

**ACADEMIC COUNCIL****MINUTES****6 April 2022****2.00 p.m. – 3.00 p.m.****Zoom Meeting****Present:**

S. Blott	L. Boran	M. Brown
J. Brunton	J. Bruton	M. Butler
PJ Byrne	A. Castillo Villaneuva	E. Clinton
B. Corcoran	E. Costello	S. Cullen
D. Curran	D. Fahy	M. Farrelly
O. Feeney	J. Foster	G. French
R. Gillanders	S. Giordani	P. Guasoni
C. Gurrin	D. Hand	S. Hegarty
A. Intizar	J. Kearney	B. Kelly
E. Kennedy	D. Keogh (Chair)	D. Kinahan
P. Landais	T. Lokot	A. Looney
L. Looney	A. Maillot	C. McArdle
D. Mc Carthy (Secretary)	K. McDonagh	J. McDonough
P. McGorman	A. McKenna	J. McMackin
J. McManis	R. McManus	P. McMorrow
M. McSharry	P. Mooney	A. Morrissey
J. P. Mosnier	G. M. Muntean	B. Murphy
N. Murphy	R. Murphy	C. Ni Mhurchú
B. Nolan	S. O'Brien	C. O'Gorman
K. O'Sullivan	N. O'Sullivan	P. Rosati
P. Sharkey Scott	J. Stokes	M. R. Sweeney
T. Szecsi	J. Travers	G. Uí Laighléis
L. Van der Werff	M. Ward	B. White

**Apologies:**

B. Anderson	S. Belton	M. Crane
C. Furlong	P. Gallagher	G. Hughes
A. Logan	C. Mac an Bhaird	E. McGlynn
A. McNamara	A. Sinnott	

**In Attendance:**

V. Cooke	C. Dunne (Item 8.1)	R. Keegan
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**1. Adoption of the Agenda**

The agenda was adopted.

**A. Minutes and Related Issues****2. Minutes of the meeting of Academic Council of 2 February 2022**

The minutes were approved.

**3. Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

**4. Minutes of the meeting of the Education Committee of 8 December 2021 and 9 February 2022, minutes of the meeting of the Education Standing Committee of 13 December 2021 and minutes of the meeting of the Strategic Learning Innovation Project Steering Group of 4 October 2021.**

The minutes were approved.

**5. Minutes of the meeting of the University Standards Committee of 6 January 2022**

The minutes were approved.

**6. Minutes of the meeting of the Graduate Research Studies Board of 20 January 2022**

The minutes were approved.

**B. Policy and Strategy Issues****7. President's report (oral report)**

- 7.1 The President noted the completion of Semester 2 teaching. He extended the appreciation of the University and its students to all staff and acknowledged the enormous effort involved in continuing to operate face-to-face teaching during a period of considerable difficulty and uncertainty. He also welcomed Dr David McCarthy as recording secretary.

7.2 The President expressed his condolences to the family of Red Óg Murphy on behalf of the University and thanked DCU Students' Union and Student Support and Development for providing support to students and their families.

7.3 The President assured the Academic Council that DCU unambiguously supports the Ukrainian people following the brutal invasion of the country by Russia. The President informed Academic Council that DCU will respond as a university should and that Laura Mahoney, the Executive Director of Engagement, will coordinate this response.

The President informed Academic Council that Mariya Gabriel, EU Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, is working with partners to develop and implement a common framework for relocating displaced scholars and students.

The President informed Academic Council that a dedicated response unit will be established, which is supported by the Irish Universities Association (IUA). This unit will be funded by the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, will be located in Maynooth University and will be staffed by individuals seconded from the sector. The President noted that the University will offer 400 student accommodation beds so that DCU can operate as a reception centre, taking advantage of its proximity to the airport.

