

**THE UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN
TRINITY COLLEGE**

The Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting of 17 November 2008

PRESENT: Provost (in the Chair), Bursar, Chief Operating Officer, Registrar, Professor D. Singleton, Professor M. Marsh, Ms. P. Murphy, Treasurer (Acting) – Secretary of the Committee

IN
ATTENDANCE: Research Accounting Manager

APOLOGIES Vice-Provost-Chief Academic Officer, Mr. C. Reilly

The Minutes of the Meeting of 1 October 2008 were approved and signed.

Section A

No Items

Section B

FN/08 – 09/13 Action List

The Committee noted the circulated 2008/09 Action List as at November 2008 and the current status in relation to the actions agreed.

FN/08 – 09/14 Funding Outlook 2009 and Beyond
(Minute FN/08-09/01 of 1.10.2008 refers)

The Committee was advised that the Provost had briefed the Board, at its last meeting, on the provisions in the Government Budget as follows:

- (i) an increase in the Student Charge for 2008/09
- (ii) a real decrease in funding of circa 5.5% in 2009 resulting from no absolute increase in core grant and unavoidable cost increases
- (iii) an increase in capital funding to cover committed projects
- (iv) PRTL I V expected to proceed in the near future.

The Committee also noted that the Board had been briefed on the need to accelerate the Action Plan approved in 2007. The Treasurer (Acting) advised the Committee that no correspondence had been received to date from the HEA in relation to the 2009 Recurrent Grant and that there was no further update in relation to the scope and timing of the Forensic Audit to be carried out by the Comptroller & Auditor General's Office which had been previously announced by the Minister of Education and Science. The Treasurer (Acting) also outlined for the Committee the progress of the Funding Group (chaired by the Vice Provost/Chief Academic Officer) which has been tasked with examining all aspects of College's financial situation and which is to bring forward proposals on required actions including those to address cost savings in 2009 and beyond. The Committee noted that all proposals would require the approval of the Board prior to implementation.

FN/08 – 09/15 Pensions Update
(Minute FN/08-09/02 of 1.10.2008 refers)

The Treasurer (Acting) advised the Committee that the Primary Legislation enabling the Government to take over the assets and liabilities of existing University pension funds is now expected in early 2009.

FN/08 – 09/16 CRANN
(Minute FN/06-07/87 of 27.06.2007 refers)
The Executive Director of CRANN attended for this item.

In accordance with Guidelines for the Financial Management of Trinity Research Institutes approved by the Finance Committee in June 2007, the Executive Director presented the circulated inaugural bi-annual report on CRANN outlining the background to CRANN's financial management systems along with current levels of activity. The Director also outlined the projected financial challenges and risks over the next three years if CRANN is going to fulfil its own and College's ambitions under the categories of capital infrastructure; internal funding streams; operational costs and funding diversity. The Committee thanked the Executive Director for a clear and concise report and invited him to bring forward an updated report in Hilary Term 2009.

Action:

16.1 The Executive Director of CRANN to bring forward an updated report on CRANN activities in Hilary Term 2009.

FN/08 – 09/17 Fees – Postgraduate
(Minute FN/07 - 08/46 of 18.02.2008 refers)
The Dean of Graduate Studies attended for this item.

The Dean of Graduate Studies presented the circulated discussion document which had been considered by the Graduate Studies Committee outlining the current fees charged across Faculties and possible areas for development across Postgraduate Taught Courses and Postgraduate Research Programmes. The Committee considered in detail and fully endorsed the 12 recommendations outlined by the Dean and requested the Treasurer (Acting) to forward the full discussion document containing the recommendations to the Funding Group for inclusion in the proposals necessary to address the overall financial situation.

Action:

17.1 The Treasurer (Acting) to forward the discussion document and recommendations to the Funding Group.

FN/08 – 09/18 An Post Site/Biosciences Development – Funding Proposal for Commercial and Retail Space
(Minute FN/08 - 09/07 of 1.10.2008 refers)

The Committee considered a memorandum and accompanying documentation from the Treasurer (Acting) dated 10.11.2008 outlining the background to the agreement with the successful developer and the progress made to date with regard to the funding for both the academic and commercial/retail space of the Biosciences development. The Treasurer (Acting) advised the Committee that the contractual documentation, to facilitate the drawdown of the approved loan from the European Investment Bank to fund the academic element of the development, was scheduled for signing by both parties at the end of November 2008.

