

*Incorporating any amendments approved at subsequent Board meetings*

**The University of Dublin**

**Trinity College**

**Minutes of Board Meeting, 21 January 2004**

*Present* Provost (Dr J Hegarty), Vice-Provost (Dr J B Grimson), Registrar (Mr R A Stalley), Bursar (Dr J W O'Hagan), Senior Lecturer (Dr S M Greene), Dr S P A Allwright, Mr M Dowling, Dr L E Doyle, Dr S Duffy, Dr J A Fitzpatrick, Ms H Fychan, Ms A-M Gatling, Dr H Gibbons, Mr H Kearns, Ms M Leahy, Dr J G Lunney, Mr M Miley, Dr A N M Ní Chasaide, Mrs J O'Hara, Ms E K Stokes, Dr D L Weaire, Dr T T West.

*Apologies* Mr B Connolly, Dr H M C V Hoey, Dr J C Sexton, Dr F Shevlin.

*In attendance*

*(ex officio)* Secretary, Treasurer, Assistant Secretary.

*(by invitation)* Ms Laura Gallagher, KPMG, the Deputy Treasurer, Mr D Kingston, Chairman of the Audit Committee, and the Internal Auditor for item 5/136.

The Provost welcomed Ms Gallagher attending Board for the first time.

**5/136 Financial Statements – Year to 30 September 2003** The Board considered the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 September 2003, Additional Financial Information for the same year, Financial Statements for Ghala Limited for the year ended 30 September 2003, report from KPMG relating to the Prompt Payment of Accounts Act 1997 for the year ended 30 September 2003, Academic Faculties and Departments - Analysis of Recurrent Expenditure and Research Accounts for the year ended 30 September 2003 and a memorandum, dated 14 January 2004, from the Chairman of the Audit Committee with an accompanying letter from KPMG dated 9 January 2004, all of which had been circulated. The Treasurer advised that the financial statements which were currently before the Board were the initial part of a two-stage financial reporting process, noting that financial statements prepared in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) for the same financial year will also be drafted.

The Treasurer made a presentation in relation to the Financial Statements outlining:

- (i) background to the format of the Financial Statements;
- (ii) review of accounting policies and the legislative environment;
- (iii) outcomes of the Audit;
- (iv) reporting requirements under corporate governance;
- (v) capital activities during 2002/2003 with identification of capital related financial risks;
- (vi) summary of research activity along with research related financial risks;
- (vii) income and expenditure highlights along with identification of ongoing financial risks;
- (viii) matters which need to be constantly reviewed from a risk perspective.

The Treasurer also invited the Board's attention to five issues which had previously been considered in the context of 2000/01 Financial Statements, and which the Treasurer noted could have ongoing relevance to the College in the context of the *Agenda for Change*.

Ms Gallagher of KPMG, present by invitation, advised the Board that, following the completion of the audit on 3 December 2003, the KPMG audit team had met with the Audit Committee with which it discussed all relevant issues. Ms Gallagher also advised Board that there are no out-standing audit matters which the auditors needed to bring to Board's attention and subject to Board approval of the accounts, KPMG will be issuing an unqualified audit opinion. The Board noted that an unqualified audit opinion had been issued in relation to the College's compliance with the Prompt Payments of Accounts Act, 1997 and in relation to Ghala Ltd., further noting that there were no material matters of concern to the Auditors in relation to internal controls.

The Chairman of the Audit Committee, present by invitation, advised Board that, following detailed discussions with KPMG and the Treasurer's Office, the Audit Committee was in a position to report that there are no issues of concern which should be brought to the attention of Board when considering the approval of the financial statements for the year under review. The Chairman commended both the Treasurer's Office and KPMG for the smooth transition from the previous auditors, delivering the audited financial statements in a very tight timeframe against the background of the current financial crisis. The Chairman invited Board's attention to two issues of concern which KPMG had outlined in their letter to the Audit Committee, namely the potential consequences of funding deficits in the future and the fact that the Board may wish, in the future, to make a formal annual statement in relation to financial controls, noting that the Audit Committee would advise Board in relation to associated audit issues. The Chairman of the Audit Committee concluded by advising Board that, in the view of the Audit Committee, there was no reason why the financial accounts should not be approved.

