

GOVERNING AUTHORITY MEETING

Report of meeting of Friday, December 10th 2021 2.00pm, Zoom Video Call

PRESENT:

Ms. Brid Horan (Chair)	Prof Lisa Looney
Prof Daire Keogh	Mr Cathal Marley
Mr Waqar Ahmed	Ms Fiona Naughton
Ms Zainab Boladale	Ms Deirdre O'Connor
Dr Audrey Bryan	Prof James O'Higgins Norman
Ms Marian Corcoran	Dr Aisling de Paor
Prof Yvonne Daly	Ms Michele Pringle
Mr Justin Doyle	Dr Declan Raftery (DR)
Ms Kate Goodman	Mr Terence Rooney
Cllr Jimmy Guerin	Ms Marie Sinnott
Ms Carol Hanney	Mr Brian J. Smyth
Mr David Harney	Mr Seamus Walsh
Ms Rachel Hussey	Prof Ray Walshe

APOLOGIES:

Mr John Darby	Dr Kara McGann
Ms Kathy Quinn	

IN ATTENDANCE:

Prof Anne Sinnott	Mr Ciaran McGivern
Ms Marie Mellett (recording secretary)	Ms Marian Burns

WELCOME

The Chancellor welcomed members to another meeting being held remotely due to current public health issues. She thanked everyone for their participation and noted the apologies.

The agenda was adopted.

The Chancellor enquired if there were any interests/conflicts in relation to any item on today's agenda that required a declaration on the part of a member(s) – None were declared.

- 1. MINUTES OF GOVERNING AUTHORITY MEETING OF 03RD OCTOBER 2021**
Approved by the Authority
- 2. REPORT OF MEETING OF 03RD OCTOBER 2021 FOR WEB PUBLICATION**
Approved by the Authority subject to minor revisions.
- 3 REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS**

Action 1: Postponed until the February meeting. Today the Deputy President is giving a presentation on the Strategic Plan. It is very important for the Governing Authority to get this overview.

Action 2: This is currently happening. The revised terms of reference of each subcommittee will be brought to Governing Authority for consideration and approval at February meeting.

Actions to be tracked:

Action 1: Ongoing, with an update at February meeting.

Action 2: Postponed until permitted by public health guidelines. When possible will begin with meetings on both the SPC and AHC.

Action 3: Ongoing

Action 4: Ongoing

FOR DISCUSSION

4 MATTERS ARISING

DR informed the Authority that the Standing Special Committee reviewed all four capital project tenders which had been circulated and discussed by GA in November and approved them. The Future Tech tender has to be approved by the HEA, we expect approval will be given before the end of the year.

5 PRESENTATION ON UNIVERSITY STRATEGY

The Deputy President gave a presentation to Governing Authority on the review by the Executive of DCU's Strategic Plan to develop a Transitional Strategic Plan including the following key points:

- This transitional strategic plan was essential in order to deal with the impact of Covid 19 and also reflects the appointment of the new President and Senior Management Team.
- The Plan creates a focus on quality rather than quantity, to drive real tangible effects from our strategic actions.
- There was a detailed review and renewal process with a number of 'away days'.
- The transitional plan is ambitious and will continue into our new Strategic Plan, which will be produced throughout 2022.
- The Transitional Strategic Plan reemphasises DCU as the University of Enterprise and Transformation.
- The original Strategic Plan was designed to be agile in case of any new developments e.g. DCU Futures and ECIU initiatives occurred. The Plan had nine Strategic Goals; in the second half of 2020, these were reviewed based on progress of actions and how our priorities have changed. The outcome was then reported to Governing Authority in October 2020 who approved the proposed approach and the priorities of People, Focus and Impact. The DCU Operating Framework was then looked at to see how this can support achieving our new priorities of People, Focus and Impact. DCU reaffirms our mission, calling out these 3 overarching priorities, which are underpinned by our core values of being Ambitious, Student Focused, Open, Collegial and Collaborative. The original nine Strategic Goals were then mapped into four core priorities:
 - Provide a transformative student experience

- Advance our research reputation and impact
 - Value and develop our staff community and
 - Focused institutional development.
- Each priority is owned by a member of the Senior Management Group and underpinned by strategic enablers such as being Sustainable, Global, Innovative, Creative and Engagement.

The Executive believe this provides a more coherent and streamlined view of areas of focus. The next steps is to have a Senior Management strategy away day in February to begin the process for creating a new Strategic Plan. All stakeholders will be involved, particularly Governing Authority, staff and students.

The Authority thanked the Deputy President, President and Executive for the work to date and asked Senior Management to discuss how Governing Authority can best assist Senior Management in progressing key initiatives under the Strategic Plan.

The Chancellor noted that at every meeting Authority members should be considering how plans and actions fit with DCU's strategic objectives. The Authority further noted that the new plan should outline what areas will not continue as part of the plan and what will remain. The new Strategic Plan should also recognise the importance of the digital experience for staff and students. The new plan should also outline how to make 'accountability' real for staff.

The intention is to have a further discussion with GA in April and, in the meantime, members may wish to submit views or input to the Executive.

FOR DECISION

6 PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE REQUEST RE PUBLIC INTEREST ASSURANCE STATEMENT

On the 29th June, through HEA, PAC sought the following:

'Assurances are sought from the Governing Authority that any partnerships, grants, funding or similar arrangements between publicly-funded higher education institutions and third parties do not proceed counter to the public interest, and the interests of institutions' students and staff, by contributing to the climate and biodiversity crisis'. DCU replied on the 06th July, however the response was deemed insufficient.

DR gave a presentation to the Authority on DCU's Climate Action Plan which is updated each year.

The Authority agreed that the next to HEA response should include what DCU are doing and our strategic direction in terms of sustainability. The Authority also agreed that a presentation on this should be given to Governing Authority once a year so they can track progress under DCU charter.

It was agreed DR to draft a response and circulate to the Chancellor for approval and submission.

7 DCU CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR Y/E SEPT 2020 AUDITED BY C&AG

The Director of Finance noted that at November meeting, Governing Authority approved the KPMG audited financial statements for year ended 30 September 2021, subject to there being no material differences between these financials and the C&AG audited financials (not available at that time). The C&AG have confirmed the draft DCU financial statements for 30 September 2020 have been cleared for signature by the C&AG however they are not ready for approval at today's meeting. It is proposed, subject to no material difference arising between the C&AG approved and KPMG financial statements approved last month by Governing Authority, to delegate authority to the Chancellor and President to sign the C&AG financial statements and the related C&AG Letter of Representation on behalf of the Governing Authority. In that way both the KPMG and C&AG audit for 2019/2020 will be fully closed off. The Audit Committee Chair confirmed that this approach was acceptable to the Committee.

Approved by the Authority

FOR DISCUSSION/NOTING

8 AUDIT COMMITTEE

8.1 Report of meeting of 24th November 2021

Cathal Marley, Chair of Audit Committee, gave an update to the Authority. He noted that this was the first meeting of the new Committee and the following was discussed:

- Mazars have been appointed external auditors for DCU and the Audit Committee approved their audit plan. They will be working with the finance team to have the financials ready for presenting at the April Audit Committee meeting.
- Internal Audit gave an update on their 2021 plan. Six audits have been completed, with five outstanding, these will be closed off by the end of the year. This is a significant achievement.
- The Procurement Audit highlighted concerns around policies not being updated and not accessible. The recommendation surrounding this has been actioned by management.
- The Internal Audit Plan for 2022 includes interaction with the Risk Committee. Internal Audit look at risks and will build audits around this. The Audit Plan is agile in nature.
- The Terms of Reference and Audit Charter were approved. The Terms of Reference will be brought to the next meeting of Governing Authority.

8.2 Minutes of meeting of 17th June 2021

Noted by the Authority

9 RISK COMMITTEE

9.1 Report of meeting 07th December 2021

Marie Sinnott, Chair of the Governing Authority Risk Committee, gave an update to the Authority. This was the first meeting of the new Committee and the following was discussed:

- A substantial Covid-19 update was given and the Committee were very satisfied with the comprehensive measures in place. The Committee congratulated the Chief Operations Officer and his team.
- There were no significant incidents to report.

