



Trinity College Dublin

Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath

The University of Dublin

Incorporating any amendments approved at subsequent Board meetings

Board Meeting 27 January 2021

This meeting was conducted remotely using the Zoom application and was hosted in the Yeats Room.

Present: Provost (Dr P J Prendergast), Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer (Professor J Barkhoff), Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies (Professor K Mitchell), Registrar (Professor B Tangney), Bursar/Director of Strategic Innovation (Professor V Campbell), Professor K Ahmad, Professor L Brennan, Professor A Burke, Mr K Byrne, Ms J Donoghue, Professor D Faas, Mr D Grouse, Mr E Hand, Professor R A Kenny, Ms L Keogh, Professor C Leahy; Professor R McManus, Professor K McTiernan, Ms Rachel Mathews McKay, Ms M O'Connor, Professor D R Phelan, Professor L Roe, Ms G Scanlon, Professor A Seery, Professor J Walsh.

Apologies: Professor A Nolan, Professor Fintan Sheerin.

In attendance: Assistant Secretary to the College (Ms V Butler).

(ex officio) Secretary to the College (Mr J Coman), Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer (Mr P Reynolds).

(by invitation) Chief Operating Officer (Ms G Ruane), Vice-President for Global Relations (Professor J Hussey).

SECTION A

BD/20-21/131 Statements of Interest

The Secretary to the College advised that no statements of potential conflict of interest had been received.

BD/20-21/132 Minutes

(i) Minutes of the meetings of 16 December 2020

The Board approved the draft minutes of the meeting of 16 December 2020 subject to an amendment to minute BD/20-21/095 Matters Arising which had been circulated in advance.

BD/20-21/133 Matters Arising

BD/20-21/095 Matters Arising

(i) BD/20-21/068 Risk Register

The Secretary to the College advised that further to the previously advised meeting, additional information on the matter of the pension liability had been provided to the Board member in a meeting.

A Board member thanked the Secretary to the College and the Financial Services Division for providing further information. However, he advised that having reviewed the information provided, there remained a significant level of concern in respect of the matter and the potential risks for the University. He suggested that it would be beneficial to include this matter as an agenda item for a future meeting of the Board.

In response to the comments from a Board member, and with a view to facilitating further consideration by Board members, it was agreed that an item in respect of the pension liability would be placed on the agenda for a future meeting of the Board.

Action/Decision

133.01 The Secretary to the College is to liaise with Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer to prepare a document for future consideration by the Board.

(ii) BD/20-21/101 Financial Year 2021 University Budget

The Secretary to the College confirmed that the Financial Services Division were preparing a financial information course for Board members.

(iii) BD/20-21/108 Revised Data Protection Policy

The Secretary to the College advised that having liaised with the Data Protection Officer, he could advise that Trinity is considered as the data controller for personal data (e.g. research study participant data) processed by a student working on a research project as part of their studies. The student processes personal data for the purposes set out by the project, the scope of which has been determined and decided by the University (including the research supervisor) and not the student. The purposes and means of processing are the University's and not the student's; therefore the University is the data controller. As such, in the event that a breach occurs in such instances then Trinity will be held responsible. Where Trinity is acting in partnership with another University or Hospital then allocation of responsibility and liability will be determined between the parties by way of a formal agreement, usually on a case-by-case basis.

A new Privacy Notice and Guidelines for students is planned as part of the work programme for the coming year which will set out the student's and the University's respective roles and responsibilities. The intention is to have this ready for 2021/22 registration and have it linked to the student terms and conditions.

BD/20-21/134 Provost's Report

The Provost provided an update to the Board under the following headings:

(i) Inspiring Generations Campaign

The Provost provided an update on the following strategic projects:

- **Old Library Refurbishment**

It was noted that planning permission had been received for the renovation of the building, the moving of the Library shop and environmental, health & safety and fire works, in addition to a comprehensive programme for the conservation of the collections.

The Provost advised that Trinity had submitted a request for Government funding for the project in December 2020.

- **Trinity St James's Cancer Institute**

The Provost advised that this project is progressing well with the Bursar/Director of Strategic Innovation preparing a Memorandum of Understanding for the parties involved. Trinity and St James's Hospital were actively exploring methods of appropriately engaging staff members in the Institute.

