

**C.H.I.U. Review [03/2] for C.H.I.U. Meetings
on 7th April, 2003 in NUI Maynooth**

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1. Research

1.1. ICSTI Commission

No announcements to date although it is believed that the report has been brought to Cabinet.

1.2. Research Overheads

- The report is due back from the printers the first week of April and will be published by HEA/Forfás.
- In order to aid progress in implementation of the recommendations of the report the plan is to map the current practice with respect to overheads in the universities.

1.3. University Posts and Work Permits

- Agreement has been reached with the Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment that all academic, research and senior university posts will be exempt from the current lengthy advertising process through FÁS. This will have a significant impact on speeding up the recruitment of academic and research staff as it will ensure that staff recruited from outside the European Union will obtain work permits in about 3 weeks.
- C.H.I.U. is pursuing the associated issue of visas and work permits (if desired) for the spouse and children of the academic/researcher.

1.4. HEA

1.4.1. PRTL I

Despite the Minister for Education and Science and other Ministers being made deeply aware of the detrimental effects of the pause in PRTL I Phase 3 funding on the country's future development, the pause is still in place. HEA is continuing to explore possibilities for sourcing funding.

1.4.2. North/South Research Programmes 2003

This was announced at the beginning of March with closing date on 11th April. The fund has two strands; Strand 1: North South Programme for Collaborative Research; Strand 2: Cross Border Programme for Research and Development contributing to Peace and Reconciliation. Information available on HEA website.

1.5. Science Foundation Ireland

1.5.1. Centres for Science Engineering and Technology 2002 (CSET2002)

Most of the site visits have been completed and the results will be announced following the next SFI Board meeting in April.

1.5.2. Centres for Science Engineering and Technology 2003 (CSET2003)

A new CSET call was launched with closing date on 17th February for Expressions of Interest. This resulted in 37 submissions and SFI held a consultative workshop on 12th March in the Royal Irish Academy. Only those who submitted an EOI can submit a full proposal, the closing date is 9th May, 2003.

1.6. Research Councils

1.6.1. IRCHSS

- It was agreed that 3 calls for IRCHSS Small Research Project Grants will be made in 2003. A budget of €180,000 will be allocated to this sub-head.
- The Council will offer 30 awards collectively through the following 2003/4 Schemes: Senior Research Scholarship, Research Fellowship, Senior Research Fellowship. Awards will be made on the basis of excellence across the Schemes.
- There will be 80 Government of Ireland Research Post-Graduate Scholarships for 2003/4.

1.6.2. IRCSET

- The Postgraduate Scholarship has been launched and the closing date is 14th April. It is expected that about 150 scholarships will be awarded. A novel feature is that applicants can apply online; this is the first time any agency has offered this facility.
- Following the call in 2002, 40 postdoctoral fellowships were awarded. Each grant is for €33,000 as a salary and a bench fee of €5,000.
- The results of the Basic Research Grants Scheme 2003 will be announced in mid-April

1.7. Enterprise Ireland

Intellectual Property/Technology Transfer/Commercialisation

The C.H.I.U. IP Group held its first meeting with EI on 6th February. Deans/VP Research Group met with Feargal Ó Móráin, EI. A subsequent meeting was held with the ILO Group and EI on 24th February. Both meetings were highly productive and it is clear that EI are committed to working in partnership with the universities. The first issue being focused on concerns patent funding. EI are keen to have a process in place that will make funds available for patents as it has a budget line for this activity. They are not looking for a simple solution but rather a variable model so as to meet the needs of the different institutions. A further meeting is planned for the end of March/early April and in the meantime EI will engage in bilateral discussions with the universities on this issue.

1.8. All Island Research Portal

Two companies are currently working to develop the research portal by June 2003. *InfoEd Europe*, who also work with universities North and South on building internal research information systems, are focusing on the data structure. The web portal is being developed by *j4b*, a UK company with much experience in this area. The Steering Group overseeing the development has agreed that the website will have the domain name **expertiserealand.com**.

1.9. EU Sixth Framework Programme

1.9.1. Marie Curie/Mobility Programme

As National Delegate and National Contact Point, Dr. O'Carroll has, over the past months, organised information sessions in all of the universities and RCSI. This culminated in a two-day North/South Event on 5/6 March with the participation of the UK and European Commission. The workshop was on "*How to Write Successful Marie Curie Proposals*" and attracted just under 300 participants. The event was located in RCSI with livelinks to Beaumont Hospital, University of Limerick and NUI-Galway. The office has answered over 200 email enquiries, 120 telephone contacts and reviewed over 25 proposals. This will help maximize the success of university proposals in this key part of FP6.

1.9.2. FP6 Cost Models and Contracts

Following many discussions and changes the EC has reverted to the FP5 Cost Models for FP6. The final versions of the Model Contracts are now available.

1.10. VAT on Research - Apportionment of Overheads for Recovery of VAT

Discussions between C.H.I.U. VAT advisors and the Revenue Commissioners on two key remaining issues are at an advanced stage: 1) methodology for apportionment of research overheads enabling recovery of VAT and 2) clarification of Revenue guidelines on the VAT status of ancillary activities. Once this has been obtained, each university would need to perform an assessment to ensure that all ancillary activities are correctly classified for VAT purposes and this could be a significant compliance task.

