



## Trinity College Dublin

Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath

The University of Dublin

### Board Meeting 14 December 2022

*This meeting was held in the Trinity Board Room*

**Present:** Provost (Dr L Doyle), Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer (Professor O Sheils), Registrar (Professor N Cox), Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies (Professor D Shepherd), Professor L Brennan, Professor S Browne, Mr K Byrne, Professor N Campbell, Ms Z Cummins, Mr P Farrell, Ms G Fullam, Mr D Grouse, Professor D Jones, Professor C Leahy, Ms R Mathews-McKay, Prof R McManus, Professor A Nolan.

**Apologies:** Bursar/Director of Strategic Innovation (Professor E Denny), Professor K Ahmad, Professor S Alyn Stacey, Professor I Arnedillo Sánchez, Professor R A Kenny, Professor L Roe, Professor F Sheerin, Ms C Staunton, Professor John Walsh.

**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)** Chief Operating Officer (Ms O Cunningham), Vice-President for Global Engagement (Professor E Stokes).

### SECTION A

#### **BD/22-23/082 Apologies and Statements of Interest**

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

In noting the apologies for the meeting, it was noted that there was a preference in this academic year for fully in-person meetings following the fully online meetings during the Pandemic. In setting Board meeting dates for the next academic year, further consideration would be given to avoiding assessment weeks if possible.

#### **BD/22-23/083 Minutes of the Meetings of 16 November 2022**

The Board approved the draft minutes of 16 November 2022.

#### **BD/22-23/084 Matters Arising**

The following items were raised under matters arising:

##### **(i) BD/22-23/062 Matters Arising - BD/22-23/031 Board Work Programme**

The Secretary to the College advised the Board that a sustainability update was on the agenda for the meeting.

##### **(ii) BD/22-23/062 Matters Arising - BD/22-23/032 Quarterly Financial Review and Forecasts**

The Provost advised the Board that it had come to her attention that the financial forecasts, as considered at a previous meeting of the Board, had been given without approval to a newspaper, noting her disappointment, again, at the breach in Board confidentiality. She reminded the Board

that failure to respect the confidential nature of Board business can result in significant financial and reputational damage for the University and that should a Board member be of the view that further communication on an item is warranted then they could raise this matter with her directly.

In response to a query from a Board member in respect of sanctioning or removing a Board member, the Provost clarified that it would not be feasible to do this at this time as the Board member in question had not been identified. The Registrar clarified that under the Universities Act, 1997 and the Statutes it is feasible to remove a member from the Board by resolution of the Board.

A Board member noted their disappointment at the lack of confidentiality noting that all Board members should be acting in the best interest of the University.

The Provost closed the item, reminding all Board members that all Board documentation is confidential and that, as provided for in the Statutes, she is the spokesperson for the Board.

**(iii) BD/22-23/062 Matters Arising - BD/22-23/055 Independent Review of Graduate Students' Union – Terms of Reference**

It was noted that the independent review of the Graduate Students' Union was well advanced and that elections for postgraduate class representatives had just been conducted by the Students' Union.

The Registrar clarified that the nominations from the Students' Union would then be brought to Board for approval.

**(iv) BD/22-23/068 Provost's Report – Science Gallery Dublin (SGD)**

In response to comments from a Board member in relation to future plans for the Science Gallery Dublin, the Provost advised that a cautious approach is being taken and that once full clarity is received in respect of future options and Government funding, proposals in respect of the future structure and governance of the Gallery would be brought to Board for consideration.

She noted that some good progress had been made in identifying funding and that proposals in respect of the most appropriate form for the Science Gallery in the future were being given careful consideration.

**BD/22-23/085**

**Update on Sustainability**

*The Vice-President for Biodiversity and Climate Action, Professor Jane Stout and the Sustainability Manager, Ms Jane Hackett joined the meeting for this item.*

The Provost welcomed both visitors to the meeting.

Professor Stout introduced this item with reference to her presentation dated 14 December 2022, which had been circulated in advance. She provided the Board with an overview of the work that had been conducted since her commencement in the role of Vice-President for Biodiversity and Climate Action. This included giving consideration to the development of a sustainability strategy and action plan, meeting with key stakeholders to further develop trust and relationships and visiting all of the Trinity sites to audit and clarify the existing carbon and biodiversity footprint of the university.

