A meeting of the Academic Council was held in Renehan Hall on Monday, 22 September 2014 at 15.00 hours.


**In attendance:** M. Critchley.

The Chair and President, Professor Philip Nolan, welcomed the members to the first meeting of the Academic Council for the academic year 2014-2015. In particular he extended his welcome to the Academic Secretary for this year, Professor S eán Ó Riain, and to Dr Victor Lazzarini, as the recently appointed Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Celtic Studies and Philosophy. The following new members were introduced to the meeting: Commandant Seán Murphy, the Registrar of the Defence Forces; Professor Sharon Todd, Professor and Head of Education Department; Professor Christopher Morris, Head of the Department of Music; Dr Joe Timoney, Acting Head of the Department of Computer Science; Dr Brian Ó Catháin, Acting Director of the Language Centre; Mr Ben Finnegan, President of the Students’ Union; Mr Andrew Garrad, the Students’ Union Vice-President for Education and Ms Síona Cahill, the Students’ Union Vice-President for Welfare and Equality.

1. **Approval of Agenda:**

   Accepted.

2. **Minutes of meeting of 26 May 2014:**

   The minutes of the meeting held on 26 May 2014 were agreed and signed by the Chair.

3. **Matters Arising:**

   The President referred to the launch of the new University identity in August to the short form of “Maynooth University” and that the transition had gone well. He informed Academic Council that it had been a decision of the Governing Authority not to have a bilingual logo, as the logo would then contain fifteen words. He apologised for the lack
of care put into the use of the Irish language logo in the transition phase. The President noted that the Irish language was strong in the University and it was a missed opportunity as well as an omission not to give due prominence to Irish in using the new identity. He undertook to be much more careful and explicit in future in this regard and informed the members that the University logo could be used in either language.

4. **Correspondence:**

None.

5. **Registrar’s Business:** [AC.2014-2015.01]

The Vice-President Academic/Registrar, Professor Mulkeen, referred to the circulated document from the Disability Officer which described the specific examination supports for students with disabilities. This was for information following the discussion and approval at the May meeting of the “Policy, Guidelines and Procedures for Accommodations in Exams for Students with Disabilities” [AC.2013-2014.47].

Noted.

6. **Examination Matters: PhD Reports:** [AC.2014-2015.02]

The Vice-President Academic/Registrar referred to the circulated summary of PhD candidates whose reports had been considered and accepted at the Summer Examination Board meeting and recently at the Faculty meetings.

The Examination Boards on 25 June 2014 accepted PhD reports for candidates as follows: Biology (7), Chemistry (2), Electronic Engineering (2) and one in each of the following departments/institutes – Adult and Community Education (DED), Early Irish (Sean Ghaeilge), Economics, Finance and Accounting, Experimental Physics, Hamilton Institute, History, Psychology and Sociology.

The Faculty of Arts, Celtic Studies and Philosophy meeting of 1 September 2014 accepted PhD reports for one candidate in English and one candidate in History, and two candidates in the Department of Music.

The Faculty of Science and Engineering meeting of 2 September 2014 accepted PhD reports for two candidates in the Department of Biology, and one candidate in each of the following departments: Chemistry, Electronic Engineering, Experimental Physics, Mathematical Physics and Psychology.

The Faculty of Social Sciences meeting of 8 September 2014 accepted reports for one Doctor of Education candidate in the Department of Adult and Community Education and two PhD candidates in the Department of Sociology.

Accepted.
7. **Decisions of the Examination Appeals Board:**

The President informed Academic Council that the Examination Board had met on five occasions over the summer and considered fifteen appeals of which two were upheld and thirteen were not upheld. Noted.

8. **Organisational Framework for Research Institutes:** [AC.2014-2015.03]

The Vice-President for Research, Professor Mahon, referred to the circulated document on the Organisational Framework for the University’s Research Institutes. It has been finalised following detailed consultation with all parties and presentations at the March and May meetings of Academic Council and was now for adoption. He noted that this framework codified the organisation of the institutes and was intended to clarify the process of developing research on campus, providing supports, clarity and transparency. The Vice-President for Research stressed that this important document was not the overall research strategy of the University. For example, it did not cover supports for individual researchers which were addressed elsewhere. The focus of this document was the nuts and bolts and the technical elements of the institutes and was not intended to be inspirational.

Professor Mahon informed Academic Council that he was working towards affiliation and collaboration between institutes and departments and now it had to be put into practice. He noted that there would have to be a cultural change which would take some years to enact. The significant change since the last consideration of the document was in section 7.0 on the Expert Advisory Panel, which now included Heads of Departments in order to align department and institute strategies.

The President noted that this framework was a major step forward as it provided a constitution for research institutes and clarified many issues that had previously been unclear. While there were four institutes at this time, it was possible that others could come forward in the future. The President congratulated the Vice-President for Research on his work and sought approval from Academic Council. The proposed Organisational Framework for the Research Institutes was accepted.

9. **Academic Council Committees – proposed restructuring:** [AC.2014-2015.04]

The President introduced the document on the proposed restructuring of the committees of Academic Council and its key principles, as well as the outline of a proposed structure. He noted that there would be no change to the Boards to whom specific powers had been delegated by Academic Council.

The President informed the members that a full proposal will be forthcoming in due course and it was intended to simplify the structure by removing subcommittees and reducing the overlap of members of the University Executive sitting on these committees. He noted a blurring of lines between governance and management had occurred over the years of the operation of the current committees. The committee structure was not well aligned with the goals of the University Strategic Plan 2012-17, nor with the executive responsibilities of the Vice-Presidents and Deans. The relationship between Academic Council committees and Faculty committees was
unclear. In addition the President referred to the proposed new committee for graduate and international education, reflecting the combined portfolio of the Dean of International and Graduate Studies. The Staffing Committee had not been meeting as it dealt with resource allocation and it was therefore a difficult issue for a sub-committee of Council to deal with and not strictly within the remit of Academic Council. The proposal would change this committee’s terms of reference to be relevant to issues that Council should consider.

A member raised the issue of the role of Academic Council in campus life. The President clarified that the Campus Life Committee would pay particular attention to the educational aspects and benefits of a rich campus life and how educational activities could support and be integrated with that activity. In addition it was noted that as part of the restructuring exercise of the Governing Authority’s committees it had been proposed to have two joint committees of Governing Authority and Academic Council.

It was noted that the detailed terms of reference and membership of the committees will be developed and will go to the Faculties before being brought back to Academic Council for decision at the October meeting.

10. **Maynooth University Workload Models – Guiding Principles:** [AC.2014-2015.05]

The Vice-President for Strategy and Quality, Professor Walsh, introduced the guiding principles documents on the University workload models which was now back before Academic Council following lengthy discussions at the Faculties. He noted that the proposed approach focused on high level principles with localised implementation.

A member asked how the system might be incorporated into the promotions system, when people were working to different workload models. The Vice-President for Strategy and Quality clarified that differences across departments will be accommodated in the promotions process. The President emphasised that ensuring equity across departments was one of the key considerations in developing university-wide guidelines.

During discussion of the document the following points or queries were made by members:

(i) The importance of benchmarking to national and international norms;
(ii) How non-full time staff were treated within the policy;
(iii) Whether guides or examples of allocation models would be circulated.

The Vice-President agreed that the situation of full time staff was what he had in mind when developing the guidelines. Non-full time staff allocations would be commensurate with their contracts, but within the spirit of the higher level principles (including fairness and career development). A member queried the reference by the Vice-President for Strategy and Quality to the next phase involving closer attention to specific methodologies. He explained that the HEA was interested in having universities reduce diversity across departments within institutions. Professor Walsh was complimented by a member on his consultative and inclusive approach to developing the principles.

The document was accepted subject to the addition of reference to national and international norms and inclusion of discussion of part time (not occasional) staff. Consideration would also to be given to supporting Heads of Departments and
Academic Council will be notified of the additions to the “Guiding Principles for Maynooth University Workload Models”.

11. **Curriculum Project Update:**

The Vice-President Academic/Registrar outlined the approach to further developing the curriculum project. He reported that the project will be divided into work tasks, furthered by working groups, for which volunteers would be sought, and overseen by a coordinating group (The Project Board). Academic departments would be asked to undertake the following three tasks before Christmas:

(i) Evaluate how well the departmental undergraduate programmes match the principles of the project;
(ii) Look at the departmental programmes to see how they match the greater flexibility in module choice which will be offered to students from 2015 entry;
(iii) Consider whether the department can contribute to, or wish to cooperate on the development of, interdisciplinary programmes.

Academic Council was informed that workshops will be run and guidance given on the curriculum project.

