered to share the report which provides Mathematics Leaving Certificate grades and overall Leaving Certificate points
- It was noted in an exercise conducted in 2013, that where students who failed modules in semester 1 were interviewed and received feedback and support, it had greatly assisted them in successfully completing the year.

The President thanked Ms. A. McKenna for a most interesting presentation.

¹ ‘At risk’ students are defined as those who have failed more than two modules in Semester 1 or where they have only to complete less than two modules where they have failed one or more).

7. Request for Aegrotat Award: Certificate in Guidance Counselling

Approved.

C: Items for formal approval/noting

8. Items from recent subcommittees of Academic Council

Approved.

9. Register of Academic Council members 2015-2016

Noted. It was noted too, that a small number of changes still needed to be made to this register and that they would be made as soon as possible.

10. Register of members of the Education Committee, the University Standards Committee, the Graduate Research Studies Board, the Examination Appeals Board and the GRSB Appeals Standing Committee 2015-2016.

Noted

11. Updated terms of reference 2015-2016: Academic Council and subcommittees

Approved.

12. Update on committee initiatives

Noted.

13. Reports from Autumn 2015 examinations, Progression and Award Boards

Approved².

14. Reports from Autumn 2015 Faculty Awards Boards for Research Degrees

Approved.

15. Any Other Business

The President noted that in light of the vacancy in the Deputy President role and in anticipation of Incorporation next year an interim structure to cover the responsibilities of the Deputy President is currently being put in place.

Date of next meeting:

<p>Wednesday, 9 December 2015 2.00 p.m. in AG01</p>

Signed: _____
President

Date _____

² The 2015 Autumn examinations, Progression and Award Boards Report for St. Patrick's College Drumcondra was received on 12 October 2015, circulated for approval and deemed approved.