

The University of Dublin

Trinity College

A special meeting of the University Council was held on Tuesday 10 March 2009 at 2 p.m. in the Board Room.

<i>Present</i>	Provost, Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer, Registrar, Senior Lecturer, Dean of Graduate Studies, Dean of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, Dr C Laudet, Professor J Wickham, Dean of Engineering, Mathematics and Science, Dr V Kelly, Dr M Lyons, Dr D O'Sullivan, Dean of Health Sciences, Professor G Whyte.
<i>Apologies</i>	Senior Tutor, Dean of Research, Dr C MacMaolain, Dr C Morris, Professor J Fitzpatrick, Dr D Brennan, Professor M McCarron, Professor M Radomski, Dr K Johnson, Dr A O'Gara, Ms D Flynn, Mr H Sullivan, Ms C Ní Dhubhda, Mr F Hughes, Mr D Walsh, Ms A Murphy, Mr D Kavanagh, Secretary to the Scholars (Ms N Cleary), Ms A Mc Gowan, Chief Operating Officer.
<i>In attendance</i>	Librarian, Acting Secretary, Academic Secretary.

SECTION A

CL/08-09/123 TCD-UCD Innovation Alliance Introducing this item, the Provost noted that this special meeting of Council was called to seek the support of members for the Trinity College Dublin (TCD) and the University College Dublin (UCD) Innovation Alliance.

The Provost thanked those present for attending at such short notice, and provided some background information on key developments leading to the innovation alliance between TCD and UCD. Public finances are rapidly deteriorating and the government is seeking every opportunity to make savings in the public sector. There has been much talk about duplication in the higher education sector and rationalisation is currently a topical subject. The Department of Education and Science is pressing for less duplication of research efforts, greater efficiencies and faster returns on research and development investment in higher education. The Higher Education Strategy Group is commissioned to develop a new national strategy for higher education, and will examine how Ireland can become more innovative in creating high-knowledge jobs that can help the country's economic renewal. It will also consider rationalisation and duplication of efforts within the sector. The other government body referred to as "An Bord Snip Nua" is likely to also consider rationalisation and duplication in its efforts to find billions in savings across all Government departments and the public sector. The Provost noted the research and innovation objectives set out in 'Building Ireland's Smart Economy - A Framework for Sustainable Economic Renewal, 2008,' launched by the Government in December 2008. This document recognises that there are no short-term solutions to the current economic crisis, and reinforces the importance of research and development in creating new jobs and new industries in the long-term. The 'Smart Economy' framework directly challenges the universities to contribute to finding long-term economic solutions. The PRTL

(Programme for Research in Third Level Institutions) cycle 5 places considerable importance on innovation and collaboration in research and innovation.

Trinity College has considered very carefully how to achieve value added in its research and development collaborative efforts. A series of high level discussions between UCD and TCD have taken place over the past few months, and together the universities have engaged the Taoiseach and his key ministers and civil servants in a proposal to deliver on Ireland's Smart Economy. Referring to rumours of a TCD-UCD merger, the Provost stressed the importance of protecting Trinity's autonomy while at the same time capitalising on existing research and development opportunities. The TCD-UCD Innovation Alliance will show how the issue of rationalisation can be addressed and be cost effective without requiring a merger of the two institutions. It will also address the urgent national need to turn talent into jobs, and it is the first step in realising the 'Smart Economy' which supports the creation of an innovation society.

The Government informed the two universities late on Friday afternoon, 6th March 2009, that it would launch an Innovation Taskforce to support the ambitions of the Innovation Alliance and to realise the objectives of the 'Smart Economy.' The Innovation Taskforce, chaired by the Secretary General of the Department of the Taoiseach, Mr Dermot McCarthy, will be set up to advance the development of Ireland as an international innovation hub. The taskforce, whose membership will be announced over the next few weeks, will involve participation by the public and private sectors.

The Provost confirmed that specific proposals relating to academic matters arising from the Alliance would be brought before Council for discussion and approval, and invited the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer to make the presentation on the details of the TCD-UCD Innovation Alliance.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer brought Council through the key elements of the Innovation Alliance between TCD and UCD. He noted the reasons for investing in innovation which include the creation of up to 75,000 new high level sustainable jobs, the realisation of up to 300 new high value companies of scale, the protection of 150,000 existing foreign direct investment (FDI) jobs, and supporting the transition of Irish Enterprise from small sized enterprises to medium sized enterprises. To realise these benefits, it is necessary to create an Innovation Ecosystem. Such a system depends on partnership between the Government, Education, Enterprise and Venture Capitalism. Universities are traditionally associated with Teaching and Research and this has expanded to include Innovation as an important third activity.