The President reported that there will be a report back when the membership of the working groups and the Project Board have been finalised and that a description of the structure will be presented at the next meeting. In response to the Dean of Arts, Celtic Studies and Philosophy raising the concern of Faculty that information about next year’s changes be communicated in a timely fashion, the President reported that one set of requests for feedback on the above will be sent to Heads of Departments.

Noted.

12. **Membership of Student Discipline Committee:**

The Vice-President for Strategy and Quality referred to the University’s Code of Conduct for Students which related to students both on and off campus. On occasion a complaint would be made concerning a student’s conduct and the Student Discipline Committee was the University body which dealt with such matters. He outlined the membership of this committee which he had chaired for the past nine years as a Vice-President. It was noted that Dr Lyddy had already served as the Academic Council member for the past three years and was willing to continue in that capacity for the next three years if Academic Council agreed. The nomination of Dr Lyddy to serve as the Academic Council member on the Student Discipline Board was approved.


The Director of the Computer Centre, Mr Carolan, referred to the Annual Report for the academic year 2012-2013 which had been considered in detail by the Academic Support Services Committee in April. The President thanked Mr Carolan and noted that following the revision of the committee structure such annual reports will come directly to Academic Council for information. Noted.
14. **Librarian’s Annual Report 2012-2013: [AC.2014-15.07]**

The Librarian reported that his annual report for the academic year 2012-2013 had been discussed at the May meeting of the Academic Support Services Committee. He outlined the significant changes made at the Library and some outstanding concerns including the refurbishment of two floors which were not covered in the original refurbishment, the need to invest in the Russell Library to address physical and access issues and the need for storage space for low usage yet important library material and records. The continuing significant shift from printed to electronic materials was also highlighted. Noted.

The President commented that this was a very good report and a quality service had been delivered by the Library.

The President congratulated the staff in the Computer Centre and the Library on their work.

15. **Appointment of Selection Board: [AC.2014-2015.08]**

The following selection board was before Academic Council for approval:

**Professor in Physical Geography (Climate Science)**

Internal: Professor Philip Nolan, President (Chair)  
Dr Jan Rigby, Head of the Department of Geography  
Dr Rowan Fealy, Acting Director of ICARUS  
Professor Rowena Pecchenino, Dean of Social Sciences  
Dr Frank Mulligan, Department of Experimental Physics

External: Professor Barbara Maher, Lancaster Environment Centre, Lancaster University  
Professor Robert Wilby, Professor of Hydroclimatic Modelling, Loughborough University  
(Reserve) Professor Martin Siegert, Grantham Institute for Climate Change, Imperial College London

Approved.

16. **Selection Boards for note: [AC.2014-2015.09]**

The following selection boards had been circulated by email during the summer to all members of Academic Council for approval. There had been no objections and these Boards were for noting.

Circulated 24 June 2014

**Assistant Lecturer/Lecturer in Education: Professional Mathematics in the Froebel Department of Primary and Early Childhood Education**

Internal: Professor Rowena Pecchenino, Dean of Social Sciences (Chair – President’s nominee)  
Professor Marie McLoughlin, Head of Froebel Department of Primary and Early Childhood Education
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Ms Patsy Stafford, Froebel Department of Primary and Early Childhood Education
Dr Ciarán Mac an Bhaird, Department of Mathematics and Statistics and Maths Support Centre Manager

External: Dr Seán Delaney, Registrar and Senior Lecturer, Marino Institute of Education, Dublin 3.

Circulated 7 August 2014

Lecturer in Education: Social, Environmental and Scientific Education in the Froebel Department of Primary and Early Childhood Education

Internal: Professor Rowena Pecchenino, Dean of Social Sciences (Chair – President’s nominee)
Professor Marie McLoughlin, Head of Froebel Department of Primary and Early Childhood Education
Mr Brian Tubbert, Senior Lecturer, Froebel Department of Primary & Early Childhood Education
Dr Rose Dolan, Acting Head of the Education Department
Dr Shelagh Waddington, Department of Geography

External: Dr Paul Madden, Lecturer, Marino Institute of Education, Dublin 3.

Lecturer in Education: Music Education (Half/Time) in the Froebel Department of Primary and Early Childhood Education

Internal: Professor Rowena Pecchenino, Dean of Social Sciences (Chair – President’s nominee)
Professor Marie McLoughlin, Head of Froebel Department of Primary and Early Childhood Education
Mr Seamie O’Neill, Head of Education, Froebel Department of Primary and Early Childhood Education
Dr Rose Dolan, Acting Head of the Education Department
Dr Alison Hood, Department of Music

External: Mr Ian Packham, Music Education, Church of Ireland College of Education, Dublin 6.

