Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

Board Meeting 30 September 2026

This meeting was held in the Trinity Board Room

Present: Dr M Kelly (Deputy Chairperson, in the Chair), Provost (Dr L Doyle), Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer (Professor O Sheils), Professor I Arnedillo-Sánchez, D Caden, L Cheasty, Professor C Comiskey, Professor M Cunningham, T Doyle, A Duffin, I Goggin, Dr N Hardiman, Professor D Jones, Professor A Kahane, A Kennedy, O Muldoon, Professor A Nolan, Dr D Thornhill, A Touhy, A White, Professor J Wyse.

Apologies: Chairperson (P Farrell), Professor A Dignam, Professor C O'Farrelly, Dr D Thornhill, Professor J Walsh.

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/26-27/001 Condolences

The Board extended condolences to Dr Don Thornhill on the death of his sister.

BD/26-27/002 Out-Going Board Member

The Chair, on behalf of the Board and noting that this was the last meeting they would have attended as a Board member, thanked Professor Cliona O'Farrelly for her commitment, service and valuable contribution to the work of the Board and wished her well for the future.

BD/26-27/003 Statement of Interest

The Secretary to the College/Director of Governance advised the Board that there were statements of conflicts of interest received from Paul Farrell, Chairperson of the Board, in respect of Item A7, Nomination of Chairperson and Professor Cliona O'Farrelly in respect of Item A8, Board member replacement. The Secretary to the College/Director of Governance advised the Board that both members had tendered apologies to this meeting.

BD/26-27/004 New Members' Declarations

At the invitation of the Chairperson each of the new Board members made the declaration in the language of their choice as read out by the Deputy Secretary to the College.

SECTION A.1 POLICY AND STRATEGIC MATTERS

BD/26-27/005 Minutes

(i) Minutes of the meeting of 17 June 2026

The Board approved the draft minutes of 17 June 2026.

(ii) Minutes of the meeting of 8 July 2026

The Board approved the draft minutes of 8 July subject to the amendments being made as read out by the Deputy Secretary to the College.

BD/26-27/006 Matters Arising from the Minutes

The Secretary to the College/Director of Governance advised the Board that with reference to minute BD/25-26/244, *Actioning Commitment 2.1 Thrive – A New Model for Supporting Lifelong Learning – Response to Board Questions*, that the item be taken for discussion. Fedelma McNamara, Executive Director of the Academic Services Division, would be joining the Board meeting for the duration of the item.

BD/26-27/007 Provost's Report

The Provost provided an update under the following headings:

- Trinity landscape
- National landscape
- International perspectives – broader issues impacting the University
- Any other urgent points requiring the attention of the Board

The Provost updated the Board on the success of the Fresher's Fair; public sector pay awards and associated industrial action; Trinity's experiences with the INSPIRE research infrastructure programme and key features of Taighde Éireann - Research Ireland's Empower programme. The Provost also updated the Board on Ireland's first ever Research Security Guidelines; visa approval rates; the State's upcoming Budget 2027 in the context of the continued under-funding of the higher education sector in Ireland; the current status of the EU's 2028–2034 Multiannual Financial Framework; and Trinity's support for Ireland's EU Presidency events. Finally, the Provost updated the Board on some initiatives and appointments that would support the University in delivering on its ambitions as set out in the University's Strategic Plan Thrive.

Board members discussed the impact of visa approvals on international student recruitment. The Provost noted that the University considered international students to be a vital and valued element of Trinity's student cohort. The Provost also noted that international student recruitment was being carefully managed and that steps had been taken to diversify regions of focus for this activity.

In response to a question on the continued under-funding of the higher education sector in Ireland and its impact on University finances as well as the levers being utilised to manage the University's budget, the Board was advised that the Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer would provide an update at the next meeting as the Quarter 3 Financial Update was being prepared. The Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer provided details on the expected outturn for FY 2025/26 and the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer advised of the actions being taken by the Planning Group.

Action/Decision
007.01 The Board received the Provost's Report.

Critical Infrastructure Matters

BD/26-27/008 Strategic Capital Projects Dashboard

The Bursar/Chief Strategic Developments Officer introduced the item with reference to her presentation dated 15 September 2026 which had been circulated in advance of the meeting which provided a high-level overview of the University's major capital programme.

The Board noted an update from the Bursar/Chief Strategic Developments Officer on the following capital projects: Dartry, E3 Learning Foundry and associated works involving the Zoology Building, Laidlaw Library, Old Library Redevelopment Project, shared labs in Trinity East and the Trinity South renewal programme. The Board noted the launch of the E3 Learning Foundry building after the next meeting of the Board on 28 October 2026.

Action/Decision
008.01 The Board received the Strategic Capital Projects Dashboard, dated 15 September 2026.

Other

BD/26-27/009 Provost Appointment Process – Update on Recommendations

The Secretary to the College/Director of Governance introduced the item with reference to the memorandum from the Chairperson of the Board and herself dated 22 September 2026, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting. This set out the feedback received from Board members as well as a proposed way forward. The Secretary to the College/Director of Governance advised the Board that recognising that the timeframe for gathering feedback after the June Board meeting was quite short, and there would be further opportunity for Board members to provide feedback. As a consequence, this item was for discussion only to support the Secretary to the College/Director of Governance, the Registrar and the Chairperson of the Board in taking on feedback and comments from Board members.

A number of Board members advised that it was important to ensure that any revisions made to the Provost Appointment Process were the appropriate ones; given this importance the matter should not be rushed. A Board member advised that there were a number of recommendations that were presented separately but were interconnected and the impact of decision-making around the elements would need to be well understood as they could impact on determining who would be elected Provost. A Board member recommended that there should be several models of weighting included for consideration.

In response to a query, the Secretary to the College/Director of Governance agreed to circulate the paper being considered by the Board for discussion to the Fellows and offered to meet with the Fellows also. In response to a question on the level of consultation that had taken place with the College community, the Secretary to the College/Director of Governance outlined the range of consultation that had taken place over the last two years.

A Board member advised that the current wording set out in the Report, appended to the memo, did not reflect the reality for external candidates, where the public nature of the election process posed more than a major challenge for external candidates; this was a significant difficulty. It was essential to reflect on what changes were important to protect the features of the Provost's appointment process that should be retained while also not limiting the candidate pool.

The Secretary to the College/Director of Governance welcomed the discussion and noted that there were certain changes to process required should there be an urgent need to appoint a Provost but she supported the request for further consultation and reflection. The Secretary to the College/Director of Governance also advised that the weighting set out in the report reflected the weighting utilised in Faculty elections and was intended to be illustrative only. Further work would be required to model up weightings, which would need to be supported by experts on this matter.

Action/Decision
009.01 The Board considered and discussed the memorandum from the Chairperson of the Board and the Secretary to the College/Director of Governance dated 22 September 2026.

BD/26-27/010 Proposed Changes to the Consolidated Statutes, 2010
Professor Neville Cox, Registrar, joined the meeting for this item.

(i) Schedule 4 to Chapter on Board (Reserved Business)
(ii) Chapter on Committees with Schedule 1 (Finance Committee) and Schedule 2 (Detailed Provisions Relating to Committees)

The Registrar introduced the proposed changes to (i) Schedule 4 to Chapter on Board (Reserved Business) and (ii) changes to the Chapter on Committees with Schedule 1 (Finance Committee) and Schedule 2 (Detailed Provisions Relating Committees) with reference to the memorandum from the Governance Manager and himself, dated 24 September 2026, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting. The Registrar acknowledged the great work of the Governance Manager on this piece of work.

A Board member suggested considering whether the expenditure threshold level for consideration of capital projects or major infrastructural investments should remain included in Schedule 4 or whether it would be better hosted elsewhere. The Registrar agreed to take it away and consider it with the Governance Manager.

Action/Decision
010.01 The Board approved the proposed amendments as set out in the memorandum dated 24 September 2026, noting that the approval of the proposed amendment to the Chapter on Committees would require the assent of the Fellows and the approval of the Visitors.

The Registrar left the meeting at this point.

BD/26-27/011 Nomination of Chairperson

The Secretary to the College/Director of Governance introduced the item with reference to her memorandum dated 11 September 2026 which had been circulated in advance of the meeting, providing an update on the process which led to the Nominations Committee making a nomination to the Board in respect of the role of Chairperson.

Action/Decision

011.01 The Board considered and approved the memorandum from the Secretary to the College/Director of Governance dated 11 September 2026 and unanimously re-appointed Mr Paul Farrell as Chairperson of the Board with immediate effect for a second term on the Board to the end of the academic year 2029/2030.

BD/26-27/012 Board Member Replacement

The Secretary to the College introduced the item with reference to her memorandum dated 22 September 2026 which had been circulated in advance of the meeting, outlining the approach to filling the casual vacancy.

Action/Decision

012.01 The Board considered and approved the memorandum from the Secretary to the College/Director of Governance dated 22 September 2026, approving the appointment, by co-option, of Professor Caitriona Leahy to the Board for the period from 1 October 2026 to the end of the academic year 2026/27.

BD/26-27/013 Draft Board Work Programme 2026/27

The Secretary to the College/Director of Governance introduced the item with reference to the memorandum from herself and the Governance Manager dated 22 September 2026 which had been circulated in advance of the meeting. The Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer and the Bursar/Chief Strategic Developments Officer advised of items that now could be added to the work programme.

A Board member asked that the People Projects update be brought to the Board twice this year, noting that the Chair of the People and Culture Committee would be tendering his apologies for the next meeting. There was a request for a presentation on research, relevant to the Board. Board members were invited to recommend other updates to the Secretary to the College/Director of Governance.

Action/Decision

013.01 The Board noted and discussed the Draft Board Work Programme 2026/27.

BD/26-27/014 Visitors

The Board received a verbal report from the Secretary to the College/Director of Governance in respect of two Visitor cases.

BD/26-27/015 Any Other Urgent Business

There were no other items of urgent business.

SECTION A.2 POLICY MATTERS ALREADY CONSIDERED BY PRINCIPAL COMMITTEES

BD/26-27/016 Critical Infrastructure Committee Activities' Report 2025/26

The Board noted and approved the memorandum and report from the Chair of the Critical Infrastructure Committee and the Bursar/Chief Strategic Developments Officer dated 15 September 2026.

SECTION B MINUTES FROM COMMITTEES

BD/26-27/017 Board Business Callover

The Board noted the Board Business Callover updated to 17 June 2026.

BD/26-27/018 Critical Infrastructure Committee

The Board approved the minutes of the meeting of 10 June 2026 and noted the executive summary.

SECTION C MATTERS FOR NOTING AND APPROVAL

BD/26-27/019 Administrative Procedures in the Summer Session

The Board noted the memorandum from the Secretary to the College/Director of Governance and the Governance Manager dated 22 September 2026.

BD/26-27/020 Actioning Commitment 2.1 *Thrive* - A New Model for Supporting Lifelong Learning – Response to Board Questions

Fedelma McNamara, Executive Director, Academic Services Division joined the meeting for this item.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer introduced the item with reference to the memorandum from herself and the Executive Director, Academic Services Division, dated 22 September 2026 which had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer advised that the paper had been prepared to address questions raised by Board members at the Board meeting of 18 June 2026, minute reference, BD/25-26/244, which set out the options available to deliver a new model for supporting Lifelong Learning (LLL) which was a strategic objective of the University as outlined in the University's Strategic Plan, Thrive, and a formal third pillar of educational provision, as approved by University Council. The paper also drew on evidence from Trinity's own experience and international benchmarking.

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer noted that the proposal was not driven solely by financial considerations; there was a growing national emphasis on lifelong learning, workforce upskilling and flexible learning pathways. Trinity needed to position itself optimally to respond effectively.

The paper outlined six potential organisational models for delivery. While no preferred option had been determined, the establishment of a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) had emerged as a potentially suitable mechanism, offering an agile and accountable operating platform. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer confirmed

that work remained at an exploratory stage and that the business case was still under development.

In response to a Board member's question regarding the comparison of the plans for a future model of LLL with Trinity Online Services Limited (TOSL), the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer advised that TOSL had been run on a cost-recovery basis, whereas the proposed structure would focus on income-generating opportunities and would offer programmes only where sufficient demand existed to justify delivery.

A number of Board members sought clarification regarding staff arrangements, employment conditions, workload implications and industrial relations considerations. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer confirmed that no decision had been taken about staff structures and discussions continued with Human Resources about these aspects. It was envisaged that in the early phases, teaching would be delivered primarily through professors of practice, adjunct staff and external practitioners, with the intention of minimising impact on existing academic workloads. It was envisaged that in the first phase, any buyout would only be applicable to professional services staff, and further examination of options will be considered in the development of the full business case.