- Small revisions were proposed for the Risk Management Process, however overall the process is very well documented.
- The Director of ISS gave a presentation on the lessons learned from a cyber-attack desktop exercise. The Committee were informed that the level of awareness on this subject has increased and work has begun on the recommendations. This topic will remain on the Risk Committee's agenda.
- The risk team and management are working through the recommendations from Risk and Resilience audit conducted by Internal Audit.
- Some changes were proposed for the Terms of Reference, once finalised they will be brought to Governing Authority.

The Authority also thanked the staff and students of DCU on an exemplar return to campus.

9.2 Minutes of meeting of 11th June 2021

Noted by the Authority

10 EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE

10.1 Report of meeting 25th November 2021

Rachel Hussey, Chair of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee, gave an update to the Authority. She noted that this was the first meeting of the new Committee and the following was discussed:

- The Terms of Reference were reviewed and will be brought to the next meeting of Governing Authority.
- A presentation was given on the current priorities for EDI within the University.
- The University is working towards achieving the Silver Athena Swan Award in 2024 and the first individual school award was received in September 2021.
- Policies such as Dignity and Respect have been reviewed and updated.
- A lot of work is being carried out on the Consent Framework. DCU have a robust action plan in place including a new anonymous reporting tool, which was launched last October.
- Online training for staff continues to be rolled out.
- The results of the staff survey planned before end 2021 will inform strategic planning.
- The Autism Friendly Unit has expanded to include staff supports.
- The Committee did raise concern about some activity on social media recently. The Committee were reassured that legal advice had been sought and a statement was issued by the University.

It was noted that there is a challenge of having the requirement of at least 40% of a particular gender on all Committees as some Committee positions are ex-officio. This is an area for continued focus.

10.2 Minutes of meeting 11th June 2021

Noted by the Authority

11 **PRESIDENT'S REPORT AND UNIVERSITY OFFICERS' REPORTS**

DCU President

The comprehensive report had been circulated and was taken as read and the following points were noted by the Authority.

The Chancellor noted the phenomenal achievements outlined in the report and passed on the Authority's congratulations.

With deep regret the President informed the Authority of the passing of Siobhan Murray, a second year Business School student. The Chancellor has sent a letter of condolence to the family on behalf of the Authority.

Through the SALI scheme DCU secured funding for a Professor in sustainable finance.

The DCU virtual and on-campus open days were a huge success and the President thanked all involved.

The reformed HEA Act is not expected to be enacted until the autumn 2022.

The Government did commit to have a sustainable funding model for university's in place by the end of this calendar year, but this has not happened. The report from the EU on the Irish Universities Funding Model is expected before Christmas.

DCU, along with the Students' Union, took a public lead highlighting the challenge of building affordable student accommodation in the current context. Recently, the President, the Director of Finance and the COO met with three Government Ministers for detailed discussions on this issue and Stephen Mulvany, a member of the DCU Finance Team, is working with Government departments trying to identify viable financial solutions that would enable the construction of affordable accommodation on-campus. The President of the Students' Union thanked the President and DCU for their support on this matter.

The President thanked all staff and students for a successful semester one and wished members of Governing Authority a Happy Christmas. The President of The Students' Union thanked staff for all their efforts in creating a wonderful, high quality educational experience for students this semester.

Vice President of Academic Affairs

The Vice President of Academic Affairs noted that this is the first time exams have been held before the Christmas break, with only a sub set of examinations in person this year.

Work is taking place to define how DCU and our partners in ECIU might deliver on the longer term EICU University Vision 2030. It is important that this work continues to align with and enhance our ability to attain strategic institutional goals.

Chief Operations Officer

The Chief Operations Officer noted that the focus is now on the restart for semester two, where we plan on having another near normal semester. 30,000 antigen tests are due to be delivered in early December and these will be used as an additional COVID-19 risk mitigation tool with all the other safety measures currently in place to help ensure we have a safe operational environment in the University. We do need to remain agile as we learn more about the Omicron variant.

