



Trinity College Dublin

Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath

The University of Dublin

Incorporating any amendments approved at subsequent Board meetings

Board Meeting 26 May 2021

This meeting was conducted remotely using the Zoom application and was hosted in the Yeats Room.

Present: Provost (Dr P J Prendergast), Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer (Professor J Barkhoff), Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies (Professor K Mitchell), Registrar (Professor B Tangney), Bursar/Director of Strategic Innovation (Professor V Campbell), Professor K Ahmad, Professor S Alyn Stacey, Professor L Brennan, Professor A Burke, Mr K Byrne, Ms J Donoghue, Professor D Faas, Mr D Grouse, Mr E Hand, Professor R A Kenny, Ms L Keogh, Professor R McManus, Ms R Mathews McKay, Professor A Nolan, Ms M O'Connor, Professor D R Phelan, Ms G Scanlon, Professor A Seery, Professor F Sheerin, Professor J Walsh.

Apologies: Professor K McTiernan, Professor L Roe.

In attendance: Assistant Secretary to the College (Ms V Butler).

(ex officio) Secretary to the College (Mr J Coman), Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer (Mr P Reynolds).

(by invitation) Interim Chief Operating Officer (Ms O Cunningham), Vice-President for Global Relations (Professor J Hussey).

SECTION A

BD/20-21/282 Statements of Interest

The Secretary to the College advised that no potential statements of interest had been received.

BD/20-21/283 Provost's Report

The Provost provided a report under the following headings:

(i) Old Library Redevelopment Project

The Provost, with reference to a recent announcement made in respect of Government funding of €25m for the Old Library Redevelopment Project, and on behalf of the Board, recorded his appreciation for the Government's support for the Old Library Redevelopment Project noting that the completed building will be a valued space for scholars in the future.

(ii) LERU Rectors' meeting

The Provost advised that he attended his last LERU Rectors meeting on 21-22 May 2021 where some of the main issues discussed included EU funding for open scholarship and for Horizon Europe.

(iii) Philanthropy

The Provost advised Board members that an announcement will be made the day following the meeting noting the largest philanthropic donation from an individual in the history of the State. He advised that this funding would support the development of the E3 Research Institute (E3RI) and that liaison with the incoming Provost was ongoing and positive.

The Provost opened the item for questions and comments.

Several Board members congratulated the Provost on his philanthropic achievements and the Provost advised that the University is now on target to meet the Inspiring Generations philanthropic campaign target of €400million before the end of his term.

In response to a query from a Board member regarding the refurbishment of other historic buildings on the campus and in particular Porter's Lodge, the Bursar/ Director of Strategic Innovation advised that the building is in storage and is captured on a Master Plan of the campus but is not on the current list of capital projects.

Following comments from Board members it was noted that consideration should be given to refurbishing other historic buildings at the East End of the campus and also to refurbishing the Santry Book Repository.

BD/20-21/284

Report of the Board Review Working Group and Government Legislative Proposals regarding Governance of Irish Higher Education Institutions

The Provost-elect, Professor Linda Doyle joined the meeting for this item.

It was noted that Mr Dermot McCarthy, Chair of the Board Review Working Group, unavoidably could not join the meeting for this item.

The Provost introduced this item with reference to a draft penultimate report which had been circulated in advance noting that the Board review process had commenced well before the Government legislative proposals as it was initiated following a Board self-evaluation.

He provided the Board with an overview of the Report noting that the document was presented to the Board for discussion and not finalisation. The Provost advised the Board that once the Board members have had an opportunity to discuss the Report, he plans to engage again with the Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (FHERIS) and his officials in the coming months to establish what might be achievable for Trinity in respect of the Government's proposals.

The Secretary to the College summarised the next steps in the process. He advised that it is envisaged that a draft final report from the Board Review Working group would be brought to the Board in June. In relation to the legislative proposals, the Secretary to the College advised that the Minister's plan is for the General Scheme of the Higher Education Authority Bill, 2021 to be brought to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Education, Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science possibly in July for pre-legislative scrutiny, with the full wording of the Bill developed in the summer and brought through all legislative stages in the Dáil and Seanad and enacted by the end of 2021. He advised the Board that it is Trinity's intention to promote a Private Bill as occurred after the Universities Act, 1997, noting that while the composition of the Trinity Board is likely to be legislated for in the public Act, a private Act can be enacted by the Oireachtas to amend the Charters and Letters Patent once it is consistent with the purpose and substance of the public Act.

Responding to comments from a Board member, the Provost advised that students are now identified as a separate category in the proposals so that there would be internal, external and student members of the Board and that the proposals currently allow for 2 student members. In response to comments from a Board member, the need for continued strong elected student membership on the Board was acknowledged.

A Board member welcomed the report, and the importance of maintaining a majority of internal representation on the Board was noted. The potential for an improved structure of Principal Committees, with increased delegation and decision making, in demonstrating strengthened collegiate governance was acknowledged.

Several Board members expressed reservations and concerns about the timing of the discussions with the Government and queried the necessity of agreeing definitive Board composition at this time and noted an opportunity for engagement with Trinity Senators. The possibility of engaging with Alumni and the public in respect of the proposals was also noted.

The Provost noted that on this occasion the majority of the other universities appear to be in agreement with the proposals in relation to the composition of and the significant reduction in the size of the Board (Governing Authority in other universities). Other issues of contention in relation to the legislative proposals such as the level of increased State control would be the subject of a

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submission to be prepared by the Irish Universities Association.

A lengthy and robust discussion then followed, where several Board members expressed reservations about the timing of the discussions and also about some of the recommendations contained within the draft penultimate Report from the Board Review Working Group. It was noted that Board members would be welcome to forward any specific comments or suggestions on the wording of the draft Report after the meeting.

The Provost-elect commended the work done to date and also raised some queries in respect of timing and responding to the proposals. She also noted the opportunity for Principal Committees to play a greater role in the University's governance structure.

A Board member thanked the members of the Working Group for their work and expertise, he also thanked the Secretary to the College for sharing legal advice which had been received and thanked the Provost for giving appropriate time to the discussion on this matter. The Board noted the importance for the University in protecting those governance structures that were working well and in not setting a precedent for future legislative changes.

The Provost noted the important contributions by Mr McCarthy to the work of the Board Review Working Group and in the discussions with the Government. He also advised the Board that there is no guarantee that a private Bill for Trinity will be passed by the Oireachtas and if not then the provisions of the public Act will apply to Trinity also.

Following comments from a Board member, the possibility of agreeing to having an external Board member as Chair, in the context of an internal majority of Board members, and the potential role for former members of the Board and retired staff was acknowledged.

A Board member, commending the Report and in particular the proposals on how the Board operates and the role of Principal Committees, also commended the ownership Board members have of strategic issues in Trinity.

The Secretary to the College advised that the General Scheme of the Higher Education Authority Bill, 2021 does not include specific numbers in relation to the size of the Board but rather a number of principles including a majority of external members. He noted that there may be a lot of different perspectives at a Joint Committee of the Oireachtas and that over summer time numbers are likely to be applied to the wording of the Bill with the full wording of the Bill being published in the autumn.

Following the discussion the Provost summarized that the Board for now does not wish to agree an exact reduction in the number of Board members and that he is to advise the Minister that while the University is open to some reduction in members, in the context of retaining an internal majority, a severe reduction from 27 members is not acceptable.

A Board member noted that the Trinity Board has been responsible for and delivered very significant capital projects and there is no apparent deficit in skill sets.

The Provost closed the item noting that a further update will be provided at the June Board meeting.

Action/Decision

284.01 The Board considered and discussed the memorandum from the Chair of the Board Review Working Group and the Secretary to the College dated 24 May 2021 and the accompanying draft penultimate Report.

284.02 A further update is to be provided at the next meeting of the Board in June 2021.

Professor Doyle left the meeting at this point.

BD/20-21/285 Martin Naughton E3 Learning Foundry Project

Professor Sylvia Draper, Dean of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (E3 Business Development Project Sponsor); Mr Mike Peirce, Chair of Steering Group for E3 Capital Programme; Mr Leo Harmon, Independent Monitor; Ms Edwina Hegarty, E3 Programme Manager; Mr Greg Power, Head of Capital Projects and Planning; and Mr Paul Coote, Project Appraisal Manager (FSD) joined the meeting for this item.

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The Provost welcomed everyone to the meeting.

The Bursar/Director of Strategic Innovation introduced this item with reference to her memorandum dated 19 May 2021 and a presentation dated 25 May 2021 which had been circulated in advance. She advised the Board that the following requests were before the Board for approval:

- To award the main contract to the preferred bidder.
- To increase the Capital Budget.
- To approve the project to proceed through the Execution Stage (stage 4).
- To note the updated programme due to COVID delays.
- To note the update to the E3LF Business case.
- To note the E3 Student numbers and new courses.

The Bursar/Director of Strategic Innovation reiterated what the capital project is aiming to achieve noting that it will bring significant improvements to the East End of the campus. She outlined the sustainability aspects of the project and provided an update on the tender process for the main contractor.

