

IUA Review [07/3] for IUA Meetings in UCD on 18th June, 2007.

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1. Strategy Process

Following discussion by Council at its last meeting on key principles to underpin the development of a new strategy for the Universities, the IUA Executive has continued to work on the collection of the key data required to underpin a draft strategy. It is anticipated that an initial outcome from this work will be available before the end of June.

2. Research

2.1. National Research Policy

2.1.1. *Strategy for Science Technology and Innovation 2006-2013*

The SSTI is overseen by two key groups, the Higher Education and Research Group (HERG) and Technology Ireland. The IUA is represented by N. Costello / C. O'Carroll on HERG along with delegates from the key funding agencies and government departments, and the Group is chaired by the Department of Education and Science.

There are currently four active working groups, namely -

- ***Research Careers*** – C. O'Carroll
At the last meeting on 17th April there were a number of presentations from HEA, IRCSET, IRCHSS, SFI and DCMNR. IN summary, these presentations focused on their existing funding programmes for researchers. The IUA has prepared a paper on research careers that had a first discussion at the VP/Deans of Research meeting on 30th April.
- ***High Level Indicators*** – M. Casey
This group is focusing on the development of a comprehensive and consistent set of indicators to track application of the SSTI and its outcomes over time. A further meeting of the group was held on 24th April 2007. Arising from that meeting it was agreed that all members would review the draft matrix circulated and provide feedback specifically on the roles assigned to them and on any progress or potential issues in meeting such roles. The next meeting of the group has been scheduled for 21st June 2007.

- **Capacity Development** – S. Harkin (first meeting to be arranged).
- **Infrastructure**
A special meeting of this group was held on 15th March to discuss the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI). The IUA is currently working with the VP/Deans of Research and Research Officer Groups to map current involvement of HE researchers in European infrastructures.

2.2. European Research Policy

2.2.1. European Research Area (ERA) Consultation

The European Research Area (ERA) policy initiative was launched by the Council of Ministers in 2000. The European Commission is now reviewing progress and has prepared a green paper for open consultation. There are six areas of focus:

- Realising a single labour market for researchers;
- Developing world-class research infrastructures;
- Strengthening research institutions;
- Sharing knowledge;
- Optimising research programmes and priorities; and
- Opening ERA to the world.

The EC has established six expert groups to advise on ERA policy; C. O’Carroll has been nominated to the first group on researchers. The IUA has already made a contribution to the debate at the Competitiveness Council in Wurzburg 26/27th April, responding to German Presidency proposals. The IUA will coordinate an Irish response to the green paper in June.

2.2.2. Third Country Directive

The Directive provides for a fast track procedure for admitting third-country nationals for more than three months to carry out a research project with an accredited research institution. This will be a major advance on the current system as they will not require a separate work permit. The Departments of Justice, Education and Enterprise along with IUA are working on the details and full implementation is expected for October 2007.

2.3. Higher Education Authority

2.3.1 PRTL Cycle 4

Following the first stage of the PRTL evaluation the VP/Deans of Research Group met on 30th April to discuss outcomes and plan stage 2 submissions. There was broad agreement on projects that had a high priority for all of the universities (RIA and RCSI were also involved in the relevant disciplines). The deadline for full proposals was 1st June.

2.4. Science Foundation Ireland

2.4.1. Value for Money (VFM) Review

Following a public tender and evaluation Indecon have been selected by the steering group (C. O'Carroll is IUA representative) to carry out the review. The review will be an evaluation of the value for money achieved in relation to two specific SFI programmes, namely the Principal Investigator Programmes (including Research Professor Awards and E.T.S. Walton Visitor Awards) and SFI's Centres for Science, Engineering and Technology (CSET) Campus-Industry Partnership programme. The evaluation will entail a detailed examination of the resources and inputs provided, and the outputs and impacts deriving from each programme, and an assessment of the efficacy, effectiveness, efficiency of each programme, and their complementarity with the overall objectives of the SSTI. Indecon have brought in a number of international partners including Prof. Enric Banda head of Catalan Research Foundation and former Secretary-General of the European Science Foundation (who also chaired the committee for the impact assessment of PRTL).

2.4.2. Research Overheads

Following recent correspondence and discussions between the HEA and UCFOG in relation to research funding and in particular funding for overheads, the HEA has informally indicated its intention to convene a working group to consider the issue of research overheads and advise in relation to an appropriate overhead rate for research funding contracts.

2.5 Health Research Board

2.5.1 CEO

Dr. Ruth Barrington has stepped down as Chief Executive of the HRB and her replacement has yet to be announced. In the meantime Dr. Hamish Sinclair will be acting CEO. Dr. Barrington will take up the position of CEO of the Dublin Molecular Medicine Centre (DMMC) on 1st October, 2007.

2.5.1 HRB Schemes

The HRB has funded four major PhD Scholars programmes at a total value of €20m. This will enable consortia between universities to establish comprehensive 4th level education and research training in health research. Dr. C. O'Carroll chaired the international peer review panel and reported that the members (from UK and Germany) were very impressed with the development of graduate education and training structures in each of the universities.

2.6. Irish Researcher Mobility Office and Web Portal

2.6.1 Personnel

The National Co-ordinator has taken maternity leave with effect from 4th June 2007 and a part time replacement has been hired to provide maternity cover. Key tasks involve operation of the helpdesk, signposting to relevant agencies for visa and work permits

queries and ensuring the portal is well functioning and updated. Most importantly the temporary project co-ordinator will work with D/ETE and Justice on the implementation of the Third Country Directive in Ireland and the changeover from work permits to hosting agreements from October and act as a liaison with the researchers and research organizations and academia.

2.6.2 Development 2007

Development has been completed on the extranet which supports the advertising of Job opportunities on researchcareersireland.com. As a result, uploading and searching functions for organisations have been enhanced. Some improvements have also been made on the homepage of the portal to make the text more visible and amendments have been made to facilitate additional news items. Font size throughout the portal pages has been increased. This development has been funded by D/ETE funding.

2.6.3 Statistics

Statistical analysis collated prior to the preparation of this report can be summarized as follows:

- 6,548 Job Searches on the portal
- 103 Job Applications made directly via the portal application facility but this does not reflect the large number of applications that have been made directly to the organisation
- 1,017 organisations profile searches have been made by registered users.
- 41,547 unique visits to the national portal

There are now 1,512 users registered on the portal and this number is continuously growing - (300 since last review) Users can be categorised as follows:

- Early Stage Researchers (Post-graduates) : 551
- Experienced Researchers (Post Doc) : 472
- Senior Researchers : 91
- Undergraduates : 48
- Other : 114

2.6.4 Network Meeting

The second network meeting of the year took place on 31st May 2007 and was well attended by established members as well as newer participants to the group. Much of the meeting concentrated on recent developments in entry conditions and the upcoming implementation of the Third Country Directive.

A training session on the procedures of the Hosting agreement was co-delivered by the national co-ordinator and Aidan Hodson from the Office of Science and Technology,

D/ETE. The new Marie Curie National Contact Point was introduced to the network and gave a brief overview on her role in FP7 and the assistance provided in conjunction with the mobility office. Although this network meeting marked the end of the EC three year project, it was explained that ERAMORE Ireland would still continue and the same level of assistance and services would be provided on an ongoing basis.

2.6.5 Annual Report on Mobility Trends

The office conducted its annual report on mobility trends for non Irish researchers living in Ireland and results will be disseminated throughout the CAIRDE network, and all relevant agencies and organisations. This has also been made available on the national portal much of the information and data gathered will be utilised in the coming year to improve the advice, information pages and function of the national portal and any future publications produced.

2.7. EU Seventh Framework Programme

2.7.1 Role of IUA in FP7

FP7 is now well under way with quite a number of calls from the first round already closed. This highly competitive programme will remain an essential source of research funding for Irish universities in order to leverage income from national sources.

IUA plays an important role with regard to Irish participation in FP7. C. O'Carroll is the National Delegate in the Programme Committees for the 'People' and 'Capacities - Research Potential' programmes, with the opportunity to safeguard Irish interests at the level of programme design and broader Community policies. The IUA Marie Curie Office provides practical support to applicants and contractors in these two programmes. IUA has also been accredited by the European Commission for the recommendation of expert evaluators for FP7. Acting as evaluators can provide Irish researchers with invaluable experience for the subsequent preparation of proposals of their own.

2.7.2 IUA Marie Curie Office

Since the beginning of April 2007 the IUA Marie Curie Office has been run by Dr. Dagmar Meyer, previously Assistant Professor of Mathematics at the University of Göttingen (Germany). Apart from being the FP7 National Contact Point for both the 'People' (Marie Curie) and 'Capacities - Research Potential' programmes, she has also recently been appointed as Alternate National Delegate to the corresponding Programme Committees. In particular, she acts as rapporteur for the 'People' Programme Committee working group on Marie Curie salary rates.

2.7.3 'People' (Marie Curie) programme

The FP7 Marie Curie programme was officially launched in Ireland at a national conference on 21st May 2007. The first two major calls closed on 7th May (Initial Training Networks – ITN) and on 31st May (Industry-Academia Pathways and Partnerships -

IAPP). The next important deadline will be on 14th August for the European and International Marie Curie Individual fellowships.

The IUA Marie Curie Office offers tailor-made assistance to researchers interested in applying to the Marie Curie programme. In early April an information event focussing on the social sciences and humanities was held at TCD, followed by two further events at TCD and UCD for potential applicants to the Marie Curie Host schemes (ITNs and IAPPs). A series of short workshops on the Marie Curie Individual actions has been scheduled for June: events have already taken place at NUIG, NUIM, TCD, and DCU, with two more workshops at UL and UCC to follow. WIT has also indicated an interest in hosting such a workshop.

The Marie Curie Office has provided individual support to a whole number of researchers from Irish universities and companies for the preparation of proposals for the ITN and IAPP calls, consisting in the explanation and clarification of rules and eligibility criteria and the provision of extensive feedback on draft proposals. While there was a strong interest in the ITNs, not many IAPP proposals matured to submission state due to changes in the rules in FP7 as compared to FP6, making the scheme less attractive especially for SMEs. The Marie Curie Office also provided assistance to individual researchers as well as research support staff in the implementation of ongoing FP6 Marie Curie contracts, regarding mainly financial and contractual issues.

2.7.4 *'Research Potential' Programme*

All calls for this programme in 2007 are now closed. Since this programme is almost exclusively addressed to 'Convergence Regions' and 'Outermost Regions of the EU', the possibilities for Irish institutions to take part in it are very limited. As a result, very few general enquiries and no specific requests for assistance have been addressed to the Marie Curie Office.

2.7.5 *European Networks of National Contact Points*

As a new feature in FP7, the Commission will provide funding for the coordination of European Networks of National Contact Points (one network for each programme). A proposal for the 'People' NCP Network is currently being prepared. The Irish NCP will be responsible for a work package focusing on policy issues and the monitoring of the Marie Curie programme implementation. Ireland will not play an active role in the 'Research Potential' NCP Network.

2.7.6 *FP7 National Support Structure*

The National Contact Point at the IUA belongs to the FP7 National Support Network, which brings together all Irish National Contact Points for the different FP7 programmes. The FP7 National Support Structure, headed by Dr. Imelda Lambkin, coordinates the network and organises regular events for the exchange of information and best practice, as

well as training events on specific topics (for example a recent workshop on Financial and Legal Aspects of FP7). The IUA Marie Curie Office regularly participates in these events.

2.8. *expertiseireland.com*

This quarter has seen a continuation of the trend of an increase in the number of people being contacted through the portal. Experts on the portal have been contacted regarding providing research reports for legal advice, collaboration on various projects, both industrial and academic, and users looking for post graduate opportunities.

The number of experts contributing information to the portal stands at 5,349 as of 31st May, 2007. The breakdown is as follows:

University of Dublin, Trinity College	875
Dublin Institute of Technology	674
University College Dublin	658
University of Ulster	613
University College Cork	506
Dublin City University	494
National University of Ireland, Galway	469
Queen's University Belfast	409
University of Limerick	318
National University of Ireland, Maynooth	260
Athlone Institute of Technology	28
Waterford Institute of Technology	20
Letterkenny Institute of Technology	15
Dundalk Institute of Technology	7
Institute of Technology, Tallaght	4

	2006	2007	% Change
Average duration per visit	4615	21	-99.5%
# Page Impressions	322,316	333,496	3.5%
# Searches	26,309	20,350	-22.6%
# Visits	33,076	36,124	9.2%
News articles viewed	2,141	2,045	-4.5%
# Expert Profiles accessed	39,179	37,595	-4%

The comparison of annual statistics shows that the marketing campaign for the *expertiseireland.com* portal needs to be pursued more aggressively if we are to match the statistics for the previous year.

Discussions were held with the Enterprise Ireland offices in New York and Dublin, regarding the promotion and supply of technology transfer licensing opportunities respectively. The New York office has agreed to actively promote the opportunities available for licensing and published on the *expertiseireland.com* portal to client companies in the US. The Dublin office has agreed to supply additional technologies available for licensing in the Industrial Technologies sector to *expertiseireland.com*.

As the current strand of funding for *expertiseireland.com* comes to an end in July 2007, a proposal for further development has been completed and will be presented to the appropriate agencies – Enterprise Ireland, IDA – and the Vice President’s for Research, for their input.

Currently there is extensive testing being conducted with TCD regarding the use of a new schema for the facilitation of expert profiles to *expertiseireland.com*, and from the new UCD Research Management System. Teagasc have begun the process of contributing expert profiles also, but this information is currently on the test site awaiting approval for publication onto the portal.

3. University Reform

3.1. Strategic Innovation Fund

3.1.1. SIF Cycle I Sectoral Projects

IUA projects funded under cycle I of SIF are progressing well in the second quarter of funding. Tendering exercises are completed or underway in a number of projects for the hiring of external experts to implement parts of the workplan. The quarterly progress report, with details of individual projects, will be given by Siobhan Harkin, IUA, for Council, Registrars and Plenary attention.

3.1.2. New IUA Appointments

Dr. Westley Forsythe has joined IUA as the Coordinator of the sectoral project “4th Level Support Network”. Westley was previously the Skills Training and Collaborative Training Account Manager at the Graduate Research Office, University of Sheffield.

Áine Galvin has been appointed as project manager for the sectoral project “Improved access mechanisms for students facing socio-economic barriers and students with a disability” and will be based at the IUA office. Áine, who is Director of Access at UCD, will start the 12 month seconded position in mid-June 2007.

3.2. SIF Cycle II Planning

The HEA had not issued the Call for SIF II at time of writing. However, according to the HEA, the Call for Proposals under Cycle 2 of the Strategic Innovation Fund will issue shortly. In advance of the Call an outline timetable for assessing proposals under Cycle 2 is briefly described below. It is proposed that Cycle 2 will include a briefing session for the institutions, to take place in early July. One purpose of this briefing is to illustrate key differences between the call in Cycle 2 and the call in Cycle 1.

At this early stage of the process it is envisaged that the deadline for receipt of applications for funding under SIF Cycle 2 will be mid-September. The assessment of each proposal received is scheduled to be completed by the end of October. Each institution applying for funding under Cycle 2 will then be offered a feedback meeting, to take place during November. Funding allocations and project plans will be finalised by the end of the year.

The IUA has convened the SIF II Planning Group, comprising representatives across senior university management - Registrars, Finance Officers, Secretaries, HR, VPDoR and Teaching and Learning. This Group progressed the discussions on the sectoral approach to SIF II in an all-day meeting held on 25th May, 2007 at the IUA. The outcomes of the meeting will be tabled for (i) discussion and sign-off of high level themes by IUA Council (ii) next steps in the progression of specific projects by IUA Registrars and (iii) expert input from IUA Plenary.

4. Funding

4.1.1. Recurrent Funding 2006/2007

The University Chief Finance Officers Group (UCFOG) wrote to the HEA on 23rd April 2007 detailing a number of very significant funding issues which represent a real threat to the financial sustainability of the sector. These issues included the erosion of core recurrent funding arising from the failure of grant increases to match inflationary cost increases over a number of years, the impact of increased research activity on core funding, the resource implications arising from recent legislative and related requirements and from matching funding requirements. The HEA has agreed to bring these matters to the attention of its task force on the recurrent grant allocation model.

UCFOG also wrote to the HEA in April 2007 requesting clarification as to why the percentage increase in the grant available for distribution to universities was less than the overall percentage increase awarded to the sector in the book of estimates. A total of 8.5% has been top-sliced from the grant for specific purposes including €10m for medical education reform. UCFOG are seeking further clarification in respect of some of these adjustments.

4.1.2. Tuition Fee Increase Submission 2007/08

The sector is still awaiting notification of the approved tuition fee increases for 2007/08. The HEA and relevant government departments had committed to notifying universities of the approved increases by the end of March 2007. The UCFOG chair wrote to the HEA in this regard on 26th April 2007.

4.1.3. Recurrent Grant Allocation Model

Revised student number returns in line with the definitions and interpretations agreed between the Registrar's group and the HEA have been submitted to the HEA. The audit of student numbers is well advanced and all institutions have completed Phase I (site visits by the steering committee) of the audit process at this point. Consultants (Mazars) have been appointed by the HEA to undertake Phase II (detailed systems review) of the audit process and this work is currently in progress.

The HEA was invited to present the findings of their risk and sensitivity analysis to the University Chief Finance Officers Group and did so at the UCFOG meeting in UCC on 2nd April. A joint UCFOG/Registrar's group meeting was organised to consider a number of issues arising from the risk and sensitivity analysis. The key points to note are as follows:-

- The basic principle in respect of student numbers must be that all students are counted. This would then form the basis for informed discussions with the HEA in relation to what students should and should not be included for the purposes of allocating funding.
- The current moderating mechanism is not appropriate and the sector favours a negotiated moderating whereby individual institutions agree an appropriate plan and timeframe with the HEA for moving to the new funding levels. The possibility of using SIF funding to assist in this regard should be pursued.
- The proposed performance related funding element is not appropriate and must be removed. Performance funding should be incentive based rather than punitive.
- The sector believes that any move towards fee harmonisation or the introduction of a mechanism to the model which would impact on core grant allocations on the basis of fee differentials is not appropriate and must be reconsidered.
- The issue of 3 v's 4 year programmes would be considered by the sector.
- The appropriateness of the metrics for the 5% research top-slice would also be reviewed.

Arising from the discussions it was agreed that the IUA would write to the HEA in relation to a number of these issues and that further consideration would be required by the sector in respect of other issues.

4.1.4. Estimates for Public Services

On review of the final published ‘2007 Revised Estimates for Public Services’ it was noted that the university and IoT grant allocations, which previously had been reported separately under sub-heads E4 and E5 respectively were now being reported as a single line under sub-head E4. The IUA was most concerned by this development and wrote to the Assistant Secretary of the Department of Education and Science strongly urging the DES to, at a minimum, revert to the previous reporting arrangements and to consider the creation of a separate dedicated sub-head for universities under the DES vote encompassing current and capital. We await a response from the DES.

4.2. Pension Issues

The IUA through the HEA Pensions Working Group continues to work with the HEA, DES and DoF to resolve the issues facing university pension schemes. The proposal that existing university pension schemes be taken over by the State and that the funds be transferred to the National Treasury Management Agency has been agreed in principle by the relevant government departments and is awaiting final approval by the Minister for Finance.

There remain a number of implementation issues to be addressed and it is intended to reconvene the IUA Pension Working Group to consider such issues.

As reported in the April IUA Review full pension liabilities are required to be shown in the balance sheet of universities for the first time in 2005/06 financial statements in accordance with the requirements of Financial Reporting Standard 17 (FRS 17) and differences of opinion have arisen between the C&AG and university external auditors in relation to its application in the financial statements of universities. The sector will continue to liaise with the C&AG, HEA and external auditors in relation to this issue.

4.3. Taxation Issues

As reported previously KPMG had been engaged to advise the sector in relation to PAYE related issues arising from recent correspondence received from the Revenue Commissioners. A representative group from the universities will meet with KPMG to develop and revise the draft submission further.

4.4. Nursing

Agreement has been reached with the HSE and DoHC in relation to the transfer of midwifery and integrated children’s/general nursing degree programmes to the third level sector.

4.5. Tax Relief at Source on Tuition Fees

The IUA has been approached by the Revenue seeking the assistance of the sector in facilitating the capture of data at source in respect of tax relief on tuition fee payments. The Revenue have requested that universities capture the name and PPS number of

individuals paying tuition fees by asking students to submit details electronically and for universities to then return this data to the Revenue once a year. There would be no obligation or responsibility on universities to follow-up on responses or to verify the data received. The IUA, through the finance managers group is dealing with this issue.

4.6. Meeting with the Department of Employment & Learning in NI

Following a request from the Department of Employment & Learning in Northern Ireland representatives from the IUA met with officials from that department to discuss proposals for the payment of registration fees for NI students attending institutions in the ROI. The meeting was a useful information sharing forum and we await formal proposals from the DELNI in relation to the payment of registration fees.

5. HEA/Department of Education & Science

5.1. HEA Survey on the Costs of Access Students

As reported previously the HEA had engaged consultants to undertake a review of the costs of access students. A briefing on the initial findings of the consultants draft report was held in April 2007.

The main points to note are as follows:-

- Access students accounted for over 20% of student numbers in the institutions surveyed
- Cost per access student based on preliminary results is c.€1,300
- There is considerable variation in the split of costs within student lifecycle stages across the institutions selected
- The socio-economic access group accounts for the highest proportion of access spend (49% of total) and also represents the highest spend per student at €1,823

The IUA has sought a meeting with the HEA and the consultants prior to the finalisation of the draft report.

5.2. Recurrent Grant Allocation Model

Full report is detailed at Section 4.1.3.

5.3. Data Collection re. Under-Represented Student Groups

A meeting took place at the HEA on 24 May to provide initial feedback on the preparations underway to gather data during student registration 2007 concerning under-represented student groups. All institutions – universities and IoTs - are moving to gather all the supplemental socio-economic and access data through on-line systems, as part of the overall student registration process. Although students cannot be obliged to provide this data, the HEA was pleased by the idea (as developed in some universities) that students would at least have to click onto the relevant questionnaire URL as an obligatory

step in the registration process. The HEA now agrees that it would be sensible to try to ensure this can be done as part of the CAO system.

Following meetings between the Data Protection Commissioner and the HEA, the DPC concerns about institutions gathering and stocking “sensitive personal data” appear to have modified slightly insofar as there would appear to be an understanding that the data in question is indeed necessary for the purposes for which it is gathered. The onus will however be on individual institutions to ensure/review the robustness of their institutional data protection policies, and the levels of access by staff etc to sensitive data.

The HEA has prepared a student information leaflet which will be sent via the CAO mailing list to all applicants.

Given that this data is to be used as a basis for the RGAM access weighting of 1.33, it will need close examination by all interested parties. The tender for the socio-economic coding of the received data was to have been issued in early June and consultants are expected to be in place by 1 September.

6. Communications / Events

6.1. Marketing the University Sector and IUA Services

6.1.1. IUA Website Development

The IUA launched its new-look website on June 4th. New features include: rolling news from National and International publications featured on the home page; more streamlined navigation and content; installation of a search facility.

6.1.2. 4th Level Ireland Website Development

Now that the new Network Co-ordinator for Graduate Schools has taken up his post, development on the 4th level website can begin in earnest. Potential logos have been created and content will be developed in line with overall strategies for the 4th Level initiative.

6.1.3. Communications Group Meeting

The inaugural meeting of the IUA Communications Group took place on May 15th. Agenda items discussed included issue management, university strategy, web development and creation of key sectoral messages. A second meeting has been scheduled for early September and work will begin on tying the communications messages to the proposed strategy for the university sector.

In advance of the meeting, on May 9th the IUA Communications Manager met with Frank Fitzmaurice, newly appointed Corporate Services Director at NUI Maynooth who has responsibility for the NUIM Communications Office.

6.1.4. 3rd IUA e- Newsletter

On April 25th the 3rd IUA newsletter was distributed. In the third issue we focused on staff changes in the IUA. Ned Costello taking up his position as new Chief Executive, Dagmar Meyer becoming the new Marie Curie National Contact Point in April and Westley Forsythe taking up his position as 4th Level Network Coordinator in May. Also featured was IUA Success in the First Round of the Strategic Innovation Fund, Academy Award Success for Anil Kokaram of TCD and the IUA Council Call for a Knowledge Foresight for the Humanities and Social Sciences.

6.2. Press/Publicity and Media Relations

Press Releases

2nd April – Minister Michael Martin Announces €8.5million Technology Transfer Awards

2nd April – IUA Council Calls for Knowledge Foresight for the Humanities and Social Sciences

21st May – IUA Launch of the FP7 Marie Curie ‘People’ Programme

Featured Articles

April & May 07:

April 3rd **Irish Examiner** *€8.5m package to benefit industry and universities*

April 9th **Irish Times** *Provost Stresses Value of Social Sciences*

May 20th **Sunday Tribune** *Growth through technology – bringing third level research to market*

6.3. International Affairs

6.3.1. Distribution of IUA International Brochure

The international and 4th level brochures were sent to Mexico for the Euro Posgrads Fair at the end of March and to the Irish Embassy in Russia for a postgraduate student fair in May. All IUA brochures are available on-line on the IUA website for download.

6.4. Events

As well as IUA organised events, members of IUA staff will also partake in a number of external events throughout 2007.

6.4.1. IUA National Launch of Marie Curie ‘People’ Programme in FP7 Crowne Plaza Hotel, Santry, May 21st 2007

An IUA organised event to mark the launch of the Marie Curie Programme for FP7. Funding for this launch was made available through Enterprise Ireland and we had 180 registered delegates – the highest figure to date. Speakers were drawn from across the university sector and our special keynote was delivered by Dr Begoña Arano, Acting head of the Marie Curie Programme at the European Commission. All presentations from this event are available for download from the IUA website.

6.4.2. *Minister Micheál Martin announces €8.5 million of TT Funding UCC, April 2nd 2007*

The IUA in conjunction with Enterprise Ireland facilitated the announcement of €8.5million of funding for new Technology Transfer Officers by Minister Micheál Martin. The announcement was made in the Glucksman Gallery as an additional activity of the IUA Plenary. The event was attended by the Provost and Presidents, senior university staff, industry associates, IUA and Enterprise Ireland staff and local media.

6.5. Publications

6.5.1. *Marie Curie Success Brochure*

The ‘*Marie Curie Success for Ireland*’ brochure looking back over the last five years of funding successes achieved is near completion and will be launch at a European Commission event in Brussels on June 12th. The aim of this brochure is to encourage participation in FP7.

6.5.2 *FP7 People Programme - Marie Curie Actions*

To outline and explain the various Marie Curie funding programmes to potential applicants a new leaflet was produced and distributed at the IUA Launch of the FP7 Marie Curie People Programme on May 21st. This leaflet will be distributed to the research offices of the 7 universities and more widely to IT’s and Industry.

7. Quality Assurance

7.1. *IUQB Matters*

7.1.1 *IUQB Meetings*

A meeting of the IUQB Board took place on 21st May 2007. At that meeting, the Board approved the draft budget for 2007, including the request for increased staffing.

Grant Thornton produced the first set of draft accounts for IUQB in May 2007. The accounts were prepared for the period 26th February 2006 to 31st December 2006. The 2006 accounts were signed at the meeting.

The next meeting of the IUQB Board is scheduled for 24th September 2007.

7.1.2 *IUQB Budget 2007*

Following the request by the Board at its meeting on 23rd February 2007, the CEO prepared a fully-costed budget for 2007, for presentation to the Board meeting on 21st May 2007. This included an account of spending for the period January-April 2007.

As indicated in the IUQB submission to the April IUA Review, due to the increased compliance workload on the office post incorporation, increased management of the sectoral projects and commitments at international level, the proposal for the 2007 IUQB Budget contained a request for an increase in IUQB staff from 4 (3.8 WTE) to 7 (6.6 WTE) persons.

In April 2007, IUQB was informed that the HEA had allocated a sum of €70,000 to IUQB as part of the HEA 2007 Quality Assurance Programme. This money is in addition to the sum of €300,000 for allocated to IUQB by the HEA in February. This represents an increase from €258,000 in 2006.

Included in the budget was a proposal that the university subscriptions for 2007 would amount to €12,000, an increase from €18,500 in 2006. This will have to be approved by the subscribers at the Annual General Meeting.

7.1.3 *Annual General Meeting 2007*

The first Annual General Meeting of members of the Company will take place in University College Dublin on 18th June 2007. The meeting will consider the Report of the Board of Directors and the Financial Statements for IUQB for 2006.

The meeting will be requested to approve the increase in subscriptions from members for 2007, as provided for in the 2007 Budget.

7.1.4 *External Review of IUQB commissioned by the HEA*

In December 2006, the HEA agreed to the request to commission a quality review of IUQB in 2007, so that IUQB can fulfil the requirements as an external quality assurance agency under Part 3 of the *European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* (the Bergen standards).

The HEA distributed draft terms of reference for the review to stakeholders for consultation in May 2007. The terms of reference for the review were considered by the Authority at its meeting on 23rd May 2007. The HEA indicated that they will also be in

contact with the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) in relation to the review.

7.1.5 Sectoral Project Activities

The project organising group for *Quality Improvement in Teaching and Learning* includes Jacqueline Potter and Ciara O'Farrell (both TCD), Iain McClaren (NUIG), Aine Hyland (ex-UCC), Bettie Higgs (UCC) and the IUQB Programme Manager. The group met on the 16th April and again on the 17th May. Draft chapters for the Interim report and the Booklet of Good Practice were presented and reviewed at each meeting. Chapters include: *Research led learning and teaching as a form of scholarship*; *International context and developments* (including the influence of Bologna); *National context* (including frameworks, funding initiatives etc); *Irish university context* (strategic planning, modularisation, semesterisation); *Teaching and learning issues* (as identified in EUA and academic unit reviews and university student and staff workshops); *Support for teaching and learning*; *Organisation and structures* (Deans, Vice-Presidents, Registrars, support units); *Academic supports* (e.g. recruitment, induction, certification, CPD portfolios, pedagogic support); *Improving the student experience by supporting teaching and learning* (student supports, tutorials, career development, generic skills; supports for 'problem' students); *Quality assurance* (feedback, evaluations-both unit and university level, accreditation, programmatic reviews, external examiners, student involvement, performance management, portfolios, strategic planning); *Inter-institutional collaboration and co-ordination*; and *Policy development* (national).

The interim report and a preliminary draft of the booklet will be presented at a national conference to be held on the 9/10th November 2007 in UCC.

The project organising group for *Institutional Research* comprises of several of the Institutional Research Officers in place in the universities including Aoife Flanagan (NUIG), Maura McGinn (UCD) and Joan Mullen (NUIM). The other members of the group are Jim Gosling (NUIG), Noel O Connor (DIT) and the IUQB Programme Manager. Meetings of the project management group for the Institutional Research project took place on the 23rd March and 11th May 2007. Members are drafting the chapters for the Interim report and a preliminary draft of the booklet. Chapters include: *National and international context*; *Structures and governance* (including institutional organisational); *Data resources systems currently in use*; *Data sources* (Internal and external, -national and international); *From data to information* (Analysis of the current national systems and comparison to the international stage); *Roles for IR* (in-management, research, learning and teaching, administration, performance, quality, planning); *Ensuring data processes and information quality, Resources; Policy developments and implications*.

The Interim report and a draft of the booklet will be presented at a national conference to be held on the 12/13th October in NUI Galway. This conference also serves as the 5th Annual IUQB Conference.

The project organising group for *Mathematics, Teaching and Learning* comprises of Ann O'Shea (NUIM), David Wraith (NUIM), Niall Madden (NUIG), Don McQuillan, and the IUQB Programme Manager. A meeting of the project management group took place on the 13th March 2007 at which the statistical data collected from six of the seven Irish universities together with other documentation, information and reports received were reviewed and chapters for the booklet were devised. Analysis of the data is underway and is being used to inform the booklet. The chapters being written focus on: the *Organisation of mathematics education in Ireland* (Key players, trends and issues arising from data collection exercise, policy formation, funding models); *Professionalisation of teaching and learning in Mathematics* (CPD at 2nd and 3rd level, educational research, recognition for teaching and support in mathematics); *Student focus* (nature of change in the cohort, education and the curriculum at 2nd level, the transition from second to third level, 'service' teaching); *Teaching and learning at university* (Teaching and learning styles, tutorials, student feedback, assessment, resources); *Quality assurance* (feedback, assessment, student involvement, programmatic reviews, unit reviews). Key national stakeholders will be consulted on the draft booklet and the input will be used to inform the final publication.

The organising group for *Strategic Planning in Academic Department* includes the IUQB programme Manager working with John Davies (UK) an expert in Strategic planning who was invited to draft the booklet of good practice together with Norma Ryan (UCC) and Tony Carey (UCD) who will work as part of the group in an editorial and redrafting capacity as chapters are received. The final editorial work for the booklet will rest with the Irish team. A detailed overview of the chapters for the booklet has being received from John Davies. All chapters draw on evidence and experiences derived from the project. Chapters include: *Why departments need strategic plans* (national influences-EUA reviews, OECD report, departmental reviews; national development and funding policies; internal influences- university plans, funding, HR); *Nature and content of departmental strategic plans* (analysis of the local models and approaches used); *Interface between departmental and university plans and planning* (with reference to the linkage of dept and university plans, mechanisms of engagement and supports provided); *Processes for developing the plan at departmental level* (to include working with the departmental culture and the university mission, synchronisation of processes); *Managing the implementation of departmental strategic plans* (at departmental level, at university level); *Critical elements in the success or otherwise of departmental strategic planning* (emerging key elements at departmental and university level which appear to be pre-conditions for success of both the development and of the implementation of plans). The first two chapters are to be completed by June 9th, with three more by the end of July and the final part to be completed by the end of August. Feedback from the departments involved, the university project leaders and senior management will be sought as to the outcome and the implementation of the strategic plans developed. The feedback obtained will be incorporated into the booklet.

7.1.6 *IUQB Internationally*

The CEO has been appointed to the QAA Scotland Committee, as its first international member. He attended his first meeting of the body on 23rd May 2007.

The CEO, as a member of the pool of evaluators for the EUA Institutional Evaluation Programme, acted as secretary of the team that made the preliminary visit to one of the universities participating in the system review of higher education institutions in Slovakia.

IUQB hosted a visit from senior staff of the University of Applied Sciences at Satakunta in Finland on 15th May 2007.

The CEO acted as a facilitator at one of the sessions of the ENQA Workshops on Quality Assurance and Qualifications Frameworks held in Dublin on 7-8th June 2007. The meeting was organised in cooperation with HETAC.

7.1.7 *IUQB Publications*

The 2nd issue of *IUQB News* was published in May 2007. Over 7,000 copies were circulated to the universities and other stakeholders throughout Ireland and internationally.

A draft of the second edition of *A Framework for Quality in Irish Universities* (first published by CHIU in 2003) was considered by the IUQB Board at its meeting on 21st May 2007. The document will be a joint IUA/IUQB publication. The document will be considered by the IUA Quality Committee at its meeting on 18th June 2007 and will be published in the summer.

8. Copyright

In 2004 the joint IUA/CODIT working group on copyright agreed the terms of a licence for copyright with ICLA. The cost of the licence, which was to include substantial digital copying, was agreed at €3.90 per student per annum, increasing in stages to €6.00 per student per annum. Difficulties were encountered in relation to the extension of digital

copying licences to UK publications and such difficulties remain. The agreement provided for a review of the licence fee before 2006/07.

ICLA have recently issued renewal invoices for 2006/07 at €4.50 per student per annum (the next point on the fee scale agreed in 2004) on the basis of an extension of the scope of the licence to include artistic works (through an agreement with the Irish Visual Rights Organisation). The working group has recommended that institutions accept the revised licence fee in respect of 2006/07 and that all outstanding invoices should be settled.

There have also been difficulties with the data collection audits required to allow ICLA to distribute fee income to copyright holders and this is a key issue for the extension of digital copying to UK publications. The working group has been liaising with ICLA to try to agree a workable data collection system and will continue to represent the sector in this regard.

The IUA has also renewed its licence, on behalf of the seven universities, with Newspaper Licensing Ireland Ltd in April 2007. The licence provides for the reproduction of national, regional and UK newspapers and includes an extension for the electronic storage of material for 120 days.

9. European Issues

9.1. Bologna Process

The biannual ministerial conference in the Bologna Process took place in London on 17-18 May. The resulting communiqué highlighted progress across Europe in implementing the Bachelor/Master/Doctorate structures. Priorities for 2009 were set in the fields of student and staff mobility, the social dimension, (including improved data collection re both of these), employability of graduates, and internationalization. These priorities show a move away from the “nuts and bolts” approach of previous such communiqués and a return to longer-term strategic issues underpinning higher education reform across the continent.

9.2. EUA

The EUA’s Lisbon Declaration resulting from the EUA Convention of 30-31 March was presented to Ministers in London [*Appendix 9(a)*], along with the executive summary of the EUA Trends V report and the conclusions from the EUA report on doctoral programmes. These three documents can be found in a single publication at http://www.eua.be/fileadmin/user_upload/files/Publications/EUA_Bologna_ministerial_meeting.pdf

Based on a large-scale research project to which most Irish higher education institutions contributed, the EUA Trends V report was published with the universities’ perspectives on implementation of the Bologna process and arising challenges. The full report can be found at -

http://www.eua.be/fileadmin/user_upload/files/Publications/Final_Trends_Report_May_10.pdf

10. IUA Matters

10.1. Annual General Meeting

The AGM of the IUA takes place on 18th June 2007 in UCD.

10.2. Change of Company Directors

Gerard Wrixon and John O'Connor resigned as directors of the IUA and were replaced by Michael Murphy and Don Barry.