



Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting of 23 November 2015

PRESENT: Provost (Chair), Vice Provost-Chief Academic Officer, Bursar, Chief Operating Officer, Mr. J. Gorringer, Registrar (for Minutes FN/15-16/46-49), Ms. C. Curtis, President of the Students Union, Chief Financial Officer (CFO) – Secretary of the Committee

IN

ATTENDANCE: Deputy CFO, President of the Graduate Students Union

APOLOGIES: Dean of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences, Professor R. Gilligan

The Minutes of the meeting of 9 November 2015, along with an update on open action items, were noted subject to a minor amendment. A matter arising from the minutes of 20.10.2015 is recorded separately below - Minute FN/15-16/46 refers.

Section A

No Items

Section B

FN/15 - 16/46 Increase in EU and non-EU Postgraduate fees and other non-EU Undergraduate fees for 2016/17
(Minute FN/15 - 16/32 of 20.10.2015 refers)

Having expressed her concern about the proposed fee level increases for 2016/17 at the meeting of 20.10.2015 (Minute FN/15-16/32 refers), the President of the Students Union requested that her dissent from the decision be formally noted.

FN/15 - 16/47 Commercial Revenue Unit (CRU) Subsidiary – NewCo Business Plan
XX (Minute FN/15 - 16/3 of 25.09.2015 refers)
The Commercial Director attended for this item.

The Committee welcomed the circulated memorandum from the Commercial Director dated November 2015 and the update he provided by way of presentation, noting that the revisions made to the proposal to address the issues raised by the Committee had the full support of the CRU Advisory Board.

The Committee reviewed the revised financial projections, the updated tax advices along with amendments to the sales and marketing strategy in relation to planned customer channels. In noting that consideration of governance arrangements was ongoing, the Committee requested the Commercial Director to engage with the College Secretary to embed appropriate legal advices around governance arrangements in the proposal prior to its consideration by Board. The Committee further requested that the Commercial Director ensure all elements of the proposal are fully aligned to College policies.

The recent and planned engagement between the Director of Public Affairs & Communications and the Interim Marketing Director to manage brand alignment, as requested by the Committee, was also noted.

In considering the legal and licensing issues in relation to the operation of NewCo, the Committee welcomed the clarification that Intellectual Property would be held in the University and licensed to NewCo, and requested that the licencing arrangements conform to international best practice (ie a cost-plus model).

Having considered the detail of the revised proposal for brand internationalisation as presented, the Committee approved the €722k investment requested in the context of the financial returns as outlined and recommended it for onward consideration and approval by Board.

Action

- 47.1** The financial investment in the new brand internationalisation initiative (NewCo) was approved and recommended for onward consideration and approval by Board.
- 47.2** The Commercial Director to engage with the College Secretary to embed appropriate legal advices in relation to governance arrangements for NewCo in the proposal prior to its consideration by Board.
- 47.3** Intellectual Property to be held in the University and licensed to NewCo with licencing arrangements to conform to international best practice (ie a cost-plus model).
- 47.4** The Commercial Director to ensure that all elements of the NewCo proposal are fully aligned to College policies.

FN/15 - 16/48

Academic Registry Enhancement Programme

(Minute FN/14-15/74.1 of 04.02.2015 refers)

The Programme Director attended for this item.

The Committee considered the circulated memorandum from the Academic Registry Enhancement Programme Director dated 13.11.2015 setting out an update on the Programme since its commencement in early 2015 under the following headings:

- Background & Context
- Current Situation
- Budget Update
- Risk
- Update by Workstream

The Committee noted the challenges encountered in delivering the Programme, in particular the modularisation stream, embedding structural changes and the associated financial and other risks. The Committee further noted that the contingency had not been drawn down (however, it will be needed to support modularisation) nor had the provision to support continuous improvement been utilised due to resource constraints of the system vendor.

In considering the key performance targets, the Committee noted the metrics outlined by the Programme Director and, whilst these are available on the Academic Registry website, requested that they be sent to Schools on a monthly basis for the next 12 months.

Thanking the Programme Director for his report, the Committee requested that a further report be brought for consideration in Trinity Term 2016.

Action

- 48.1** Monthly reports setting out performance metrics to be circulated to the Schools for the next 12 months.
- 48.2** A further report to come forward in Trinity Term 2016.

FN/15 - 16/49

Communications Strategy

(Minute FN/14-15/26 of 29.10.2014 refers)

The Director of Public Affairs & Communications attended for this item.

The Committee reviewed the circulated report from the Director of Public Affairs & Communications (PAC) for the year ended 30 September 2015 (along with an updated Financial Schedule, which was tabled at the meeting) noting the update and metrics provided across the following headings:

- Highlights
- Performance
- Update on Strategic Targets
- International Media Highlights
- Broadcast Media Highlights
- Other Figures

The Committee further noted the updates on risk and the negative variance to budget for 2014/15. The completion of the Identity Initiative was also noted, along with the move of the Marketing Directorate under the remit of Global Relations during the year.

Acknowledging the high level of change experienced by the Communications Office in the period under review, the Committee requested the Director of PAC to develop a new Communications Strategy, with a particular focus on developing social media engagement, along with clearly defined KPIs and metrics to measure performance against investment. The revised Communications Strategy should also be linked to the College's Strategic Plan.

The Committee thanked the Director of PAC for his report and, in line with College policy, requested him to provide an update in Trinity Term 2016.

Action

- 49.1** The Director of PAC to develop a new Communications strategy along with clearly defined KPIs and metrics to measure performance against investment.
- 49.2** In line with College policy, the Director of PAC to provide an update in Trinity Term 2016.

FN/15 - 16/50

Trinity Biomedical Sciences Institute (TBSI)

(Minute FN/14 - 15/70 of 04.02.2015 refers)

The Executive & Technical Director of TBSI attended for this item.

The Committee welcomed the Executive & Technical Director of TBSI and considered the first of the bi-annual reports dated 23.11.2015 as circulated, which set out an update under the following headings:

- Update since the last report
- Financial Summary
- Grant Applications
- Grants Awarded
- Sustainability
- Risk
- Other

The level of recurring annual deficit being incurred, resulting in a cumulative deficit position by 2017 if action is not taken, was noted with concern. The Committee, further noting the increase in usage of TBSI's facilities, expressed concern in relation to the level of PI activity and success rates in attracting awards. In this context, the Committee requested the Academic Director and Executive & Technical Director to bring forward a report setting out the detail of PI activity and the associated success rates in generating external research funding with a view to identifying areas where improvements could be made.

The Committee also expressed concern that the 5-year financial plan for TBSI as requested had yet to be completed and signed off by the participating Schools and requested that the plan be finalised as a matter of priority, and following engagement with the Dean of Research, be brought forward for consideration in Hilary Term 2016 as part of his overall review of the financial sustainability of TRIs.

In response to a query on the CMU, the Executive & Technical Director advised that it was outside his remit.

The Committee thanked the TBSI Executive & Technical Director for his report and, in line

with College policy, requested him to provide an update in Trinity Term 2016.

Action

- 50.1** Details of the research activity and success rates by PI, along with areas where improvements could be made, to be included as part of the next report.
- 50.2** A five year financial plan for TBSI to be completed as a matter of priority which, following engagement with the Dean of Research, will be brought forward for consideration in Hilary Term 2016 as part of his overall review of the financial sustainability of TRIs.
- 50.3** In line with College policy, the TBSI Executive & Technical Director to provide an update in Trinity Term 2016.

FN/15 - 16/51

Centre for Research on Adaptive Nanostructure (CRANN)

(Minute FN/14 - 15/71 of 04.02.2015 refers)

The Director of CRANN and Amber Programme Manager attended for this item.