The University operates under the HEA/IUA Code of Governance for Universities 2019. However, DCU is also a registered charity as are a number of its subsidiary companies. A review of the compliance of the University and its subsidiaries with the Charities Code of Governance is on-going and any recommendations resulting from that review will be brought to Governing Authority through Audit Committee.

Director of Finance

No further update.

Director of Human Resources

The Director of Human Resources noted the following:

- The 'Our DCU' workshops have been revisited.
- The Staff Engagement Survey has been circulated and the closing date for responses is 17th December. The outputs will be examined in January.
- The Human Capital Initiative continues to be rolled out and will inform management of the types of roles needed over the coming 3-5 years.
- The President Staff Awards are taking place online next week. 79 nominations were received.
- A number of Christmas events are being held including the Children's Art Competition and two outdoor staff Christmas parties. Staff will receive a Christmas gift bag and be able to avail of the online Christmas panto.

12 STUDENT INFORMATION SYSTEM UPDATE

The Vice President of Academic Affairs informed the Authority that the momentum of the project has built significantly over the last three months. A new Programme Director has joined. Recently, detailed planning has gone into ensuring alignment of delivery streams and what resources will be needed to assist this.

Resourcing was a high risk for this project and good progress has now been made. Some roles were set at graduate level. As part of the hiring process a good development programme has been initiated. Project management resources have also been built on. The design workshops are taking place in January, where a staff member from each faculty will participate.

Full implementation will be broken down into two releases. The first release is for the second phase of CRM. This is due to go live in advance of the September 2022 intake of postgraduates. September 2023 will see the second release where we will move to the new database.

The budget is on target, however it will be revisited in January.

The Chancellor asked for a comprehensive overview of the SIS Project to be given to the Authority in the coming months.

FOR DECISION

13 PERSONNEL MATTERS

The Chancellor noted that Kara McGann met with the Director of Human Resources to discuss the process of selecting the below candidates. Kara was satisfied that the process was appropriate.

The Director of Human Resources submitted the following candidates for approval:

- Prof Deirdre Butler for appointment as Full Professor, Institute of Education.
- Dr Paul Downes for appointment as Professor, Institute of Education.
- Dr Charlotte Holland for appointment as Professor, Institute of Education.

Approved by the Authority

14 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chancellor noted that the Honorary Degree Committee met and reviewed their Terms of Reference which will be tabled to the February meeting of GA.

The Honorary Degree Committee considered a nomination of Sjur Bergan for the award of Honorary Degree and recommended that the Authority approve the awarding of an Honorary Degree recognising his major contribution in the field of education including the mutual recognition of qualifications and standards.

Approved by the Authority

DR informed the Committee that at the beginning of January he will circulate an email to all members in relation to the Ethics in Public Office Act where members have to declare any disclosable interests by them, their spouse/civil partner or a child which could materially influence them in relation to the performance of their official functions. If no such disclosable interests exist no declaration is required.

Chancellor

Date

Action Items:

<i>Action</i>	<i>Person responsible</i>	<i>Deadline</i>
1. Update on academic assurances across the University.	VP of Academic Affairs	February meeting
2. Terms of Reference of all sub committees need to be reviewed and brought back to Governing	Chair of sub committees /	February meeting

	Authority.	Declan Raftery	
3.	Circulate a breakdown of the non EU price increases by course.	Director of Finance	April 2022
4.	Governing Authority to give input into the next Strategic Plan.	All members	April 2022
5.	Draft a response to the HEA and circulate to the Chancellor for approval.	DR	ASAP
6.	A comprehensive presentation on the SIS Project.	LL	2022

Items to be tracked:

Action		Person responsible	Deadline
1.	Quarterly progress reports on each risk in the Strategic Risk Register.	President	On-going
2.	Meetings of GA to be held at different locations.	COO	Future meetings to be held on other DCU campuses and occasionally meetings will be held off campus subject to public health guidelines
3	New Executive Director of Engagement to present on International Affairs - within 3 months of appointment.	COO	Ongoing
4.	The President and Senior Management will withdraw from the April meeting each year to allow for a discussion in their absence.	President and SMG	Ongoing
5.	Comprehensive presentation on progress of the SIS Project.	LL	April and November meetings in 2022/2023