



Incorporating any amendments approved at subsequent Board meetings

**Minutes of Board Meeting 18 November 2020**

*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, Professor D Faas, Mr D Grouse, Mr E Hand, Ms L Keogh, Professor R McManus, Professor K McTiernan, Ms M O'Connor, Professor D R Phelan, Ms G Scanlon, Professor A Seery, Professor F Sheerin.
- Apologies* Prof Andrew Burke, Ms S Farrell, Prof Fintan Sheerin.
- 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 G Ruane), Vice-President for Global Relations (Professor J Hussey).

**SECTION A**

**BD/20-21/062 Statements of Interest**

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

**BD/20-21/063 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 14 October 2020 were approved and signed.

*Ms Scanlon joined the meeting at this point.*

**BD/20-21/064 Matters Arising from the Minutes**

The following matters were raised as matters arising in respect of minute BD/20-21/030 Provost's Report:

**(i) Energy Management Winter 2020-2021**

The Chief Operating Officer advised that she had liaised with the Director of Campus Infrastructure and could confirm that a winter energy management plan was in place which took account of the changing demands that are occurring directly associated with the Covid -19 Pandemic. She advised Board members that in advance of the Christmas 2020 holiday period a general University wide e-mail will be circulated to all staff, students and residents. This will stress the need to turn off all equipment and services over the holiday period, where possible.

The Chief Operating Officer also advised that a review of operating schedules had been conducted and, in particular, she noted that prior to the Christmas holiday period the operating schedules will be amended for the 11 days of the holiday. This is done to ensure an adequate temperature is maintained in the unoccupied building to prevent fabric damage.

The Provost proposed, and it was agreed, that the energy management plan would be considered the Estates Policy Committee and brought back to a future meeting of the Board

**(ii) Resilience Training**

The Secretary to the College advised that further information in respect of resilience training had been received from the Board member and it had been shared with Human Resources.

**(iii) Weekend Activities**

The Secretary to the College advised that proposals in respect of activities for students at weekends had been prepared by the Vice-President for Global Relations and presented to the Phased Resumption of Activities on Campus Group for consideration.

The Vice-President for Global Relations advised that there were several activities planned but that running of such activities is being impacted by the current health restrictions.

A Board member advised the Board that the Students' Union Officers were also actively planning creative events for students over the Christmas period.

In response to a query from a Board member in respect of the increase in demand for the Counselling Service, the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer advised that funding had been received from the Higher Education Service (HEA) to expand the service. Another Board member noted that while additional resources were being provided to the Counselling Service there remained a significant increase in demand. The good work of the Service to date was acknowledged.

**Action/Decision**

**064.01** It was agreed that the Energy Management Plan would be considered the Estates Policy Committee and brought back to a future meeting of the Board.

*Professor Kenny joined the meeting at this point.*

**BD/20-21/065 Provost's Report**

The Provost provided Board members with an update on the following items:

**(i) Speaking Events**

The Provost informed Board members that he had participated in several speaking events, including the delivery of lectures to welcome students to the university in the week of 28 September 2020.

He had also spoken at the EU Research and Innovation event on 22 September 2020.

The Provost also took part in the McGill Summer School, remotely, and was in a conversation event with Professor Louise Richardson, Vice-Chancellor of Oxford University.

**(ii) New Benches on Front Square**

It was noted that a virtual unveiling of the new benches on Front Square had been held. The benches, along with a scholarship for students from Asia had been generously funded by a philanthropic donor.

**(iii) The Provost's Salon**

The Provost advised that he is continuing to connect with alumni around the world through the use of online Provost's Salon events.

**(iv) Trinity Education**

It was noted that the official launch of the Trinity Education had taken place on 21 October 2020. It was launched by the EU Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, Ms Mariya Gabriel with the Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, Mr Simon Harris, TD.

**(v) Accreditation of the Trinity St James's Cancer Institute**

The Provost advised that the Trinity St James's Cancer Institute, jointly operated by Trinity College and St James's Hospital, had become the first in Ireland to be awarded OEI Cancer Centre accreditation and designation. The award was officially presented to the Institute on 12 November 2020 in a virtual event which included the Minister for Health, Mr Simon Donnelly, TD.

**(vi) Board Review Working Group**

It was noted that the work of the Board Review Working Group was continuing. The Provost and the Chair of the Working Group, Mr Dermot McCarthy, had met the Secretary-General at Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science to establish the current status of the proposed new legislation and to update the Department on the Working Group

The Provost advised that it is likely that the Heads of the Bill will be published in early 2021 and emphasised the importance of the work of the Working Group, so that the university is prepared, and in a position, to develop a Private Bill is required.