The Committee welcomed the Director of CRANN and the Amber Programme Manager who outlined the key points set out in the first of the bi-annual reports on CRANN dated 23.11.2015 as circulated, under the following headings:

- Executive summary
- Financial summary
- Grant applications
- Sustainability
- Risk

The Committee considered the updated position as outlined, noting in particular the stable income forecasts and industry overhead along with a reduction in staff costs. The Committee also noted the challenges in reducing running costs overall. In relation to the running costs of the AML, the Committee noted the planned corrective action to address the forecasted annual deficit over the next five years.

Having considered the detailed report from the Director of CRANN and noting that a 5-year financial forecast had been prepared, the Committee requested that this document be finalised, signed off by the relevant Schools and, following engagement with the Dean of Research, be brought forward for consideration in Hilary Term 2016 as part of his overall review of the financial sustainability of TRIs.

The Committee thanked the Director of CRANN and the Amber Programme Manager for their report and, in line with College policy, requested them to provide an update in Trinity Term 2016.

Action

- 51.1** A five year financial plan for CRANN to be finalised, signed off by the relevant Schools and, following engagement with the Dean of Research, to be brought forward for consideration in Hilary Term 2016 as part of his overall review of the financial sustainability of TRIs.
- 51.2** The Director of CRANN and the Amber Programme Manager to provide an update in Trinity Term 2016.

FN/15 - 16/52

Student Enrolments 2015/16

(Minute FN/15 - 16/32.4 of 20.10.2015 refers)

The Manager, Academic Services Division attended for this item.

The Committee welcomed the Manager of the Academic Service Division who summarised the key points of her circulated memorandum dated 12.11.2015. Noting that registrations were ongoing and therefore student numbers are not final, the Committee considered the

current registrations by student type and Faculty along with comparators for the previous two years.

The Committee noted that undergraduate (UG) EU student numbers are expected to be higher than in the prior year, with non-EU UG numbers already up by 4% on 2014/15, and recognised that Schools are clearly focussed on recruiting non-EU UG students. Concern was expressed about the reduced student numbers on Post Graduate Taught (PGT) courses and the associated challenges in balancing the University's budget. In this context, the Committee requested the VP/CAO to bring forward a report to EOG on PGT course metrics, recommending that courses with 10 or less students be replaced with new programmes that would attract higher numbers. The Committee also recommended that every School have at least one PGT course running each year. The Committee noted the constraints in relation to projecting Post Graduate Research (PGR) enrolments as outlined.

Noting the Non-EU enrolments linked to various strategies as set out in the memorandum, the Committee further noted with concern the overall enrolment trends (by Faculty) over the four years from 2011/12 to 2014/15 as summarised below.

	UG	PGT	PGR
FEMS	↑14%	↑2%	↓25-30%
FAHSS	↓7%	↑20%	↓25-30%
FHS	↑8%	↑7%	↓25-30%

The Committee requested that a similar report would in future be brought forward later in the year so that the figures and trends could be reviewed when enrolments were complete.

Action

- 52.1** The VP/CAO to bring forward a report to EOG on PGT course metrics.
- 52.2** The VP/CAO's report on student enrolments to come forward on an annual basis once enrolments are complete.

FN/15 - 16/53

Global Relations II

(Minute FN/14 - 15/140 of 08.06.2015 refers)

The Vice-President for Global Relations attended for this item.

The Committee reviewed the memorandum from the Vice President for Global Relations (VPGR) dated 10.11.2015, as circulated under the following headings:

- GRSII Expenditure Report – End of Year Finances 2014/15
- Business Plan Reconciliation – Current Non-EU Student Registrations 2015/16

In considering the detailed expenditure report for GRSII, the Committee welcomed the positive variance to budget, noting the reasons as outlined and requested that the VPGR engage directly with the CFO in terms of the proposed usage of the underspend arising.

