

*Incorporating any amendments approved at subsequent Council meetings*

**The University of Dublin**

**Trinity College**

**A special meeting of the University Council was held on Wednesday 29 November 2006 at 9.30 am in the Board Room.**

Present	Provost, Vice-Provost, Senior Lecturer, Registrar, Senior Tutor, Dean of Graduate Studies, Dean of Arts and Humanities, Dr G Biehler, Mr D L Parris, Dean of Engineering and Systems Sciences, Dr M Stuart, Dr H Gibbons, Dean of Health Sciences, Dr V A Campbell, Dr J P Gormley, Dean of Science, Dr M E G Lyons, Dr M J F Brown, Dean of Social and Human Sciences, Dr B M Lucey, Ms F M Haffey, Dr A O'Gara, Ms H Allen, Mr R Kearns, Mr P Laird.
Apologies	Dr M L Brennan, Ms N McGarrigle, Mr C Reilly, Mr D Wallace, Mr W Tobin, Professor N M Claffey.
In attendance	Librarian, Secretary, Acting Academic Secretary.
Observers	Dr M H Adams, Dr P Coleman.
Student observer	Mr D Macken.
By invitation	Professor V J Scattergood (for CL/06-07/045).

**Statutory Declaration** Dr A O'Gara, representative of the Senate of the University, made the statutory declaration.

**CL/06-07/045 Restructuring: Report of the Working Group on Restructuring** The Provost thanked those present for making themselves available for this special meeting of Council to consider the report of the Working Group on Restructuring dated 15<sup>th</sup> November 2006, which had been circulated. He noted that arising from recommendations of Council and the Heads' Committee, Board at its meeting of 5 July 2006 requested that a working group be established to prepare proposals for consideration by Board on the grouping of Schools into a federal structure of 3-5 clusters. The Provost commented on the importance of College making a timely decision on finalising the reorganisation of academic structures as, among other things, a decision in this regard will enable the commencement of administrative and support services reform. He invited the Senior Lecturer to make a presentation on the key findings of the report of the Working Group on Restructuring.

The Senior Lecturer opened the presentation by thanking members of the Working Group for their contribution and commitment throughout the process, which was intensive and very time-consuming for all involved. The Working Group had met on six occasions and its membership comprised Professor E J O'Halpin (Board); Professor J A N Parnell (Board); Dr V A Campbell (Council); Dr H Gibbons (Council); Professor D J McConnell (Heads); Professor J H Ohlmeyer (Heads); Professor T PMcC Brown (Deans); Mr D Quinn, President of Students' Union; Senior Lecturer (Chair); Acting Academic Secretary (Secretary).

There had been a good degree of consultation to-date and, as Board is expected to make a decision on the issue of clustering of Schools at its meeting of the 12th December 2006, an intensive consultation schedule has been arranged for the weeks leading up to the 12th December.

The Senior Lecturer noted the five key principles that emerged and which are deemed paramount in the consideration of continuing academic restructuring and administrative and support services reorganisation. These are:

- (i) Academic coherence in the organisation of disciplines within the university;
- (ii) Academic pre-eminence in the strategic and financial planning of the university;
- (iii) Devolved decision-making and financial accountability and authority to academic units;
- (iv) Administrative and support services reorganisation to facilitate and underpin teaching, learning and research;
- (v) Student representation on College committees in the new academic structure should not be any less favourable than is currently the case.

He noted the following conclusions of the Working Group:

- (i) There was unanimous agreement that Schools should be grouped into clusters and devolution of decision making achieved as described in this report;
- (ii) There was a clear majority view in favour of grouping Schools into three clusters organised as follows: Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences; Health Sciences; Engineering and Science;
- (iii) There was a minority view in favour of more than three clusters because of a conviction that a cluster of Engineering and Science would not have a sufficient degree of academic coherence;
- (iv) Groupings of Schools should be titled 'Academy' with a 'Vice-Provost' and a 'Pro-Vice-Provost' in each;
- (v) The relationship between the new 'Academy' structure and principal committees, and between the 'Vice-Provosts' and Annual Academic Officers should be reviewed with the intention of achieving the most appropriate governance structure for College;
- (vi) The existing faculty organisation should be replaced, and a phased and well-structured transition from faculty to 'Academy' should be managed.

The Senior Lecturer took the meeting through each of the key principles, and addressed the reasons why the majority of the Working Group believed that a three-cluster model is preferable to a five-plus model. During the discussions it became clear that a five-cluster model would not work because it was inevitable that the existing Faculty of Arts and Humanities would split because of representation issues. A three cluster model satisfies all the key principles articulated above, whereas a five-plus model does not. A three cluster model can deliver greater economies of scale and greater administrative efficiency, and can facilitate devolution of budgets and meaningful decision-making to academic units.

Following deliberations on the nomenclature, the Working Group recommended the use of 'Academy' and 'Vice-Provost', and there was a preference for the selection of the 'Pro-Vice-Provost' and the 'Vice-Provost' by election from among the academic staff within the 'Academy.'

The Working Group recognised the importance of representation in terms of single and multi-discipline Schools at cluster level and in terms of budgetary allocation. The Group also considered representation of broad disciplines within a cluster, and concluded that there should be a 'Pro-Vice-Provost' in each cluster so as to ensure

equity of discipline representation. The issue of costs was considered and it is clear that the grouping of Schools into clusters will require upfront investment and funds received from the Strategic Innovation Fund for change management will be invested in instituting a three-cluster model, if approved, for a three-year period in the first instance.

Finally, the implications of a three-cluster model will require a root-and-branch review of College's committee structure; a review of the role and number of Annual Academic Officers; a review of the Statutes, which is already in train; the initiation of administrative and support services reform in order to align these with the new academic structure.

The Provost thanked the Senior Lecturer for the presentation on the report of the Working Group on Restructuring and opened the discussion to the floor.

Council welcomed the report and discussed the proposal at length. The following key issues were raised:

*Academic coherence* Council recognised that academic coherence was an important key principle and that the current flat structure of 24 academic units represents the maximum level of academic coherence at discipline level that College is likely to achieve, and that this outcome represents the collective will of the academic community. It was felt that the proposal for a three-cluster model would, among other things, serve to integrate academic disciplines at the level of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, research, preparing funding proposals, agreeing strategy, and sharing costs and administrative resources. It was commented that in a cluster model, College would need to ensure that cross-cluster teaching and research are facilitated and encouraged.

*Representation* The issue of representation was considered paramount and the proposal that each cluster has a 'Pro-Vice-Provost' was welcomed. It was commented that there is no parity of representation of the broad disciplines in the current Faculty of Engineering and Systems Sciences and that this must be avoided in a three-cluster model. The issue of representation is not only in terms of the 'Pro-Vice-Provost' and the 'Vice-Provost' at cluster level, but also in terms of the representation of Schools on the cluster's Strategic and Financial Management Committee. For example, in a cluster of Engineering and Science, the six Schools in Science would dominate such a Committee and it was suggested that representation might be considered in terms of staff and student FTEs. It was recognised that these issues of governance detail needed careful consideration and agreement if a cluster model is approved.

In discussions on representation, there were arguments for and against a cluster of Engineering and Science.

*Selection of the 'Vice-Provost' and the 'Pro-Vice-Provost'* There was general approval for the election of the 'Pro-Vice-Provost' and the 'Vice-Provost', but it was also suggested that there should be flexibility in this regard because the governance of clusters may differ depending on the nature of academic activity and relationships with and, in some instances, dependencies on external government and accreditation bodies. This in turn will determine the type and level of administrative support required. All clusters will, however, be subject to College regulations on academic governance.

There was some discussion about the method of election and how parity of representation of broad disciplines within a cluster might be achieved. This would require detailed consideration along with other issues of governance, and Council requested that, should Board approve a three-cluster model, these matters as well as

those of representation be addressed by means of a consultative process along the lines of the Working Group on Restructuring.

**Nomenclature** Council in discussing nomenclature tended to favour the title 'Faculty' over 'Academy.'

**Consultation and Decision** Council commended the consultative process in place and the Working Group for its frank assessment of the weakness of the current governance structure, which is putting considerable strain on both academic and administrative staff. It was observed that the College community is becoming increasingly disaffected and staff are becoming alienated within their own communities. A decision on finalising academic restructuring is now critical. The democratic process of consulting through a bottom-up process has resulted in a flat structure of 24 academic units and it was suggested that a decisive direction is now required.

It was also suggested that there is no appetite for change in College, but it was explained that the idea of clusters and the need to address weaknesses in the current governance structure originated from the Heads' of School, and was supported by Deans, students and Council. Student representatives confirmed that the student body has indeed an appetite for change.

**Student input** The student representatives stressed the importance of having undergraduate and postgraduate student representation on whatever new committees emerge if a three-cluster model is approved. The students believe that there has been a tangible diminution in the level and quality of academic and administrative services to students in the past year, and the Student Council fully supports the proposed three-cluster model, believing that better use of central administrative supports and improved integration of services will, over time best serve the interests of students. The increase in postgraduate student numbers demands that the structure of the Graduate Students' Union be reviewed, and representation of postgraduate students on College committees should be increased to reflect the relative size and importance of this student body.

**Make-up of a Cluster** It was expressed that the cluster must be adequately resourced and the mistakes made in the first phase of restructuring should not be repeated. It was felt that the 'Vice-Provost' must have the authority to lead the cluster and to represent the best interests of the Schools at the appropriate decision-making *fora* in College. It was suggested that the 'Pro-Vice-Provost' and the 'Vice-Provost' should have adequate administrative support which would not only provide the necessary administrative back-up but also administrative continuity and retention of knowledge in the hand over of Office from the outgoing 'Vice-Provost' to the incoming 'Vice-Provost.' It was also held that clusters should be allowed to develop according to the needs of the Schools.

**Budgets and ARAM** Council felt that greater clarity was needed in terms of budgetary control and allocation. It was felt that while Schools should continue to be ARAM nodes, that the arrangements between the Schools and the Cluster in respect of budgets need greater definition. It was suggested that this level of detail should be agreed through a consultative process where significant issues are addressed such as how 'over-funded' Schools can be assisted and how indirect costs can be controlled. There was a requirement for a central integrity mechanism to ensure transparency and accountability in the devolution of budgets and decision-making.

**Administration and Support Services** It was held that administrative and support services should be reorganised to support academic activity, and that heads of administrative areas should be held accountable for delivering a cost efficient and effective service. The success of the three-cluster model is highly dependent on the type of administrative support devolved (physically and/or virtually) to the cluster and the

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ability of the central administration to respond in a flexible way to the needs of the Schools. The view was expressed that 'less administration was more'.

In concluding the discussions, the Provost thanked Dr Gibbons, Dr Campbell and Professor Brown, members of Council, for serving on the Working Group, and Council for its considered observations on the report. He commented on increasing external demands for compliance in a wide range of complex legislative and financial areas, and noted that administration had to serve both internal and external demands and not exclusively the academic activity. The Provost noted the issues raised by Council and especially its overwhelming desire for stability in the management of the University, and he acknowledged the governance issues identified by Council that would need addressing if a three-cluster model is approved.

Signed .....

Date .....