

## **Quality Promotion Sub-Committee**

Minutes of the meeting of 24 August 2010

**Present:** Professor Jim Walsh (Chair), Professor Tom Collins, Dr Honor Fagan, Dr Bernard Mahon, Mr Aengus Ó Maoláin, Professor Ray O'Neill, Dr Tom O'Connor, Dr Richard Watson (Secretary).

**Apologies:** Professor Margaret Kelleher, Mr Cathal McCauley, Mr Colm Nelson, Professor Rowena Pecchenino, Dr David Redmond.

The Chair welcomed to the committee the new student representative, Mr Aengus Ó Maoláin, who is the President of the Students' Union. In view of the number of documents for consideration, it was agreed to postpone consideration of the Quality Implementation Plans to another meeting.

### **1. Minutes of meeting of 4 June 2010**

The draft minutes of this meeting had been circulated and were accepted.

### **2. Matters arising**

Under 2, the Vice President for Research confirmed that the review of the Commercialisation Office had taken place, and may be published by NUIM; he is to discuss with the Director of Quality if the resulting report fulfills the legal requirements of the Universities Act 1997. Also under 2, it was reported that the Dean of Graduate Studies and the Director of Quality had agreed that a review of the Graduate Studies Office should take place within the next few months, and a separate review of the Graduate School during the academic year 2011-12.

Under 4, the Notes of the meeting on 4 June 2010, which had been circulated, were accepted as suitable for publication on the web after deletion of the lists of those present and those who had sent apologies.

### **3. Self Assessment Reports**

#### **3.1 Research Support Services**

The Vice President for Research was absent for discussion of this item. The QPSC reviewed the draft Self Assessment Report of the Research Support Office. The Sub-

Committee considered that it was an excellent report, providing much qualitative and quantitative information as well as useful evaluation. The report describes in great detail the considerable advances and achievements made over a short space of time, but it also includes a very honest assessment of the activities of the Office: the SWOT analysis was particularly admired.

Various substantive matters identified in the Report as needing attention, such as the structure of the Office, communications issues, and the need for legal expertise, were noted by the Sub-Committee and will certainly be addressed during the Peer Review Visit. The Sub-Committee had few suggestions for changes in the Report, and the improvements which the changes are intended to achieve might be more easily accomplished during the Peer Review Visit. The general thrust of the document in seeking more support for front line activities is in accord with that of the IRIU Report on NUI Maynooth, and mention might be made of the linked concerns. There might also be some mention of outcomes from the review of the Commercialisation Office, if these are available: these would no doubt be of considerable interest to the Peer Review Group. Finally, there are a few typos which the Director of Quality was to convey to the Vice President for Research and the Research Support Co-ordinator.

### **3.2 Student Services**

The QPSC reviewed the draft Self Assessment Report of Student Services. It commended the manner in which so many disparate offices and departments had worked separately and in consultation with each other to produce a coherent account of their varied activities, and congratulated the Director of Student Services on the successful production of the draft Report. It welcomed in particular the evidence that the Student Services departments are moving towards closer cooperation, in ways such as the establishment of the Information Point and the search for a Common Project.

There was general agreement that there are services provided which are difficult to evaluate and have impacts which are impossible to measure: much of the self evaluation is necessarily focussed on “internal” data, known only to the service providers. For example, to remark that a certain percentage of the student population availed of a particular service does not on its own give an indication of the value of that service. Nevertheless, the Sub-Committee suggested that, in some cases, it might help the Peer Review Group if some comparisons were made with services provided in other universities of a similar size. These comparisons might help in the formulation and justification of recommendations: it strengthens an argument for additional staff, for example, if it can be pointed out that a similar office serving similar numbers of students in another institution has a greater number of staff members. It might even be possible to establish benchmarks by looking at the overall situation in the Irish universities.

The Sub-Committee had a few suggestions which are intended to improve the presentation.

1. The size of the tables on pages 6 and 7 could be increased: they are difficult to read with the present font size.
2. The “Lessons Learned” as stated at the foot of page 16 should be modified. It is a misrepresentation of the Campus Development Plan, which includes the intention to find new pitches to replace any built upon. In particular, the last sentence should be removed.
3. There are a few typos which the Director of Quality was to convey to the Director of Student Services.

#### **4. Quality Implementation Plans**

Consideration of these was deferred to the next meeting; and it was agreed that the Sub-Committee should give some further thought as to how best the process of “Follow-up” might be completed, in such a way as to preserve a collegial approach without causing undue delay in responding to the Departments.

#### **5. Response to Institutional Report on NUIM**

A draft Action Plan had been composed and circulated. There were some entries which were still to be made and it was hoped that these could be collected before the next meeting of the Sub-Committee. It was agreed that at that meeting the Sub-Committee should also have a full discussion on Benchmarking in the light of the documents prepared by the Institutional Research Officer and the Vice President for Research.

#### **6. Forthcoming reviews**

Several members volunteered to act as Internal Reviewers, as in the following table

<i>Date</i>	<i>Departments/Services &amp; Supports</i>	<i>Internal Reviewers (1 or 2, + 1 sub)</i>
21 – 22 September 2010	Research Support Services	Professor Jim Walsh
19 – 21 October 2010	Student Services	Professor Jim Walsh
15 – 17 November 2010	Library	Professor Ray O’Neill
8 – 10 February 2011	Access Office	Dr Honor Fagan
15 – 17 February 2011	French	Dr Bernard Mahon

In addition, Dr Mahon volunteered to act as an Internal Reviewer in the review of the Registrar’s Office, the date of which has yet to be fixed. The Director undertook to seek for more volunteers.

## **7. AOB**

It was agreed that the next meeting would take place at 2.30 pm on Friday 3 September.