

**THE UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN
TRINITY COLLEGE**

The Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting of 1st December 2004

PRESENT: The Provost (in the Chair), the Bursar, the Registrar*, Dr L. Doyle, Professor D. Weaire, Mr. F. Kieran, the Dean of Arts (Letters)*, the Senior Lecturer, the Secretary**, the Treasurer (Secretary of the Finance Committee)

IN ATTENDANCE Mr. I. Mathews

(PRESENT FOR): * Minutes FN/04-05/24 to FN/04-05/27
** Minutes FN/04-05/24 to FN/04-05/28 (part)

The Minutes of the Meeting of 10th November 2004 were approved and signed.

The Treasurer briefed the Committee on the status of actions arising from previous meetings. It was agreed that an updated list of actions would be circulated and considered by the Committee on a quarterly basis.

FN/04- 05/24 Recurrent Income and Expenditure Estimates – 2005

The Treasurer tabled extracts from the Government Estimates for 2005 in respect of third level and further education recurrent grant and services and capital services. The Committee noted with concern the 6% proposed increase to cover recurrent grant and undergraduate fee remission scheme. The Committee heard a report that the sector had sought a 9.5% increase in order that services could be maintained at existing levels and enable compliance with legislative obligations in respect of the Part-time Workers Act, 2001 and the Fixed-term Workers Act, 2003. The deficit implications for 2005 were discussed but the Committee noted that it would be some weeks before clarification of the actual grant allocations would be received from the HEA. Arising from new legislation the Committee considered the obligations of the College arising from the Part-time Workers Act, 2001 and the Fixed-term Workers Act, 2003 with particular reference to the financial implications for existing research grants and contracts. The College as employer will be obliged to meet the legislative obligations but in turn will need to engage with sponsors regarding their obligations in the matter. The Committee noted the extensiveness of such a project.

The Committee heard that the financial outturn for 2003/2004 was nearing completion and requested that the Treasurer be mindful of the current funding trends and significant needs likely to arise in relation to progress on the change agenda.

Section A

FN/04-05/25 Science Foundation Ireland – Indirect Costs

(Minute FN04-05/17 of 10.11.2004 refers)
The Dean of Research attended for this item.

SFI correspondence dated 24 November 2004 along with AOIP Panel review comments and a pro-forma AOIP summary data for submission to SFI by 3 December had been circulated. The Dean of Research outlined for the Committee the SFI AOIP review process as a result of which College had received a maximum award of a 30% overhead contribution based on 2004 levels of activity. The Committee congratulated the Dean on achieving the maximum award particularly in the context that not all host institutions had achieved the 2004 level of overhead of 30%. Furthermore the Committee noted that the Dean of Research would have flexibility to reallocate AOIP

funds up to 10% between categories without consulting the Foundation. HEA correspondence to CHIU dated 9th November 2004 was circulated, requesting CHIU to update the HEA on the current state of play in relation to SFI overheads and requesting information on any knock-on implications for HEA core funding of the universities. The Committee noted that CHIU would be responding to this correspondence in due course.

FN/04-05/26 Financial Information Systems
(Minute FN/04-05/18 of 10.11.04 refers)

The Treasurer reported on meetings and discussions which had taken place in order to identify the resourcing implications associated with bringing the development of financial information systems to tender stage and outlined the broad magnitude of resourcing likely to be required. The Committee noted however that a more refined proposal was dependent on forthcoming meetings and discussions between the Vice Provost, IS Service and external parties and that proposals would be brought back to Executive Officers as soon as possible.

FN/04- 05/27 Governance – Board decisions
(Minute FN/04-05/19 of 10.11.2004 refers)

A memorandum dated 25 November 2004 in relation to consideration of recommendations to Board in respect of devolution of decision-making. The Committee recommends that the Finance Committee be requested to make decisions associated with residential rent charges, catering prices, setting of fees generally (to include e.g. tuition fees, wedding fees and external examiner fees), the financial implications of exchange agreements, self-financing course proposals, travel and subsistence rates and house loans. This recommendation is being made by the Committee in the context of its terms of reference which state that any future proposals in relation to the devolution of decision-making will be identified as part of an evolving process of documenting Board-approved policies and decisions arising therefrom. The Committee noted that the terms of reference of the Committee would be reviewed within one year and devolved decision-making proposals would again be reviewed at that time.

