



Incorporating any amendments approved at subsequent Board meetings

Board Meeting 6 October 2021

This meeting was conducted remotely using the Zoom application and was hosted in the Provost's Office.

Present: Provost (Dr L Doyle), Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer (Professor O Sheils), Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies (Professor D Shepherd), Registrar (Professor N Cox), Bursar/Director of Strategic Innovation (Professor E Denny), Professor K Ahmad, Professor Alyn Stacey, Professor L Brennan, Professor A Burke, Mr K Byrne, Ms J Donoghue, Professor D Faas, Ms B Genockey, Mr D Grouse, Ms L Keogh, Ms R Mathews-McKay, Professor R McManus, Ms S Mueller-Owens, Professor K McTiernan, Professor A Nolan, Professor D R Phelan, Professor L Roe, Ms G Scanlon, Professor A Seery, Professor J Walsh.

Apologies: Professor R A Kenny, Professor F 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) Interim Chief Operating Officer (Ms O Cunningham), Vice-President for Global Relations (Professor E Stokes).

SECTION A

BD/21-22/032 Statements of Interest

The Secretary to the College advised that there was a potential conflict of interest for the Vice-President for Global Relations in respect of agenda item A.7 Change to Title of Annual Officer. Having discussed the matter with Professor Stokes, the Secretary to the College recommended, and it was agreed, that she would leave the meeting for the discussion on the item.

He also noted a potential conflict of interest for Professor Stokes in respect of agenda item A.8. 2010 Consolidated Statutes: Proposed Amendments. He recommended, and it was agreed, that Professor Stokes would remain in the meeting for this item.

BD/21-22/033 Minutes

The Board approved the draft minutes of the meeting of 15 September 2021.

Professor Phelan and Ms Scanlon joined the meeting at this point.

BD/21-22/034 Matters Arising

The following items were raised under matters arising:

BD/20-21/299 Report of the Board Review Working Group and Government Legislative Proposals regarding Governance of Irish Higher Education Institutions and BD/21-22/011 Matters Arising.

The Secretary to the College advised that an update on this item would be provided under the Provost's Report.

Professor Ahmad joined the meeting at this point.

BD/21-22/035 Provost's Report

The Provost advised the Board that she would like to discuss the Government Legislative Proposals regarding Governance of Higher Education Institutions with Board members, noting that the discussions are on-going at present.

She invited the Secretary to the College to give an update in respect of the 'Report on the Pre-Legislative Scrutiny of the Higher Education Authority Bill 2021' published by the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Education, Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science at the end of September 2021.

The Secretary to the College summarised some of the key recommendations contained in the report as follows:

- Legislative reform will be of limited value unless it is accompanied by a sustainable funding model.
- Provide greater clarity on how institutional autonomy will be maintained and continue to allow for the differentiation of mission by HEIs.
- There is a need to clarify the distinct boundaries of responsibilities and powers between the Minister and HEA that will ensure a strong and independent HEA.
- The HEA should have a designated role in the promotion and support of research, the development of research policy and the provision of research funding.
- The HEA research role, including its role in policy advice, oversight, collaboration, as well as funding, needs to be set out very clearly.
- Further clarity is required on how the Appeals Boards will be constituted in keeping with other Parts of the General Scheme of the Bill.
- In respect of the membership of HEI governing boards/authorities, further clarification is required regarding:
 - The number and proportion of external members;
 - The competency frameworks to be used for selection;
 - The impact on accountability and responsibility on internal members of governing boards;
 - Increasing the proposed overall number of governing board members;
 - Staff representation.

He advised that at a meeting between the Secretary General of the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science and the chairs of the governing bodies and a number of Department officials, a number of clarifications had been provided in respect of the proposed role of the Minister and that of the HEA. He also advised that transitional arrangements would apply to Governing Authority membership to allow continuity and that it is proposed that the funding model will be initially addressed in the forthcoming Budget and reviewed on an annual basis.

The Provost thanked the Secretary to the College for his update and invited the Board's attention to a short presentation she had prepared to assist the discussion. She noted that, to date, there has been progress made in the discussions, with good working relationships in place with the Minister and Department officials. The discussions had included consideration of the report of the Board Review Working Group as approved by the Board on 16 June 2021. She advised that the consultation process was now coming to a close and that deliberations in respect of the composition of the Board will soon be concluded by the Minister, prior to the wording of the Bill being approved by the Cabinet and then published.