In response to queries from a number of Board members, the Treasurer clarified technical issues in relation to the accounts and agreed to supply details on the income and expenditure of the Library Shop to Dr Lunney.

The Board noted Mr Dowling's comments in relation to resources for postgraduate students.

In response to a query, the Chairman of the Audit Committee advised Board that the development of a policy on financial reserves is particularly challenging for the College in view of its dependence on State funding and the lack of clarity as to whether the College or the State carries the financial risks in the current environment, further advising that a model for financial management should be developed. The Provost advised Board that the Bursar is developing proposals for a model to manage financial reserves which will be considered by Board in due course.

The Financial Statements for the College and the letter of representation were approved by the Board and signed by the Provost and the Treasurer, subject to an amendment to note 29 of the Financial Statements.

The Provost invited Board's attention to a draft verification letter to the HEA in relation to financial governance for 2003 which he, following consultation with the Board, is required to provide under the agreed 'Financial Governance of Irish Universities – Balancing Accountability and Autonomy'. The Board approved the letter as drafted.

The Board thanked the Treasurer and her staff for their very hard work in preparing the financial statements within the required deadlines.

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Ms Gallagher, Mr Kingston, the Internal Auditor and the Deputy Treasurer withdrew from the meeting.

In response to a query, the Treasurer advised Board that research accounts are allocated to the department which is deemed to be the primary grant holder and that it would not be possible to allocate funds to partner departments within College, noting that it may be possible in future editions of the 'Analysis of Recurrent Expenditure and Research Accounts' to advise readers of this arrangement by way of a general footnote.

The Treasurer also advised Board that following a meeting with the HEA, a submission had been made in relation to the College's finances, noting that the terms of reference for the HEA review are currently being finalised.

**5/137 Finance Committee** - The Board noted and approved the recommendations recorded in the Minutes of the meeting of the Finance Committee held on 7 January 2004.

**5/138 Senior Lecturer's Annual Report, 2002-03** In introducing the report, the Senior Lecturer stated that the report contained information on various activities within the Senior Lecturer's Area during 2002-03 and provided information on undergraduate admissions in 2003. Noting that the report was expanding each year, the Senior Lecturer invited suggestions on what material might be removed from future versions. Notwithstanding this, she commented that the report was not comprehensive in terms of all academic issues nor in relation to the Senior Lecturer's activities.

The Senior Lecturer invited attention to aspects of the data presented under the following headings:

- (i) **Applications and Admissions** Trinity attracted 11% of first preference applications in the CAO system (12.6% in 2002) and there was an overall College ratio of first preference applications to course quotas of 2.9:1 (same as 2002), noting the variation in the ratio of the number of students who meet course requirements to quotas across different disciplines.
  - Students with a Disability* Information is available on the number of applicants who disclose on the CAO form that they have a disability.
  - Entrance Exhibitioners* A total of 491 new entrants achieved 545 points or more and all were awarded Entrance Exhibitions (470 students in 2002). A reception for all Entrance Exhibitioners, parents and school principals was held over three evenings in November 2003. Sixty-two percent of Entrance Exhibitioners were female (66% in 2002).
  - Students applying under the Mature Student Dispensation Scheme* There were 783 (696 in 2002) students applying for entry under the mature student dispensation scheme of whom 132 were offered places and 101 students registered (105 in 2002).
  - New Entrants Survey* Two thousand and thirty-seven students (2037), representing 82% of new entrants, responded to the survey. Trinity's reputation for quality in teaching, its international reputation and its location were the top three reasons which motivated students to seek admission.
  - Schools Liaison Activities* A wide range of schools liaison activities was reported on and it was noted that admission materials and the website had recently been improved. The Senior Lecturer advised Board that additional resources will be required for this area over the coming years. The Board noted that the Undergraduate Student Recruitment Advisory Group will present its report to the Academic Affairs Committee in the near future.

