

**EDUCATION COMMITTEE  
MINUTES**

Wednesday 25 January 2023

2.00 p.m. – 4.10 p.m., Zoom Meeting

**Present:** Dr Claire Bohan, Professor Mark Brown, Ms Jennifer Bruton, Dr Jing Burgi-Tian, Professor Michelle Butler, Professor Brian Corcoran, Mr Eoin Crossen, Professor Dominic Elliott, Dr Rachel Keegan (Secretary), Professor Lisa Looney (Chair), Ms Aisling McKenna, Dr Jennifer McManis, Ms Pauline Mooney, Professor Joseph Stokes, Dr Monica Ward and Professor Blánaid White.

**Apologies:** Dr Sarahjane Belton, Professor John Doyle, Professor Derek Hand and Professor Anne Looney.

**In attendance:** Ms Valerie Cooke and Dr Ruth McManus (item 6).

The Chair welcomed Professor Dominic Elliott to his first meeting of the Education Committee in his capacity as Executive Dean of DCU Business School.

The Chair welcomed Dr Claire Bohan back to Education Committee and she recorded her gratitude to Ms Annabella Stover for ensuring continuity of representation by Student Support and Development at recent meetings.

**SECTION A: AGENDA, MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

**1. Adoption of the agenda**

The agenda was adopted.

**2. Minutes of the meeting of the Education Committee of 14 December 2022**

The minutes of the meeting of 14 December 2022 were approved.

**3. Matters arising from the minutes of 14 December 2022**

**3.1** It was noted that a revised proposal for the LLM was on the agenda (item 6).

**3.2** It was noted that revisions to DCUBS aviation programmes and associated modules were currently under review by the Faculty (item 3.5).

**3.3** It was noted that a validation proposal for the MSc in Athletic Therapy was currently under review by the Faculty (item 8).

**4. Minutes of the meeting of the Strategic Learning Innovation Project Steering Group of 21 November 2022**

The minutes of the meeting of 21 November 2022 were approved.

**SECTION B: STRATEGIC MATTERS**

**5. Strategic Academic Initiatives**

**5.1 Teaching and Learning Strategy and metrics**

The Chair reminded members that the new DCU Strategy would be considered at the April meeting of Governing Authority and so the specifics of the Teaching and Learning (T&L) Strategy under the agreed areas of focus need to be advanced quickly. She briefed members on progress made with respect to the T&L Strategy and she summarised the work to be completed over the next five weeks as follows:

- Elaborating on the overarching teaching and learning narrative including defining the identified pillar priorities.
- Developing a set of statements that are aligned to the narrative and adopted by Faculty and other relevant units in their respective plans.
- Identifying year-one indicators and establishing a first set of KPIs.

The Chair drew members' attention to the template circulated to Faculties in November in order to gather information on actions planned under the identified pillar priorities, and she requested that they be discussed at Faculty level promptly, if they had not been already. She informed members that Professor B. Corcoran and Dr M. Ward would be engaging with Faculties to help develop the flexibility and excellence pillars with the goal of having an advanced draft for the next meeting of the Education Committee.

**5.2 ECIU University implementation**

The Chair presented a proposed structure for the oversight and governance of DCU's engagement in the ECIU consortium. She noted that it was timely that the University establishes a formal structure as we progress into the second phase of the ECIU University project.

She informed members that the proposed structure would include an ECIU University Project Implementation Group, to be facilitated by the ECIU Senior Project Officer, an ECIU Strategic Oversight Committee at Senior Management level, and a reporting line into Education Committee and onwards to Academic Council.

The Education Committee approved in principle the proposed two-tier structure for governance and oversight of ECIU activities. The Chair indicated to members that terms of reference would be submitted to the Education Committee for consideration in due course.

It was suggested that there may be value in including some oversight from Finance in respect of the financial impact of DCU's investment in the consortium.

It was suggested that a body of work was needed on terminology and the overarching branding of the ECIU University project.

It was suggested that there may be merit in establishing internal KPIs for ECIU consortium engagement, particularly where activities are aligned with the DCU Strategy.

It was queried if any mapping had been done to identify commonalities across the partner institutions. The Chair informed members that some work had been done in relation to research interests and that an education portfolio manager had recently been appointed to the ECIU University project and that engagement with partners had commenced to identify commonalities across offerings.

### **5.3 Broadening DCU's portfolio**

The Chair briefed members on DCU's response to a recent HEA call, which if successful, would see the University moving into new health-related disciplines. Development of a proposal was led by the Faculty of Science and Health and supported by OVPAA, Finance and the President's office, and submitted in January. The outcome of the call is expected in quarter two of this year. Professor M. Butler informed members that the turnaround for the call was very tight but that the Faculty now had a template which would help with future calls. The Chair noted that further calls in similar disciplines were expected as the Government responds to skills shortages in a range of health-related areas.