The Bursar/Director of Strategic Innovation, summarising the financial aspects of the project, advised the Board that there had been an increase in the allocation of funds from philanthropic sources allocated to the project. She concluded by noting that the demolition works are scheduled to finish by August 2021, building works to commence in September 2021 and the building will be handed over for occupation in Autumn 2023.

Mr Coote provided the Board with an update on the business case in terms of impact of Brexit and the Pandemic. In particular, Mr Coote advised that there was no change in borrowing or no further request to Government proposed. He noted that the project will report to Board every 6 months and concluded by providing an update on income and expenditure for the project.

Professor Draper advised the Board that the projected increase in student numbers was assured by the introduction of new degree and postgraduate programmes. She advised that staff in the Faculty were eager to occupy the building and that the E3 proposals were already significantly increasing academic collaboration and enhancing the way programmes are delivered and research is conducted.

Mr Harmon, with reference to his memorandum dated 18 May 2021, provided Board members with a summary of his report. He advised the Board that the E3 Trinity team and the design team are performing well under what have been extraordinary circumstances. He noted the increase in budget which arises due to the impacts of Brexit, the Pandemic, inflation and supply issues.

Mr Harmon noted that the current team members are committed to delivering a quality project and that the selected contractor has shown their ability to deliver quality in other projects.

Mr Harmon concluded by summarising some of the risks to the project noting that he is optimistic for a successful delivery of this project.

In response to queries from Board members, the Bursar/Director of Strategic Innovation assured the Board that high quality subcontractors are to be engaged in the project. Mr Power advised that detailed requirements in respect of quality had been contained in the tender documentation and building works will be closely monitored as the project progresses.

Several Board members commended the proposals and the progress made to date noting that energy and the environment are increasingly areas of interest for staff and students and that the Learning Foundry will further embellish the reputation of the University.

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Action/Decision

285.01 The Board considered and approved the memorandum from the Bursar/ Director of Strategic Innovation dated 19 May 2021 and the requests within.

285.02 The Board noted and discussed the memorandum from the Independent Monitor dated 18 May 2021.

BD/20-21/286 HR Update

Ms Antoinette Quinn, Director of HR joined the meeting for this item.

The Provost welcomed Ms Antoinette Quinn to the meeting.

The Interim Chief Operating Officer provided the Board with an update on the process for the recording of annual leave and the timeline for the implementation of role regrading.

She advised that the recording of annual leave proposal had been approved by the Executive Officers' Group but that implementation had been delayed due to the impact of the Pandemic. She advised that Human Resources continue to engage with all areas in College noting that the recording of leave is a legal requirement, and has always been conducted and that this proposal was simply upgrading the means by which this is done.

With respect to role regrading for non-academic members of staff, Ms Cunningham advised that a team of staff members will be in place to evaluate requests for roles to be reviewed from October 2021.

In response to comments from a Board member in respect of the electronic form which had been circulated to capture leave data, Ms Quinn advised that she would be meeting with the Heads of School later that day to discuss and that meetings had also been held with staff representative groups. Ms Quinn, noting that the proposal is to implement a digital process to replace current manual processes advised that any concerns will be addressed before the matter is progressed.

In response to a query from a Board member regarding role grading, Ms Quinn clarified that the membership of the Steering Group overseeing role grading included the Chief Operating Officer, herself and other experienced members of the administrative staff and experienced personnel from Human Resources.

With respect to the Role Grading Working Group, Ms Quinn advised that there was broad representation on the Group and that the Terms of Reference will be approved electronically over the summer months with a view to implementing role regrading in October 2021.

Action/Decision

286.01 The Board received the update from the Interim Chief Operating Officer and the Director of Human Resources.

Ms Quinn left the meeting at this point.

BD/20-21/287 Review of Scholarship – Terms of Reference

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies invited the Board's attention to his memorandum, dated 17 May 2021, which had been circulated in advance. He advised the Board that it is proposed to establish a Working Group to examine all aspects of the institution of Scholarship in consultation with the College community and outlined the proposed membership of the Working Group.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies gave an overview of the average number of Scholarships awarded each year and the associated financial costs. In addition, he summarised some of the main areas for consideration as part of the review.

Following comments from a Board member, the importance of ensuring equal opportunities for students was noted. It was also noted that having to take employment to finance their studies can be an academically limiting factor for some students. Consideration could also be given to alternative ways to utilise the funding associated with Scholarship for the benefit of all students and particularly those with financial restraints.

Following comments from Board members in relation to the proposed membership of the Working Group, it was noted that consideration should be given to inviting other members as follows:

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- A member of the Business School
- A member from one of the professional Schools
- A representative from the Scholars
- A representative from the Fellows
- A staff member with legal expertise
- The Faculty Deans.

The requirement for Statutory changes, should there be any revision to Scholarship, was noted.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer welcomed the review noting that it was timely and an opportunity to modernise the process. He also welcomed the suggestion that consideration could be given to how Scholarship could be utilised to encourage students to go on to do research.

In response to a query from a Board member the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies clarified the practice of intermission.

In response to comments from a Board member, the importance of ensuring equal access to a meaningful education for all students and the provision of appropriate supports for students was acknowledged.

The Board approved the terms of reference subject to some amendments to the membership of the Working Group. A revised version of the Terms of Reference is to be brought to a future meeting of the Board.

Action/Decision

287.01 The Board considered and approved the memorandum from the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies dated 17 May 2021 and the terms of reference contained within subject to some amendments to the membership.

BD/20-21/288 Visitors

The Board received the verbal report from the Secretary to the College.

BD/20-21/289 Annual Sustainability Report 2019/2020

Mr Mike Clark, Director of Campus Infrastructure, Mr Pat McDonnell, Head of Estates Strategy and Mr Raoul Empey of Sustineo consultancy joined the meeting for this item.

Mr Clark introduced this item noting the impact of the Pandemic in respect of sustainability matters as the campus was closed and people were remote working with the result that energy usage levels fell dramatically.

Mr Empey invited the Board's attention to his presentation dated 20 April 2021 noting that Trinity was ranked 14th out of 768 global universities in respect of Sustainable Development Goals and 52nd out of 377 and the highest in Ireland in respect of Climate Action.

He advised that a Climate Change Action Plan is being developed and due for completion by June 2021, which will be the first in a series of annuals plans to be produced. Mr Empey also advised the Board of some ongoing energy saving projects across the campus.

Professors Alyn Stacey, Hussey and Walsh left the meeting at this point.

Mr Empey summarised the University's performance in respect of some key sustainable goals. He noted that careful consideration needs to be given to what targets the University sets to be achieved by 2030 noting that targets should be ambitious but achievable. The role of teaching and research should also be considered.

Ms O'Connor and Professor Brennan left at this point.

Mr Empey concluded by noting some recommendations including the possible allocation of dedicated resources to drive and accelerate the sustainability agenda. He advised that it is timely for the University to review all of its sustainability targets and to assign responsibility for each to an individual.

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Prof Sheerin left the meeting at this point.

Responding to a query from a Board member in respect of a possible audit of CO2 emissions in the University, Mr Empey advised that come January 2022 the University will be asked to report as much information as possible in this regard including business travel and flights.

Mr Clark, responding to comments from a Board member in respect of the need for more charging points for electric cars, advised that consideration is being given to possible locations and that the completion of the medium voltage project facilitated more electric charging points. It was agreed that additional charging points should be installed on the campus.

The Board approved the 2019/2020 Sustainability Report and the Provost closed the item thanking Mr Empey for his contribution to the item.

Action/Decision

289.01 The Board considered and approved the memorandum from the Director of Campus Infrastructure and the Head of Estates Strategy dated 19 May 2021 and the accompanying 2019/20 Sustainability Report.

289.02 It was noted that the Climate Action Plan would be brought to a future meeting of the Board.

289.03 It was agreed that additional charging points should be installed on the campus.

Mr Clark and Mr Empey left the meeting at this point.

BD/20-21/290 Any Other Urgent Business

There were no other items of urgent business.

SECTION B

BD/20-21/291 Library and Information Policy Committee

The Board noted and approved the draft minutes of the meeting of 15 March 2021. It was noted that the Committee had approved the 2019/20 Annual Report, IT Services and proposals in respect of security enhancements to University email services.

SECTION C

BD/20-21/292 Membership of Audit Committee

The Board noted and approved the Memorandum from the Registrar dated 19 May 2021.

BD/20-21/293 Board Membership – Students' Union

- (i) The Board noted that the following had been elected, and would serve as members of the Board of the College for the academic year 2021-2022:
- President; Ms Leah Keogh
 - Welfare Officer; Ms Sierra Mueller-Owens
 - Education Officer; Ms Bev Genockey
- (ii) The Board noted that the incoming members listed in (i) above would be invited to attend the Board meeting of 16 June 2021 as observers.

SECTION D

In compliance with the Data Protection Acts this information is restricted.

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