In addition Professor Stout advised of reporting and applications that had been conducted, outreach events, planning for Green Week and an increase in communications and social media activity.

A Board member welcomed the update as provided by Professor Stout and in particular the growing networks and visibility of the Sustainability team. In addition, the Board member noted the importance of embedding sustainability into the curriculum of academic programmes and Professor Stout advised that she had raised this matter with the Undergraduate Studies Committee and the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies advised that further consideration is being

given to this.

In response to a query from a Board member in respect of the sustainability challenges facing the University, Professor Stout advised that a target to reduce carbon emissions by 51% by 2030, as set by Government, represented a significant challenge particularly given the historic nature of the College's campus and available resources. She also noted that it is important to consider behavioural change and increase awareness in respect of sustainability matters.

The Chief Operating Officer noted that significant funding would be required to upgrade and improve heating systems and energy consumption in the older buildings on the campus, but that progress had been made in respect of the Rubrics project and will also be achieved when the Old Library Redevelopment project is completed.

In response to a query from a Board member in respect of Dublin City Council's plans for enhancing Pearse Street, reducing traffic and air pollution traffic in the area, Professor Stout advised that as it is acknowledged that Trinity is a key stakeholder on this matter she will continue to engage with the relevant external groups and to monitor developments.

The Chief Operating Officer advised that she is monitoring proposals in respect of the introduction of further cycle lanes on Pearse Street and that there is a meeting to discuss planned in January 2023.

In response to queries from a Board member in respect of funding for sustainability initiatives, the Provost advised that there was no one available source and that on an annual basis funding would be considered in the context of prioritising sustainability activities and reprioritising other activities. In addition, the Provost noted that the Trinity East project will endeavour to conduct refurbishment and regeneration in a sustainable way.

A Board member noted the importance of considering European funding opportunities and possible philanthropic funding to underpin sustainability initiatives.

In response to queries from a Board member, Professor Stout advised that it is envisaged that a costed sustainability roadmap, with clear timelines, will be brought forward for consideration at the end of Semester 2. The Chief Operating Officer advised that no sanctions for failing to meet the emissions target has, as of yet, been specified by the Government.

A Board member noted the support for embedding sustainability in education and noted the potential to engage further with students and the public to gain support for financial investment from Government to support sustainability initiatives.

The possibility of increasing the number of charging stations for electric vehicles on the campus was noted.

The Provost closed the item, thanking Professor Stout and Ms Hackett who left the meeting at his point.

#### **Action/Decision**

**085.01** The Board received the verbal update from the Vice-President for Biodiversity and Climate Action

*Professor Stout and Ms Hackett left the meeting at this point.*

#### **BD/22-23/086**

#### **Strategic Capital Projects Dashboard**

The Chief Operating Officer provided the Board with a verbal update in respect of some of the on-going strategic capital projects. In particular, she advised that significant progress is being made in the refurbishment of the Rubrics and welcomed the use of geothermal heating in that building, noting that it is envisaged that similar heating systems may be used for other projects.

In response to a query from a Board member in respect of potential impact of Metro North on existing capital projects, the Chief Operating Officer clarified that consideration will be given to this when making any submissions for planning and the Provost advised that the development of Metro North is being closely monitored.

**Action/Decision**

**086.01** The Board noted the Dashboard as circulated and received the verbal update from the Chief Operating Officer.

**BD/22-23/087**

**Financial Year 2022/23 Consolidated University Budget**

*Financial Planning and Risk Manager, Mr Keith Creedon, joined the meeting for this item.*

The Provost welcomed Mr Creedon to the meeting and provided the Board with the context for the consideration of this item.

The Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer introduced this item with reference to a presentation from himself and Mr Creedon, dated 14 December 2023, which had been circulated in advance. He advised the Board that the Financial Year 2022/23 Consolidated University Budget was approved by Planning Group on 18 October 2022, the Executive Officers' Group on 8 November 2022 and by Finance Committee on 23 November 2022 and was now before the Board for approval.

The Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer noted the significant financial challenges facing the University including rising energy costs and general inflation, supply chain issues and the planned upcoming closure of the Old Library amongst others. He then provided the Board with a summary of the budget noting key elements including income, research activity, operating costs, and capital expenditure.

The Provost thanked the Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer and opened the item for discussion and questions.

Responding to a query in respect of Government funding received, the Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer advised that currently the University is funded 40% from exchequer funding (including research funding) and 60% from non-exchequer sources.

In response to comments from a Board member in respect of rising energy costs, the Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer noted the need to improve energy efficiency across the campus and to invest in more efficient heating systems. However, he noted that this will require significant financial investment and that all possible funding possibilities will be examined in addition to noting the importance of all future business cases demonstrating a commitment to sustainability.

In response to queries and comments from a Board member in respect of the staff: student ratio and student fees, the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer advised the Board that consideration is being given to the student profile and numbers with consultation underway with stakeholder groups as to how best Trinity can support students and the different ways by which programmes can be delivered.

Following a related comment from a Board member, the Provost clarified that in the current Strategic Plan there are many commitments given with many actions in progress and that the current level of student enrolments had been planned for. She noted that there are on-going discussions at the University Council in respect of the profile of future students and what approach Trinity may take in respect of its academic offerings.

Responding to a comment from a Board member in respect of projected energy costs, the Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer clarified the process by which forecasted energy costs are determined, noting that while there may be a growth in usage in some areas of the College, Estates and Facilities are implementing measures that will reduce usage in other areas to off-set this.

**Action/Decision**

**087.01** The Board considered and approved the memorandum from the Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer dated 7 December 2022.

*Mr Creedon left the meeting at this point.*

**BD/22-23/088 Board Composition: Update and Consultation Process**

The Registrar introduced the item with reference to a memorandum from himself and the Secretary to College dated 8 November 2022, which had been circulated in advance. He provided the Board with an update on the consultation process to date noting that overall the consultation process has seen significant engagement and has given many useful suggestions in respect of the principles and procedures to be followed when nominating and appointing the new composition of the College Board and drafting the necessary Statute amendments.

With respect to amendments to the Statutes, the Registrar advised that drafting is in progress and it is proposed to hold an away-day meeting of the Board which will facilitate detailed discussion on the draft amendments in advance of any decisions being formally approved by the Board at a later date. The away-day is provisionally scheduled for the afternoon of Thursday, 9 February 2022 and Board members were asked to note this date in their diaries

**Action/Decision**

**088.01** The Board noted and discussed the memorandum from the Registrar and the Secretary to the College dated 8 November 2022.

*The Bursar/Director of Strategic Innovation left the meeting at this point.*

**BD/22-23/089 Trinity Legacies Review Working Group**

*The Senior Dean, Professor Eoin O'Sullivan, joined the meeting for this item.*

Professor O'Sullivan advised the Board that the Trinity Legacies Review Working Group (TLRWG) had been established 2 months ago, included external membership, and was tasked to develop a process by which legacy issues could be considered based on evidence and with due consideration. He advised the Board that in the first instance the Group had been tasked to consider the Inisbofin crania and the naming of the Berkeley Library.

In respect of the Inisbofin crania, Professor O'Sullivan advised the Board that a working paper providing context and evidence on the matter had been commissioned and published on the TLRWG website, that a 2-week public consultation process had been conducted as agreed with the Inisbofin community following a meeting in early November, and submissions had been received, including a petition signed by members of the Inisbofin community seeking the return and reburial of the crania.

Professor O'Sullivan advised the Board that the Group had recommended consultation with relevant statutory bodies including the Irish Medical Council and the National Museum of Ireland in advance of any final decision in respect of the crania being made.

The Provost noted that while the Group reports to her, this was an important matter she felt should come forward to the Board.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer provided Board members with a clarification in respect of how the crania would have been obtained.

In respect of a query about the time it might take for a final decision to be reached, the Provost clarified that there will be processes to be followed and noted her belief that the matter was being treated appropriately with evidence-based discussion.

Professor O'Sullivan clarified that the Director of the National Museum of Ireland was a member of

the Review Group and that he anticipated a formal communication on the matter from them early in the new year.

A Board member noted the media interest on this matter and a second noted the level of public interest in this matter re-enforced the importance of handling this matter sensitively.

Following comments from a Board member in respect of addressing colonial heritage matters, the Provost noted the importance of building respectful debate where a wide range of views can be heard.

In response to a query from a Board member in relation to communication with the Inisbofin community, Professor O'Sullivan advised that, with Board agreement, contact will be made with members of the Inisbofin community to advise them of the intention to seek guidance from the Irish Medical Council and the National Museum of Ireland. A Board member noted that such matters can be contentious and welcomed the approach being taken.

The Provost concluded the item and thanked Professor O'Sullivan for his contribution to and work on this matter.

*Professor O'Sullivan left the meeting at this point.*

#### **Action/Decision**

**089.01** Board received the verbal update from the Provost and the Senior Dean and noted the next steps as outlined by the Senior Dean.

#### **BD/22-23/090 University Council**

The Board noted and approved the draft Acta of the Council meeting of 30 November 2022 and noted and approved the corrected Actum CL/22-23/037 from the Council meeting of 2 November 2022.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer extended her gratitude to Professor Alyn Stacey for noting the corrections required to the minutes of the meeting which had now been made.

#### **BD/22-23/091 Provost's Report**

The Provost thanked the Board members for their time and continued commitment to the work of the Board during 2022.

#### **BD/22-23/092 Any Other Urgent Business**

The following items of urgent business were raised:

##### **(i) Concert in Public Theatre**

The Vice-President for Global Engagement advised the Board of an upcoming concert for charity being held in the Public Theatre and encouraged Board members to attend should they wish to do so.

##### **(ii) Secretary to College**

The Secretary to the College advised the Board that he had informed the Provost that he plans to retire from the end of October 2023. The Secretary to the College advised that he had selected that date as the transition to the new Board and governance structures will be in place by then and it will mark the end of that phase of work.

The Secretary to the College noted that he has really enjoyed working with the Provost and with all the colleagues in Trinity. He noted that he will give any assistance he can with helping to find a successor and that he will arrange for a full briefing and handover of ongoing work.

It was noted that more details on the recruitment process will be brought to future Board meetings.

Board members congratulated the Secretary to the College with a round of applause.

The Provost commended the Secretary for his work to date and thanked him for informing the Board at this early stage so that a robust recruitment process could be commenced.

## SECTION B

### **BD/22-23/093 Board Business**

#### **(i) Callover**

The Board noted the callover updated to 16 November 2022.

#### **(ii) Outcomes**

The Board noted the Board outcomes from the meeting of 16 November 2022.

### **BD/22-23/094 Audit Committee**

The Board noted and approved the draft minutes of the meeting of 11 October 2022.

### **BD/22-23/095 Equality Committee**

The Board noted and approved the draft minutes of the meetings of 17 May 2022 and 26 October 2022.

### **BD/22-23/096 Finance Committee**

The Board noted and approved the minutes of the meeting of 23 November 2022.

## SECTION C

### **BD/22-23/097 Board Business Approved by Written Procedure**

The Board noted that the enclosed memorandum from the Registrar, dated 23 November 2022, was approved by Board on 25 November 2022.

### **BD/22-23/098 Higher Degrees**

The Board noted Higher Degrees, approved by Council on 30 November 2022.

### **BD/22-23/099 Policy Review Record Sheet**

The Board noted the memorandum from the Secretary to the College and the Project Officer, Secretary's Office, dated 30 November 2022.

### **BD/22-23/100 Prizes and Other Awards - Lindsay Downes Prize**

The Board noted and approved the memorandum from the Head of the School of Social Work and Social Policy dated 5 November 2022.

### **BD/22-23/101 Appointment of Additional Assistant Junior Dean for 2022-23**

The Board noted and approved the memorandum from the Junior Dean dated 22 November 2022.

### **BD/22-23/102 Proctors' Lists for Winter Commencements**

The Board noted that the Proctors' Lists were approved by the sub-committee of Board on 17 November 2022.

### **BD/22-23/103 Sealings**

The Board noted the Sealings (See Appendix 1 to this minute).

**This information is restricted due to commercial sensitivity.**

### **BD/22-23/104 Report from the Student Conduct and Capacity Committee**

The Board noted and approved the memorandum from the Registrar dated 17 November 2022.

**SECTION D**

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

*The Provost closed the meeting and wished everyone a very Happy Christmas.*

Signed: .....

Date: .....