



**Trinity College Dublin**

Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath

The University of Dublin

### **Board Meeting 3 December 2025**

*This meeting was held in the Trinity Board Room*

**Present:** Chairperson (P Farrell), Provost (Dr L Doyle), Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer (Professor O Sheils), D Caden, Professor M Cunningham, Professor A Dignam, T Doyle, I Goggin, Dr Neasa Hardiman; Professor D Jones, Professor A Kahane, Dr M Kelly (Deputy Chairperson), Professor C Leahy, D Leahy; O Muldoon, Professor A Nolan; Professor C O'Farrelly; Professor I Arnedillo Sánchez, Dr D Thornhill, Professor J Walsh, J Wyse.

**Apologies:** A White, R Matthews McKay, Dr M Olmstead.

#### ***In attendance***

**(ex officio):** Secretary to the College/Director of Governance (V Butler), Chief Operating Officer (N Gorman), Bursar/Chief Strategic Developments Officer (Professor E Denny), Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer (L Ryan).

***In attendance:*** Deputy Secretary to the College (AM O'Mullane).

#### **BD/25-26/075 Statement of Interest**

The Secretary to the College/Director of Governance advised the Board that there were no statements of potential conflict of interest received.

### **SECTION A.1 POLICY AND STRATEGIC MATTERS**

#### **BD/25-26/076 Minutes**

Board approved the draft minutes of 15 October 2025 subject to the changes being made as read out by the Deputy Secretary to the College to the Board.

#### **BD/25-26/077 Matters Arising from the Minutes**

The Secretary to the College/Director of Governance advised with reference to BD/25-26/056, Any Other Business, that there would be a presentation on international student recruitment at a future meeting of the Board.

The Secretary to the College/Director of Governance advised with reference to BD/25-26/0039, Dartry Accommodation Policy, that there would be a presentation on decision-making in respect of capital projects at a future meeting.

#### **BD/25-26/078 Provost's Report**

The Provost provided a verbal report on the launch of the Strategic Plan, the planned approach to the implementation of the Strategic Plan and progress updates. The Provost welcomed the launch by Minister Lawless of the INSPIRE programme, a €750m funding scheme for research infrastructure. The Provost also updated the Board on the University's applications to the Global Talent Ireland programme, a

programme to attract exceptional mid-career and established researchers from across the globe to Ireland. The Provost congratulated the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer and her team for the successful System and Performance Dialogue meeting with the HEA.

*Professor John Walsh joined the meeting at this point.*

In response to a question from a Board member, the Provost provided a breakdown of applications and disciplines for the Global Talent Ireland programme and provided details on the period of funding for the initiative. While welcoming the INSPIRE programme, Board members noted that there continued to be a funding gap in funding for Irish Universities. Board members noted the importance of the Arts & Humanities and Social Sciences disciplines to society and the importance of advocating for these disciplines.

*Neasa Hardiman joined the meeting at this point.*

#### **Action/Decision**

**078.01** The Board received a verbal report from the Provost.

#### *Financial/Audit Matters*

#### **BD/25-26/079 Consolidated University Budget Financial Year 2025/26**

*Keith Creedon, Head of Financial Planning and Analysis, joined the meeting for this item.*

The Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer introduced the item with reference to their memorandum dated 25 November 2025, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting. The Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer advised on the governance route of the Budget and set out details of the recommendations that arose from the review of the Budget Planning Allocation (BPA) model earlier in the year, including Planning Group's agreement to allocate budgets for College-wide costs and create a discrete Strategic Fund to allow a rapid response to emerging strategic opportunities. The Board noted that there would be no change from the BPA model for three years.

The Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer set out details of the budget being presented to the Board for approval and noted the challenges for Budget FY26 including ongoing inflationary impacts on costs and the implications of Government Budget 2026. She noted that while there were positive elements to the Government Budget regarding research infrastructure and pay award funding, there was no provision for non-pay inflation costs and demographic growth and no "Funding the Future" core funding allocation in 2026. She provided details on student numbers and fee income, noted the provisions for annual investment in Digital Transformation in line with the University's Strategic Plan and the need to generate significant surpluses in the coming years to absorb the impact of the closure of the Old Library during redevelopment. She set out details on the approach being taken to support managing inflationary pressures on both pay and non-pay costs.

The Head of Financial Planning and Analysis summarised the key components of the budget including increased total budgeted income and expenditure versus prior year, the budgeted surplus out-turn, and the key risks identified.

Board members observed that the budget was finely balanced and noted the impact of the unfunded elements of pay awards and non-pay inflation on budgeted EBITDA and net surplus. Board members also noted the importance of managing rising costs and being able to respond rapidly to changing circumstances. In response to questions about the BPA model and cost-containment, the Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer advised that performance against budget and forecast will continue to be reviewed, assessed and reported to the Board on a quarterly basis and should there be a move away from a growth environment, a key assumption of the BPA model, the model could be re-examined. In response to questions, the Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer advised that cost management plans were being developed.

There was discussion about the operation of the BPA model in a devolved environment and how the model could support alignment to the Strategic Plan objectives. The Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer noted the creation of a discrete strategic fund supported this alignment. There was also a discussion about student recruitment and the impact of government policy on student recruitment figures in other jurisdictions as well as demographic changes over the next decade.

#### **Action/Decision**

- 079.01** The Board considered and approved the memorandum from the Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer and the Head of Financial Planning and Analysis dated 25 November 2025 and the accompanying Consolidated University Budget for Financial Year 2025/26.

*The Head of Financial Planning and Analysis left the meeting at this point.*

#### *Critical Infrastructure Matters*

#### **BD/25-26/080 Strategic Capital Projects Dashboard**

The Bursar/Chief Strategic Developments Officer introduced the item with reference to their presentation dated November 2025 which had been circulated in advance of the meeting which provided a high-level overview of the University's major capital programme.

The Bursar/Chief Strategic Developments Officer provided an update on the Old Library Redevelopment Project and timelines expected for the planning permission decision for the extension of the Book of Kells exhibition. The Bursar/Chief Strategic Developments Officer provided a progress update with regard to Building Control (Amendment) Regulations 2014 (BCAR) for the E3 Learning Foundry Project. They also provided an expected timeline for planning permission for the Laidlaw Library Project. The Trinity East business case would be brought for Board consideration in Q1 2026, and work was progressing on the three different refurbishment projects for the Trinity South Renewal programme. The Board noted the Bursar/Chief Strategic Developments Officer's update on the Dartry Project.

**Action/Decision**

**080.01** The Board received an update from the Bursar/Chief Strategic Developments Officer.

**BD/25-26/081 Proposal for Amendments to Capital Projects Governance**

The Bursar/Chief Strategic Developments Officer introduced the item with reference to the memo dated 20 November 2025 which had been circulated in advance of the meeting. The Bursar/Chief Strategic Developments Officer set out the background to the proposals and details of the proposals themselves which involved an increase in certain financial thresholds, increased usage of Enterprise Project, Programme and Portfolio Management (ePPM) project tool to improve transparency and oversight of projects and associated changes to the Statutes as required.

Board members supported the proposals and noted that given the thresholds had not been updated since 2012, the changes would approximately bring the thresholds in line with inflation. Board members noted that the thresholds applied to capital expenditure projects that had already been approved by the Board.

Board members advised that the Capital Review Group (CRG) should escalate and report to the Board should risks with a capital project heighten. A Board member recommended that the thresholds be reviewed on a regular basis. There was a request from a Board member for the reporting dashboard to keep a running total of the quantum approved under the thresholds since the last report to the Board.

**Action/Decision**

**081.01** The Board considered and approved the memorandum from the Bursar/Chief Strategic Developments Officer, the Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer and the Chief Operating Officer dated 20 November 2025.

*Risk and Compliance Matters*

**BD/25-26/082 University Risk Register 2025/26**

The Secretary to the College/Director of Governance introduced the item with reference to the memorandum dated 25 November 2025 which had been circulated in advance of the meeting. The Secretary to the College/Director of Governance set out the methodology, the movement of the top 6 risks from 2024-25, University Risk Register movement within the academic year and new risks added within the period, an overview of the high risks for academic year 2025-26 as well as the overall University risk register, the university sector risk profile 2025 and the emerging risks on the horizon.

In response to a number of Board members observations, the Secretary to the College/Director of Governance agreed to modernise the language of the Academic Misconduct risk description as well as to improve the risk description and risk rating for Artificial Intelligence. The Secretary to the College/Director of Governance also agreed to review the fourth control listed for the Accommodation Availability risk. Following discussion, it was agreed that the Board would receive an update at a future meeting on the Laboratory Safety and Hazard Risk

In response to a question on how emerging risks connected in with the formulation of the University Risk Register, the Secretary to the College/Director of Governance advised that the framework combined both bottom-up and top-down methodologies which enabled the capture of emerging risks at the local level as well as capturing those big picture emerging risks. The Secretary to the College/Director of Governance advised that further work was required on embedding a risk appreciation culture and advised of the steps being taken to address this.

There was discussion of the risk rating of the Cybersecurity risk. The Chief Operating Officer advised that the rating reflected the significant investment in IT security, infrastructure resilience and ongoing maturity of the cyber security control environment and the likelihood of occurrence as rated by insurers; the impact remained high. A balance needed to be achieved in reflecting the operation of controls and the contextual environment with increases, for example, in phishing emails.

**Action/Decision**

- 082.01** The Board considered and approved the memorandum from the Secretary to the College/Director of Governance dated 25 November 2025.

*Major Strategy Item*

**BD/25-26/083 Proposal for Amendments to Capital Projects Governance**

**(i) Establishment of the Role of Associate Dean of Graduate Studies**

The Provost introduced the item with reference to the memorandum dated 26 November 2025 which had been circulated in advance of the meeting noting the alignment of the creation of this role with the Strategic Plan.

**Action/Decision**

- 083.01** Board considered and approved the memorandum from the Provost dated 26 November 2025.

**(ii) Nomination of Associate Dean of Graduate Studies**

The Board considered the memorandum from the Provost dated 26 November 2025 which had been tabled at the meeting.

**Action/Decision**

- 083.02** Board considered and approved the memorandum from the Provost dated 26 November 2025.

**BD/25-26/084 Visitors**

This item was taken as the next item at the meeting. Board received a verbal report from the Secretary to the College/Director of Governance in respect of two Visitors cases. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer agreed to brief the Senior Lecturer on points raised by Board members regarding the Academic Appeals and Dignity and Respect Complaint processes.

**Action/Decision**

- 084.01** Board received a verbal update from the Secretary to the College/Director of Governance in respect of two Visitors cases.

**BD/25-26/085 Honorary Degrees**

*Professor Neville Cox, the Registrar, joined the meeting for this item.*

The Registrar introduced the Honorary Degrees item with reference to his memorandum dated 2 December 2025 which had been tabled at the meeting. The Registrar set out details on the approach to the honorary degree's ceremony, the proposed nominations and reminded Board members about the confidentiality of the item until the nominations were approved by the University Senate.

**Action/Decision**

- 085.01** The Board considered and approved the memorandum from the Registrar dated 2 December 2025.

*The Registrar left the meeting for this item.*

**BD/25-26/086 Membership of the Principal Committees**

This item was deferred to a future meeting of the Board.

**BD/25-26/087 Statement on the Systems of Internal Control**

The Secretary to the College/Director of Governance introduced the item with reference to the memo from herself and the Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer dated 21 November 2025.

Board members noted the period covered by the Review of Internal Controls, the timing of the review and the approach taken to the review and noted that the results of the ongoing audit of Trinity's financial performance for the year ended 30 September 2025 may result in updates to the Statement.

**Action/Decision**

- 087.01** Board considered and approved the memorandum from the Secretary to the College/Director of Governance and the Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer dated 26 November 2025.

**SECTION A.2 POLICY MATTERS ALREADY CONSIDERED BY PRINCIPAL COMMITTEES**

**BD/25-26/088 Revised Management of Trademark Portfolio Policy**

The Board approved the memorandum from the Secretary to the College/Director of Governance dated 14 November 2025 and the accompanying Revised Management of Trademark Portfolio Policy.