**(vii) Framework for Consent in Higher Education Institutions**

The Provost is to chair a new group, which will develop proposals for the implementation and roll-out of the Framework across the University.

**(viii) Research Funding Expansion Strategy**

The Provost advised that he, and the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer are actively liaising with various parties across the university to develop a research funding expansion strategy for the University. This is with a particular focus on Horizon Europe funding calls.

**(ix) Student Recruitment/ Commercial Revenue Income/ Research income**

The Provost commended the work of the Schools and the Global Relations team in managing the student recruitment process to an extent where small increases, as opposed to possible decreases, in student numbers had been observed in many cohorts of students.

It was noted that, in the Commercial Revenue Unit, the financial impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on income had been somewhat mitigated by pay savings.

The Provost advised that the first ever European Research Council (ERC) Synergy Grant in Ireland had been awarded to Trinity academics, Professor Paul Holm and Professor Francis Ludlow. He also noted the university's strong success rate in the Science Foundation Ireland Frontiers for the Future Programme and advised Board members that he had written to congratulate each of the 24 successful Trinity Principal Investigators.

**(x) Sculptures in the Long Room of the Old Library**

The Provost advised the Board that the project to commission, with funding from philanthropy, the sculptures of four women scholars in the Long Room of the Old Library was progressing and that the following four females had been selected from a list of 500 suggestions:

- The scientist Rosalind Franklin;
- The folklorist, dramatist and theatre-founder Augusta Gregory;
- The mathematician Ada Lovelace;
- The writer and pioneering women's rights advocate Mary Wollstonecraft.

In response to queries from a Board member in respect of international student recruitment plans for 2021, the Vice-President for Global Relations advised that much of the student recruitment will be conducted through webinars. However, she noted that there continues to be a presence on the ground in India, China and the United States who were continuing to meet with people individually. The Vice-President for Global Relations also acknowledged the significant level of engagement by members of alumni that had been observed. She acknowledged that student recruitment is proving more difficult as a result of the impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic and that there is also rising levels of competition from other universities outside of Ireland.

In response to a query from a Board member in respect of Horizon Europe it was noted that the Provost and the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer are actively developing a strategy for the University to maximise the potential for successful funding applications.

Responding to queries from a Board member in respect of some savings made by the Commercial Revenue Unit from payroll savings, the Chief Operating Officer advised that as a reduced number of activities were able to proceed due to the national restrictions, reduced numbers of resourcing had also been observed.

A Board member commended the Provost for his philanthropic activities and also advised Board members of a potential future economic risk to international student recruitment as the economic impact of the Pandemic is fully known and local economies and financial markets adjust accordingly.

**BD/20-21/066 Trinity Technology and Enterprise Campus (TTEC) Branding**

*Chief Innovation and Enterprise Officer, Dr Diarmuid O'Brien; Director of Public Affairs and Communications, Mr Tom Molloy; and Ms Nik Dillon and Mr Adam Gallagher of Alkamee Brand and Design joined the meeting for this item.*

Ms Dillon and Mr Gallagher invited the Board's attention to their presentation, dated 13 November 2020, which had been circulated. They provided the Board with an overview of rationale for the new TTEC name. They also provided Board members with imagery to illustrate the proposed usage and outlined the story and purpose behind the suggested new name of Trinity East.

Ms Dillon and Mr Gallagher also outlined some naming options for the early activation spaces, providing Board members with a visual representation of how this would be integrated with the Trinity East proposal.

The Provost thanked Ms Dillon and Mr Gallagher and opened the item for discussion.

During the course of discussion, the following points were raised:

- The importance of the branding reflecting the connection to Trinity and the main campus.
- The importance of selecting branding that reflects the history and the future of the University.
- The need to ensure that the selected branding would be understood and effective globally.
- When finalising the branding due consideration should be given to the Irish translation of the wording.

Following comments from a number of Board members, it was agreed that the use of the wording 'The future starts here' should be removed from the branding material.

In respect of the naming of the early activation spaces, the connection to the surrounding area and the industrial heritage of that area was welcomed by several Board members. However, no clear consensus in respect of a preferred option from the two presented was reached in the discussion.

*Dr O'Brien, Mr Molloy, Ms Dillon and Mr Gallagher left the meeting at this point.*

The Provost noted the importance of ensuring there is community engagement and support for the proposals. The Board approved the renaming of TTEC to Trinity East. It was also agreed that a proposal outlining alternative suggestions for the naming of the early activation spaces is to be developed and brought back to the Board for further discussion.

**Action/Decision**

**066.01** The Board considered the memorandum from the Interim Chief Innovation and Enterprise Officer dated 13 November 2020.

**066.02** The Board approved the renaming of TTEC to Trinity East.

**066.03** It was agreed that the use of the wording 'The future starts here' should be removed from the branding material.

**066.04** A proposal outlining alternative suggestions for the naming of the early activation spaces is to be developed and brought back to the Board for further discussion.

*The dissent of Professor Alyn Stacey was noted.*

**BD/20-21/067 Historic Accommodation Buildings (Rubrics and Chief Steward's House) Project Update**

*This item was taken at this point in the agenda.*

*Project Sponsor, Professor Kevin O'Kelly joined the meeting for this item.*

Professor O'Kelly invited the Board's attention to his presentation, dated 18 November 2020, which had been circulated. Providing the Board with an update on the project, Professor O'Kelly gave Board members an overview of the proposed building and accommodation layouts in the Rubrics and the Chief Steward's House. He outlined the proposed energy strategy for the project noting that, in consultation with senior College stakeholders, a Ground Source Heat Pump (GSHP) was chosen as the preferred sustainable energy option.

Professor O'Kelly summarised the project timeline and budget and gave an update in respect of the business case. He concluded his presentation by outlining the work programme for the next 6 months, noting that a tender submission to approve a contractor will be brought to the Board for approval by the end of the academic year.

The Provost thanked Professor O'Kelly and opened the item for discussion.

A Board member expressed reservations in respect of the provision of the temporary accommodation for Fellow Emeriti and also suggested that the Chief Steward's House be kept in perpetuity for retired Fellows and be renovated for that sole purpose. In response to the comments it was noted that workshops had been held with the Fellows Emeriti and consensus reached around the desired features. It was noted that further workshops will be held with the Fellows in the future around the types of furniture and finishes that will be provided. The Provost also clarified that it is intended that all staff will be eligible to avail of the accommodation as appropriate.

The Bursar/Director of Strategic Innovation, noting that there had been significant engagement with the Fellows to date, emphasised the importance of the project as it will ensure there is an adequate amount of suitable space available to accommodate the growing cohort of Fellows Emeriti. She also clarified that the Annex, formerly used by Secretary's Office staff, had recently been upgraded and is intended only for temporary use while the works to the Rubrics is being conducted.

In response to a query from a Board member in respect of how the meeting rooms or allocated desks would be requested, the Bursar/Director of Strategic Innovation advised that the exact booking mechanism is currently under consideration in the consultation workshops.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer welcomed the project noting that the refurbishment of the Chief Steward's House would result in the provision of guest accommodation, similar in standard to that which is offered by other universities across the world. The Provost noted that this project will also help to alleviate some of the difficulties encountered by incoming staff members when trying to source accommodation in Dublin.

The Provost closed the item thanking Professor O’Kelly, the Senior Dean, the Bursar/Director of Strategic Innovation, the Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer and all of the team in Estates and Facilities for their work on the project to date.

**Action/Decision**

**067.01** The Board considered and discussed the report from the Project Sponsor, Professor Kevin O’Kelly.

*Professor O’Kelly left the meeting at this point.*

**BD/20-21/068 Risk Register 2019-2020**

*The Interim Chief Risk Officer, Mr Henry Wallace, joined the meeting for this item.*

The Provost welcomed Mr Wallace to the meeting. He noted that technical difficulties with the link to the meeting had prevented completion of the discussion on the Risk Register 2019-2020 following his presentation at the last meeting of the Board (BD/20-21/031 refers) and as such, invited Mr Wallace to address the queries which had been raised by Board members at that meeting.

The Interim Chief Risk Officer, responding to a query which had been raised by a Board member in relation to the risk posed by the lack of a Government guarantee in respect of the pension liability, advised the Board that legal advice on this matter had been previously received by the University. He advised Board members that the matter had not been qualified by the Comptroller and Auditor General when auditing the Financial Statements and that on assessment by the Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer it was deemed to be a technical qualification by the external auditors KPMG. Mr Wallace also noted that the likelihood of this risk materialising was low due to a number of mitigating factors such as the acknowledgement of the liability by the State. As such the risk had not been included in the Financial Services Division risk register and this high-level College-wide risk register. He advised the Board that a composite risk in respect of the failure of the Government to meet financial expectations and commitments to the University will be included in the Financial Services Division’s Risk Register for 2020-2021.

Responding to a query in respect of the risk to the continuity of teaching and research in the Pandemic, Mr Wallace, noted the new management and governance structures which had been established to actively and continuously monitor the risks and it was noted that significant efforts had been made to ensure the continuation of activities on campus.

Responding to a query from a Board member in relation to a risk that may be posed from the employment of staff members on fixed-term contracts, the Interim Chief Risk Officer informed Board members that he had reviewed the risk registers for the schools and faculties and that this risk had been recorded on the registers of 1 of the 3 faculties. He had also discussed the matter with the Director of Human Resources and had been advised that there was currently no significant issue in this regard.

A Board member made some comments in respect of an email which had been issued by the Provost and the Associate Vice-Provost for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Professor Clodagh Brook, addressing potential racist matters in the University, noted the potential risks for the reputation of the Board and to academic freedom. In response the Provost suggested, and it

was agreed, that Professor Brook is to be invited to report on her findings in respect of potential racist matters and to discuss inclusive curriculum proposals at a future meeting of the Board. A second Board member advised the Board that racist matters had also been brought to the attention of the Students' Union.

In response to comments from a Board member, the Provost noted the importance of examining the pension liability matter further. He also advised Board members that as the probability of the risk happening was low, the risk had not been classified as high and as such was not appearing on this Register. It was agreed the Interim Chief Risk Officer and the Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer are to further examine the matter of the pension liability and whether there was a need to seek additional legal advice in this regard, with a view to providing an update at the next meeting of the Board. The Board could also ask the Finance Committee and/or the Human Resources Committee to consider the matter. The Interim Chief Risk Officer also advised that the Board member's comments would be taken into consideration when preparing the 2020-2021 Risk Register.

In response to a query from a Board member in respect of the mechanism used to calculate the risks, it was agreed that the Board member is to liaise directly with the Interim Chief Risk Officer on this matter.

**Action/Decision**

**068.01.** The Board approved the Risk Register 2019-2020.

**068.02.** It was agreed that the Interim Chief Risk Officer and the Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer are to further examine the matter of the pension liability and whether there was a need to seek additional legal advice in this regard, with a view to providing an update at the next meeting of the Board.

**068.03.** It was agreed that a Board member is to liaise directly with the Interim Chief Risk Officer in respect of the calculation of the risks.

**068.04.** The Associate Vice-Provost for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is to be invited to report on her findings in respect of potential racist matters and discuss inclusive curriculum proposals at a future meeting of the Board.

*Mr Wallace left the meeting at this point.*

*Professor Walsh also left the meeting at this point.*

**BD/20-21/069 Alumni Engagement Strategy 2020-2023**

*Director of Alumni and Supporter Relations, Trinity Development and Alumni, Ms Jennifer Taaffe to join the meeting for this item.*

Ms Taaffe invited the Board's attention to her presentation, dated 14 October 2020, which had been circulated in advance informing the Board that this was the first formal alumni engagement strategy for the University. She advised the Board that the strategy aims to build supportive connections between alumni and the college community, particularly in the challenging times of the Pandemic. It is envisaged that the Strategy will deepen alumni engagement across all age cohorts and geographies, deliver more programmes digitally and increase the numbers of alumni volunteering for the benefit of the University.



Ms Taaffe summarised the approach to be taken under the Strategy, noting the guiding principles and the enabling activities. She also summarised the alumni engagement operational plan for the coming years for Trinity Development and Alumni, noting that an integrated approach would be followed.

Responding to a query from a Board member, Ms Taaffe advised that Trinity Development and Alumni liaise closely with the Schools to ensure that members of alumni are engaged with in a compelling and meaningful way.

In response to a query from a Board member regarding the availability of a Trinity email address to alumni for an indefinite period, Ms Taaffe advised that this practice was GDPR compliant and noted that use of a Trinity email address for contacting alumni is particularly of benefit in contacting most recent graduates.

The Provost thanked Ms Taaffe who left the meeting at this point.

#### **Action/Decision**

**069.01** The Board considered and approved the memorandum from the Director of Alumni and Supporter Relations, Trinity Development and Alumni, dated 9 November 2020 and the accompanying Alumni Engagement Strategy 2020-2023.

*Professor Brennan left the meeting at this point.*

#### **BD/20-21/070 Proposal for the use of Quotas in the 2020-2021 Scholarship Examinations**

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies presented his memorandum dated 10 November 2020, which had been circulated in advance. He noted that the Board, at the meeting on 14 October 2020, had approved the timing and electronic conduct of the 2020-2021 Scholarship Examinations (Board minute BD/20-21/037 refers).

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies advised that a proposal was now before the Board in respect of the use of quotas in the 2020-2021 Scholarship examinations and provided Board members with the rationale for and the details of the proposed quota process. He advised the Board that the use of an online format may lead to a deviation from the normal range of marks awarded, including a possible inflation of grades, as was observed in the annual examinations held online at the end of the last academic year due to the Pandemic. This, in turn, could render normal benchmarks inaccurate as criteria to judge academic excellence.

It was noted that another reason to consider the use of quotas is a financial reason, with the significant costs of Scholarship being drawn from a fixed and dedicated resource. This resource could be over-whelmed if the number of students being awarded Scholarship this year greatly exceeds typical levels.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies advised that he had discussed the matter with a member of the Law School as set out in his memorandum and it was noted that the Statutes are silent in respect of the Board's ability to approve the use of quotas for Scholarship examinations and that arguments both for and against the Board's ability could be made. It was noted that it may be beneficial to refer the matter as a *dubium* to the Visitors, who could determine the matter according to the intent of the Statutes as a whole.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies outlined the proposed allocation method for the 2020-2021 Scholarship examinations, advising Board members that this would see the quota being applied at Faculty level and the number of Scholarships being awarded being capped at 60, an overall number of scholars slightly higher than the average of the last five years. The process is to be carried out by the Central Scholarship Committee and it was noted that under such a scheme, students would still have to reach the existing bar for individual achievement.

Responding to comments from a Board member expressing concerns regarding the use of quotas, the Provost advised that a cap on the number of Scholarships had been in place in the past.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer, quoting from the McDowell and Webb 1982 book: *Trinity College Dublin 1592-1952. An academic history*, advised Board members that well into the 19<sup>th</sup> century the number of Foundation Scholars was capped at 70. He also noted, that due to the potential for grade inflation, there was a risk that the academic achievement and standing of the 2021 Scholars could be diluted without a quota.

Given the exceptional circumstances in which the University is currently operating, and to ensure clarity, the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer proposed that the matter be referred to the Visitors as a *dubium* to determine whether the proposal was compliant with the Statutes.

A Board member, expressing agreement with the suggestion from the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer, queried the allocation of Scholarships in the past when a quota was in place and the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies clarified the position.

In response to comments from a Board member, it was acknowledged that greater consideration on the means of assessment and the need to encourage critical thinking by students should continue. The importance of clear and appropriate communication in respect of the use of quotas in the upcoming Scholarship examinations, should such use be approved, was noted.

Following discussion, it was proposed, and agreed, that the interpretation of the Statutes in respect of the matter is to be referred to the Visitors as a *dubium*.

The Provost noted that the Board conditionally approved the use of quotas in the 2020-2021 Scholarship Examinations subject to the determination of the Visitors in respect of the *dubium* confirming that the proposal is compliant with the Statutes.

#### **Action/Decision**

**070.01** The Board considered the memorandum from the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies dated 10 November 2020, and it was agreed that the interpretation of the Statutes in respect of the matter is to be referred to the Visitors as a *dubium*.

**070.02** The Board conditionally approved the use of quotas in the 2020-2021 Scholarship Examinations subject to the determination of the Visitors in respect of the *dubium* confirming that the proposal is compliant with the Statutes.

*The dissent of Professor Alyn Stacey from decision 070.02 was noted.*

**BD/20-21/071 Appointment of Judicial Visitor**

The Secretary to the Board advised Board members that further to previous consideration, the Hon. Mr Justice George Birmingham had been appointed by the Government as the Judicial Visitor with effect from 12 November 2020. He advised the Board that Mr Justice Birmingham is, since 2018, an *ex officio* member of the Supreme Court as President of the Court of Appeal.

The Board recorded its thanks to Dr Justice Maureen Harding Clark for her distinguished service as Judicial Visitor for over a decade.

**Action/Decision**

**071.01** The Board received the update from the Secretary to the College and noted the appointment of Mr Justice Birmingham as the Judicial Visitor.

**071.02** The Board recorded its thanks to Dr Justice Maureen Harding Clark for her distinguished service as Judicial Visitor for over a decade.

*The meeting was brought to a close at this point with all remaining items of business deferred to be considered at a reconvened meeting of the Board.*