Having reviewed the detailed reconciliation against the GRSII business plan in terms of student registrations for 2015/16 (not yet finalised), the Committee noted that income targets had been exceeded and overall student number targets were expected to be reached. The Committee further noted the variances in the student numbers achieved (by category) against the targets set. The performance of a specific Faculty in terms of meeting targets for PGT students was noted and the Committee requested the VPGR to engage with the Faculty regarding PGT courses offered.

Acknowledging the very positive and productive engagement between the GSU and Global Relations as outlined by the President of the GSU, the Committee thanked the VPGR for her report and, in line with College policy, requested her to provide an update in Trinity Term 2016.

Action

- 53.1** The VPGR to engage with the CFO in relation to the proposed usage of underspends in FY 2014/15.

53.2 The VPGR to engage with the specific Faculty in relation to PGT courses offered.

53.3 The VPGR to provide an update in Trinity Term 2016.

FN/15 - 16/54

START Programme Update

(Minute FN/14 - 15/86 of 12.03.2015 refers)

The Committee considered the circulated memorandum from the Deputy CFO dated 17.11.2015, which provided an update on the expenditure and cost savings arising from the START Programme. In reviewing the level of net investment in the Programme to date, the Committee noted that, while approved costs remain higher than baseline costs overall and the reasons for this variance, a net saving is projected in the longer term if cost savings are realised as planned.

The Committee thanked the Deputy CFO for her report, requesting that the next update report detailing progress against savings targets come forward in Trinity Term 2016.

Action

54.1 An updated report to be brought forward in Trinity Term 2016.

Section C

FN/15 - 16/55

FIS/GeneSIS/IDM & HR Project Updates

(Minute FN/15 - 16/42 of 20.10.2015 refers)

The Committee noted the circulated memorandum from the Director of IT Services dated 16.11.2015, setting out updates for the IDM and GeneSIS projects.

FN/15 - 16/56

Minutes of Sub Committees

The Committee noted the draft minutes of the Investment Committee meeting of 10.11.2015, as circulated. The Committee further noted the engagement of the Investment Committee on the issue of divestment challenges and requested that, once finalised, the outcome of this work would be brought forward to Finance Committee for further consideration in the context of the full impact of any future divestment on University activity overall.

Action

56.1 The work of the Investment Committee on divestment challenges to be brought forward for consideration in due course.

FN/15 - 16/57

Minutes of Audit Committee

The Committee, having considered the draft minutes of the Audit Committee meeting of 15.10.2015 as circulated, noted the details of the minute regarding Strategic Audit Planning and the intention to engage on the current strategic projects and strategies and the risks identified in the High Level Risk Register. In this context, the Committee requested an update on the status of the top 10 priority projects/investments for consideration in Hilary Term 2016.

Furthermore, the Committee noted the two emerging themes on which the Internal Auditor will now focus as set out below:

- Capacity within the University to undertake the scale of planned projects in terms of the available skills, personnel/resources and funding.
- Plans to realise a return on the investments made utilising reserves over the past number of years.

Action

57.1 A status report on the top 10 priority projects/investments to be brought forward for consideration in Hilary Term 2016.

FN/15 - 16/58 Minutes of Estates Policy Committee

The Committee noted the draft minutes of the Estates Policy Committee meeting of 18.09.2015, as circulated.

**FN/15 - 16/59
XX Related Entity Financial Reporting**

The Committee, noting the circulated memorandum from the CFO dated 16.11.2015, recommended the Directors' Report and audited Financial Statements of the Central Applications Office for the year ended 31st December 2014 to Board for noting.

Action

59.1 The Directors' Report and audited Financial Statements of the Central Applications Office for the year ending 31.12.2014, to be forwarded to Board for noting.

The Committee noted the next Finance Committee meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, 16 December 2015 at 2.30pm** in the Provost's Boardroom.

PROVOST.....

DATE.....