

**THE UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN  
TRINITY COLLEGE**

The Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting of 26 November 2007

PRESENT: The Provost, Bursar, the Registrar, Professor J. Parnell, Ms M. Leahy, Professor N. Grene, the Senior Lecturer, the Secretary, the Treasurer (Secretary of the Finance Committee).

IN  
ATTENDANCE: Deputy Treasurer

APOLOGIES Mr A. Byrne

(PRESENT  
FOR)

The Provost welcomed the Pro-Dean of Arts & Humanities, Professor N. Grene as a member of the Finance Committee.

The Minutes of the Meeting of 11 October 2007 were approved and signed subject to removal of the word "quarterly" in the third bullet point of minute FN/07-08/01.

**Section A**

**No items**

**Section B**

**FN/07 – 08/17 TCIN**  
(Minute FN/06-07/88 of 27.06.2007 refers)  
Professor Shane O'Mara and Ms B. Hewitt attended for this item

The Committee had been circulated with a TCIN memo from the Director of the Institute dated 8 November 2007.

The Treasurer outlined for the benefit of new members of the Committee the background to funding and expenditure issues which had arisen in the concluding stages of PRTL Cycle 3, the resolution which had been brought to those issues and the request of the Committee to have placed before it a financial plan based on known circumstances so that the issues arising therefrom might be identified and considered by the Committee with representatives of TCIN. Professor O'Mara, Deputy Director of the Institute and Ms Hewitt, Interim Accountant, outlined for the Committee how the financial forecasts had been arrived at and identified a number of funding and other issues which need to be addressed as a matter of urgency if the activity of the Centre is to be placed on a sustainable basis of operation. In this context the Committee noted that activities undertaken by TCIN form an integral part of the research mission of the University as outlined in the Strategic Plan and acknowledged that the Centre was in the unique position of having at its disposal both human and animal scanning facilities which had enabled significant staffing appointments to be made in this area of expertise. The Committee also noted the PRTL funding proposals under PRTL 4 had not been successful and that the MRI scanner would be a very significant cost which could not be met through the existing activity of the Centre. The Committee concluded that the main issues to be addressed included MRI costs for the period to 31 December 2009, the TCIN and participating Schools relationship in the context of future strategic planning and the sharing of resources including overheads.

Following the discussion the Committee agreed that:

- In the context of the very special circumstances arising because of the MRI facility (acknowledged in the Forfás review of PRTL) the Bursar and the Dean of Research should consider how funds might be found to address this exceptional cost for the period to 31 December 2009 only. Following this period it is expected that the scanner must be capable of generating significant income to contribute towards its running costs.
- A submission should be made to the HEA outlining the unique circumstances of the MRI scanner and making a case for special funding to ensure the continuation of the facility. This submission should be coordinated by the Dean of Research working with TCIN. Possible inclusion in the PRTL 5 submission should also be considered.
- All non-MRI aspects of the TCIN activity must be self-financing.
- The TCIN should amend its reporting to include self-financing activity codes and all other income codes including all overheads allocated directly to the Centre.
- The TCIN and participating Schools relationship should be addressed as soon as possible by the Bursar and the Dean of Research with the participating parties in order to develop some agreed funding model which will allow the viability of the Institute to be secured.

Action:

- 17.1 HEA submission on MRI Scanner to be coordinated by Dean of Research.
- 17.2 The Director of TCIN to develop plans for the MRI Scanner to yield significant income to contribute to its costs by 31 December 2009.
- 17.3 Funding to cover MRI Scanner to 31 December 2009 to be considered by the Bursar and the Dean of Research.
- 17.4 Discussions regarding the TCIN and participating schools regarding funding relationships to be undertaken by the Bursar and the Dean of Research.

**FN/07 – 08/18 Quarterly Accounts to 30 September 2007**

The Committee received a memorandum dated 19 November 2007 with accompanying Quarterly Accounts schedules for the period to 30.09.2007 from the Financial Accountant and Research Accounting Manager. The Committee was briefed by the Deputy Treasurer on capital projects (funded by the HEA and not funded by the HEA), School Accounts, Administrative and other areas, Service Departments, Subsidiary Activities, Strategic Innovation Fund and Research Activities. The Committee noted the position in relation to capital projects, the overall level of unspent balances/reserves, the current position in relation to ICT recurrent activity, balances on the change fund, the results for the year in relation to Service Departments and Subsidiary Activity. The continued advice in relation to unspent balances was acknowledged.

In relation to research activity the Committee noted that 147 new research accounts had been opened up in the three months to 30.09.2007 of which 69 provided a contribution to overheads. The Committee welcomed the increasing levels of research activity undertaken during the year which now represent some €71.3m of expenditure activity representing a 10% increase over the equivalent period last year.