Amended Selection Boards for note:
Approved by Academic Council on 26 May 2014 and subsequently amended:

Professor and Head of Department of English

Internal: Professor Philip Nolan, President (Chair)
Dr Thomas O’Connor, Dean of Arts, Celtic Studies and Philosophy
Dr Emer Nolan, Acting Head of Department of English
Professor Joe Cleary, Department of English
Dr Michael Dunne, Head of Department of Philosophy
Dr Fiona Lyddy, Dean of Science and Engineering (addition)

External: Professor Lionel Pilkington, Department of English, NUI Galway
Professor James Chandler, Department of English Language and Literature, University of Chicago
Joint Board for the following two posts:
Lecturer in Design Innovation (3 Year Contract Post)
Lecturer in Anthropology (Half-time – 3 Year Contract Post)

Internal:  Professor Ray O’Neill, Vice-President for Innovation (Chair – President’s nominee)
           (in place of Professor Rowena Pecchenino, Dean of Social Sciences)
           Dr Frank Devitt, Head of Department of Design Innovation
           Dr Mark Maguire, Head of Department of Anthropology
           Dr Pauline Garvey, Department of Anthropology
           Dr Rose Dolan, Acting Head of Education Department (addition)

External:  Dr David Prendergast, Principal Investigator, Intel Institute for Sustainable Connected Cities

17. Academic Appointments: [AC.2014-2015.10]  
The President referred to the circulated list of academic appointments which had been made over the summer. He went through the list noting that some posts remained to be filled and the following appointments were noted by Academic Council.

   Lecturer in Mathematical Physics
      Dr Masud Haque

   Lecturer in Electronic Engineering (3 years)
      Dr Le Nam Tran
      Dr Souheil Ben Smida

   Lecturer in History (British)
      Dr Jonathan Wright

   Lecturer in Music
      Dr Estelle Murphy

   Lecturer in Spanish
      Dr Antonio Calvo Maturana

   Lecturer in Chemistry
      Dr Elisa Fadda
      Dr Robert Elmes

   Professor & Head of Education
      Professor Sharon Todd

   Lecturer in Education
      Dr Thomas Walsh

   Lecturer in Geography
      Dr Cian O'Callaghan

   Lecturer in Law
      Dr Delia Ferri
Dr Cliodhna Murphy
Lecturer in Business
Dr Christina Donnelly
Dr Marian Crowley-Henry
Dr Na Fu
Dr Olga Ryazanova
Professor/Senior Lecturer in Law
Dr Claire Hamilton
Dr Noelle Higgins
Professor/Senior Lecturer in Business
Professor Pamela Sharkey
Dr John Cullen
Assistant Lecturer in Accounting
Dr Aodhain Casey
Lecturer in Education (Maths) – Froebel
Mr Eddie Costello
Lecturer in Education (SESE) – Froebel
Ms Bernadette Wrynn


The provisional schedule of meetings for 2014-2015 had been circulated and the President noted these may change if the committees were restructured.

19. **Any Other Business:**

(a) A member raised the question of the cost of the re-branding exercise. The President gave an estimate of the design side costing €20-30,000, with similar costs in associated activities. He noted that these were orders of magnitude that will be clarified under Matters Arising at the next Academic Council meeting.

(b) The President noted that the Honorary Degrees Committee has met and will reconvene to further consider the award of honorary doctorates. It had made decisions on a number of doctorates and also developed some additional potential candidates.

(c) The Vice-President Academic/Registrar proposed co-opting the Director of Registry on to Academic Council. This was proposed (1) in order to avoid disjuncture between decisions at Academic Council and implementation in the Registrar’s Office and (2) so that the nuances of discussions at Academic Council were not lost on the staff in the Registrar’s Office. Agreed.
20. **Date of Next Meeting:**

The next ordinary meeting will be held on **Monday, 20 October 2014** at 15.00 hours in Renehan Hall. The meeting concluded at 15.55 hours.

Professor Seán Ó Riain  
Secretary

*Items for the next ordinary meeting should be sent to the Secretary of Council, c/o Academic Council Office, Humanity House, South Campus by midday on Wednesday, 8 October 2014.*