The Provost advised that one possibility is that all of the governing authorities are to have similar composition but that discussions to date have confirmed that the legislative proposals will recognise Trinity's distinct legal structure which includes the Visitors and Fellows and therefore allow a different Board structure for the University.

The Provost also advised that within the legislative proposals there were many elements which will continue to form part of Trinity's remit such as the selection and appointment of the Chair of the Board. The Trinity Board would also be responsible for the creation of a competency framework which would form the basis for the selection of the external members by a Board Nominations Committee. She also noted that there are decisions which the University can make for itself in respect of Board membership and noted the opportunity posed by the increase in the number of external Board members to further add greater diversity and reflect the University's ethos. The potential to further enhance the role of the Principal Committees of Board was also acknowledged.

The Provost concluded by noting that it is expected that a transition phase will allow most, if not all, current Board members to serve out their terms and that the overall planned approach is to utilise a hybrid Bill, which is a combined public/private Bill, to amend both the public Universities Act, 1997 and the private Trinity College Dublin (Charters and Letters Patent Amendment) Act, 2000.

The Provost opened the item for questions and comments.

Professor McManus left the meeting at this point.

The Provost, in response to comments from a number of Board members, advised that discussions to date suggest that there is to be 1 undergraduate and 1 postgraduate student representative on the Board and acknowledged the request for such representatives to be the elected Presidents of the respective Unions. She also acknowledged the proposed reduction in student representation on the Board and the request that additional student representatives be included as part of the external membership and agreed to raise these matters in future discussions with Government officials. The potential for student organisations to be active in voicing their concerns at a national level about the proposed reduction in student membership was also noted.

Professor McTiernan left the meeting at this point.

Some Board members commended the work to date in efforts to secure proposals that would meet Trinity's governance needs however, it was acknowledged that the process of appointing Ministerial nominees to Boards can be slow and the importance of ensuring Board members have the appropriate skill-sets was acknowledged.

The Provost, responding to comments from several Board members in relation to the proposed increase in external members, noted the importance of ensuring that an appropriate competency framework is in place to underpin the selection and appointment of such Board members. The importance of external Board members being interested in education and research and committed to the values of the University was also acknowledged. The potential to increase diversity on the Board through the additional external membership was also noted.

A Board member expressed their concerns and disagreement with the approach being followed in respect of the proposed legislative changes. In particular, they noted the distinction in respect of the independent ownership of Trinity as opposed to other universities and voiced concern about the use of legislation to control an independent body.

In response, the Registrar advised that the use of hybrid legislation could address and acknowledge the distinct legal structure of Trinity noting that a balance will be needed between what Trinity would like to have in place and the vision of the Government.

The Provost, acknowledging the concerns raised by Board members advised that she would be happy to discuss the matter with Board members further in the coming weeks. She advised that she would reflect on the comments from Board members and will raise the relevant issues with Government as the discussions continue with a view to providing a further update at the next meeting of the Board.

The Provost concluded by advising that she is due to meet with the Fellows in the coming week and will raise a Board member's comments in respect of the number of Fellows on the Board and the importance of ensuring appropriate numbers of all staff on the Board at that meeting. She thanked the Board members and brought the item to a close.

BD/21-22/036 Approval of Draft Outline Board Work Programme 2021/22

The Provost introduced this item noting that the presented work programme was to act as a guide for the Board and that other items could also be included on the agendas of meetings as appropriate.

The Secretary to the College, with reference to his memorandum dated 29 September 2021 which had been circulated in advance, provided the Board with a summary of the new items added to the work programme subsequent to the discussion on the work programme by the Board in September.

After commenting on resourcing and finances, a Board member asked for a review of the impact of outsourcing across College to be added to the Board Work Programme, in respect notably of financial savings and efficiencies (if any). The examples of responsibility for maintenance of equipment in teaching rooms and provision of security were cited as two areas for consideration by such a review. The Provost advised that such matters will be considered in the strategic updates and reports that are scheduled to come to the Board.

Action/Decision

036.01 The Board considered and approved the memorandum from the Secretary to the College dated 29 September 2021 and the accompanying Board Work Programme 2021/22.