The areas of concern in the research accounts were identified and the actions proposed noted. In relation to a specific group of research accounts the Committee considered again the approach which had been adopted in relation to the responsibility for the repayment of the significant (and subsequently increased) overspent balance. In this context the Finance Committee reconfirmed its already strongly expressed view that in the absence of repayment from within the PI's own resources the School would be

responsible for repayment within the 10 year timescales already agreed. Furthermore the Committee agreed that the first call on the savings from an unpaid leave of absence would be used to repay the increased level of the debt arising from new circumstances since the original arrangements had been made. The Committee noted that the College had only ever written off one significant research debt on the basis that the circumstances that gave rise to the debt had been absolutely outside the control of the PI in question and in any event had subsequently been discharged. While noting that the overspent balance in the current case had been minimised through partner PI's undertaking unfunded work, the Committee confirmed that the circumstances of this case were within the control of the PI and the repayment arrangements currently in place should be continued as agreed. Maintaining this position was identified as being extremely important and pertinent in the context of devolved budgetary authority with responsibility and accountability which now applies in all areas of the College. The Committee was also concerned to ensure fairness and equity in relation to the treatment of debts that arise in order to ensure that areas which had not overspent would not be burdened with reductions in resource allocation arising from debts met at a College level.

#### **FN/07 – 08/19 Control Exception Report**

The Committee had been circulated with a Control Exception Report for the six months to November 2007 and noted the range and level of items listed therein. It was agreed that this report was useful in highlighting matters for consideration and addressing in future periods. As has become normal practice the Committee requested that a copy of the report be forwarded to the Senior Lecturer for consideration at the Heads Committee and Deans and furthermore that it be circulated to Heads of Service and Support areas in order that all might be placed in a position to fully understand and address the matters arising in the report on an ongoing basis.

##### Action

19.1 The Treasurer to forward the Control Exception Report to:

- The Senior Lecturer for the Heads Committee
- All Heads of Service and Support areas.

#### **FN/07 – 08/20 Code of Governance of Irish Universities – Treasurer's Office Responsibilities** (Minute FN/07-08/05 of 11.10.2007 refers)

A memorandum dated 19 November 2007 had been circulated to the Committee by the Treasurer in relation to the Treasurer's Office responsibilities arising from the implementation of the Code of Governance of Irish Universities. The Committee accepted the memorandum with the listing of the controls currently in place in respect of the areas of responsibility within the remit of the Treasurer and noted that if the specific processes, procedures and controls identified in the memorandum were fully complied with it could be expected, subject to audit testing, that the College should be in compliance with these particular requirements of the code.

#### **FN/07 – 08/21 Sports Centre Financial Report** (Minute FN/06 – 07/20 of 29.11.2006 refers)

At its meeting of 29 November 2006 the Finance Committee requested an update from the Director of Sport in relation to the income and expenditure outcome for the Sports Centre in respect of 2006/07. In this context the Committee had been circulated with a memorandum from the Director of Sport dated 19 November 2007. The Committee noted the very positive result in respect of 2006/07 and noted the observations in relation to non-pay costs in future years, the re-equipment fund and the need to continue to review membership profiles. The Committee welcomed the report and accepted the budgets for 2008/09 and 2009/10 as presented and noted that there

would be a full year review in November 2008.

**Section C**

**FN/07 – 08/22 Annual Reports of Sub-Committees of Finance Committee for 2006/2007**

The Committee noted and accepted the Investment Committee annual report for the year ended 30.09.2007.

The outstanding Catering and Residences sub-committees annual reports will be presented at the meeting of 19 December 2007.

**FN/07 – 08/23 Minutes of Sub-Committees**

The Committee noted and accepted the minutes of the Investment Committee meeting dated 20.09.2007.

**FN/07 – 08/24 Consolidated Financial Statements – 2005**

Correspondence dated 28 September 2007 from the Office of the Comptroller & Auditor General had been circulated along with a report of the Comptroller & Auditor General in respect of the Financial Statements to 30 September 2005. The Committee noted that this documentation had been presented to the Audit Committee and had, as is normal procedure, been forwarded to the Department of Education & Science for tabling for the Oireachtas within 14 days of receipt.

The Provost, on behalf of the Finance Committee made a presentation and expressed his thanks and appreciation to the Treasurer for her services to the Finance Committee during her 10 years as Treasurer to the College and the previous 4 years as Finance Officer and wished her well in the next phase of her career.

The next meeting of the Finance Committee will be held on 19 December 2007 at 2.00 pm, in the Board Room.

PROVOST.....

DATE.....

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