Professor B. Corcoran briefed members of the recent HCI Pillar 1 call launch and the very immediate deadline of 23 February, requesting close liaison with him on proposals. He also drew attention to two smaller calls for summer camps in ICT and entrepreneurship for second-level students. He noted that the University needs to move to a position of anticipating these calls which come quickly and with very short deadlines.

## **SECTION C: PROGRAMME AND MODULE-SPECIFIC MATTERS**

### **6. Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences: Revised Academic Offering, Master of Laws (LLM)**

Dr R. McManus presented the revised LLM, informing members that the proposal is to create a number of specialisms within the existing LLM programme. She advised members that the majority of LLM programmes in Ireland already offer specialisms. She noted that the revised proposal is to retain a single LLM award and that specialisms will be recognised on the transcripts.

Education Committee members noted the responsiveness of the programme proposer in taking on board previous feedback. The revisions to the programme were approved subject to the Course Builder entry being updated to reflect the following:

- Module descriptors should be reviewed to ensure that the appropriate workload convention is applied (i.e. 10 ECTS should equate to 250 workload hours).
- All modules should be mapped against the Programme Learning Outcomes.

## SECTION D: OTHER MATTERS

### 7. AI-generated content

The Chair noted the growing awareness of the power of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools for generating content, indicating that these tools represent another wave of technology that the University would need to incorporate into teaching, learning and assessment.

Dr M. Ward introduced the paper on AI-generated content, noting that the most immediate challenge for the University was in assessment design. She advised members that the paper was intended to aid staff in the design of assessment for this Semester and that there was a bigger piece of work to be done to look at the possible benefits of these tools for teaching.

Education Committee endorsed the approach to assessment as set out in the circulated paper. The Chair noted that further work would be done in this area in advance of the next academic year.

Professor J. Stokes noted that these tools would also have implications for research students and he requested that future work include these cohorts.

Professor M. Brown informed members that Professor Phillip Dawson from Deacon University would be visiting DCU in June. Professor Dawson has significant expertise in AI technologies.

### 8. IUA updates

The Education Committee was provided with updates on recent IUA activities. The key points were noted as follows:

#### IUA Quality Officers Group

- Ms A. McKenna noted the diversity of activities and topics considered by the Quality Officers Group, including a number which fall outside of the remit of DCU's Quality Office. She informed members that some of the activities were more reflective of the work of the OVPAA and she noted, by way of example, the ongoing work on the International Education Mark, which was being led out by Ms P. Mooney on behalf of DCU.
- She drew attention to a number of activities and projects which were ongoing or being planned by the Quality Officers Group including:

- ongoing input into a QQI-commissioned discussion paper on the future of quality assurance in the higher education sector,
- a review of the CINNTE review cycle which would inform future QQI review processes,
- a series of best practice sharing workshops for quality office staff across the sector, and
- a piece of funded research which would look at the role of external examiners as part of the quality assurance systems in higher education institutions.

#### IUA Deans of Graduate Studies Group

- Professor J. Stokes informed members that Minister Simon Harris had requested a national review of State supports for PhD students. This will include a review of financial support, the equity and consistency of arrangements across the sector, the status of PhD students, the impact on the funding of research programmes, graduate outcomes including the return on investment to the researcher and visa issues.
- Other areas currently being looked at by the Dean of Graduate Studies Group include a review of the National Framework for Doctoral Education and collaborative doctoral programme arrangements.

#### IUA Registrars Group

- The Chair advised members that the IUA Registrars Group continues to engage with the Department of Education on a number of matters relating to the Leaving Certificate including Leaving Certificate reform and the timeline for results. She informed members that there was no clarity on the dates of results for 2023, but that indicates the University should be prepared for another late start for first-year students. She noted that a coordinated start for first-years across the sector was useful this year and a similar approach may be agreed upon for the coming year.
- She indicated that a report from the OECD was expected in the next few weeks, focusing on the skills agenda. She noted that it was anticipated that future funding calls would be strongly linked to that report.
- At its most recent meeting, the Registrars Group considered a number of matters including the apprenticeship model, a recent HEA competitive call in health-related disciplines, professional award descriptors and the status of Ukrainian students for the forthcoming year.

Mr E. Crossen noted that, because of the enormous implications for students, it was very worrying to hear that there appears to be no appetite to return to the old schedule of Leaving Certificate publication dates. He advised members that he would raise this with DCU Students' Union colleagues.

**9. Any other business**

There was no other business.

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

**Date of next meeting:**  
Wednesday, 22 February 2023  
at 2.00 pm  
Room F327  
St. Patrick's Campus