The history of TCD-UCD collaboration to-date and their geographical proximity have created a strong platform for deeper collaboration. In 2007 the two universities signed a public Memorandum of Understanding on collaboration and complementary research missions. TCD and UCD have successfully collaborated in the delivery of joint PhD programme modules, authored many scholarly papers, and have had major successes in securing research funds for joint activities; for example, The Dublin Molecular Medicine Centre, The National Institute for Bio-processing Research and Training, and the National Digital Research Centre. The two universities were also successful in securing PRTL funding in cycles 1 to 4.

The Innovation Ecosystem has three key elements: (i) the Innovation Taskforce, (ii) the 4th Level Innovation Academy, and (iii) an enabling policy environment. The initiative is similar in concept to the Irish Financial Services Centre (IFSC) but focused

on the creation and scaling up of indigenous knowledge and technology-intensive enterprises.

As already described, the Innovation Taskforce will be established by the Taoiseach and chaired by the Secretary General of the Department of the Taoiseach. It is expected that through the work of the Innovation Taskforce the necessary physical and legislative infrastructure will be established to enable the creation of an Innovation Ecosystem in Dublin. The Innovation Taskforce will, among other things, identify specific policy measures that will help to increase levels of innovation and the rates of commercialisation of research and development on a national basis. It will consider how to accelerate the growth and scale-up of indigenous enterprises and how to attract new knowledge-intensive direct investment. The 4th Level Innovation Academy will respond to initiatives proposed by the Innovation Taskforce. A four-mile long innovation corridor will be created between the campuses of the two universities, and the 4th Level Innovation Academy will be established along this corridor. The Academy will house the existing Technology Transfer Offices of the two universities as well as incubation units to support new start-up companies. Joint venture in enterprise development is an important element of the Alliance, and the two universities will work together on the research, design, prototyping and innovation to bring new ideas and inventions to the commercial stage.

The 4th level Innovation Academy will straddle the existing campuses and focus particularly on fourth-level PhD training. Students will be able to move between the campuses to avail themselves of the resources and expertise at each institution. The partnership aims to enhance the creative and innovative qualities of third-level graduates and improve the take-up of maths and science at second level. Enabling legislation, in areas such as immigration policy, transport initiatives and philanthropy, will be necessary to help Ireland compete in the global economy and to stimulate innovation and new ideas. Enabling legislation will also be necessary to facilitate the creation of a strong venture capital sector and to create tax incentives for national and foreign direct investment.

Concluding the presentation, the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer commented that the TCD-UCD Innovation Alliance responds to the open challenge to Irish universities set out in the 'Smart Economy' framework.

In discussing the Innovation Alliance, Council sought clarification on the inter-relatedness of the three strands in the Innovation Ecosystem and the timeline for delivery. The Provost responded that the initiative as a whole should be seen as strategic and the plan for implementation will have to be developed. Some aspects of the Innovation Alliance can be addressed relatively quickly, and the implementation timeline for other elements will be determined by the outcome of the Innovation Taskforce's deliberations. Responding to queries on the location of the 4th Level Innovation Academy, the Provost confirmed that there is no building earmarked at the moment, but he noted that there are many possibilities along the four-mile corridor between the TCD and UCD campuses. The merging of the two Technology Transfer Offices will provide the necessary scale to manage the project.

The role of the arts, humanities and social sciences disciplines in the 4th Level Innovation Academy was discussed. The Provost commented that these disciplines would have a future role, especially in such areas as language provision and creativity workshops, but for the moment the emphasis will be on science and engineering. It was noted that there is already considerable cooperation between the two universities in the social sciences area, especially at PhD training levels. The Dean of Graduate Studies commented that existing students on the PhD Programme: Texts,

Contexts, Cultures, could benefit from programmes offered by the 4th Level Innovation Academy.

In response to a question, the Provost commented that the Innovation Ecosystem is a national development and not solely confined to Dublin. At least 80% of our PhD graduates enter professions other than academia, and it is important that this initiative can find ways to commercialise discoveries and create jobs for these graduates. The Provost confirmed that the Academy would be managed by an oversight group comprising senior representatives from TCD and UCD.

Council queried the impact of the innovation alliance on the direction of Trinity's current and future research. The Provost noted that the alliance should strengthen and complement existing research areas of strength in both universities. Where research areas overlap, they should benefit from scale and complementary inputs. He confirmed that it is not the intention of the Innovation Alliance to carve up research interests, and noted that the two universities have independently developed certain research strengths in the past. However, in new and emerging research areas, such as energy, for example, it would be important that both universities play to existing strengths, complementing rather than duplicating each other's efforts. Council discussed the benefits of students having access to expertise in both universities and the general benefits of pooling resources in key areas.

Council welcomed the TCD-UCD Innovation Alliance and congratulated the Provost and his team for this creative and positive approach to the 'Smart Economy' framework. The Provost, in conclusion, invited Council members to the launch of the Innovation Taskforce which will be held at 2:00 on Wednesday 11th March 2009 in the Royal College of Physicians, Kildare Street.

Signed

Date