The President informed Academic Council that, in order to expedite the reception of refugees, he is advocating for the acceptance of Ukrainian students as 'occasional students', which would mean DCU credits attained by a student can contribute to the award of their home institution. The President acknowledged that flexibility will be required to ensure incoming students are facilitated to continue to engage with their studies.

Prof Lisa Looney assured Academic Council that there will be a coordinated approach across the sector to ensure consistency in how incoming students are supported to continue their studies. L. Looney confirmed that DCU will work with the relevant agencies to implement the extension of free fees and SUSIE grants to incoming students.

The President informed Academic Council that the DCU Brexit Institute hosted a virtual event on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 to consider the war in Ukraine and the future of the EU. The event was addressed by Thomas Byrne TD, Minister of State for European Affairs. The President noted the ongoing contribution of DCU scholars to discussions about the war in Ukraine and called particular attention to publications by Prof Donnacha Ó Beacháin and Dr Alex Baturó in *The Irish Times* and *The Washington Post* respectively.

7.4 The President thanked all DCU staff who participated in the Spring Open Day on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2022, which saw 1,800 prospective students visit the campuses. The professionalism of the event and the enthusiasm of the staff was highlighted by those who attended. The President noted that there was significant interest in DCU Futures amongst attendees. The President reiterated that DCU Futures is an essential element of DCU's strategic ambition, as a radical reimagining of how students will learn and how programmes will be delivered at DCU in the future.

- 7.5 The President noted that CAO first preferences have increased slightly compared to the same time last year. He requested that relevant members of Academic Council continue to promote their respective programmes over the coming months and encourage their colleagues to do the same.
- 7.6 The President noted that DCU Business School was awarded the Athena Swan Bronze Award on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022. He expressed particular thanks to Prof. Regina Connolly, the Self-Assessment Team (SAT) Chair, and reiterated DCU's commitment to equality and inclusivity.
- 7.7 The President informed Academic Council that the QS World University Rankings by Subject 2022 were published today, 6<sup>th</sup> April 2022. He noted that DCU has maintained its position as the top-ranked university in Ireland for Communication and Media Studies.

Ms Aisling McKenna informed Academic Council that DCU is ranked in Sports-Related Subjects for the first time. A. McKenna informed Academic Council that QS World University Rankings by Subject 2022 is one of two rankings published in April, the other being the Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Rankings. A. McKenna will work with DCU Communications Team in the coming months to promote the University's achievements from both rankings.

The President noted that DCU ranked number one in Ireland for its graduate employment rate in the QS Graduate Employability Rankings 2022, which were published on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2021. The President informed Academic Council that DCU also joined the top two hundred universities in the world for graduate employability.

- 7.8 The President noted the launch of the DCU Professional Development Framework, which will provide clarity to professional, support and administrative staff on the behavioural competencies associated with their grade and will provide them with opportunities to consider their career development goals and to integrate learning and development into their everyday activities. The President thanked Fiona Carvill and her colleagues in Human Resources for their work in developing the framework.

The President noted that there are now separate frameworks in place to provide faculty, researchers, and professional, support and administrative staff with clearly-defined expectations relating to their role and to facilitate career planning and development conversations between individual staff members and their managers.

- 7.9 The President thanked the Estates Office for their engagement with the peer review component of the Quality Review. He noted that the peer review panel commented positively on the commitment of Estates Office staff to the institution.

## 8. Strategic academic initiatives

### 8.1 DCU Futures: Transversal skills and language programme

Dr Ciaran Dunne delivered a presentation to Academic Council on DCU Futures that provided updates on the progress of (i) the Language and Culture Programme (Multilingualism) and (ii) the Transversal Skills Plan.

C. Dunne informed Academic Council that classes commenced in January 2022 as part of the Language and Culture Programme, with a total of 76 students enrolling across 3 modules: Ab initio Spanish (24), Intermediate Spanish (19) and Intermediate French (33).

C. Dunne informed Academic Council that an Associate Professor has been appointed to coordinate this project, which will expand during the 2022/23 academic year to deliver a total of 18 modules. This will include new modules in French and Spanish delivered in Semester 1 and new modules in Arabic, German, Japanese and Russian in Semester 2.

C. Dunne updated Academic Council regarding the Transversal Skills Plan, which involves defining and operationalising the transversal skills project by creating competence frameworks with appropriate learning outcomes. To this end, 16 Expert Panels have been established, which comprise of 125 members from across all faculties and many service units and are intended to harness the potential of interdisciplinarity within the University. This approach will allow colleagues to actively shape the transversal skills agenda and also raise awareness about DCU Futures across the University. C. Dunne explained that Bantani Education is providing support in developing the competence frameworks and that the plan is succeeding and is currently on track.

Prof Lisa Looney informed Academic Council that multilingualism was not hugely visible within the first stages of DCU's Human Capital Initiative (HCI) project, but had gained strong momentum. L. Looney noted that, due to government policy on developing multilingual skills amongst higher education students, it is important that the multilingualism component of DCU Futures is fully supported. L. Looney noted that DCU can take a leadership position in multilingualism within the higher education sector.

The President further reiterated that DCU Futures is not an add-on to programmes but a radical reimagining of how students will learn and how programmes will be delivered at DCU. He acknowledged that the multilingualism component of DCU Futures could be considered as part of the University's new strategic plan and would further strengthen DCU's position as a European university situated in Ireland.

Dr Blánaid White thanked colleagues in the School of Applied Languages and Intercultural Studies, the Registry and Faculty Offices for their ongoing support with delivering modules belonging to the Language and Culture Programme. B. White informed Academic Council that employers are excited about the introduction of transversal skills into curricula and the ability of students to evidence attainment of these skills using a competence framework.

**C. Items for Formal Approval/Noting**

The President noted the large number of accreditation reports being considered by Academic Council. He acknowledged the hard work of faculty involved in developing these new programmes and congratulated programme proposers on the successful outcomes of the Accreditation Boards.

**9. Validation Report: MA in Documentary Practice**

Approved

**10. Validation Report: BSc in Athletic Therapy and Training/MSc in Athletic Therapy and Strength and Conditioning**

Approved

**11. Validation Report: MSc in Strategic Learning and Development**

Approved

**12. Accreditation Report: Graduate Certificate in Financial Intelligence and Technology**

Approved

**13. Accreditation Report: MA I Léann na Gaelige**

Approved

**14. Accreditation Report: MSc in Health and Social Inclusion**

Approved

**15. Accreditation Report: MSc in Specialist Nursing for Future Healthcare and MSc in Specialist Midwifery for Future Healthcare**

Prof Lisa Looney explained the validation and accreditation process for this programme. The validation of the *MSc in Specialist Nursing for Future Healthcare* was approved by Academic Council on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2022. Subsequently, a change to the proposed programme title was approved by the Education Committee by Chairs Action on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2022, *MSc in Specialist Nursing/Midwifery for Future Healthcare*.

L. Looney called particular attention to Recommendation 1 in the Accreditation Report, namely that two separate awards are now designated within the programme: a MSc in Specialist Nursing for Future Healthcare and a MSc in Specialist Midwifery for Future Healthcare. L Looney noted that considerable work is required to address the recommendations of the Accreditation Board and informed Academic Council that the panel had stipulated that the responses to these recommendations be submitted to her for approval before the programme can be launched.

Approved

**16. Accreditation Report: MSc in Child and Family Health and Wellbeing**

Approved

**17. Items from recent sub-committees of Academic Council**

Noted

**18. Report from Quality Promotion Office 2020-21**

Noted

**19. Any other business**

The President noted this is the last meeting of Academic Council that Mr Billy Kelly will attend. He expressed the thanks and appreciation of Academic Council to B. Kelly for all his work over the years.

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

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

**Date of next meeting:**

23 May 2022

2.00 p.m.

Zoom meeting