1.11. C.H.I.U. Research Office

The Research Officer, Ms Siobhan Harkin has been appointed and will take up her post on 7th April. She will provide support for the Research Office and for projects related to the analysis and formulation of university sector policies covering teaching as well as the research functions of the universities.

1.12. European Research Area/Irish Presidency 2004

1.12.1. Barcelona Target (3% GDP on R&D 2010)

The Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment (DETE) is coordinating national efforts in supporting the ERA. The specific objective of achieving 3% GDP investment in R&D by 2010 is being tackled by an Inter-Departmental Committee chaired by R. Long (DETE) consisting of senior representatives from all relevant Government Departments including the Taoiseach's Office. Three working groups have been established who will report back to the IDC in September. The three areas for action are Framework Conditions (mobility, tax breaks for R&D etc.), Business Expenditure on R&D (BERD) and Government Expenditure on R&D (GOVERD/BERD). Dr. O'Carroll represents C.H.I.U. and has been asked to Chair the latter group.

1.12.2. Irish Presidency 2004

Ireland will have the Presidency of the EU for the first six months of 2004. C.H.I.U. is working with DETE to maximize university involvement in the Presidency. The issue has also been raised with DEA/HEA.

2. University Funding 2003

2.1 2003 Provisional Recurrent Grant Allocations

The universities were advised of their provisional recurrent grant allocations on 18th February 2003, totalling €343m across the sector. This represented a 2.6% increase on the *adjusted final* grant allocation for 2002 according to the HEA. The adjusted final 2002 grant included a reduction in funding of €12m representing ‘savings to the Exchequer’ which was substituted by the €250 per capita increase in the 2002/03 student charge. It was flagged in the C.H.I.U. Review of 27th January that the State funding base has been permanently reduced as a result.

Following analysis and assessment of the provisional 2003 allocations, each university has had to adopt a programme of temporary cutbacks in a range of areas, particularly in relation to staff recruitment and replacement as well as across-the-line cuts in non-pay budgets. On this basis, it is considered that the universities will be able to manage financially in 2003 but not without creating serious difficulties. University managements are in the process of finalising budgets for 2003. The focus is now moving to 2004 as the HEA has signalled that further cuts might be expected. The current cut-back measures, which are only sustainable in the short-term, if they were to be compounded by further reductions in State funding in 2004 would impact fundamentally on academic programmes, student and staff services and universities facilities/infrastructure.

Following discussions between C.H.I.U. Council and UCFOG on 27th January, the UCFOG Subgroup on Funding met to consider the above on 3rd February.

The HEA stated in their letter of 18th February that ‘*Costs arising from pay increases awarded by the Benchmarking Body, MLT award and Protection of Employees (Part-Time Work) Act 2001 are not included in the allocation. A separate allocation will be made at a later stage in respect of these*’. While confirmation of the separate allocation has been welcomed, there is concern that the HEA has been unable to clarify that the allocation will cover 100% of the related costs.

2.2 Tuition Fees

It is intended to develop a sectoral position on the fees issue in the broader context of overall funding. On 27th March speaking at the USI Congress, the Minister for Education and Science stated that a decision on the reintroduction of tuition fees would be made by Easter following the report of the review group on third-level education.

The estimated sectoral recurrent funding requirements for 2004 are in the process of preparation for consideration. The HEA has stated that ‘*it seems likely that the allocations for 2004 will be subject to the same rigour and restrictions*’ (as 2003). On this basis, the only room for manoeuvre in order to address the funding gap is in the area of tuition fees.

2.3 ESF – Aided Third Level Access Measure

Correspondence was received from the HEA on 6th February advising of concerns held by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment following verification procedures carried out at two universities. These are being considered by UCFOG.

2.4 Nursing Degree Programme – Funding for Claims

Recurrent Funding: Following further discussions with and correspondence to the Department of Health and Children setting out the implications of non-receipt of funding, four of the six universities providing the nursing programme have finally received funds.

However to date, two universities have received no recurrent funding allocations at all despite continuous representations to the regional health boards and the Department by the universities/C.H.I.U. Currently, €1.5m is outstanding. The Chair of the C.H.I.U. Taskforce on Nursing met with the Principal Officer of the Nursing Policy Division on 25th March seeking to address the outstanding payments and to discuss a revised payment process for future allocations. The Nursing Policy Division accepted the need for a revised payment structure and is seeking approval internally to make recurrent payments directly to the universities. An actuarial review to ascertain the cost of pension entitlements for staff transferring to universities will commence shortly.

Capital Funding: It appears as though capital funding requests are being approved and paid expeditiously by the Department of Health and Children.

2.5 Capital Funding 2003

The HEA has been holding meetings with individual universities to prioritise capital projects impacted by the announcement in November 2002 that funding would only be allocated for projects / purchases which were the subject of contract on 14th November 2002. The process provided for the list of prioritised projects to be considered for funding by DES. The C.H.I.U. Working Group on capital funding has met and is seeking clarification from HEA/DES on a proposed HEA audit of all capital facilities.

Backlog maintenance grant: The universities had been advised that this grant would not be provided for 2003. It is hoped that following finalisation of individual university budgets, it might be possible to prepare a C.H.I.U. submission to the HEA setting out the impact of this decision.

2.6 Section 50 Schemes– Changes in the 2003 Finance Act

The Finance Act has brought forward the expiry date for Section 50 to 31st December 2004. C.H.I.U. received preliminary advice that the Department of Finance might consider a proposal for transitional arrangements to cover projects in progress at the end date. This approach has been endorsed by UCFOG and a submission is to be prepared. A negative interpretation of changes in the Finance Act by the Revenue Commissioners is causing serious problems for university projects and is being appealed to the Minister for Finance.

3. HEA Issues

3.1 Harmonisation of Financial Statements

PWC issued a draft Consolidated Reporting Template for the University Sector on 17th February. The detailed format and accounting policies included were subsequently considered at meetings of the C.H.I.U. Working Group, UCFOG and the Financial Accountants' Group. A second draft of the report is currently being prepared following this consultation process and it will be submitted shortly to the HEA and C&AG. Consultation has also taken place between individual universities and their respective auditors to consider the operational and reporting impact of the changes in 2003 as the year of implementation. The report will highlight transitional issues for 2003.

3.2 Definition of an EU student

A C.H.I.U. Working Group has been established to devise a common definition of an EU student for fee purposes, together with guidelines for implementation. The Group is composed of representatives from the Admissions Officers and Fees Officers and is

chaired by Mr. J. McGinnity, Assistant Registrar, NUIM. Considerable progress has been made to date in developing a definition which would address the broad range of cases presented to universities annually and facilitate a sectoral assessment of their status. Once the draft is completed, the consultation process will begin with the relevant C.H.I.U. groups, then legal advice will be obtained and a submission will be made to the HEA. It is hoped that a final definition will be ready for presentation to C.H.I.U. in June for implementation from September 2003.

3.3. *Ethics in Public Office Acts, 1995 and 2001*

The HEA has written to University Heads advising them of a Department of Finance request to other Departments and Officers to consider and identify positions of employment and directorships which may be appropriate for prescription under the above Acts. The HEA has sought observations on proposals in relation to prescribed posts and the reporting and notification requirements. The proposals will be considered at the C.H.I.U. meetings on 7th April, 2003.

3.4. *HEA Review of Universities' Statements on Equality*

The HEA announced the membership of the Review Group on 27th February, 2003 as Mr. Maurice O'Connell, Chair; Dr. Maureen Gaffney, Mr. Tony Crooks, Professor Ossi Lindquist, Ms. Laura Handy. The HEA issued a press release which outlined the purpose of the review and C.H.I.U. issued a response to the announcement. The review is currently underway.

3.5. *Completion / Retention*

Representatives of the Registrars' Group discussed their concerns with proposals for a follow-up Student Satisfaction Survey with HEA officers. The HEA has circulated a revised questionnaire and the researcher is contacting each of the universities in relation to the conduct of the survey. In response to strong reservations raised about information to be given to students asked to complete the survey, and the need to observe the principle of "informed consent", the HEA has accepted that a "follow-up" of students would not be included in the survey.

3.6. *Discipline Balance*

C.H.I.U. submitted a response prepared by the Registrars' Group on Discipline Balance to the HEA on 12th February, 2003. The HEA convened a second consultative meeting on 28th February, 2003 to discuss further the issues arising from the study on discipline balance and to review the submissions made by the interested parties. C.H.I.U. was represented at the meeting by Dr. W.J. Smyth, NUIM; Dr. D. Redmond, NUIM; Dr. S. Greene, TCD; Dr. C. Hussey, UCD; Professor A Moran, UCC; Dr. M. Kavanagh, NUIG; Dr. B. McMullen, DCU; Dr. J. O'Brien, UL; Mr. F. Costello, HEA, made a presentation of a review of submissions received. Dr. Aims McGuinness, Jr, NCHEMS, made a presentation on State Policy and Higher Education in the US. HEA has circulated copies of his presentation to meeting participants. There was a general consensus from the reports of the workshops that there was a need for a comprehensive higher education policy and that discipline balance was but one element of such a policy. It is understood that Dr. O'Hare and HEA staff involved in the study have visited Finland and the Netherlands and are due to visit the US.

3.7. *Working Group on Undergraduate Medical Education*

Arising from discussions between the Department of Health and Children, DES and the HEA held in response to issues raised in the Medical Council's "Review of Medical

Schools in Ireland, 2001”, [copy available on www.medicalcouncil.ie/reviewmedsch.htm] a joint approach to addressing issues of mutual concern has been proposed. This approach would include –

- (a) A Working Group on undergraduate MET, with an independent chair, involving the Department, HEA, Deans and other management, regulatory and public interest stakeholders to look at short and medium term issues associated with curriculum development and delivery method in terms of duration, form, etc.
- (b) A liaison group of officials from the two Departments to discuss issues of mutual interest,
- (c) The project group of the National Taskforce on Medical Staffing that is looking at undergraduate medical manpower requirements and issues related to the intern year, to continue its work and feed recommendations into the two groups above.

The Working Group would be required to examine and make recommendations relating to the organisation and delivery of undergraduate medical education and training in Ireland, and have regard *inter alia* to the Programme for Government.

While the background Medical Council report concerns the education and training of doctors, it is clear that for the universities the issues raised cannot be considered in isolation from the linkages and inter-relationships with staff and students across the wide range of courses and subjects. The Review Report raises resourcing and staffing issues which are the responsibility of the universities not the medical schools. This primary responsibility of the university is not reflected in the composition of the Working Group.

As regards the reference to the Programme for Government, while there is no specific mention of medical education/training in the Health Sector of the programme, there is the following provision under the Education Section –

“we will support ...the move towards a common science degree as the principal means of entry into medical, veterinary and other related degree courses”.

It is questionable that the Working Group, as proposed, would be an appropriate body to examine all the aspects of this proposal which could also have implications for universities without medical schools. One “university management nominee” is being sought from C.H.I.U. Five Medical School Deans will have places. One representative each from university Departments of Public Health and General Practice is proposed on the Group and C.H.I.U. is welcome to offer views on these two nominations.

In response to a C.H.I.U. request to universities for views on the proposal for a working group, DCU stated that it would be important that the three universities without Medical Schools be represented by the Deans of Science.

4. Strategy / Enrolments

4.1. Overall Policy Context

Since the last C.H.I.U. Review there have been a number of significant speeches and papers which address higher education policy issues relevant to the formulation of a future strategy for the university sector. They are summarised briefly in the following paragraphs:-

4.1.1. Role of the Universities in the Europe of Knowledge

Communication of the European Communities [Com(2003) 58; 05.02.2003]. Some of the main points in the Communication are as follows:

- i. Europe needs excellence in its universities, to optimise the processes which underpin the knowledge society and meet the target, set out by the European Council in Lisbon, of becoming the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion.
- ii. The Communication notes a number of areas within which reflection, and often also action, is needed, and raises a series of questions such as:
 - how to achieve adequate and sustainable incomes for universities, and to ensure that funds are spent most efficiently;
 - how to ensure autonomy and professionalism in academic as well as managerial affairs;
 - how to concentrate enough resources on excellence, and create the conditions within which universities can attain and develop excellence;
 - how to make universities contribute better to local and regional needs and strategies;
 - How to establish closer co-operation between universities and enterprises to ensure better dissemination and exploitation of new knowledge in the economy and society at large
 - how to foster, through all of these areas, the coherent, compatible and competitive European higher education area called for by the Bologna Declaration, as well as the European Research Area set out as an objective for the Union by the Lisbon European Council, in March 2000.
- iii. This Communication, which has been prepared in the context of the 2003 Spring European Council, invites responses to these questions from all those concerned with higher education, research and innovation.
- iv. European universities generally have less to offer and lower financial resources than their equivalents in the other developed countries, particularly the USA.
- v. European universities as such have not recently been the focus of reflection and debate at European Union level. The Commission seeks to contribute to such a debate, and this Communication accordingly examines the place and role of European universities in society and in the knowledge economy (Section 3), offers some ideas on universities in a European perspective (Section 4) and sets out the main challenges facing the European universities, along with some issues for consideration (Section 5).

4.1.2. Address to the RIA by the Tánaiste – “Towards a Civic Science: A Mission for the 21st Century”

In her address to the RIA, the Tánaiste set out her views on various topics including Ireland as a contributor to scientific advances, embedding science in the culture of the country, government investment in science and research and the role of higher education institutions. Views states include:-

“... higher education is probably the most important place for building the scientific infrastructure...”

“...the continued success of this R&D depends upon the abilities and ideas that students form while in third level and advanced courses...”

“... Institutions of higher education should also explore how to build on their own academic research clusters with industry ...”

4.1.3. *Speeches by Minister Dempsey to an OECD Conference in Dublin [7/3/03] and at the Institute of Technology, Athlone [10/3/03]*

In his speech to the OECD the Minister expressed the views on quality and access including:-

“... Credibility, tolerance, appreciation of diversity and social skills also form part of education in the knowledge society. An education system which does not take due account of this cannot be of high quality ...”

“... in the area of tackling disadvantage, we have much more to do. And it may not be a question of additional investment. I hold the view, that in what are laudable efforts to tackle educational disadvantage, we have created bodies which overlap and duplicate their activities...”

In his Athlone speech Minister Dempsey included the following comments on international students and quality:-

“... the Irish education system is held in very high esteem and we need to accelerate progress in accessing the overseas market ... Some of our third level institutions are already well tapped into the foreign education market but, overall, the experience seems to me to be patchy and disjointed. Over the next few months, I will formulate a strategy which I hope will benefit the third level sector here in developing an international focus...In my view, the strategy needs to have an Irish brand and quality mark attached to it that will be recognised and accepted internationally...”

“... On the issue of quality, I must admit that I have a concern that insufficient attention is being paid to the quality of teaching at third level. It seems to me that there are too many instances where lecturers are standing in front of a class without ever having shown an aptitude for teaching. It’s an issue that requires attention and, much more than that, it requires action”.

4.1.4. *IDA CEO Address to Columcille Winter School*

In his address, Mr. Seán Dorgan reviews the contribution of education to Ireland’s economic success and cultural development. He develops the theme of the **“connectedness of education”** and argues that **“national competitiveness in the advanced countries will be based not on costs but on knowledge, innovation, feasibility and connectedness – how everything works together”**. He considers that these are not the characteristics of our educational system to the degree necessary in the emerging economic conditions. He suggests **“that it may be timely to conduct a forward-looking review of our education policies”** and sets out the IDA **“description of our desired third level sector”** as follows:-

“The third level educational sector of the future should be characterized by:

- an agility and responsiveness which links the best of academic enquiry and excellence to evolving national aspirations,*
- leading national development through sources of new learning of international significance,*
- centrality to the national ethos of creativity and innovation through links to businesses which are globally competitive,*
- closeness to community needs for lifelong and more advanced education.*

Such a relevant and engaged sector would be a real national asset”.

4.1.5. *Taoiseach's Address to Ogra Fianna Fáil, 3 March, 2003*

The Taoiseach devoted a large part of his address to Third Level education. In discussing the issues of access/participation, fees and funding, the Taoiseach sets the need for review of higher education in an international context and broadens the review agenda to include quality. Notably he states – “we set as a national strategic objective that Ireland would be in the top rank of the OECD for qualifications in terms of both quality and of participation” and he offers the following views on the quality and future of higher education -

“Quality at Third Level is expensive and the current system seems to have a number of drawbacks. It has no way of rewarding programmes that provide outstanding quality and it is very inflexible. The Minister for Education and Science is now looking at all these issues. He is looking at them with an open mind. He also wants to make sure that core funding for all is sufficient to support high standards – but he knows that we have to seriously look at new ways of providing funds for colleges. This is fundamental to securing the future of Third Level education”.

“Those who are against any changes and are opposed to even looking at alternatives have failed to make any serious contribution to the debate on the future of our Third Level education system”.

4.1.6. *Address by Chairman, HEA to IBEC – “Education and the Economy: What can Business do?”*, 14 March, 2003

Dr. Don Thornhill, in his address, responded to a number of points made by Seán Dorgan in his speech [4.1.4. above]. He agreed with the strong emphasis placed on the importance, relevance and connectedness of the education system with the economic system. He stressed that the primary mission of educators was to facilitate the personal growth and development of their students and suggested areas for practical co-operation between business and education. On the need for **investment in higher education and research** as a contribution to economic development he states:-

“We can sustain growing incomes and economic growth through productivity growth based on advanced education and training and research and development.”

“We can only develop a world-class innovation structure at the leading edge of innovation by investing much more heavily than we do at present in research and development”

“We have a lot of ground to make up. We spend about 1.2% of our GDP on research. The EU average is 50% higher and the average in the OECD is 80% higher”

“Both government and business have a lot to do – and in particular to meet the target of 3% of GDP set by the EU for 2010”.

“Our universities and institutes of technology have the potential to become incubators of the future waves of new businesses. But to do this we need to invest much more heavily and systematically in technology transfer and commercialisation.”

In regard to the **future structure of the higher education system** he gave the following views –

“It is my strong belief that differentiation has to continue to be an essential and vital part of the system in order to address the multiple economic and social needs and the requirements of students”.

“There is also a concern with nomenclature and titles and a perception that there is not parity of esteem between the two sectors of higher education. We have to continue to work on those problems”.

“We need diversity in our system. It would be a great pity if all our universities and institutes of technology operated to a uniform model. There is a wide range of student, economic and social needs”.

“It would be damaging if we were to attempt to distribute basic research activity and basic research funding in some even handed way across the 25 or more third level institutions which we now have in the country. Our research investments in the future must be based on the most rigorous assessments of quality and strategic capacity”.

“Through alliances with research- intensive institutions, through engagement in applied research and through secondment and transfer opportunities, researchers in all institutions can play a part in the developing research agenda”.

On the issue of a **review of education policies**, he is opposed to a root and branch examination but considers that *“it would be useful and timely to take stock and critically examine at a strategic level, and with an eye to the future, the effectiveness of the linkages between education policies and other public policies – including public policies for economic development, for health, environment, social welfare and justice”.*

4.1.7. Presentation by DES Principal Officer on Challenges facing Higher Education in Ireland

Mr. Kevin McCarthy, Principal Officer, Higher Education Section, DES, made a presentation recently to a visiting Mexican delegation. He gave an overview on challenges facing higher education covering broad context, policy objectives and influences/pressures.

4.2. Strategic Planning Process

Papers have been prepared on New Forms of Learning – Coherent Higher Education Sector and University Funding and have been submitted to C.H.I.U. Council for consideration.

C.H.I.U. submitted a proposal prepared by the New Forms of Learning Group to the HEA in response to a HEA invitation for expressions of interest for the provision of a service to enhance the Irish higher and further education and training sectors through the application of technology. This submission proposes the formation of an eLearning agency which would provide a national eLearning service in support of the Higher Education, Further Education and Training Sectors. It would assist all these sectors in improving quality and increasing access while demonstrating efficiencies in cost per learner. The agency would be established with the support of the seven universities in Ireland, Dublin Institute of Technology, Sligo Institute of Technology and Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology. Within a relatively short time, the managed eLearning service would be

rolled out to all third level institutions and training agencies. The Council of Directors of Institutes of Technology have sent a letter in support of the proposal to the HEA.

4.3. *Modernisation of the Higher Education Sector*

“Sustaining Progress: Social Partnership Agreement 2003-2005” includes provisions for the modernization of the public services including the education sector. The following are the provisions relating to universities –

“All staff employed in the HEA sector agree to ongoing co-operation with, and adoption of, new and more flexible work patterns arising from the broadening of roles and responsibilities of third level educational institutions and the challenges facing them from the ever more diverse student base. It is accepted that the change agenda will include measures arising from the implementation of:

- institutional planning and strategic development;*
- specific initiatives arising from Quality Assurance and the developing ethos of continuous quality improvement and service delivery;*
- changing structures and reporting relationships arising from new research institutes and other organisational developments; and*
- performance development and management to ensure alignment of performance and effort with organisational goals and strategies.*

These changes will be implemented through local consultation and discussion”.

The section relating to institutes of technology is much more extensive, presumably reflective of the 11% benchmarking award to their staff compared to the 3% for university staff. However, the more extensive modernization agenda for the institutes is indicative of the types of reform that government would wish to see also in universities. It includes a structured system of performance development and management, flexible modes of course delivery, formal student surveys by each lecturer as part of QA, detailed examination results review and appeals arrangements, adequate and regular supervision of postgraduate students, and co-operation of administration staff with modularisation/semesterisation.

4.4. *Access*

The position of Head of the National Access office was advertised and the recruitment process is nearing completion. Both DES and the HEA made presentations to the Oireachtas Committee on Education and Science.

In early February 2003 the HEA informed universities of increased allocations under the Student Assistance Fund 2002 and of revised guidelines for the operation of the Fund. The lateness of the notification and the changed guidelines have caused serious problems for universities and a C.H.I.U. response based on views received from universities was sent to the HEA. DES is considering the universities’ views and further information requested in relation to Foundation courses has been sent to the HEA/DES. Other process issues raised by the HEA are being considered by UCFOG.

4.5. *International Students*

OECD issued an overview of trade in international education. It reports on current trends and issues such as GATS negotiations and quality assurance and accreditation mechanisms.

Representatives of the Universities met with Lindy Hyam, CEO, IDP Education Australia, on 5th February, 2003. Her presentation to the Group was followed by a lively and interesting discussion. Ms. Hyam has proposed that IDP would undertake a research project for C.H.I.U. The proposal is that C.H.I.U. would sponsor the development and analysis of forecasts of the global demand for higher education in Ireland to 2025 and would involve – analysis of Ireland’s International programme, Strategic Scenario Development, Development of Projections, Final Report and Industry Seminars. The proposal cost is €68,000 which would not include primary research on student statistics or costs of organising industry seminars.

Ms. Hyam has received the support of IDP to work with C.H.I.U. or Irish Universities to provide services that do not compete directly with Australian interests. She is preparing a further document for C.H.I.U.’s consideration.

Atlantic Bridge, a US Corporation which represents four Irish Medical Schools in recruiting students in the US has submitted a proposal to C.H.I.U. The proposal is that Atlantic Bridge promote and market Irish universities in North America to attract and enable students to undertake studies in Ireland. The proposal is being circulated to the universities for consideration.

5. NQAI

5.1. National Framework of Qualifications

The C.H.I.U. Director wrote to the NQAI on 4th February, 2003 laying out in general terms the views of the Registrars’ Group on award types and a further email response was sent on 27th January, 2003. The NQAI has just circulated a document entitled “*Titles of Initial Major Awards – Types – Further Input into Discussion*”. The NQAI is holding a workshop on 2nd May, 2003 on the inclusion of international awards in the national framework of qualifications. This follows the publication of a discussion document and a submissions’ process. Copies of the Discussion Document and 30 submissions received are available on www.nqai.ie. The Registrars meet with the Chief Executive of the Authority on 1st April to discuss –

- Titles
- Implementation of the Framework
- Implementation of the Authority’s policy on Access, Transfer and Progression
- Authority’s role as an Irish NARIC

5.2. NARIC / ENIC

The NQAI has been appointed as the National Academic Recognition Information Centre [NARIC] with effect from 1st February, 2003. It has also become the national centre for the European Network of Information Centres [ENIC] and is acting as the National Reference Point [NRP] for providing information on national vocational qualifications. NQAI has sought the views of the university sector on possible approaches that the Authority might take in performing the NARIC, ENIC and NRP functions.

6. Quality Assurance

6.1. IUQB

The IUQB was formally launched at the inaugural conference on “Quality Assurance in Irish Universities” which was held in University College Cork on 7/8 February, 2003.

The speakers from abroad expressed their appreciation of the excellent way in which the conference was organised and were particularly impressed by the informed level of audience participation. The document “*A Framework for Quality in Irish Universities: Meeting the Challenge of Change*” was also launched at the conference. The IUQB website is online at www.iuqb.ie.

6.2. IUQB Sectoral Programme

The universities have decided to use the HEA allocation of €105,000 for the sectoral programme on the following three projects:

- Best Practice in PhD Programmes
- Best Practice in the Provision of Student Services
- Best Practice in the Teaching and Learning of Mathematics at Third Level

The projects are based on the recommendations contained in Peer Review Group Reports since reviews started in 1995, as well as on the expertise of a wide variety of university staff in these important areas. The Quality Officers of the seven universities have drawn up detailed plans for each project and progress has been made as follows:-

PhD Project: Basic facts are being collected and contact has been made with many important players to explain the goals of the project. These include The Deans/Vice Presidents of research and the Deans of Postgraduate Studies where these exist. The Executive Directors of IRCSET and IRCHSS are keenly interested and have offered financial support. Professor J. Gosling and Dr P. Walsh, Quality Officers in NUIG and DCU respectively, are organising this work.

Student Services Project: The organisation of this project is well advanced due to the prior involvement of the UCD Quality Office in the EUA Quality Culture Project in Student Services. Procedures used in that project are being adapted to the local situation with the work being organised by Professor A. Harrison and Ms. S. Magennis, Quality Officers in UCD and NUIM respectively.

Mathematics Project: Mathematicians, representatives of the university Centres for Teaching and Learning, and representatives of faculties that receive mathematics teaching will work together to advance this project. Many mathematics departments in Ireland have already developed and applied new methods for involving students in their own learning so this project already has a head start. Dr N. Ryan and Dr A. Thomas, Quality Officers in UCC and UL respectively, are organising the work, assisted by Professor D. McQuillan.

6.3. HEA Review of QA/QI Procedures

No review team has yet been appointed, and the projected date is the end of the year.

6.4. QA International

As part of overall strategy in maintaining IUQB influence through involvement in QA at international level, Professor D. McQuillan will join an EUA Team in a review of a Spanish university and a US team (organised by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges) in a review of a Swiss business school, both in the Autumn.

The EUA has formulated a new draft statement on Quality. This is in preparation for the Graz convention, organised to provide an input into the Berlin meeting of ministers which

will advance the Bologna Process. The statement sets down principles for promoting a European dimension for QA, and is very close to the Irish model.

7. International

7.1. *Higher Education Developments in European Countries*

The EUA has circulated short reports on recent development in higher education in a number of European countries. The burning issues reported include university reform, university legislation, graduate unemployment, composition of university councils, university funding, university fees, access, doctoral training programmes, university autonomy, quality assurance, admissions, curricula reform.

Emerging trends identified cover GDP targets for research investment, increased and diversified university funding, integration of ICT into teaching/learning, university industry co-operation.

National developments in the Bologna Process include statutory requirements for diploma supplements, establishment of joint degrees, move to career-integrated studies and increased modularisation, adoption of ECTS, establishment of national steering committees, reports/conferences/seminars on degree structures, Tuning projects, etc.

7.2. *EUA Council Meeting, Bristol, 27th March, 2003.*

The 7th EUA Council meeting held in Bristol on 27th March, 2003 was attended by Professor D. McQuillan. Among the topics discussed were - preparation for the Graz Convention and European Commission communication “The Role of the Universities in the Europe of Knowledge”. In regard to the Commission document, the EUA had issued a statement to the European Convention on “The Role of Universities in Shaping the Future of Europe”. The Council was followed by the 2nd Annual Assembly.

The Annual Report prepared for the Assembly reported on EUA activities for 2002 including the following developments –

- EUAs contribution to the development of the European Higher Education Area and the European Research Area,
- ECTS/Diploma Supplement,
- Joint Masters Pilot Project

7.2.1. *EUA Conference*

The EUA Conference entitled “The Role of the Universities in the European Research Area (ERA)” was held in Bristol on 28th-29th March, 2003 in conjunction with the EUA Council and Assembly meetings. Issues addressed at the conference include the geographical concentration of excellence; the true cost of university research; the place of small universities in a world of networks and centres of excellence; division of research capacity; and the structure of research in the social sciences and the humanities. Other issues examined were the links between research and research training, between demands from society and from private enterprise, and the role universities can play in relations between science and society and questions such as whether universities should specialise more in teaching or research and whether there are possible divergences between teaching and research priorities; also the research at BA and MA levels, the links between the two levels and the impact on research; and the optimal duration and structure of PhD studies.

7.3. *EU Developments*

Erasmus World Programme – The proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a programme for the enhancement of quality in higher education and the promotion of inter-cultural understanding through co-operation with third countries (Erasmus World) has been under consideration by the Education Committee. Several countries have maintained a general reservation on the text and indicated that internal consultations were still on course. Specific reservations on budgeting aspects have been entered by 10 countries including Ireland.

7.4. *Bologna Process*

The Department of Education and Science has established a Bologna Steering Committee to prepare the Irish input into the meeting of European Ministers for Higher Education which will take place in Berlin on 19th September. The Berlin meeting is part of the Bologna Process and is aimed at the development of a coherent Higher Education Area by the year 2010. Professor D. McQuillan is representing C.H.I.U. on the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee was informed at the last meeting that the draft has proved so controversial that it is being scrapped and a totally new document is in preparation.

A Diploma Supplement Group has been established by the Registrars' Group with a view to agreeing a common university approach to the DS. Professor D. McQuillan has been proposed as the university sector representative on the EU network of advisors on the European Credit and Transfer System

7.5. *Graz Convention*

The 2nd Convention of European Higher Education Institutions is organised by EUA and hosted jointly by the three universities in Graz: the Karl-Franzens-University, the Technical University and the University of Art and Music.

The Convention will highlight the role of higher education institutions in driving reform at European level through the Bologna process. The aims of the EUA are to formulate a coherent message from the higher education institutions and to strengthen the role of the institutions in the creation of the European Higher Education Area. 600 higher education leaders across Europe are expected to attend the Convention.

The outcomes of the Graz Convention will be presented by EUA as the contribution from the higher education institutions to the next Conference of European Education Ministers in Berlin in September 2003.

In addition to pushing forward the main action lines of the Bologna Declaration of 1999 and the Prague Communiqué of 2001, the main themes of the Graz Convention are:

- European higher education in a global world
- Higher education and research: revisiting the links
- Consolidating a quality culture in Europe's universities
- Improving institutional governance and management

EUA will also present a draft version of the Trends III report, based on the responses of nearly 800 higher education institutions across Europe to its recent survey on the implementation of the Bologna Process.

8. Nursing Programme – Bord Altranais

An Bord Altranais informed C.H.I.U. by letter dated 3rd February, 2003 that it was establishing an Education and Training Committee and invited C.H.I.U. to nominate three representatives from the University Sector to join the Committee.

The Registrars' Group have been concerned for some time about the reporting requirements that An Bord Altranais (ABA) were seeking to place on Universities in relation to nursing programmes. The Registrars' Group had previously met with An Bord Altranais Executive, had strongly stated the universities' position that An Bord, in its role as "accrediting agency" for the nursing profession should operate in the same way as other professional bodies. This position was reiterated in a letter from Chair of the Registrars' Group to An Bord Altranais on 4th March, 2002. Other issues relating to recruitment and course titles were also raised and a meeting was requested and has been agreed to.

9. Copyright

The ICLA wrote to higher education institutes in early February informing them of the ICLA Licensing Scheme for Educational Establishments and urging institutions to take up a license offering abated charges as an incentive for sign-up before 1st April, 2003. The Copyright Group met on 24th February and 24th March, 2003. Clarification and advice has been obtained from C.H.I.U. solicitors on a range of issues. On the basis of advice received, letters were sent on behalf of the Group to the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise Trade and Employment and the ICLA. The letter to the Tánaiste conveys the following as the views of the universities and institutes of technology –

- that the charges in the ICLA scheme are excessive,
- that the scheme only covers photocopying onto paper and not electronic provision to students,
- that they are willing to pay a fair amount
- that they will seek to come to an acceptable arrangement with the ICLA and avoid a need to challenge the scheme.

The letter to the ICLA covers points made to the Tánaiste and seeks a meeting to discuss the ICLA Licensing Scheme.

10. North/South Relations

10.1. CRI

A meeting of university Heads, North and South, has been arranged for NUIM on 7th April to consider proposals for future developments.

10.2. North/South Conference

A second North/South Conference, sponsored by DES and DEL, will be held on 15th/16th May, 2003 in the Slieve Russell Hotel, Co. Cavan. The theme for the conference which is being organised by the Centre for Cross Border Studies is International Students.

11. External Relations

11.1. AVCC Visit

The Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee, in response to a proposal made by C.H.I.U. Vice-Chair on the C.H.I.U. visit to Australia has confirmed that an AVCC delegation will visit Dublin and Cork on 28th/29th August, 2003 prior to attendance at a Commonwealth Conference in Belfast.

11.2. *Visit to Brussels*

A proposal for a visit by University heads to the European Parliament and Commission in June 2003 is under consideration.

12. **IBEC/C.H.I.U. Joint Council**

Dr. Eoin O'Driscoll has replaced Dr. Paddy Galvin as Chair of the Joint Council. A presentation was made to Dr. Galvin who served as Chair from 1994 to 2003. A tripartite working group comprising representatives of IBEC, C.H.I.U. and the Council of Directors of Institutes of Technology has been formed to develop a joint policy position on how enterprise and the third level sectors acting in partnership can contribute towards the achievement of a knowledge economy.

13. **RCSI**

In the last C.H.I.U. Review [03/1] attention was drawn to the Private Bill on the Royal College of Surgeons being introduced to the Oireachtas. It is understood that the proposals in the Bill are currently being examined by DES.

Issues for consideration include -

- power to award degrees in a range of medical areas and further disciplines not defined in the Bill without provision for a prior detailed review process which would normally be applied before such degree awarding powers would be granted to an institution
- the levels at which degrees would be awarded
- the need for quality assurance arrangements.