Questions were raised in relation to Human Capital Initiative (HCI) regarding learning engagement figures, the operation and success of HCI-funded micro-credentials and the criteria used to determine viability. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer advised the figures had been drawn from the HEA audited records of the Pillar 3 HCI programme and advised that the main metric of success of a micro-credential was determined by whether the income was sufficient to cover the cost, noting many that were successful had been developed in concert with employers. The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer noted that for LLL while demand was important there also needed to be a genuine need. Six Schools had expressed appetite in participating as 'early adopters' in the new model of LLL and currently the priority was to ascertain the optimal model.

Professor Jones left the meeting at this point.

The Provost emphasised the need to position the University to respond to changing learner expectations and demand for more flexible modes of education, while remaining consistent with its academic mission and values. LLL activity already exists across Schools but was delivered through a fragmented range of approaches. The proposal represented both a strategic response to future developments in higher education and a response to demand from within the University for a more coherent framework. The Provost noted that LLL provision represented an important opportunity to diversify the University's income streams.

Professor Cunningham left the meeting at this point

Board members emphasised the importance of robust analysis of market demand, financial sustainability, staffing models and lessons learned from previous initiatives.

Action/Decision

020.01 The Board noted the memorandum from the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer and the Executive Director, Academic Services Division, dated 22 September 2026, noting that a business case would be brought back to the Board for consideration and approval in due course.

BD/26-27/021 Revised Terms of Reference

(i) Critical Infrastructure Committee (Principal Committee)

The Board noted and approved the revised terms of reference of the Critical Infrastructure Committee (Principal Committee).

(ii) Quality Committee (Compliance Committee)

The Board noted and approved the revised terms of reference of the Quality Committee (Compliance Committee).

BD/26-27/022 Membership of the Committees of Board

The Board noted and approved the memorandum from the Registrar dated 22 September 2026.

BD/26-27/023 Membership of the Student Conduct Committee

The Board noted and approved the memorandum from the Registrar dated 22 September 2026.

BD/26-27/024 Membership of the Advisory Committee on Honorary Degrees

The Board noted the memorandum from the Registrar dated 22 September 2026.

BD/26-27/025 Head of School

The Board noted and approved the nomination of Professor Nicola Carr as the Head of the School of Social Work and Social Policy for a second term to the end of Trinity Term 2028.

BD/26-27/026 Gifting of Oak Bookcase ('House of Lords' Bookcase)

The Board noted and approved the memorandum from the Secretary to the College/Director of Governance dated 20 September 2026.

BD/26-27/027 Trinity Ball 2027

The Board noted the memorandum from the Secretary to the College/Director of Governance dated 17 August 2026.

BD/26-27/028 Prizes and Other Awards – Gold Medal Nominations

The Board noted and approved the memorandum from the Senior Lecturer/ Dean of Undergraduate Studies dated 18 September 2026.

BD/26-27/029 John Mallet Purser Memorial Lecture 2026

The Board noted and approved the recommendation that Professor David Poole, University Distinguished Professor and holder of the Coffman Chair for Distinguished University Teaching Scholars and the Elizabeth Chapin Burke Chair in Health and Human Sciences, Kansas State University, should be invited to deliver the John Mallet Purser Memorial Lecture in Michaelmas Term 2026.

BD/26-27/030 Chair of the Trustees of the Marino Institute of Education
The Board noted and approved the memorandum from the Provost dated 18 September 2026.

BD/26-27/031 Trinity Nomination to the Dublin Dental University Hospital Board
The Board noted and approved the nomination of Professor Hevey, Dean of Graduate Studies, to the Board of the Dublin Dental University Hospital for a period of four-years from 2026/27 to 2029/30, to replace Professor Martine Smith.

BD/26-27/032 Sealings (This information is restricted due to commercial sensitivity)
The Board noted the Sealings (attached as Appendix 1 to this minute).

BD/26-27/033 Library Loan Request – Selection of items from the Fagel Collection
The Board noted the memorandum from the Librarian and College Archivist dated 14 September 2026.

Signed: ……

Date: ……