Action

27.1 Board to approve recommendations in relation to the devolution of decision-making as set out.

27.2 Terms of reference to be reviewed in one year.

Section B

FN/04- 05/28 Quarterly Accounts at 30th September 2004

The circulated Quarterly Accounts were presented by the Deputy Treasurer on a detailed basis as agreed by the Committee at its last meeting.

Capital Projects: The Committee while having previously considered Issue 6 of Bursar's Report on Capital Projects (which outlined financial and other data in relation to projects recently constructed/nearing completion and the position in relation to the overall capital programme) noted that accounts as presented showed the cash position on the capital projects at 30.09.2004.

Capital Projects funded by HEA Capital Grants: The Committee noted that the reimbursements outstanding on both tax and non-tax based HEA & State Funded Capital Projects amounted to €16.9m and that these amounts are being bridged from recurrent cashflows with consequent implications for interest earnings on the recurrent account.

Capital Projects not funded by the HEA: The Committee noted the level of €2.7m funding received in advance.

Faculty and Departments: The Committee noted the impact on the overall balance arising from the Board decision to recover credit balances held at 30.09.2003 as the

overall departmental balances had decreased by 36.8% since 30.09.2003. The cumulative non-pay/pay, recurrent equipment, self-financing courses and activities decreased by 83%, 100%, 24% and 12% respectively. The Bursar agreed to bring forward a guidance paper for Deans and Heads of Departments/Areas regarding the appropriate level of accumulated balances to a future meeting.

The Committee noted with concern the failure of one Faculty to engage with the Treasurer's Office to enable explanatory information on departmental balances to be brought to the Finance Committee.

The Committee was briefed on a number of accounts for which no funding sources had been identified.

Administrative and Other Areas Non Pay Budgets

Service Departments

Library

IS Services

Bio-resources Unit: The Committee approved the request from the Director of the Unit to extend the previously approved concession for a further 2 years.

Audio Visual and Media Services

Centre for Microscopy Analysis

Buildings Office

Student Health Service

Counselling

Subsidiary Activities

Residential Rooms – College

Residential Rooms – Trinity Hall

Catering

The Committee had a preliminary and cursory discussion in relation to financial management in the College.

Action

28.1 The Committee recommends that where necessary account holders from whom information is required for the Finance Committee be informed of the Committee's wish that they engage with the Treasurer's Office.

Due to the inability of the Finance Committee to remain quorate the following items were deferred for consideration at the meeting of 12 January 2005:

B1. Quarterly Accounts to 30 September 2004

Subsidiary Activities

New Research Accounts

Research Account Balances

B2. Control Exception Report

C1. Procurement Annual Report

Section C

FN/04- 05/29 Financial Information Systems Annual Report

The Committee noted and approved a memorandum from the Financial Information Systems Section of the Treasurer's Office dated 22.11.2004 which had been circulated outlining the Financial Systems Development projects in 2003/04 and the planned projects for 2004/05.

FN/04-05/30 Annual Reports to 30 September 2004

The Committee approved the following sub-Committees' the annual reports that had been circulated –

- (i) Investment Committee
- (ii) Financial Assistance Committee
- (iii) Capitation Committee

The Committee noted that annual reports were not available from the:

- (i) Conferences Committee as the Committee had not convened in 2004
- (ii) Catering Management Committee for this meeting but would be available for the next meeting.
- (iii) Business & Industry Committee annual report would not be available until the Finance Committee meeting of 16.02.2005 due to lack of resources in the Research & Innovations Office.

FN/04- 05/31 Housing – University Assistance to Staff

The Committee noted a report from Mr T O'Higgins FCA titled 'University Assistance to Staff in the Housing Market' dated January 2002 that had been circulated. The report outlined the background associated with Irish Universities having experienced particular difficulties in recruiting academics from overseas and consideration of possible forms of housing assistance (shared equity schemes, rent subsidies, provision of accommodation in university owned property or in campus residences and payment of removal expenses). Having considered the various options from a legal, taxation and practical viewpoint, the report concluded that the Universities should proceed with great caution before implementing any arrangements associated with assistance for staff in the housing market.

FN/04- 05/32 External Examiner

The Committee noted and approved a circulated memorandum from the Senior Lecturer dated 10.11.2004 enclosing a proposal (previously approved by the Dean's Committee) from the Dean of Arts (Letters) for the appointment of an external examiner to the Diploma in Deaf Studies with effect from this academic year.

The next meeting of the Finance Committee has been arranged for 12th January 2005 at 2.30 pm, in the Board Room.

PROVOST.....

DATE.....

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