

The University of Dublin

Trinity College

Minutes of Special Board Meeting, 10 March 2009

<i>Present</i>	Provost (Dr J Hegarty), Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer (Dr P J Prendergast), Senior Lecturer (Dr A Douglas), Registrar (Dr J Barkhoff), Dr S P A Allwright, Mr P Connell, Mr W J Dowling, Ms O S Foley, Dr E Mac Cárthaigh, Dr A McElligott, Dr K J McGinley, Ms P Murphy, Dr E J O'Halpin, Dr A J Piesse, Dr D M Singleton, Mr H Sullivan, Mr B Sweeney, Dr J K Vij.
<i>Apologies</i>	Bursar (Dr M M O'Mahony), Ms G Clarke, Mr R Hodson, Dr J F McGilp, Dr D O'Neill, Mr C Reilly, Dr H J Rice, Dr S M Ryan, Dr K Walshe.
<i>In attendance</i>	
<i>(ex officio)</i>	Acting Secretary, Treasurer (Acting).
<i>(by invitation)</i>	Chief Operating Officer.

SECTION A

BD/08-09/182 TCD/UCD Innovation Alliance The Provost, introducing the topic, thanked Board members for attending the Special Board meeting which had been convened at short notice to brief Board on the proposed TCD/UCD Innovation Alliance and to seek Board's support for the initiative, noting that the University Council had strongly endorsed the Alliance at a meeting held earlier that day.

The Provost invited Board's attention to the considerations currently being given in a number of fora to the rationalisation of the university sector as a response to the current financial difficulties. He also advised Board of the opportunities and responsibilities offered to the sector by the government's proposals on the development of a Smart Economy announced in December 2008, and by the call for proposals under PRTL 5, both of which stressed the importance of collaboration between third level institutions.

Noting the previous discussions which had taken place at Board in recent months (minutes BD/08-09/121 of 28 January 2009 and BD/08-09/087 of 9 December 2008 refer), the Provost outlined the background to the discussions which had taken place with UCD, confirming that the proposals would result in an alliance, not a merger, between the two institutions, based on the Memorandum of Understanding which had been signed in February 2007. He advised Board that the planned alliance with UCD would build on pre-existing activities in the two institutions, including Trinity's Broad Curriculum for undergraduate students, and would ensure the inclusion of innovation and entrepreneurial skills in the education of all students, thereby contributing in a significant way to sustainable job creation. The Board noted that the initiative taken by Trinity and UCD in developing the Innovation Alliance, which would be the catalyst for the development of an Innovation Ecosystem in Dublin, is a factor in ensuring National Development Plan Funds for the sector as a whole.

The Provost also stated that the proposed alliance with UCD would not preclude maintaining, or developing, collaborations with other institutions where it was appropriate to do so.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer invited Board's attention to the details of the proposed alliance addressing in particular:

- (i) the requirements of an innovation system to stimulate national economic recovery;
- (ii) the partnership elements of an Innovation Ecosystem, viz. education, government and enterprise/venture capital;
- (iii) the role of innovation as a third pillar of university activity to complement teaching and research;
- (iv) the critical mass which an alliance between UCD and TCD could provide in terms of undergraduate and postgraduate student numbers and research funding, citing the success of existing collaborations as evidenced by the numbers of publications and citations;
- (v) the components of the proposed 4th level Innovation Academy and how they would meet the identified needs of business including joint planning of research strengths, joint and complementary structure PhD programmes, the provision of modules on entrepreneurship and innovation, addressing the issue of poor take-up of mathematics and science at the second level and the need to engage in continuous professional development;
- (vi) the role of government in the establishment of an Innovation Ecosystem, noting in particular the importance of a high-level Innovation Task Force which it was expected would be announced by the Taoiseach on the following day;
- (vii) the establishment of a Global Hub for innovative industries physically located in the area between the two institutions.

In conclusion, the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer, noting the College's duty to respond to the current national crisis, identified the rationale for Trinity's participation in the alliance with UCD, noting in particular:

- the achievement of critical mass;
- the previous track record of collaborations between the two institutions;
- the physical proximity of the two institutions;
- the speed with which proposals could be initiated.

In discussing the proposed alliance, the following points were made by Board members:

- (a) the College, for the national good, is correct to participate in an alliance with UCD;
- (b) there will have to be cross-party engagement to ensure the long-term political support for the Alliance once it is established;
- (c) in order to achieve maximum benefit from the proposed alliance the relatively poor standards of mathematics and science at second level will have to be tackled;
- (d) there is a need to harness the knowledge generated in universities to bridge the gap between the sector and the needs of industry from campus companies to small and medium sized indigenous companies to foreign-owned industries located in Ireland;
- (e) resources should be secured for Trinity and UCD to maintain their on-going activities and further the aims of the Alliance;
- (f) there is a need for greater flexibility in the management of universities' intellectual property to ensure that there will be maximum gain for the national economy;
- (g) innovation is best taught by students actively participating in innovative activities as an integral part of their core disciplines;

Incorporating any amendments approved at subsequent Board meetings

- (h) the implementation of the Innovation Alliance should not be at the expense of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences which account for the majority of undergraduate students;
- (i) National Development Plan funds should be secured to fund the re-skilling of unemployed graduates;
- (j) the Alliance, and the associated initiatives, introduced by the Innovation Task Force must operate to the highest ethical standards.

In response to queries, the Provost and the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer advised Board that:

- (i) the proposed alliance would build on, and complement, the existing Dublin Region Higher Education Alliance under which Trinity already has collaborative arrangements in place with other institutions;
- (ii) the Alliance aims to increase the number of spin-off companies from the two institutions and, at the same time, enhance the career prospects for postgraduate students and postdoctoral researchers;
- (iii) the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences will not be marginalised in the development of the Innovation Alliance, noting the importance of integrating these disciplines into the initiative in a sustainable and successful manner;
- (iv) while there is disquiet in some institutions at the impact which the proposed alliance will have on the unity of the sector and the role of the IUA, Trinity and UCD both feel that they have a duty to respond to the challenges of the Government's plans for a Smart Economy and it is expected that other institutions may develop similar collaborative proposals in due course;
- (v) there is a high-level team in place comprising Officers from UCD and Trinity to begin the implementation of the plan without delay;
- (vi) it is likely that, when the Alliance is in place, the technology transfer activities in both institutions will work together as a Joint Venture in Enterprise Development.

The Board, noting that detailed proposals for the implementation of the Alliance would be presented to Council and Board in the normal way, endorsed the College's participation in the Alliance.

Signed:

Date: