



**Trinity College Dublin
The University of Dublin**

Minutes of the Risk and Compliance Committee

Friday, 7th June 2024, 14.00-15.30

Trinity Board Room

Present: Professor M Cunningham (Chair), Secretary to the College/Director of Governance (Ms V Butler) (Secretary), Mr A Blair, Chief Risk Officer (Ms J Carmichael), Professor J Gilmer, Head of Safety (Dr K Murray), Professor N Ó Murchadha, Mr D Scott, Professor J Wyse.

In Attendance: Ms S Brown (Minute-taker)

Apologies: Academic Secretary (Ms P Callaghan), Chief Operating Officer (Ms O Cunningham), Mr J Harty, College Solicitor (Ms S MacBride), Mr G Woods.

RCC/23-24/40 Statements of Interest

There were no statements of interest declared by members.

RCC/23-24/41 Minutes

The RCC approved the draft minutes of the meeting of 9 May 2024.

RCC/23-24/42 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

RCC/23-24/43 Callover

The RCC noted the callover dated 9 May 2024.

RCC/23-24/44 Strategic Plan 2025-2030 Consultation

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer and Ms Fedelma McNamara, the Executive Director of Academic Services Division, joined the meeting for this item.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer introduced the item with reference to the presentation from the Academic Services Division which had been circulated. She noted that this would be the fourth strategic plan and that the new plan would share some common themes with the three previous plans, such as the quest for excellence in research and teaching, which would provide a good starting point.

She set out the HEA's requirements for the development of the strategic plan under the three headings of Timeframe, Consultation and Content. She informed the Committee of the requirement for the new strategic plan to be in place no later than 3 months after the expiry date of the current strategic plan and that permission had been sought for that date to be July 2025 based on the March 2020 launch date of the current plan. She noted that some additional requirements had been introduced under the HEA Act 2022, most notably that the Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science has requested sight of drafts of the plan as it develops. She advised that there is also an obligation to consult with other constituencies of the University. She summarised the consultative approach being taken which involves targeted meetings rather than open consultation meetings, due to recent challenges encountered at an open session. In response to a query she advised that there was no plan to re-introduce open sessions in this phase of the consultation. She informed the Committee that College-wide surveys had been issued to staff, students and alumni and that the many suggestions garnered would be collated over the summer. Ms McNamara confirmed that some 330 responses had been received to date and that the survey closure date had been extended to 21st June to allow for more responses to be received.

The Vice-Provost/CAO advised that the new strategic plan will need to reflect current financial restraints and that consideration would need to be given to any other potential new funding opportunities.

The Chairperson opened the floor to questions and comments. A summary of the comments made is as follows:

- Workload is a real issue not just in Trinity but across the higher education sector; Trinity through its new strategic plan could show real leadership within the sector by addressing this issue.
- Not only does Trinity need to be at the forefront of research on sustainability, it could further explore the possibility of commercialising it, through for example private sector/university partnerships.
- The Board needs to be ambitious in its thinking, giving consideration to ideas such as creating a new campus and new partnerships such as with the TUs.
- Space allocation should focus on the university's core activities of teaching and research.
- The University Risk Register could be used as the basis for a framework of strategic issues that need to be addressed, such as future proofing for future pandemics in areas such as online assessment.
- The importance of developing a set of values and behaviours and communicating these will be a very important aspect of developing the new strategic plan; it is a key means of bringing people together.
- The model of teaching-only contracts could be explored as a means of freeing up time for other staff to conduct research. The Vice-Provost/CAO noted that this model has been used in the UK and has been divisive and that it would be important not to replicate those mistakes; nonetheless it is recognised that staff in many disciplines are doing a disproportionate amount of teaching.

- In developing the strategic plan, consideration will need to be given to managing and reducing risk associated with it. Engaging with industry may present ethical and reputational risks for example.
- Trinity needs to ensure that it is sufficiently competitive and ensure that the level of overheads are not an obstacle to engaging with industry (although it was noted that they are currently aligned to European standards).

In response, the Vice-Provost/CAO noted that the importance of focusing on teaching and research cannot be understated, and that a serious focus on research will be needed to maintain the University's ranking as first in Ireland. She acknowledged that within the current environment of decreased research funding, new approaches will need to be considered beyond the traditional model of applying for research grants such as exploring links with industry and potential new partnerships, and enterprise-led research.

With regard to the need to free up time for research, the Vice-Provost/CAO highlighted that the emerging theme of digital disruption would be transformative and could have the potential to free up time for all staff.

With regard to the number of objectives envisaged in the new strategic plan, the Vice-Provost/CAO informed the Committee that the approach envisaged would be to have a set number of core strategic vertical pillars (5 or fewer) from which Schools and Units would choose which transversal areas they would develop along with associated KPIs.

In response to a query from a member about the funding of the strategic plan, the Vice-Provost/CAO clarified that current funding goes towards the operational costs of running the University and that therefore another financial lever will need to be identified to enable implementation of target objectives of the strategic plan.

The Vice-Provost/CAO invited the Committee to submit any further comments via the strategic plan email strategy2025-30@tcd.ie.

The Chairperson closed the discussion by thanking the Vice-Provost/CAO and Ms McNamara and it was agreed that they would come back to a future meeting of the RCC at a future phase in the strategic plan's development for further consultation.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer and Ms Fedelma McNamara left the meeting at this point.

RCC/23-24/45 University Risk Register 2023/2024 Medium and Low Risks Summary

The Chief Risk Officer introduced the item with reference to her presentation dated 7 June 2024 which had been circulated. She noted that a comprehensive review of the action plans that are intended to reduce the level of risk being managed within the University will be undertaken in 2024, commencing in ASD. She highlighted the key trends likely to impact the University through global activities such as disruption to social cohesion, as well as impacts of potential political changes due to the volume of both European and international elections

taking place in 2024. She highlighted some changes in risks, noting that there is a reduction in the number of low risks to 8 and that there is currently a total of 27 medium risks. She informed the Committee that the medium and low risks summary had been approved by the Risk Management Group and by EOG and that following RCC approval it would be brought to Board on 19 June.

In the context of risk 16, the Chief Risk Officer confirmed that the current Fraud Policy is undergoing review to ensure it remains fit for purpose. With regard to risk 17, she noted that a Knowledge Security Group was in place since 2023, established with the aim of identifying the level of exposure of the risk of inappropriate access to research data, intellectual property and personal data.

The Chairperson opened the floor to questions and comments. With respect to risk 42 which was related to non-compliance with legal and regulatory requirements for the University, it was suggested that reference to safety legislation should be made, perhaps linking it to risk 46 (the risk of a breach of health and safety policies within the University). The Chairperson noted that this was one of the reasons for his request for the RCC to have oversight of compliance requirements across the University as it would inform this risk.

In response to a request from a member of RCC that more information be provided that would provide a greater understanding of the link between risks, the Chief Risk Officer advised that work on an interdependency map had commenced. It was agreed that she would bring an initial draft of the interdependency map for the top 6 risks to the RCC in the autumn.

In response to a suggestion that in the context of, for example, reputational risks it needs to be clear what pro-active and reactive actions plans are in place, the Chairperson noted that the RCC had received assurance from a recent presentation on cyber-security, and that other presentations would be given on the top risks to the RCC. The need for an updated emergency response plan that had been raised by the RCC and on which work was underway (led by the College Secretary) would also provide assurance.

In response to a query regarding the revision of the Fraud Policy, the Secretary to the College/Director of Governance confirmed that the review process involved stakeholder engagement (including a workshop being run by the Chief Risk Officer) and would incorporate the experience of actual cases that had arisen. She noted that the University's policies must align with its Statutes as part of the process of review.

In response to a query the Secretary to the College/Director of Governance confirmed that a person had been appointed to the role of Director of Public Affairs and Communications and was due to begin in the coming weeks.

With regard to the Knowledge Security Group that had been established by the Chief Risk Officer, it was agreed that the minutes from that Group should be brought to the RCC for information.

The RCC approved the memorandum from the Chief Risk Officer and the 2023/24 Medium and Low Risk Summary.

Action/Decision

45.1 The Chief Risk Officer will bring an initial draft of the interdependency map for the top 6 risks to the RCC in the autumn.

45.2 The minutes of the Knowledge Security Group will be brought to the RCC for information.

RCC/23-24/46 Risk and Compliance Committee Terms of Reference

The RCC approved the revised Terms of Reference of the RCC as had been circulated.

RCC/23-24/47 Almanack 2024/25

The RCC approved the Almanack 2024/25 dated 31 May 2024.

RCC/23-24/48 Associated Companies – Directors’ Reports

The Secretary to the College/Director of Governance introduced the item with reference to her memorandum dated 31 May 2024 and accompanying Associated Companies Directors’ Reports which had been circulated. She noted that Trinity Online Services CLG had ceased all core business activities following the transfer of the services and employees to the University and that the company had been closed.

In response to a query, she clarified that with regard to Science Gallery, the funding that had been promised would not now be fully realised and that it was necessary to reconsider the opportunities available for the future of the Science Gallery. She confirmed that this is under active consideration by the Executive Officers’ Group.

The RCC approved the Associated Companies – Directors’ Reports.

RCC/23-24/49 Any Other Business

The Chairperson thanked the members of the RCC for their participation and contributions during the year.

There were no other items of business.

Signed



Date

18 September 2024