



The Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting of 24 February 2010

PRESENT: Provost (in the Chair), Registrar, Bursar, Professor M. Marsh, Professor D. Singleton, Interim Chief Operating Officer, Ms. P. Murphy, Mr. Cónán O'Broin, Treasurer – Secretary of the Committee

IN ATTENDANCE: Research Accounting Manager

APOLOGIES: Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer

The Minutes of the Meeting of 16 December 2009 were approved and signed.

The Committee noted the circulated 2009/10 Action List as at February 2010 and the current status in relation to the actions agreed.

Section A

FN/09 – 10/43 Research, Training and Conference Travel Scheme

XX The Committee noted the circulated memorandum from the Staff Relations Manager dated 17.02.2010 regarding a proposed amendment to the existing Research, Training and Conference Travel Scheme in order to comply with College's obligations under the Protection of Employees (Fixed Term Work) Act 2003 along with other factors associated with changes made to the academic year. Noting the increased flexibility for academic staff in terms of the draw down of the travel allowance under the revised Scheme, the requirement for Heads of School to approve claims (in-line with College policy) and the financial impact of the extension of the Scheme to part-time academic staff, the Committee approved the proposed changes as set out therein.

FN/09 – 10/44 Procurement

XX The Committee noted the memorandum from the Finance Operations Manager dated 15.02.2010, as circulated, which outlined the aims of the Procurement Strategy and Vision, approved by Executive Officers in December 2009. Recognising the challenges presented by the current economic/funding environment, the Committee considered the proposed Supplier Management Programme as a first step towards realising the stated goals of the Procurement Strategy and Vision, which include achieving cost savings and adding value (through reducing supplier numbers, as well as the benefits associated with aggregate spend and automating the order and payment process). In this context and noting the recommendations of Report #2 of the Planning Group (Minute FN/09-10/46 of 24.02.2009 refers), the Committee approved the introduction of a charge for non-compliance with College's preferred supplier agreements on the first day of Michaelmas Term 2010. The Committee requested that the implementation of the new policy be preceded by a comprehensive communication strategy to the College community (including circulation of preferred supplier categories) over the coming months, to be managed by the Treasurer's Office. Furthermore, the Committee requested that the impact of the policy change be reviewed again in Hilary Term 2011.

Action:

44.1 A charge for non-compliance with preferred supplier agreements to be introduced on the first day of Michaelmas Term 2010.

- 44.2 The Treasurer's Office to manage a comprehensive communication strategy to the College community in advance of the introduction of the policy change.
- 44.3 The impact of the policy change to be reviewed in Hilary Term 2011.

Section B

FN/09 – 10/45 TCIN

(Minute FN/09-10/24 of 16.12.2009 refers)

The Treasurer advised the Committee on the updated position of the TCIN and in particular the recent manifestation of certain risks highlighted previously to the Committee. In the context of the need to assimilate the impact of this specific financial concern, the Committee agreed that the revised financial plan for the TCIN will now be presented at its meeting of 13.04.2010.

Action:

- 45.1 An updated financial plan for the TCIN to be presented to the Committee at its meeting of 13.04.2010.

FN/09 – 10/46 Report #2 of the Planning Group

The Treasurer invited the Committee's attention to the Report #2 of the Planning Group dated 24.02.2010 from the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer, covering the period July 2009 to February 2010, as circulated. Noting the successful launch of the College's Strategic Plan (2009-14) and the ongoing implementation of the Resource Planning Model, the Committee considered the convergence of these two strands into the single activity of delivering on the Strategic Plan, as set out in the Report under the following headings:

- Update on the recommendations of Report #1 of the Planning Group
- Income generation from ancillary services
- Cost management
- Governance of areas outside Faculties/Chief Operating Officer
- SFI OIP 2010

The Committee considered and noted the recommendations and work programme to June 2010 set out in Report #2 of the Planning Group, that had been fully endorsed by Executive Officers.

FN/09 – 10/47 Pensions

(Minute FN/09-10/22 of 16.12.2009 refers)

The Committee were advised by the Treasurer of the successful transfer of pension assets and liabilities to the State on 31.12.2009.

FN/09 – 10/48 Research & Related Accounts

The PI and his Financial Administrator attended for item 2 below.

(Minutes FN/09-10/29 of 16.12.2009 and FN/08-09/28 of 17.12.2008 refer)

1. The Treasurer updated the Committee on the status of a particular group of research accounts, noting that the Committee had requested a plan identifying how the issues would be addressed going forward. The Treasurer advised the Committee that further financial concerns had arisen in the intervening period and given the extent of the financial and reputational risks involved, the Faculty, School and Treasurer's Office were working closely with the PI to bring forward a plan to the meeting of 13.04.2010.

2. By way of background, the Treasurer outlined that, as part of ongoing financial governance and procedural reviews, financial updates in respect of this group of accounts had been notified to the Committee on a regular basis over a number of years. The Committee noted the size and complexity of activity associated with this group of accounts and expressed concern at the trend and potential risks identified.

At the Committee's invitation, the PI, by way of a verbal update, outlined his view of the key issues associated with the suite of accounts under his control. The Committee, again expressing concern at the existing and potential risk factors associated with this group of accounts, requested the PI to present a detailed financial plan addressing the potential financial exposure at its meeting of 13.04.2010.

Action:

- 48.1 The PI, along with the Head of School/Faculty Dean, to present a financial plan to the Finance Committee on 13.04.2010.
- 48.2 The PI to present the Committee with a financial plan on 13.04.2010.

Section C

FN/09 – 10/49 Funding Statements 2008/09
(Minute FN/09-10/27 of 16.12.2009 refers)

The Committee was circulated with the Audit Committee memorandum to Board dated 13.01.2010, along with the accompanying letter from KPMG to the Audit Committee dated 18.01.2010 that outlined the outcome of the 2008/09 audit and matters for noting by Board including: the Bioscience's loan facility, the Code of Practice for Governance of Irish Universities, the risk register and issues associated with eStrategy etc. The Committee noted that the 2008/09 Funding Statements had been approved by the Board (Minute BD/09-10/113 of 27.01.2010 as circulated) and were signed without qualification by KPMG on 27.01.2010.

FN/09 – 10/50 Purchase of Property

The Committee noted the circulated memorandum and supporting documents from the Treasurer dated 16.02.2010 setting out the background to a recent Board decision to purchase a property.

FN/09 – 10/51 Campus Companies Venture Capital Fund

The Committee noted the background and current position of the Campus Companies Venture Capital Fund as circulated in a memorandum from the Treasurer dated 17.02.2010 and will consider further updates in relation to the dissolution of the fund as they arise.

Action:

- 51.1 The Committee will consider further updates in relation to the dissolution of the Campus Companies Venture Capital Fund as they arise.

FN/09 – 10/52 RPM Implementation – Status Report

The Committee noted the current status of the RPM Implementation as outlined in the circulated memorandum from the Senior RPM/FECP Accountant, dated 17.02.2010 under the following headings:

- Policy and operation issues
- Research quality metrics
- Issues under consideration by Planning Group
- Risk management
- Next steps.

FN/09 – 10/53 Full Economic Cost Project (FECP) – Status Update Report

The Committee considered the circulated memorandum from the Bursar, dated 3.02.2010, outlining a status update report on the Full Economic Cost Project including progress made to date and the European Commission Framework requirements. Key issues for noting related to the release of FECP data, Academic Activity Profile response rates, data collection error/bias and funding. The timetable for the first full FECP outcomes was also set out.

FN/09 – 10/54 Borrowing Framework

The Committee considered the circulated memorandum from the Treasurer dated 17.02.2010 and attached document in relation to the revised Framework for Borrowing and Loan Guarantees and recommended its approval by Board for operation going forward, on the basis that the amendments to the existing Framework, arising from a review by the HEA and IUA, were minor in nature.

Action:

54.1 The revised Framework for Borrowing and Loan Guarantees to be recommended for approval by Board.

FN/09 – 10/55 Treasurer's Office Review
(Minute FN/09-10/7 of 11.10.2007 refers)

The Committee noted the circulated memorandum and appendices from the Research Accounting Manager and Service Liaison Officer, dated 17.02.2010, setting out an update on the actions taken on foot of the recommendations of the external review of the Treasurer's Office carried out in 2007. The Committee also noted the comprehensive and far-reaching approach taken by the Treasurer's Office to date and the ongoing engagement with the College community to improve the overall service provided.

FN/09 – 10/56 Pay Rates for Part-Time, Hourly-Paid Staff

The Committee considered the memorandum from the Treasurer dated 16.02.2010 along with supporting information from the Acting Staff Secretary and approved the recommendation to abate the pay-rates for part-time, hourly-paid academic staff in line with the Emergency Measures in the Public Interest (No.2), noting that this abatement would also apply to occasional lecturers, invigilators and other hourly paid staff. The Committee requested that the Treasurer's Office notify the College community of the revised pay rates as proposed.

Action:

56.1 The Treasurer's Office to notify all relevant College staff of the revised hourly pay rates.

FN/09 – 10/57 Accommodation & Catering Services Annual Report 2009

The Committee accepted the circulated Accommodation & Catering Services Annual Report 2009, which had previously been approved by the Interim Chief Operating Officer.

FN/09 – 10/58 Travel and Subsistence Rates for Ireland and Abroad 2010

The Committee noted and approved the memorandum as circulated from the Treasurer dated 17.02.2010 with the accompanying 2010 College booklet on Travel and Subsistence Rates for Ireland and Abroad. It was agreed that the booklet would be circulated to Faculty Deans, Heads of School/Support Units and Principal Investigators and in addition it will be made available to all interested parties on the College website.

Action:

58.1 The Treasurer's Office to circulate the Travel and Subsistence Rates booklet for 2010 to the Faculty Deans, Heads of School/Support Units and Principal Investigators and also publish it on the College website.

FN/09 – 10/59 Finance Committee Evaluation/Self Assessment

Having been circulated with the draft self-assessment questionnaire for 2009/10, Committee members were requested to review the questionnaire and to revert with any suggested amendments within the timeframe specified in the covering memorandum from the Treasurer dated 17.02.2010. It was agreed that the final self-assessment questionnaire will then be completed and returned by the Committee members, with the outcome of the evaluation process (compiled by the College Secretary) to be considered at the Committee's final meeting of the year on 26.05.2010.

Action:

59.1 Committee members to revert with any suggested amendments to the draft self-assessment questionnaire within the timeframe specified.

FN/09 – 10/60 Minutes of Sub-Committees

The Committee noted and approved the minutes of the following sub-committee meetings, as circulated:

- (a) FECP meeting of 8.12.2009;
- (b) Investment Committee meeting of 9.02.2010.

The next meeting of the Finance Committee has been arranged for 19 March 2010 at 2.00p.m. in the Board Room.

PROVOST.....

DATE.....