

Quality Promotion Sub-Committee

Minutes of the meeting of 4 June 2010

Present: Professor Jim Walsh, Professor Ray O’Neill, Professor Rowena Pecchenino, Dr Honor Fagan, Dr Tom O’Connor, Dr Richard Watson.

Apologies: Professor Margaret Kelleher, Mr Colm Nelson, Dr David Redmond, Mr Cathal McCauley, Professor Tom Collins.

The Secretary thanked all those who had done so much on his behalf in his absence, particularly Professor Walsh for doing the work of the Director of Quality in Departmental reviews and for acting as Institutional Coordinator in the Institutional Review, Professor Tom Collins for acting as Secretary to the QPSC, and Ms Marguerite Lohan for conducting the business of the Quality Promotion Office single handed.

1. Minutes of meetings of 12&15 January, 19 January, 22 January, 27 January, 5 February, 15 March 2010

The draft minutes of these meetings had been circulated and were accepted.

2. Matters arising

A long discussion took place concerning the reviews of the Research Office, the Graduate Studies Office, and the Commercialisation Office, arising from AOB of the meeting of 5 February 2010. It was agreed that a review would take place of Research Support Services, to include the Office of the Vice President for Research and the Research Support Office, and the other offices only in so far as they fall within the oversight of the Vice President for Research. The Commercialisation Office is being reviewed separately, at the behest of Enterprise Ireland, and it is hoped that the resulting report may fulfill the legal requirements of the Universities Act 1997. The Research Support Office will also be reviewed separately, but it was thought that it might be too soon to conduct a review of the School of Graduate Studies. The School exists on paper but many people are unaware of its envisaged role; it might be better to rename the School as “Graduate School” and the Dean as “Dean of Graduate School”, in order to provide a more recognizable structure with a

higher profile. There is also a need to address the matters relating to the postgraduate experience mentioned in Section 4 of the Institutional Report, and to examine the positioning of the Graduate Studies Sub-Committee as a subcommittee of the Research Committee. The Dean and the Director of Quality are to discuss how best to conduct quality reviews of the Graduate School and the Graduate Studies Office

3. Action plan in response to Institutional Report on NUIM

The Sub-Committee considered each of the recommendations in Section 6 of the Institutional Report and assigned responsibility for action in each case.

- 6.12 President and Chair of Governing Authority
- 6.13 President as Chair of IUA
- 6.14 Vice-President for Innovation (It was remarked that the appropriate response to this recommendation has already been made in the preparation of the Adjustment Strategy)
- 6.15 Human Resources
- 6.16 Deputy President, in consultation with Senior Officers
- 6.17 QPSC
- 6.18 QPSC
- 6.19 Director of Quality
- 6.20 Director of Quality and QPSC
- 6.21 Dean of Teaching and Learning
- 6.22 Alumni Office, informed by the Career Development Centre as regards the First Destination Survey, and in cooperation with the Institutional Research Officer
- 6.23 Institutional Research Officer, Vice President for Research, QPSC
- 6.24 Dean of Teaching and Learning (The Teaching and Learning Committee is already at work on this)
- 6.25 QPSC
- 6.26 Deputy President
- 6.27 QPSC

It was agreed that the Director of Quality would prepare appropriate documentation for this process beginning with letters to go from the Deputy President to those responsible for the actions.

4. Annual Dialogue with IUQB

The visit of IUQB to NUIM for the Annual Dialogue meeting took place on 11 May 2010, and was attended by the Deputy President, the Registrar and Director of Quality. A useful and amicable discussion took place. One of the proposals arising from the meeting was that the QPSC should consider publishing notes, as distinct from minutes, of its meetings. It was agreed that such notes of a meeting for publication on the web would be approved at the following meeting of QPSC.

5. The follow up process

The Director of Quality expressed concern at the difficulty of ensuring completion of the follow up process and obtaining a Quality Implementation Plan (QIP) for publication on the web. It was agreed that when the Peer Review Report (PRR) is sent to the Head in charge of the unit under review, a request be made that the unit start preparing a QIP by grouping the recommendations of the PRR under three main headings:

- i. Recommendations which the unit could implement unaided
- ii. Recommendations which the unit could implement only with assistance from other bodies within the University and without cost implications
- iii. Recommendations which the unit could implement only if additional resources are provided by the University

In the case of each recommendation, the unit should make a response to include statements concerning some or all of the following:

- what actions are required, by the unit or other bodies, in order that the recommendation be implemented
- what resources might be required, including an indication of the level of capital or recurrent expenditure involved
- whether or not the recommendation has already been implemented since the Peer Review Visit
- for a recommendation which does not require additional resources, what the proposed timeframe is for the actions required to implement the recommendation if it has not already been implemented, or, if it has been

decided not to implement the recommendation, what the reasons are for this decision

It was thought that many of the recommendations which require significant additional resources should be listed in the Annual Report of the QPSC and referred to the Planning and Development Committee for consideration on an annual basis.

In addition to the detailed responses to each recommendation, the unit may, if it so wishes, make a general response to the Peer Review Report, for inclusion as an appendix to the draft QIP. When the draft QIP is completed, within a three month period, it should be submitted to the QPSC for consideration. The comments of the QPSC should be conveyed to the Head of the unit by the Secretary of the QPSC, and a revised draft, along with any comments of the QPSC, should be submitted by the Secretary to the President. The Head arranges a meeting with the President to agree a final version of the document, which is signed by both President and Head and returned to the Secretary for publication on the web as the QIP.

6. Consideration of responses to Peer Review Reports

Responses to Peer Review Reports had been received from the Departments of Chemistry, Electronic Engineering and Psychology, and from the Hamilton Institute. In the light of the preceding discussion, it was agreed that the Secretary should follow existing procedures as clarified above and seek to obtain from each Head or Director a QIP which no doubt would incorporate their responses. Some doubt was expressed as to the feasibility of obtaining a QIP in the form envisaged above from Heads who had already responded to the PRR and in some cases met the \President.

7. Annual report

The Annual Report of the QPSC and the QPO to the Governing Authority had been prepared and was circulated to the Sub-Committee. It was adopted for submission to the Planning and Development Committee and the Governing Authority.

8. Forthcoming reviews

It was agreed that the following offices, units and departments be reviewed, with the peer review visit to take place in the next academic year 2010-11:

Student Services

Library

Registrar's Office

International Office

Access Office

Corporate Services

Research Support Office

Department of French

Department of Philosophy

Centre for Media Studies

It was decided that reviews of the Centre for Teaching and Learning, the School of Graduate Studies (or Graduate School), and the Human Resources Office would be deferred until the following academic year.

9. AOB

The Director of Quality informed the QPSC that Dr Inga Milisiunaite, Director of the Quality Management Center, Vilnius University, Lithuania, is due to visit the University on 16 June in order to discuss approaches to quality assurance and enhancement procedures. She is to meet the Deputy President at 2.30 p.m., and will be in the Council Room from 3.15 p.m. to 4.30 p.m. Any members of the QPSC who wish to join in the discussion are invited to come along during that time.