The Committee was briefed on the details of the agreement with the developer regarding the funding of the commercial and retail space and was informed that the developer in conjunction with the College had conducted a market sounding exercise to

source debt funding at commercial interest borrowing rates. The Committee noted that a number of loan offers had been received in what was a very turbulent time for financial institutions.

The Treasurer (Acting) outlined an alternative funding option, which had been recently considered and approved by the Executive Officers and advised that similar options had been operated successfully by the College in the past. Following a detailed discussion and noting in particular the benefits of this option, the Committee approved the financing of the commercial/retail portion of the development up to the level of the agreed budget from existing cash holdings held by the College, with the default position of recourse to external commercial loan funding to replenish cash holdings if required.

Section C

FN/08 – 09/19 Minutes of Sub-Committees

The Committee noted and approved the minutes of the Full Economic Costing Project (FECP) Steering Group dated 12.06.2008, 9.07.2008 and 24.09.2008 as circulated.

FN/08 – 09/20 Treasurer's Office Review

(Minute FN/07 – 08/76 of 30.05.2007 refers)

In part response to the recommendations of the external review of the Treasurer's Office in 2007, the Committee was circulated with a memorandum from the Treasurer (Acting) dated 10.11.2008 and accompanying schedules setting out a revised Mission Statement and a newly created Vision and Values for the Treasurer's Office. The Committee noted that this initiative would more closely align the service and support provided by the Treasurer's Office with the needs and requirements of the College community and external stakeholders.

FN/08 – 09/21 HEA Correspondence – Reduction in Public Expenditure

The Committee noted the circulated correspondence to the Provost from the HEA dated 1.10.2008 outlining the reductions in public expenditure across the categories of the College's core grant allocation, Medical Education, Strategically Important and Vulnerable Subjects (SIVS) and Governance.

FN/08 – 09/22 Students Union Restructuring and Loan

(Minute FN/05 – 06/94 of 21.06.2006 refers)

The Committee was circulated with a memorandum from the Financial Accountant dated 10.11.2008 and accompanying loan repayment schedule advising that the Students Union had at 30 September 2008 repaid in total the loan amount approved by the Finance Committee in 2006 in accordance with the agreed conditions. The Committee, in welcoming the early repayment of the loan one year ahead of the original timeline, noted the appreciation of the Students Union to the Treasurer's Office, the Committee and the College in supporting their rationalisation plan.

FN/08 – 09/23 Sports Centre Financial Report
(Minute FN/07 – 08/21 of 26.11.2007 refers)

The Committee noted the memorandum and attachments from the Director of Sport dated 04.11.2008 as circulated, which detailed a full review of the Sports Centre operations in 2007/08 including the level of income generated, expenditure incurred and the outcome to 30.09.2008. The Committee noted the budgeted cumulative surplus for 2008/09 and future years which included a permanent reduction in the Cista Communis contribution to pay and non-pay costs in future years recently agreed with the Chief Operations Officer along with the annual contribution of 8% of income to a Capital Re-development Fund to provide for short term and medium term sports projects. The importance of continually reviewing membership levels, pricing and market conditions into the future was accepted. The Committee welcomed the comments of the Director that the Sports Centre had been used enthusiastically by the College community especially the students since its opening and the future objective of increasing staff and public use, particularly the local community, at off peak times.

FN/08 – 09/24 Dublin Experience
(Minute FN/05 – 06/56 of 8.02.2006 refers)

In the circulated memorandum from the Librarian dated 7.11.2008, the Committee noted that an outline review of the options for Visitor Services attractions in the space previously used by the Dublin Experience had been undertaken by the Visitor Services Officer and the Library Shop Manager. Having considered the factors identified in the review, the Committee accepted the Librarian's opinion that there was not a strong business case for the replacement of the Dublin Experience or an alternative attraction in the Arts Building. In the context of revised exhibition facilities for the Library and other College collections which are presently under discussion, the Committee agreed that the option for developing an audiovisual presentation in the College or the city elsewhere will be considered when results of a feasibility study on locations, presently under way, are available.

FN/08 – 09/25 Annual Reports of Sub-Committees of Finance Committee for 2007/2008

The Committee noted and approved the Investment Committee Annual Report for the year ended 30.09.2008 as outlined in a circulated memorandum from the Treasurer (Acting) dated 10.11.2008.

The next meeting of the Finance Committee has been arranged for 17th December at 2.00p.m. in the Board Room.

PROVOST.....

DATE.....

/fcm 17.11.2008