BD/21-22/037 Annual Equality Monitoring Report 2019/20

Associate Vice-Provost for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Professor Lorraine Leeson; Acting Equality Officer, Dr Siobán O'Brien Green; and EDI Data Analyst & Athena SWAN Project Officer, Ms Samantha Williams joined the meeting for this item

The Associate Vice-Provost for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion introduced the item and then invited the Acting Equality Officer to provide Board members with an overview of the Report.

Dr O'Brien Green invited the Board's attention to a presentation dated 6 October 2021, which had been circulated in advance. She provided the Board with a summary of the key findings of the Annual Equality Monitoring Report 2019/20. She advised of the University's performance in respect of some national targets and identified some trends of change that had been observed in recent years. Dr O'Brien Green summarised some of the findings of the Report for the Board in respect of age, disability, race, ethnicity and nationality and socio-economic background. She concluded by providing Board members with some detailed data in respect of gender statistics across staff and students in the University.

The Provost thanked Professor Leeson and Dr O'Brien Green and opened the item for discussion and comments.

A Board member, welcoming the Report, noted the commitment to the promotion of equality and inclusivity through goals and actions outlined in the Strategic Plan. Given this commitment and the fact that a quarter of the staff employed by the University are fixed term research staff the Board member outlined three suggestions for amendments to the Report to allow for a greater level of consideration and reflection for this cohort of staff. These included the following proposals:

- The inclusion of the equivalent data for fixed term research staff as provided for academic staff;
- To better understand the diversity of the staff profile, the authors could disaggregate by staff type, the data on part-time or temporary contracts & Recruitment Equality Monitoring;
- The inclusion of data by staff type and gender on access to maternity, paternity and parental leave and continuous professional development.

The Associate Vice-Provost for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion advised that future reports would include a greater level of data in respect of Research staff should that information be available and agreed to engage with the Board member directly in respect of future reports and the EDI strategy and bring these discussions to Board as appropriate.

A Board member welcomed the report but requested a greater synthesis of the material and stated the need to ensure both balance (so that no groups, even those perceived as over-privileged, become disadvantaged) and academic excellence. The Associate Vice-Provost for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion noted that supporting equality is not related to a drop in excellence and noted the importance of investing appropriately in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

A Board member, welcoming the report suggested that it would be beneficial if future reports could include a summary of areas that require a greater level of focus.

A Board member noted that the report captured a lot of progress on gender equality however the correlation between gender and socio-economic participation warranted further consideration. The needs of student parents and accommodation etc should also be considered.

The Acting Equality Officer advised that trends will be observed over time and that any other available data will be considered to inform fuller, more nuanced future reports.

The Associate Vice-Provost for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, the Acting Equality Officer, and EDI Data Analyst & Athena SWAN Project Officer left the meeting at this point.

In response to Board members comments, it was agreed that additional information in respect of casual staff and research staff be included in the upcoming Annual HR Metrics Report. The distinction between Adjunct Professors and this category of staff was acknowledged.

Action/Decision

037.01 The Board considered and approved the memorandum from the Associate Vice-Provost for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion dated 24 September 2021 and the accompanying Report subject to future reports including a summary of areas that require a greater level of focus.

037.02 It was agreed that additional data, particularly in respect of fixed-term Research staff would be brought to a future meeting of the Board.

The Board noted the dissent of Mr Byrne, Professor Roe and Ms Scanlon.

BD/21-22/038 Planning Group Report to Board #24

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer invited the Board's attention to her presentation dated 6 October 2021 and the accompanying memorandum and report which had been circulated in advance. She advised the Board that she was presenting this item on behalf of former Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer, Professor Jürgen Barkhoff to whom she expressed her thanks for his contribution to this item.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer gave an overview of the key themes that constituted the business of the Planning Group during the period February 2021 to June 2021 which included:

- The Strategic Plan 2020-2025: Community and Connection,
- The Occasional Staff and Casual Pay Policy,
- The second Bi-Annual Report on the Business Plan Implementation for Global Relations (GRS3)
- Monitoring of the HEA State grant, Baseline Budgeting Model (BBM) Outcomes, ECF staffing levels and the work of the Recruitment Sub-Committee.
- Several funding requests.

The Provost thanked the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer and opened the item for questions.

In response to comments from a Board member, the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer advised that the BBM review had commenced in good faith but had been paused due to the Pandemic and that it is the intention of the Financial Services Division to re-embrace that review in a focused manner.

The Provost advised that she was having on-going discussions with the Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer and noted that the BBM budget model only addressed some of the University's finances and that a review would not solve all of the issues. However, the need to ensure equity across the Schools was acknowledged.

Responding to further comments from the Board member in respect of the impact of the model on the sustainability of some schools, the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer advised that she is developing proposals to further enhance the autonomy of the schools, particularly in respect of strategic planning and staff profiles.

A Board member, echoing the comments in respect of the need for a revised budgeting model, raised a query in relation to the number of posts that were not approved by the Recruitment Sub-Group. In response, the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer clarified the nature of such posts and advised that the new proposals would enable the schools to plan ahead on a yearly basis to identify strategic posts for recruitment or renewal.

In response to comments from Board members, the importance of ensuring equity across all schools and, in particular, the smaller disciplines and schools was acknowledged.

The Provost, acknowledging the comments made on this item, advised the Board of the importance of exploring all of the options open to the University in respect of implementing a sustainable financial model for all schools.

Action/Decision

038.01 The Board considered and approved the memorandum from the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer dated 29 September 2021 and the accompanying Planning Group Report to Board.

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BD/21-22/039 Change to Title of Annual Officer

Professor Stokes left the meeting for this item.

The Provost, with reference to her memorandum dated 29 September 2021 which had been circulated in advance, advised Board members that approval was sought to alter the title of the Vice-President for Global Relations to become the Vice-President for Global Engagement to reflect the evolution of the role and its current remit more accurately.

It was noted, that if approved, the change would be with immediate effect and that all other titles with 'Global Relations' would change accordingly.

Action/Decision

039.01 The Board considered and approved the memorandum from the Provost dated 29 September 2021 and the change in title of Vice-President for Global Relations to the Vice-President for Global Engagement.

Professor Stokes re-joined the meeting at this point.

BD/21-22/040 2010 Consolidated Statutes: Proposed Amendments

The Registrar invited the Board's attention to his memorandum dated 29 September 2021, which had been circulated in advance.

He advised the Board that the proposed amendments had been agreed by the Statutes & Schedules Working Party at its meeting of 20 September 2021 and then summarised the proposed amendments under the following headings:

- Chapter on Officers
- Chapter on Board, Schedule 3 – External Relations
- Chapter on Units, Schedule 2 – Deans, Heads and other Office-holders
- Chapter on Committees, Schedule 2 – Detailed Provisions relating to Committees.

In response to comments from a Board member, it was agreed that the membership of the Human Resources Committee is to be amended to include 'a staff representative nominated by the group of unions' as opposed to 'a staff member.'

The Registrar clarified that the proposed changes to the Chapter on Officers required the assent of the Fellows.

Action/Decision

040.01 The Board approved the memorandum from the Registrar dated 29 September 2021 and the proposed amendments to the Statutes as contained within.

BD/21-22/041 Appointment of Vice-President for Biodiversity and Climate Action

The Provost, with reference to her memorandum dated 29 September 2021 which had been circulated, nominated Professor Yvonne Buckley to the position of Vice-President for Biodiversity and Climate Action. She advised the Board that Professor Buckley is the Professor of Zoology (1871) and has a significant record in issues relating to biodiversity and climate action.

Action/Decision

041.01 The Board approved the nomination of Professor Yvonne Buckley to the position of Vice-President for Biodiversity and Climate Action.

BD/21-22/042 University Council

The Board noted and approved the draft Acta of the Council meeting of 22 September 2021.

BD/21-22/043 Staff Retirements

The Provost read out the names of those staff members who retired with effect from 30 September 2021. On behalf of the Board, she expressed her thanks for the commitment and dedication of all of the staff members named.

Responding to comments from a Board member, the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer advised that it is envisaged that the strategic planning process will facilitate the allocation of appropriate resources and succession planning to fill vacancies arising from retirements as appropriate.

In response to comments from Board members, the Provost advised that she will give further consideration to an appropriate way of acknowledging the service of retiring members of staff.

BD/21-22/044 Any other Urgent Business

The following item was raised under any other urgent business:

(i) In-person teaching and timetabling

A Board member expressed some concern that a full return to in-person teaching may not be observed until the next semester noting that the additional Covid complications were compounding an already difficult timetabling process. They advised of the potential for reputational damage for the University, especially should a number of students receive online teaching only in the coming months.

Responding to the comments, the Provost advised that at all times the University will continue to follow public health guidelines and that it was for each university to determine what would be the most practical approach for their specific circumstances. She commended the ongoing good work being done across the University noting that every day more issues about the situation are being resolved. The Provost also noted that there are different cohorts with individual preferences and that every student has a different student experience. She also noted that some teaching events were conducted online before the Pandemic and so such items will remain online.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer distinguishing between emergency online teaching and online learning, acknowledged that timetabling for the University can be a complicated task. However, she advised the Board that additional teaching spaces had been identified in addition to funding for additional Teaching Assistants to commence straight after Reading Week.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer commended Heads of Schools and the School Administrative Managers for their flexibility and perseverance to date and advised the Board that a breakdown of face-to-face teaching per module had been requested. In addition, she noted that the team in the Academic Services Division were reviewing and reassigning room allocations so that capacity can be maximised. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer noted the transformative effect this will have on teaching noting that it will be achieved through a change in rooms rather than a change to the timetables. She advised the Board that in the past week approx. 177 requests to be reassigned to different venues had been received centrally and that the focus is on any difficult areas and on making things easier.

In response to comments from a Board member, the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer advised that the College Health Service and the Counselling Service are offering sessions for staff and the Provost advised that some Schools were availing of these sessions to help relieve the anxiety amongst staff about returning to work on the campus.

A Board member, noting the continual change imposed by the Pandemic which added an additional strain and workload on College Officers commended the Provost, Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer, and the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies for tackling this significant task and the good work done to date.

In response to comments from a Board member, the Provost acknowledged the importance of robust communications to all members of the University, and she advised that she would give further consideration as to how best to ensure that key messages are communicated to all as effectively as possible.

Following comments from a Board member, the importance of ensuring a series of practical measures such as the wearing of masks, ventilation and the use of monitors in teaching spaces was acknowledged.

In response to a query from a Board member, the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer advised that the required wearing of masks is to continue for the foreseeable future.

SECTION A.2

BD/21-22/045 Revised Accessible Information Policy

The Board considered and approved the Revised Accessible Information Policy.

SECTION B

BD/21-22/046 Board Business

- (i) The Board noted the callover updated to 15 September 2021.
- (ii) The Board noted the outcomes from the meetings of 15 September 2021.

BD/21-22/047 Library and Information Policy Committee

The Board noted and approved the minutes of the meeting of 17 May 2021.

BD/21-22/048 Remuneration Committee

The Board noted and approved the minutes of the meeting of 24 September 2021.

The Board noted and approved the memorandum from the Deputy Director of Human Resources dated 7 September 2021 and the accompanying memorandum from the Head of School of Computer Science and Statistics dated 30 March 2021.

BD/21-22/049 Safety Committee

The Board noted and approved the draft minutes of the meeting of 15 June 2021, and the accompanying Annual Report of the Safety Committee 2019-20.

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SECTION C**BD/21-22/050 Pro-Chancellors of the University of Dublin**

The Board noted and approved the memorandum from the Registrar dated 29 September 2021.

The Provost, on behalf of the Board, expressed her thanks to Professor Sheila Greene for her contribution and commitment to the role of Pro-Chancellor.

BD/21-22/051 Director of Trinity College Institute of Neuroscience (TCIN)

The Board noted and approved the memorandum from the Dean of Research dated 27 September 2021.

BD/21-22/052 Disciplinary Panel for Academic Staff – Standing List

The Board noted and approved the Memorandum from the Registrar dated 29 September 2021.

BD/21-22/053 Gold Medal Nominations 2021

The Board noted and approved the Memorandum from the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies dated 27 September 2021 (attached as Appendix 1 to this minute).

BD/21-22/054 Higher Degrees

The Board noted Higher Degrees, approved by the sub-committee of Board and Council on 22 September 2021.

BD/21-22/055 Membership of Committees of Board

The Board noted and approved the Memorandum from the Registrar dated 30 September 2021.

BD/21-22/056 Gender Representation among Fellows

The Board noted the memorandum from the Equality Officer dated 24 September 2021.

BD/21-22/057 Representation – National Institute for Bioprocessing Research and Training (NIBRT)

The Board noted and approved the nomination of Professor Brian Broderick, Associate Dean of Research, to the Board of the National Institute for Bioprocessing Research and Training (NIBRT) in place of Professor Andrew Bowie whose term of office has expired.

SECTION D

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

The Provost closed the meeting and thanked Board members for their contributions and time.

Signed:

Date:

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