- (ii) **Trinity Access Programmes** The progression rate of students from the Trinity Access Programmes continued to be very high and the Senior Lecturer emphasised the need for College to strengthen its commitment to these initiatives.
- (iii) **Student Population** The total student population had increased to 15,511 students (15,165 in 2001-02) and information was presented on geographical distribution, gender distribution and category of students. The Senior Lecturer noted that that the Board decision to cap the number of undergraduate students was due for review during this academic year.
- (iv) **Academic Staff** There were 49 new staff appointments in 2002-03 (97 in 2001-02). The average College staff:student ratio was 1:17 (same as previous year).
- (v) **Academic Progress** It was noted that the Deans' Committee conducts an annual review of Junior Freshman Pass Rates and will in due course make a report to Council. The percentage of Junior Freshman students who successfully completed the year in 2002-03 averaged 88% (same as previous year).  
*Foundation Scholarship* A total of 316 students presented for the Foundation Scholarship examination in 2003 (287 in 2002) and 67 Scholarships were awarded (64 in 2002).  
*Commencements, Firsts and Gold Medals* In 2002, 28 commencement ceremonies were held during which 4075 degrees were conferred (4340 in 2001). A total of 319 students received first class honors degrees in 2003 (285 in 2002) and of these, 53 received gold medals (46 in 2002).  
*Distribution of Grades achieved at Degree Examinations 2003* Fifteen percent of students achieved a first class result at their degree examination, 56% achieved a second class first division and 21% achieved a second class second division result.  
*Student Retention* A number of projects were undertaken by the Student Counselling Service in the area of student retention, supported by the HEA Targeted Initiatives Programme.
- (vi) **Academic Developments** Under this heading, brief reports were provided on the Broad Curriculum initiative, the Bologna process, implementation of the recommendations arising from the Working Party on Teaching and Learning which had been considered by Council at its meeting on 14 January 2004, the establishment of the Centre for Academic Practice and Student Learning, and the work of the Centre for Learning Technology.
- (vii) **Quality Issues** The Quality Office's activities had been subsumed into the Centre for Academic Practice and Student Learning. Information was provided on academic departmental reviews, the centralised student feedback facility, the teaching development grants scheme and the Provost's Teaching Awards. It was noted that the Higher Education Authority (HEA), in conjunction with the Irish Universities Quality Board, had initiated a review of quality assurance procedures in Irish Universities which will be undertaken by the European University Association.

In response to a queries the Senior Lecturer advised Board that:

- (i) feedback from students and Career Counsellors suggests that the Open Day is a very effective source of information for prospective students;
- (ii) the current review of TSM will try and address issues in relation to quotas;
- (iii) the gender balance of Trinity's undergraduate population is similar to that in the older universities in Ireland, noting that the University of Limerick and Dublin City University, with a greater number of computer and engineering courses, have a more even gender balance among their student populations;

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- (iv) the introduction of the Irish Universities Quality Board has been a very positive initiative, noting that each university will have to ensure that it develops a systematic procedure for reviewing its activities on an on-going basis;
- (v) the College is free to adjust its quotas in almost all courses, noting that a range of issues must be taken into consideration in any such exercise.

The Board noted Dr Duffy's request that the nationality of EU students be provided in future reports and Mr Dowling's suggestions that a survey of new entrant postgraduate student, similar to that for undergraduate students, be carried out on a regular basis and that provision be made to improve the postgraduate admissions website.

In response to a query, the Secretary advised Board that proposals in relation to vacant Chairs will be presented to Board before the end of this academic year.

On behalf of Board, the Provost thanked the Senior Lecturer, the Academic Secretary, and the staff of the Senior Lecturer's Office for preparing the report. He noted that the information in the report together with other information would be relevant in determining criteria on the allocation of resources in the future.

**5/139 Disciplinary Matter** (see Minute 2/36 of 22 October 2003) The Secretary advised Board that following receipt of legal advice, members of the Working Group established by Board, (Dr Allwright, Dr Fitzpatrick and Dr West and he), had met to consider whether the Board could reinstate a named member of staff who had resigned his Fellowship. The Board, noting the legal advice as presented verbally, and the view of the Working Group, decided that it was not in a position to allow reinstatement. It also noted the legal view that reinstatement could only be by re-election to Fellowship.

Signed: .....

Date: .....