- **Trinity East**

It was noted that the Steering Committee was working to evaluate the various options for the project to be brought to the March meeting of the Board for discussion and consideration.

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- **New Generations**

The Provost advised that work was continuing in identifying funding for new staff and PhD positions in the University noting the importance of increasing PhD places in this difficult financial climate.

(ii) The Framework for Promoting Consent in Higher Education

The Provost advised that Trinity had established a committee, chaired by the Associate Vice-Provost for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, which is tasked with developing and implementing processes which will support achievement of the objectives of the Framework for Promoting Consent and Preventing Sexual Violence in Higher Education. It was also noted that the Students' Union was also very active in this area.

(iii) Oireachtas Education Committee

The Provost had presented to the Oireachtas Education Committee on how the university sector had responded to the Covid-19 Pandemic. In particular, he had advised that while the Universities had reacted relatively well, matters were challenging with the ongoing restrictions.

(iv) Research Funding

The Provost noted that the Horizon Europe research programme is due to be launched shortly and it will be important to build on Trinity's previous successes in attracting research funding and maintaining the capability to make successful applications. The importance of resourcing the Research Development Office to support academics in attracting research funding was also noted.

(v) National Development Plan and Department Strategy Statement

It was noted that a submission in respect of the National Development Plan review was made on behalf of the College which had been led by the Chief Operating Officer and her team.

In January 2021 a submission to the Strategy Statement of the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science had also been made. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer noted that the submission to the Strategy Statement gave the College an opportunity to make a number of recommendations and to give the context as to why these are important to the University. He advised that the main focus of the submission was on the need to address the funding model, the importance of national and European research funding and the need to make it more attractive and easier for students to receive education in Ireland. It was noted that the Irish Universities Association (IUA) had also issued a submission to the Strategy Statement on behalf of the sector and, that while the Trinity submission complimented that submission, it also focused on the specific needs and initiatives of the University and what Trinity could add to the sector.

The Provost thanked those involved for their contributions to the various submissions.

(vi) Board Review Working Group

The Provost noted that he and Mr Dermot McCarthy, Chair of the Working Group, had met the Standing Committee of Fellows to discuss the issues that were identified through the work of the Board Review Working Group such as representation and the size of the Board. He advised the Board that it is envisaged that the Heads of Bill may be published by the end of this quarter. While this is only the first step in the process, it shows that the Minister is seeking to address governance across the 3rd level educational sector. The Provost noted the

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importance of Trinity being prepared to address the Bill, having robustly discussed the kind of governance the university would like to have in place so that a structure of collegial governance can be maintained.

It was noted that a revised draft of the proposals from the Board Review Working Group is to come to a future meeting of the Board when there may also be greater visibility of the proposed legislation.

(vii) Covid-19 Pandemic

The Provost advised that regular meetings to address the impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic were continuing. He noted the importance of giving continuous consideration to how issues are addressed and to the continuation of teaching, research and other activities. The Provost also noted that the current restrictions have resulted in all building sites being closed which has implications for projects such as the E3 Learning Foundry and the Printing House Square project and that an exemption to the restrictions had not been permitted to date.

(viii) Events

It was noted that the Exhibitioner Awards were held virtually on 26 January 2021 with 425 Entrance Exhibitions being recognised.

The Provost advised the Board that he had submitted an article to The Irish Times regarding admissions and the need for a review of the Leaving Certificate examination process.

The Provost concluded and opened the item for comments and discussion.

Some Board members, noting the importance of the Leaving Certificate to the University, commended the Provost for his recent media article.

In response to a comment from a Board member, the importance of flexibility in respect of the Board Review Working Group proposals was acknowledged.

With respect to the possible introduction of new legislation concerning the governance of universities, a Board member noted that given the impact of other factors such as Brexit and a potential recession, it may not be the optimal time for such legislative changes to be brought forward.

The Provost, in response to comments from Board members in respect of some staff continuing to work on campus under the current national restrictions, extended his thanks to all staff who are working to keep many services, such as the Library, open to students. He also noted that he, the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer and the Chief Operating Officer are always contactable should staff have any queries or concerns.

Two Board members, noting the importance of the Library to students, also extended their thanks to all those who are ensuring the continuation of services and safe study spaces in the Library. Following further comments from Board members, the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer advised that options had been explored to reassure concerns of staff members while also continuing the provision of the Library services.

A Board member welcomed comments on Inspiring Generations, noting that it is encouraging to hear that the Trinity St James's Cancer Institute is progressing in these difficult times and also noted the importance of the Old Library Project for the University.

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A Board member welcomed the creation of the new Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science noting the possibility for greater engagement with the Government and the potential for further robust discussion in respect of the underfunding for the Higher Education Sector.

BD/20-21/135 Independent Monitor for Trinity East

The Bursar/Director of Strategic Innovation introduced this item with reference to her memorandum dated 19 January 2021 which had been circulated in advance. She advised Board members that further to the Board decision on 26 November 2020 to appoint an Independent Monitor to the Trinity East project a procurement process had been followed. With that process now concluded, she would now like to nominate Mr Andrew Grainger for appointment as the Independent Monitor. The Bursar/Director of Strategic Innovation provided Board members with a summary of Mr Grainger's career to date, noting that he is currently an external independent member of the Estates Policy Committee. She advised the Board that if this nomination is approved, Mr Grainger has agreed to step down from his membership of the Estates Policy Committee.

A Board member, in his capacity as Chair of the Estates Policy Committee endorsed the nomination.

The Provost then invited Mr Grainger to join the meeting.

Mr Grainger joined the meeting at this point and the Provost welcomed him to the meeting.

In response to comments and queries from a Board member, Mr Grainger advised that the role of an Independent Monitor is very broad and that, if appointed, he would be reporting to the Board and seeking answers to any queries raised by Board members, including deliberations on when to proceed or how to proceed.

Responding to comments from a Board member, Mr Grainger noted the importance of having agreed milestones which are monitored by a steering group with external membership. He noted the importance of embedding the project in the existing governance structures and advised the Board that he viewed his role as one to hold the project to account. He also noted the importance of ensuring sufficient engagement across all levels of the College community and for the project to be embedded in the management and operation of the University.

Mr Grainger responding to comments from a Board member in respect of potential fluctuating property prices, advised that property matters will not be the sole focus of his work and that more broad considerations will focus on Trinity, its future success and the national implications of the project.

The Provost thanked Mr Grainger who left the meeting at this point.

The Board approved the appointment of Mr Grainger as Independent Monitor, noting that he will be reporting directly to the Board. The Provost thanked the Bursar/ Director of Strategic Innovation for overseeing the procurement process and bringing the matter to a conclusion.

Action/Decision

135.01 The Board considered and approved the memorandum from the Bursar/Director of Strategic Innovation dated 19 January 2021 and approved the nomination of Mr Andrew Grainger as Independent Monitor to the Trinity East project, as contained within.

BD/20-21/136 Trinity Inclusive Curriculum Project

Associate Vice-Provost for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Professor Clodagh Brook, joined the meeting for this item.

The Provost welcomed the Associate Vice-Provost for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion to the meeting. Professor Brook invited the Board's attention to her presentation dated January 2021, which had been circulated in advance. She provided the Board with an overview of the Trinity Inclusive Curriculum Project including the 4 main goals noting their relevance to the current Strategic Plan 2020-2025. Professor Brook also advised Board members of the membership of the Project Team and of the two phases of the project.

She concluded by outlining the next steps for the project which included the first meeting of the project Advisory Board, initial training of School Champions and the ongoing development of the Student Partner Programme.

In response to comments from a Board member, Professor Brook advised Board members that an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Data Officer had been appointed to assist in capturing the granularity of data required to help inform the discussions.

Several Board members, in welcoming the project, noted that Trinity is already a very inclusive university across staff and student communities.

In response to several comments from Board members in respect of the potential impact of the project on the principle of academic freedom, Professor Brook advised that making the curriculum inclusive is an iterative process, and that debate and discussion across College will influence how the project develops, noting that academic freedom is an important principle. The project is about questioning, and encouraging, not about removing and tearing down.

Following comments from a Board member the importance of encouraging debate and participation was acknowledged.

The Provost thanked Professor Brook who left the meeting at this point.

Action/Decision

135.01 The Board received the report from the Associate Vice-Provost for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

BD/20-21/137 HR Metrics Annual Report

The Director of Human Resources, Ms Antoinette Quinn and the Head of Strategic Planning and Process Improvement, Ms Gwen Turner joined the meeting for this item.

Ms Quinn with reference to her presentation dated January 2021, provided the Board with an overview of the 2020 HR Metrics Annual Report. She summarised the composition of the current staff cohort by staff category and the key staffing trends over last five years. Ms Quinn informed Board members of areas where there had been increases in growth and reported a growth in the use of casual payroll and in the number of recruitment competitions. The composition of Academic staff, Management, Research and Administrative staff was also provided.

In conclusion, Ms Quinn summarised the highlights and concerns set out in the Report and gave an overview of some of the key projects that Human Resources would be continuing to progress in the coming months.

In response to a query from a Board member, the Director of Human Resources clarified the categorisation differences for permanent staff and those holding contracts of indefinite duration.

The Chief Operating Officer, responding to a query from a Board member in respect of staffing levels in Estates and Facilities, advised that a change management programme had been implemented which led to a restructuring of the area. In addition, the automation of some services and increased collaboration had negated the need for a growth in staffing levels.

It was recommended by a Board member that the report include data on staff: student ratio and university income to provide additional context for the increase in staffing figures.

In response to comments from Board members, it was agreed that it would be beneficial to include the following in future reports:

- Staff: student ratios
- University Income
- A change to the title of those engaged on the casual payroll
- Information on those on tenure track contracts separate to those on fixed-term contracts
- Comparisons of staffing levels with comparable universities if available
- Information on promotions and progression.

Ms Turner, responding to a comment from a Board member in respect of the growth in the number of senior managerial positions, advised that in many cases the University has had a need to appoint at a senior level arising from new legislative requirements or due to an increase in project management activities and an increase in the number of strategic projects.

In response to comments from a Board member in respect to the use of fixed term contracts and casual pay, the Director of Human Resources noted the concerns expressed, particularly in respect to the growth observed in this area and in the resulting impact on the retention of staff. She also advised that enquiries are made to hiring areas as to why a proposed appointment is not on a permanent basis and that the type of contract is often linked to the amount of funding available to the area.

Following comments from a Board member in respect of Teaching Assistants and Demonstrators, it was agreed that the Board member could discuss the matter separately with the Director of Human Resources.

In response to comments from Board members in respect of a decrease in the number of staff on the Executive Officer grade, the resulting concerns regarding support for academics and the difficulties posed by low salary levels were acknowledged. Ms Turner advised that the reduction in numbers of staff on this grade had been mainly observed across the Divisions and undertook to check the detail and revert with the data at Faculty and Division level.

The Provost thanked Ms Quinn and Ms Turner for the detailed report.

Action/Decision

137.01 The Board considered and noted the HR Metrics Annual Report.

Ms Quinn and Ms Turner left the meeting at this point.

BD/20-21/138 Trinity Futures Discussion Paper

The Bursar/Director of Strategic Innovation introduced this item with reference to her memorandum dated 19 January 2021 and her presentation dated 27 January 2021, which had been circulated in advance. She provided the Board with an overview of the work of the Trinity Futures Group to date.

Noting that the Covid-19 Pandemic has accelerated change and innovation in higher education, the Bursar/Director of Strategic Innovation summarised the consultation process thus far, noting that approx. 300 members of the College community had engaged in these discussions to date. She also provided an overview of the key discussion points that were being considered.

The Bursar/Director of Strategic Innovation advised Board members of the importance of these discussions in a national context, referencing the recent launch of the Government of Ireland's National Remote Work Strategy.

The Bursar/Director of Strategic Innovation concluded by advising Board of the proposed next steps which include the organisation of town hall meetings and the establishment of working groups to explore the most pertinent points raised in a more detailed way, with the first working group to be established to focus on adaptable and flexible working.

The Provost, in response to comments from Board members, noted the importance of ensuring that a broad representation of staff is engaged in further discussions and working groups that are to be established.

He thanked the Bursar/Director of Strategic Innovation noting the importance of the development of such proposals especially in light of envisaged amendments to employment legislation by the Government.

The importance of the student experience, social interaction, inclusion and connection was acknowledged.

Action/Decision

138.01 The Board considered and approved the memorandum from the Bursar/Director of Strategic Innovation, dated 19 January 2021 and the next steps as contained within.

The Registrar left the meeting at this point.

BD/20-21/139 Appointment of the Next Provost

The Secretary to the College, noting that the Registrar had been unavoidably called away from the meeting, provided the Board with an update on the process for choosing the next Provost. He advised Board members that the interviews by the Interview Committee appointed by the Board had taken place and that the deadline for receipt of nominations for those candidates who had been sent forward by the Interview Committee was 12 noon on Friday, 5 February 2021. It was noted that after this deadline, the names of those validly nominated under the Statutes would be published on the website and the campaign period will commence.

A kick-off campaign meeting is scheduled for Monday, 8 February and a schedule of campaign events will also be published on the website. He noted that, having consulted with the Associate Vice-Provost for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, and being mindful of the Meeting Hours Policy, it is proposed that events will be scheduled at varying times so that there will be several opportunities for members of the College Community to join events.

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Action/Decision

139.01 The Board received the update from the Secretary to the College on behalf of the Registrar.

BD/20-21/140 University Council

The Board noted and approved the draft Acta of the Council dated 20 January 2021.

The Provost, responding to comments from a Board member in respect to the item on the introduction of quotas for the Scholarship Examinations 2021, clarified that the consent of Council was required as part of the formal approval process. He also noted that decisions at Council meetings are taken by consensus, as set down in the Statutes.

In response to queries from Board members, the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies advised that the introduction of quotas for the Scholarship exams on this occasion is intended as a one-off measure for this academic year, noting that it is not intended that quotas would be in place for future years.

He also advised Board members that, through the use of proctoring methods and robust questioning on examination papers, efforts are being put in place to ensure that students have the opportunity to show their understanding and mastery of the material being examined. In respect of the potential for plagiarism, the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies advised the standard processes remain in place.

BD/20-21/141 Any Other Urgent Business

The Provost noted that this was the last meeting of the Board that the Chief Operating Officer, Ms Geraldine Ruane, would be attending as she is due to take up a new position in the Royal Dublin Society. On behalf of the Board, he thanked Ms Ruane for her skillful contribution to Trinity in her time as Chief Operating Officer noting that she was instrumental in consolidating the role and advancing the activities of the Corporate Services Division.

Ms Ruane thanked the Provost and noted that she had enjoyed her time working in Trinity. She extended her thanks to her colleagues for the good work that is being done to support students, staff, teaching and research across the University.

SECTION B**BD/20-21/142 Board Business****(i) Callover**

The Board noted the Callover updated to 16 December 2020.

(ii) Outcomes

The Board noted the Board Outcomes from the meetings of 16 December 2020.

BD/20-21/143 Equality Committee

The Board noted and approved the draft minutes of the meeting of 3 December 2020 and the accompanying Disability Service Strategic Plan 2020-2025.

BD/20-21/144 Estates Policy Committee

The Board noted and approved the draft minutes of the meeting of 4 December 2020.

In response to a query from a Board member in relation to the Historic Accommodation Buildings Project, it was agreed that the minutes would be reviewed and amended as required.

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SECTION C

BD/20-21/145 Higher Degrees

The Board noted Higher Degrees, approved by the sub-committee of Board and Council on 20 January 2021.

BD/20-21/146 Head of School

The Board noted and approved the nomination of Professor Brian O’Connell as Head of School of Dental Science for a further three-year term, to 30 November 2023.

BD/20-21/147 Sealings

The Board noted the sealings, as circulated, and attached as Appendix 1 to this Minute.
This information is restricted due to commercial sensitivity.

BD/20-21/148 School of Medicine Studentships 2020/21

The Board noted and approved the memorandum from the School of Medicine dated 18 January 2021.

BD/20-21/149 Associated Companies – Directors’ Reports

The Board noted and approved the Memorandum from the Secretary to the College dated 21 January 2021.

SECTION D

In compliance with the Data Protection Acts this information is restricted.

Signed:

Date: