

Incorporating any amendments approved at subsequent Board meetings

The University of Dublin

Trinity College

Minutes of Special Board Meeting, 14 February 2005

Present Provost (Dr J Hegarty), Vice-Provost (Dr J B Grimson), Registrar (Dr D J Dickson), Bursar (Dr J W O'Hagan), Senior Lecturer (Dr J A Murray), Dr S P A Allwright, Dr W J Blau, Dr L E Doyle*, Dr J A Fitzpatrick, Dr H Gibbons, Mr H Kearns, Mr F Kieran, Ms M Leahy, Dr J G Lunney, Mr D Mac Síthigh, Dr A N M Ní Chasaide, Mrs J O'Hara, Dr M M O'Mahony, Mr L Ryder, Mr R P Sheridan, Dr M K Simms*, Ms E K Stokes, Mr B Sweeney, Dr D L Weaire.

Apologies Mr B Connolly, Dr H M C V Hoey, Dr F Shevlin.

In attendance

(ex officio) Secretary, Treasurer, Assistant Secretary.

(by invitation) Dean of Research (for BD/04-05/182)

(present for) *BD/04-05/181-182 (part)

The Provost welcomed those present to the Special Meeting of the Board which had been convened specifically to consider issues in relation to academic structures.

SECTION A

BD/04-05/181 Minutes The Board noted the draft minute of the discussion on re-structuring which had taken place at the Board meeting held on 2 February 2005, noting that it would be formally approved at the Board meeting scheduled to take place on 2 March 2005.

BD/04-05/182 Discussion Paper - Academic Structures The Senior Lecturer invited Board's attention to a memorandum, dated 9 February 2005, which had been circulated, noting that it would also be considered by Council at its meeting on 21 February 2005. The Senior Lecturer advised Board that following the discussions at the previous Board and Council meetings at which agreement had been reached on a number of issues and at which a number of principles had been endorsed (minute BM/04-05/158 of 2 February 2005 refers), the Deans and Officers had focused on addressing the issue of federated schools, and whether Heads of Schools or Deans should be budget holders for those departments not part of an 'integrated' school, noting that the key criteria in resolving these issues are that the solutions would be in the College's best interest and would maintain consensus and avoid division.

The Senior Lecturer invited Board's attention to the implications of a devolved academic structure and the following reasons for the proposed changes:

- to enable academic units to take charge of academic and resource planning and management;
- to have accountability for educational and research outcomes;
- to simplify communication and enhance the connection with central decision-making processes;
- to avail of the benefits of deeper administrative support;
- to release academic time to focus on teaching and research;
- to allow disciplines and schools to grow and innovate through linking resources to activity;
- to foster the emergence of new academic specializations;
- to simplify decision-making through devolved budgets.

The Senior Lecturer advised Board that three models had been developed to try and find a consensus and to cater for the differing views on faculties, schools and departments. He invited Board's attention to the key features of each.

- I. *Schools only* where all departments would become members of either 'integrated' or 'federated' schools. Integrated schools would have fully devolved academic and budget holding responsibility. In federated schools, budget holding would be devolved to the Head of School who may be appointed by any of the proposed three means of appointment, (a) internal or (b) open competition or (c) combined nomination and election). Devolution within the federated school would be decided by the Head of School in consultation with the School Executive. The Faculty Dean would play the role of 'honest broker' and would not have a direct role in academic planning and resource allocation to schools. Under this model the role of dean and faculty would be clear and unambiguous and would be without any conflicts of interest.
- II. *'Mixed Model'* where those schools that have formed, and that may form in the future, would have fully devolved academic and budgetary authority. All other departments would not become part of any new school structure and the Faculty Dean would be budget holder and would decide on matters of academic and resource planning in consultation with the Heads of Department. Therefore, the role of the Dean would be divided between that of 'honest broker' for schools and 'executive' dean for departments. Under this arrangement deans may experience conflict in representing the two groups even-handedly or may be perceived to do so. In addition, Heads of School and Heads of Department would have different roles and responsibilities, as the latter would have no budget holding responsibilities. Furthermore, if the Faculty Dean also carried responsibility for academic and resource planning for departments in the Faculty, this could be an exceptionally demanding role.
- III. *Deans and Vice-Deans* where schools that have formed, and that may form in the future, would have fully devolved academic and budgetary authority. For these schools, the faculty dean would have the role of 'honest broker' and all other departments in a faculty would not become part of any new school structure. To provide the departments that are not part of a school with dedicated support, their budget would be devolved to a Vice-Dean who would act as budget holder and who would decide on matters of academic and resource planning for the

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departments, in consultation with the Heads of Department. In some Faculties, there would be only integrated schools and therefore no Vice-Dean. The Senior Lecturer invited Board's attention to the suggestion that this model best satisfies the criteria specified by Board and Council and noted the following advantages:

- (i) it accommodates new schools with fully devolved academic and resource planning and management;
- (ii) it accommodates departments that do not wish to be part of a federated school and/or those who express a preference for a Faculty-based ARAM type arrangement;
- (iii) it accommodates those departments that may have an interest in forming a school but wish to take some longer time to consider and discuss such an initiative (perhaps over the next year or more);
- (iv) it maintains the integrity of the Faculty Dean in having, and being seen to have, an equal relationship with all units in a faculty and representing them equally in College decision-making;
- (v) it allows those who are not in new schools to elect a Vice-Dean (if they choose appointment by election) from among their own constituency.

The Board, noting a number of issues in relation to the appointment of Deans and Vice-Deans which remain to be addressed, also noted that arrangements for the formation of interim school executives and proposals in relation to the number of faculties will be presented in due course.