**BD/25-26/089 Revised House Loan Policy**

The Board approved the memorandum from the Financial Operations Manager dated 24 November 2025 and the accompanying Revised House Loan Policy.

**BD/25-26/090 People and Culture Committee Annual Report 2024/25**

The Board approved the memorandum from the Director of Human Resources dated 21 November 2025 and the accompanying People and Culture Committee Annual Report 2024/25.

**BD/25-26/091 Marino Institute of Education Institutional Quality Progress Report**

The Board approved the memorandum from the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer dated 25 November 2025 and the accompanying Marino Institute of Education Institutional Quality Progress Report.

**BD/25-26/092 Royal Irish Academy of Music – Non-Academic Policies**

The Board noted the memorandum from the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer dated 25 November 2025 and the accompanying Royal Irish Academy of Music – Non-Academic Policies.

**SECTION B MINUTES FROM COMMITTEES**

**BD/25-26/093 Board Business Callover**

The Board noted the Board Business Callover updated to 15 October 2025.

**BD/25-26/094 University Council**

The Board approved the minutes revised draft acta of the meeting of 5 November 2025. In response to a query regarding the minute on Academic Freedom Policy, the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer advised that the minute would be reworded to better reflect the approach being taken to the review of the Policy. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer also confirmed that Board members were welcome to join the Council Working Group on Academic Freedom.

**BD/25-26/095 Audit Committee**

The Board approved the minutes of the 27 May 2025 and noted the executive summary.

**BD/25-26/096 Critical Infrastructure Committee**

The Board approved the minutes of the meeting of 24 September 2025 and noted the executive summary.

**BD/25-26/097 Finance Committee**

The Board approved the draft minutes of the meeting of 12 November 2025 and noted the executive summary.

**BD/25-26/098 People and Culture Committee**

- (i) The Board approved the minutes from the meeting of 21 May 2025.
- (ii) The Board approved the draft minutes from the meeting of 25 September 2025.

**BD/25-26/099 Quality Committee**

The Board approved the draft minutes of the meeting of 16 October 2025.

**BD/25-26/100 Risk and Compliance Committee**

The Board approved the draft minutes of the meeting of 12 November 2025 and noted the executive summary.

**SECTION C MATTERS FOR NOTING AND APPROVAL**

**BD/25-26/101 Board Membership- Students' Union**

The Board noted that Ms Grace McNally has been elected as President and will serve as a Board member for the remainder of the 2025/26 academic year.

**BD/25-26/102 Board Business Approved by Written Procedure**

The Board noted that the enclosed memorandum from the Registrar was approved by Board on 17 November 2025.

**BD/25-26/103 Membership of the Chapel Committee**

The Board noted and approved the memorandum from the Registrar dated 25 November 2025.

**BD/25-26/104 Consolidated Statutes, 2010, Assent of the Fellows**

The Board noted the memorandum from the Registrar dated 25 November 2025.

**BD/25-26/105 Higher Degrees**

The Board noted the Higher Degrees approved by Council on 5 November 2025.

**BD/25-26/106 Prizes and Other Awards – Gold Medal Nominations**

The Board noted and approved the memorandum from the Senior Lecturer and Dean of Undergraduate Studies dated 19 November 2025.

**BD/25-26/107 Policy Management Annual Report 2024/25**

The Board noted the memorandum from the Secretary to the College/Director of Governance dated 14 November 2025.

**BD/25-26/108 Sealings (This information is restricted due to commercial sensitivity)**

The Board noted the sealings (attached as Appendix 1 to this minute).

**BD/25-26/109 Staff Disciplinary Panel Reserve Standing List**

The Board noted and approved the memorandum from the Registrar dated 25 November 2025.

**BD/25-26/110 Related Entity Financial Report**

The Board noted the memorandum from the Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer dated 24 November 2025.

**BD/25-26/111 Intellectual Property Reporting Requirement for the HEA Annual Governance Statement 2024/25**

The Board noted the memorandum from the Director of Knowledge Exchange, Trinity Innovation and Enterprise, dated 26 November 2025.



**SECTION D PERSONNEL MATTERS**

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

Signed: .....

Date: .....