The Board noted that the production of initial outputs from the ARAM is now underway and that a transition plan for its implementation is currently being prepared. The Senior Lecturer advised Board that academic and resource plans for schools, and groups of departments working with their Vice-Dean, would have elements similar to the *Three Year Staffing Plans* of some years ago, although with more discretion in relation to budgets, noting that it is envisaged that such plans would be approved by the Resource Management Working Group and recommended to Board for approval.

The Senior Lecturer also invited Board's attention to factors which will have to be taken into account when developing the transition plan for the implementation of both the ARAM and the new academic structures, noting that the treatment of academic units which will be in deficit under the ARAM will have to be considered in the context of the College's strategic objectives. The Board noted that, if academic units which will be in difficulty under the ARAM Transition Plan are to be provided with additional support for strategic reasons, this must be provided in a transparent manner with clarity concerning objectives and requirements.

The Board noted Dr Ní Chasaide's report on the views of Fellows in relation to the composition of faculties, the distribution of schools within faculties, the size of schools, the budgetary responsibility of Deans and also noted the request that the Fellows be given an opportunity to discuss the Board document prior to any decisions being made.

The Board also noted comments from other Board members that the Board, to date, had taken all concerns raised by Fellows and other groups in College into consideration in formulating proposals and that it was now time to make decisions for the good of the College overall.

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In the course of a long and detailed discussion the following issues were raised by Board members:

- (i) the role of Research Centres has to be explicitly addressed in the final restructuring plan and Research Centres and other academic units must have equal academic status. The Board noted the comments of the Dean of Research in relation to the need for a strong governance structure for Research Centres, while at the same time ensuring that inter-disciplinary research is enhanced. It was noted that these issues are being considered by the Research Committee;
- (ii) the transition plan should offer no disincentive to schools already formed and which are anxious to begin the process of change, noting that financial support for academic units which will be in deficit will be kept under review in the context of plans for their areas being developed over a clearly defined, agreed timescale;
- (iii) clarity in relation to the functions being devolved to schools and faculties will be essential if the new systems are to operate effectively;
- (iv) there is a risk, that if there is more than one Vice-Dean in a Faculty, situations analogous to the previously proposed federated school arrangements could develop;
- (v) the terms of reference and lines of responsibility for Deans, Vice-Deans and Heads of School, and their respective reporting arrangements to Board and Council, need to be clearly defined;
- (vi) academic units which will continue to be in deficit after the ARAM transition period has elapsed should not be compelled, by economic factors alone, to change their academic direction at the expense of the integrity of the discipline;
- (vii) the ARAM should operate in a meaningful and optimal manner for Schools and academic units and be seen to support high academic performance and address under performance;
- (viii) the promotions process should take account of individual staff members' contributions to the implementation of the re-structuring, particularly during the transition period;
- (ix) the implementation of the proposals should include provisions for more timely decision-making in relation to new initiatives than heretofore;
- (x) there is a need to communicate the background to, and rationale for, decisions in relation to the re-structuring more widely throughout the College;
- (xi) once the model for the academic structures is defined, consideration will have to be given to the role and function on non-academic staff.

In response to queries from a number of Board members, the Senior Lecturer advised that:

- (a) under the new arrangements it is envisaged that heads of disciplines will be relieved of much of their current administrative duties which will enable them to devote more of their time to academic development and leadership;
- (b) under the new arrangements there will still be a need to provide administrative support for the provision of courses and for student liaison at existing departmental level;
- (c) payment for Vice-Deans and other Officers will be addressed at the implementation stage, noting that the number of Vice-Deans in any one faculty could depend on the final composition of the faculties;
- (d) there will continue to be fora at Faculty level where staff and students will be represented;

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- (e) Heads of Schools and Deans will have to be in place by the end of Statutory Term in July 2005;
- (f) the naming of academic units and departments under the new arrangement will be addressed in due course.

In response to queries, the Provost and the Senior Lecturer advised Board that government funds may become available to support restructuring in universities and that it is likely that these funds would be distributed on the basis of competitive bids. The Provost invited Board’s attention to the opportunities which private fund-raising can offer, noting examples where creative proposals have secured private funds and enhanced disciplines’ academic activities.

The Board strongly supported the Deans and Vice-Deans model as offering the best opportunity for the College, agreed that the implementation details of this model should be further developed, including issues in relation to the number and composition of faculties. The Board noting that a joint meeting of Board and Council would not have decision-making powers agreed that, following consideration of the proposals at the Council meeting on 21 February, there would be an additional Board meeting on 23 February to make a final decision in relation to the structures model.

The Board thanked the Senior Lecturer for his very hard work in bringing the discussion to this stage within very tight deadlines.

BD/04-05/183 Advisory Committee on Honorary Degrees The Registrar invited Board’s attention to arrangements which were being made for a special Honorary Degree ceremony which would be held on 5 September 2005 during the British Association Festival of Science. The Board approved the nominations of the Advisory Committee on Honorary Degrees, as presented by the Registrar for this ceremony.

BD/04-05/184 Pension and related entitlements Under Other Business, in response to a query, the Secretary advised Board that all staff recruited since 6th April 1995 pay the full PRSI rate and that, as approved at the previous meeting (minute BD/04-05/162 refers), staff recruited from 1 January 2005 will become members of a revised government-approved pension scheme, details of which will be presented to Board in the near future.

BD/04-05/185 External Board Member Under Other Business, in response to a query, the Secretary advised Board that Mr Connolly, the ministerially-nominated External Board member had tendered his apologies for the Board meetings he had missed since October 2004 for reasons stated.

BD/04-05/186 Trinity Hall Under Other Business, in response to a query, the Secretary advised Board that a report on Trinity Hall issues would be available at the next meeting.

Signed:

Date: