

**C.H.I.U. Review January 2002 [02/1] for C.H.I.U. Meetings  
on 28<sup>th</sup> January, 2002 in University College Dublin**

**1. Research**

**1.1. PRTL**

The results for Cycle 3 were announced by the Minister on 20<sup>th</sup> December, 2001. The total amount is €320m that is composed of €142m to support research personnel and €178m for buildings and equipment.

**1.1.1.** The HEA scheme to fund collaborative projects between Irish Third Level Institutions and MediaLab Europe has approved 16 projects for funding in 2002 (full details not yet announced). This scheme allocates up to €1.27m and supported 11 projects in 2001.

**1.1.2.** The next PRTL call (Cycle 4) is expected to be launched in late Spring 2002.

**1.1.3.** Dr. Eucharia Meehan has been appointed as Head of Research Programmes at the HEA. Dr. Meehan was formerly with Elan at TCD.

**1.2. Science Foundation Ireland**

**1.2.1.** Dr. Alistair Glass and Dr. John Atkins have been appointed Directors of ICT, and Biology and Biotechnology, respectively. The two appointees along with Dr. Bill Harris participated in the VPDOR Group meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> December, 2001.

**1.2.2.** Dr. Bill Harris announced the SFI Board that will be chaired by Brian Sweeney, Chairman, Siemens Ireland. This Board will be joined by some new appointees from Europe (as yet unannounced) at its first meeting on 30/31 January, 2002.

**1.2.3.** The C.H.I.U. Central Universities Research Office is continuing its close collaboration with SFI in developing new research funding schemes. It is expected that following the first SFI Board Meeting two major schemes, SFI Investigator Awards and SFI Centres, will be launched. The Investigator Award will allow researchers to apply for significant project funding (~€300,000/yr) in areas underpinning ICT and Biology & Biotechnology. The SFI Centres Scheme will provide funding to enable teams of researchers to carry out collaborative research that will have substantial impact. These Centres may be in new dedicated buildings or in existing buildings or be virtual centres, all within Third Level and Public Research Bodies.

**1.3. Funding of Overheads for Research Activities**

The first meeting of the Group was held on 23<sup>rd</sup> November, 2001. The Group agreed with C.H.I.U. that the prime objective of the study is the “*proper and sufficient funding of research activities*”. A Subgroup chaired by C. O’Carroll, was established to investigate the current situation as regards overheads in Ireland and the practice in other countries. The Subgroup presented its report on 18<sup>th</sup> January, 2002. It was agreed that this Subgroup will continue its work focusing the system used in the US and report back in March.

#### **1.4. *Irish Research Council for Science Engineering and Technology [IRCSET]***

**1.4.1.** The Council has announced that it will supplement the Enterprise Ireland Basic Research Grants budget by €7.6m. This will double the total amount available.

**1.4.2.** The Council will soon issue a call for application for IRCSET Scholarships. The SRC Scholarship scheme is intended to support researchers in the early stages of their research career – typically in the period following their primary or Masters degree. Scholarships are valued at up to €19,000 per year, of which €12,700 goes to the researcher and €6,300 is available for fees, direct laboratory costs and travel. (It is desirable that the student attend one or more major international conference to present his/her work). It is envisaged that up to 500 SRC Scholarships will be funded every year, and that funding will typically be provided for three years.

**1.4.3.** Martin Hynes, formerly of Forfás and Science Foundation Ireland has been appointed Executive Director of the Council.

#### **1.5. *Irish Research Council for the Humanities & Social Sciences [IRCHSS]***

The Humanities Council has recently issued a Call for Proposals to its Government of Ireland Research Scholarship Scheme.

#### **1.6. *Enterprise Ireland***

**1.6.1.** The Basic Research Grants Scheme closed on 17<sup>th</sup> January, 2002 and indications are that, given the doubling of the budget, there has been a significant increase in the number of applications.

**1.6.2.** Agreement on the ATRP contract was finally agreed, following lengthy negotiation, by the C.H.I.U./EI Liaison Group on 22<sup>nd</sup> November, 2001.

#### **1.7. *Study of Research Management Needs in Universities***

The final version of the Terms of Reference for this study was agreed by the VPDOR Group at its last meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> December, 2001. It has been forwarded to the HEA for final agreement.

#### **1.8. *Co-ordination of Research Funding Agencies***

Four of the main Research Funding Agencies – HEA, SFI, HRB & IRCSET – are establishing a basis for co-operation. This co-operation will form complementarity, coherence, transparency and accountability.

#### **1.9. *Research Support***

**1.9.1.** The Research Information Support System (RIS) is gaining wide acceptance across the sector. The system provides interactive web-based access to research expertise giving information such as publications, and research interests.

**1.9.2.** A meeting was held with C.H.I.U., IBEC, Elan and Conor Long on 11<sup>th</sup> January, 2002 to discuss industry aspects of this system. The issue will be raised at the next IBEC Science, Innovation and Technology Committee.

#### **1.10. *The Next EU Framework Programme (FP6)***

**1.10.1.** The C.H.I.U. Central Universities Research Office has played a key role in drafting a response to the Commission Proposal for the Rules governing participation in FP6 by the European Universities Association (EUA).

**1.10.2.** The C.H.I.U. Central Universities Research Office is involved with the European Commission in breaking down barriers to researcher mobility as part of the development of the European Research Area. It ran part of the conference organized by the Commission on the concept of a “*Scientific Visa*”.

## **2. VAT on Research**

### **2.1 Implementation of VAT Legislation**

C.H.I.U.’s advisors (BDO Simpson Xavier) prepared a draft guide on the implementation issues for universities arising from the new legislation, incorporating guidance on classification of research contracts for VAT purposes. The draft was circulated to Research and related Administrative staff in November 2001. The guide will be amended to take account of further developments in Quarter One 2002 and once finalised, will be published by C.H.I.U. and circulated to the universities.

There are a number of key aspects which are being addressed currently:

1. **Clarification of the status of national / public funding as exempt from VAT.** - C.H.I.U.’s advisors have liaised extensively with key public bodies identified in C.H.I.U.’s *Summary of Research Funding by Agency and Programme* document [Director’s Report 01/4] to obtain Revenue clearance for research contracts (particularly in respect of provisions relating to IPR and royalties). The summary will be included as part of the Guide once completed.
2. **Wellcome Trust:** Following a submission by C.H.I.U.’s advisors, a very favourable outcome has been obtained in respect of Wellcome funding – research undertaken is now considered to be a taxable service at a Zero rate. Therefore, no VAT will be charged to Wellcome on services received and universities will be able to recover VAT on purchases made in supplying the research service.
3. Discussions are continuing with Revenue on the basis by which VAT on overheads attributable to the provision of research services, can be recovered by the universities.

### **2.2. VAT on E.U. Framework Contracts**

In December 2001, on foot of a detailed C.H.I.U. submission to the Department of Finance, the universities received as part of the 2001 Supplementary Grant, compensation in respect of VAT outstanding on EU Framework Programmes (Third to Fifth) of €4.5m. This was a very successful outcome to a lengthy process of consultation between C.H.I.U. and Advisors, Revenue and Department of Finance officials.

## **3. University Funding**

### **3.1. Estimates/Budget 2002**

C.H.I.U., in a letter dated 20<sup>th</sup> November, 2001 to Minister Michael Woods, T.D., expressed serious concern about the low level of provision in the 2002 Government Estimates for the PRTLTI and funding for building grants and capital costs for universities, and urged the Minister to make good the shortfalls in provision in the 2002 Budget. In a reply dated 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2001 the Minister indicated that PRTLTI Cycle 3 would

proceed when a five year timeframe forward projection of expenditure had been agreed between DES and HEA and said that while provision for the total amount for capital investment in universities sought by the HEA had not been possible the amount provided “€58m will enable the HEA to continue to provide new and improved facilities in the Universities sector”. Apart from an amount of €7m provided for DCU, there was no provision made for an increase in general capital funding for universities in the Budget.

The current situation where the 2002 capital provision for the IOT sector is more than double that for the university sector raises serious questions about planning for, and funding of, infrastructural investment in the higher education sector. Are universities loosing out because they have not developed with the HEA a strategic plan for the sector which would set agreed priorities for development and seek to maximize investment funds for the sector? Universities need to consider whether collaboration to maximise overall funding for the sector rather than competition between universities to obtain funding for specific individual projects would better serve the long term interests of the sector.

### **3.2. *Recurrent Funding Levels – C.H.I.U. Model***

UCFOG representatives met with the HEA on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2001. C.H.I.U. 2001 submissions on the 1) 2002 Recurrent Funding Model which would take account of the total expected increase in costs and 2) Process model for grant notification, were acknowledged by the HEA. They had been forwarded to DES in July 2001 but no response had been forthcoming. The HEA acknowledged the universities’ concerns about the impact on funding for 2002 and undertook to pursue the matter.

2002 recurrent funding issues flagged to the HEA included insurance premia in which significant increases have been experienced by the universities, a market trend which was accelerated by the tragic events of 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001.

### **3.3. *Targeted Funding:***

2001 Funding for Targeted Initiatives was advised to the universities on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2001. Funding across all categories totalled IR£7.2m (2000 - £6.5m). For the first time in 2001, funding of £660k was allocated to Strategies for the Use of Technology in Higher Education.

### **3.4. *Capital Funding***

#### **3.4.1. *PRTL Cycles I and II - Deficits arising on capital funding***

On 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2001, UCFOG submitted a summary of the estimated deficits on capital funding for PRTL Cycle 1 and 2 projects. It is considered that a deficit of IR£22m, representing 20% of the total funding has been identified arising from building inflation costs incurred by the universities. The universities are seeking a commitment for funding at a level of 50% of the deficit from the HEA, on the basis that Private Donors will be approached to provide the balance. An urgent response was sought from the HEA at the meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2001, to date however this has not been forthcoming.

#### **3.4.2. *C.H.I.U. pre - budget submission to the Minister for Finance seeking extension to Section 50 of Finance Act 1999 and Section 843 of the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997***

A successful C.H.I.U. pre-budget submission was made to the Minister for Finance in November 2001 seeking extensions to the above provisions to facilitate projects planned and in progress. In December 2001, the Minister announced that Section 50 relief for the provision of residential accommodation for third level students located at or near campus facilities would be extended from 31 March 2003 to 30 September 2005 where an application for planning permission was made by 30 September 2003.

On 18<sup>th</sup> January, it was further announced in respect of Section 843 (which provides that availability of capital allowances at 15% per annum (10% in year 7) on expenditure incurred on certain buildings used for the purposes of third level education, would be extended from 31 December 2002 to 31 December 2004.

### **3.5. Procurement**

Strategic priorities have been identified by the Procurement and Contract Officers' Group and endorsed by UCFOG as objectives to be addressed in 2002. These include preparation of strategic review reports for each university evaluating all aspects of the role of procurement and resourcing in the context of best practice and the development of a model for collaborative purchasing. Procurement in each university will be making a significant contribution to the acquisition of equipment for the Nursing Degree Programme and projects awarded funding under PRTL Cycle 3.

## **4. HEA Issues**

### **4.1. Accountability – Financial Governance of Irish Universities**

The joint C.H.I.U./HEA Report has now been finalised and is in the process of being published. It will be circulated to all universities when it becomes available shortly. Formal sign-off by the universities is in progress with each university head stating acceptance of the report's recommendations and confirming that arrangements will be made to address them.

### **4.2. Harmonisation of University Financial Statements**

With the completion of the study and report on *Financial Governance of Irish Universities*, UCFOG consider that it is now appropriate to commence a formal harmonisation review of university financial statements. The matter was discussed with the HEA on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2001 and it was noted that agreement was required on a number of principles prior to undertaking a detailed review.

### **4.3. Borrowing Framework**

On 19<sup>th</sup> December 2001, the HEA formally advised that the framework had been approved by each university and was effective from 17<sup>th</sup> December 2001.

### **4.4. Framework in respect of payments to university employees by corporations (S25 (5b) Universities Act 1997)**

In October 2001, UCFOG submitted a draft framework to the HEA for consideration. The draft was discussed at the meeting with the HEA on 26<sup>th</sup> November and it would appear that further consideration of the purpose and scope of the framework is required.

### **4.5. HEA Review of Universities' Statements of Equality**

The C.H.I.U. Registrars' Group discussed the HEA's proposals with the HEA Executive at a meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> November, 2001. The C.H.I.U. view that the relevant section of the Universities' Act provided for a review and not an evaluation as proposed by the HEA was conveyed by C.H.I.U. representatives. A distinction was drawn between a review, being a summary and an analysis of statements and operations and an evaluation which under the Universities' Act was specified only in regard to quality assurance. The HEA agreed to examine the submission made by UCC with a view to deriving a template for submissions to be made by the other universities.

#### **4.6. *Review of the Higher Education Equality Unit***

At the meeting with the HEA on 20<sup>th</sup> November, 2001 the review of the HEEU carried out on behalf of the HEA by Professor Osbourne and Ms. Leith of the Centre for Research on Higher Education, University of Ulster, was discussed. C.H.I.U. representatives questioned whether the HEEU as constituted and how it operated best served the needs and interests of the universities and the HEA. C.H.I.U. pointed out that the HEA itself had not chosen to use the HEEU on a number of equality issues or projects in the past and that this indicated that the HEA itself must have concerns about the HEEU apart from any reservations the universities might have.

The future of the HEEU would have to be considered in the light of the proposal to establish a National Office for Equality of Access to Higher Education arising from the Action Group on Access Report (McNamara). Universities would not be prepared to fund a National Equality Unit as envisaged in the Osbourne/Leith Report. C.H.I.U. considered that it would be more cost effective to retain such funding within each university as the Universities' Act placed responsibility on the individual institutions to develop and promote equality policies and procedures. The HEA is seeking the universities' views in writing.

#### **4.7. *Completion Rates – Qualitative Study***

At the meeting with the Registrars' Group on 20<sup>th</sup> November, 2001 the HEA referred to the July 2001 letter to C.H.I.U. which communicated the intention to conduct a qualitative study of factors affecting non-completion as a follow-on exercise from both February's publication of non-completion rates in the University sector and the subsequent HEA seminar in May. In recent communications DES had expressed concern at the apparent lack of progress.

On being advised that work had not advanced significantly DES had written to HEA and had queried the basis for continuing to fund the targeted initiatives in this area. The HEA also raised the issue of the Ministerial request, following the February publication, that institutional policies be reviewed within twelve months.

C.H.I.U. advised the HEA that a subgroup of the Registrars had met on a number of occasions and could provide an outline of the body of work being conducted across the sector which addresses retention. There was some reluctance to participate in the proposed follow-up study due to concerns as to the starting basis for the exercise which was an *a priori* presumption that high retention was 'good' and low retention was 'bad'. The fear would be that this presumption was motivated primarily by concerns as to perceived costs to the exchequer of non-completion rather than being driven by concerns as to student welfare.

The HEA noted this point and said that the first survey had itself raised some of these issues, in particular that course non-completion could reflect change of course rather than pure drop-out. The HEA said that they intended that the follow-up survey would provide a more appropriate means to investigate such issues in more detail. Following further discussion it was agreed that the exercise should be advanced and that a meeting would be arranged between Dr. Mark Morgan and the C.H.I.U. Retention Network.

#### **4.8. *HEA Student Records System***

At the meeting with the Registrars Group on 20<sup>th</sup> November, 2001 the HEA raised the issue of implementing the new student records system and requested that a working group be established to advance work on this matter. C.H.I.U. confirmed that a trial downloading process was underway in TCD and that subject to a satisfactory outcome in that instance, all institutions would shortly commence downloading data. Compliance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act had been achieved by means of individual institutions assigning each student a separate identification number to that of the CAO. It was agreed that a meeting would be arranged with the C.H.I.U. group addressing this issue with a view to establishing a wider group to progress this matter on a system-wide basis.

### **5. Enrolments / Future Strategy**

#### **5.1. *Strategic Planning***

Further workshops for the C.H.I.U. Council have been arranged for 23/24 January and 7/8 February, 2002. The C.H.I.U./ HEA jointly commissioned Report prepared by Professor Malcolm Skilbeck –*The University Challenged* – was published on Tuesday, 8<sup>th</sup> January, 2002. A summary of the report has been emailed to all colleges with the Chairman’s suggestion that it be forwarded to all staff in the universities. The full report may be downloaded from the C.H.I.U. website ([www.chiu.ie](http://www.chiu.ie)). The report received widespread media coverage. Copies of the report have been sent to relevant government departments, state agencies, social partners and interest groups. It is hoped that the report will raise awareness and stimulate discussion within the universities and in political and media circles about the strategic challenges and opportunities facing the university sector.

#### **5.2. *Lifelong Learning***

Further to the “Memorandum on Lifelong Learning” presented in October, 2000 (Doc. SEC (2000) 1832), the European Commission initiated a European-wide consultation with all stakeholders concerned which resulted in a wealth of information and suggestions. On this basis, the Commission prepared a Communication on “*Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality*” which was adopted on 21<sup>st</sup> November, 2001. The purpose of the communication according to the Commission, is to define political objectives and to propose adequate measures to provide European citizens with the means to succeed in the knowledge economy and society by developing their employability, adaptability and personal capacities. The communication is part of the package for the March 2002 Barcelona European Council. The press release gives an overview of the objectives and content of the communication and the full text is to be found at [http://europa.eu.int.comm/education/life/index\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int.comm/education/life/index_en.html)

#### **5.3. *Foreign Students***

The recommendation to the Irish University Sector in the Skilbeck Report –*The University Challenged* – to expand their services in setting undergraduate and postgraduate places on the global market was picked up in newspaper reports. Subsequently, the Irish Times, 16<sup>th</sup> January, 2002 reported a statement made by Mr. John Dennehy, Secretary General, DES, at the Public Accounts Committee to the effect that “*third level colleges will increasingly have to recruit their students from Asia and the Far East as the numbers of Irish students starts to plummet*”.

Currently there is an absence of government policy which would provide a coherent context within which universities could expand their operations in international education and this needs to be addressed if the third level colleges are to act as Secretary General, DES, forsee. In a draft paper entitled “*New International Dimension in Irish Higher Education*” prepared for C.H.I.U. by John Lynch, Chief Executive, IEBI/HEDCO, key policy areas which need to be addressed are identified as follows:

- the elements involved in international education (student recruitment and exchange joint programmes, staff mobility, curricular changes, research, etc);
- its benefits to students, to staff, to colleges and to the country,
- the respective roles of government and colleges in developing and implementing policies on international education,
- the best structures to promote and facilitate international education,
- international education needs to be mainstreamed in Irish colleges with close co-ordination between the different elements.

The paper also points out that IEBI is a small *ad hoc* agency with a limited remit and that its future role, as a stand alone agency or as part of a larger agency, needs to be examined in a wide review which looks at the various elements of international education in Ireland.

The Paper also provides a brief overview of developments in international education in other countries. There are a number of government departments and state agencies as well as different education sectors that would have an interest in the development of policy in this area. Expansion as proposed by Secretary General, DES, would require political backing. It would be in the interest of the university sector to play a leadership role in the development of policy in this area.

#### **5.4. *Nursing Degree Programme***

The Funding Plan for the Nursing Degree Programme has been finalised. The Programme was launched by the Minister for Health and Children on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2001 and a press release was issued from the C.H.I.U. Chair. A number of issues remain to be addressed and work is continuing to ensure that all aspects are addressed including: clarification of and funding for the complement of nurse lecturers required for the completion of the Diploma programme between 2002 and 2004. Representatives of the Registrars’ Group met with the executive of An Bord Altranais on 18<sup>th</sup> January, 2002 to discuss the development of relations between An Bord Altranais and the Universities. It was agreed to hold meetings on a regular basis.

#### **5.5. *Garda Clearance for Clinical Placements***

The Registrars' Group have been considering the issue of Garda Clearance for students on clinical and other placements for nursing, medical and care students. The issue arises out of a procedure introduced by the Health Boards whereby Garda clearance is required in respect of persons being recruited into employment in health care services (working with children). This is not a requirement arising from statute or legal regulation but a practice introduced from a public concern policy.

Garda clearance is being sought by the placement provider in advance of student placements and the onus is being placed, in some instances, on the universities to obtain the Garda clearance. However, it appears that the procedure adopted and being implemented generally by the Gardaí is that they will provide the clearance service only for employers in respect of prospective employees. Universities can face difficulties in that they are not the employers of the students and neither do the placement providers regard the students as employees, nor do they wish to take on the responsibility of getting clearance. In some Garda Divisions clearance had been provided for universities but generally there is a lack of resources in the Garda to provide a clearance service in respect of students. A central unit to deal with Garda clearance for people working with children is planned but there is no indication as to when this will be established.

The Registrars' Group has identified a number of concerns about the implications of this issue for universities:-

- Does responsibility/liability for clearance (vetting) of students lie with university or with placement providers or both?
- What is the position of the universities in the event of a negative Garda report?
- Would self-declaration be an acceptable solution?
- Clearance would relate only to criminal convictions. If outstanding charges were not covered what would be the position of the university?
- Again Garda clearance would not cover students from other jurisdictions – what would the position/responsibility of the university be in relation to such students presented for placements?

Advice has been sought from C.H.I.U. solicitors on these questions and an initial response has been received. Consultations with solicitors are proposed and the need for each university to review the experiences of the relevant departments in their universities in relation to student placements and the Garda clearance requirement has been referred to the Registrars. Such a review would provide a basis for a sectoral account of current working practices/policies and requirements regarding clinical placements which the solicitors feel they need in order to understand the issues better.

#### **5.6. Skills**

There are no developments to report on DES action on the recommendations of the Third Report of the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs launched last July. The Report recommended new additional investment of £130m (€165m) in the IT area over five years to cover a range of initiatives [DR.01/4, Par. 5.6]. There is no indication yet that any funding have been set aside in the 2002 Estimates.

## **6. Freedom of Information**

The Act was extended to the universities in October 2001. As anticipated, there were a number of detailed media requests in particular at the outset but in general the volume of requests has been manageable. With preparatory work almost complete, the universities have moved to the implementation phase with increasing focus on records management systems. The FOI Implementation Officers Group is continuing to meet monthly to discuss ongoing issues and the HEA has appointed an FOI Co-ordinator who will provide support as required. The FOI Working Group will convene quarterly to monitor developments. The universities will also be participating in the Public Service Users' Network with other public bodies across all sectors.

The Working Group has been pursuing funding for implementation with the HEA. A meeting to flag the estimated recurrent funding deficit for 2002 of IR£500k, was held with the HEA on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2001. The universities have clearly advised the HEA that the absence of necessary funding will significantly compromise the universities' ability to fulfil obligations under the Act.

## **7. National Qualifications Authority of Ireland**

The NQAI launched its discussion document "*Towards a National Framework of Qualifications*" on 29<sup>th</sup> November, 2001. The Registrars' Group set up a small drafting committee chaired by Dr. Hussey to prepare a C.H.I.U. response to the NQAI. A draft has been prepared which will be considered by the Registrars' Group at its meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> January, 2002.

## **8. Quality Assurance**

### **8.1. HEA Review Proposal**

On 20<sup>th</sup> December, 2001 the HEA sent a document to C.H.I.U. which outlines the proposed HEA approach to its review of Quality Assurance procedures in the universities as provided for under Section 49(2) of the Universities' Act, 1997. In response to a request for an early meeting, Dr. C. Hussey, Chair, Registrars' Group, Professor A. Moran, Chair, IUQSC and M. McGrath met informally with HEA executive on 16<sup>th</sup> January, 2002. The HEA proposal will be considered by the Registrars' Group at its meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> January, 2002 and a formal meeting with the HEA is being organised for mid-February, 2002.

### **8.2. IUQSC Proposal**

The proposal for the establishment of an 'Irish Universities' Quality Board' prepared by the IUQSC Chair, Professor A. Moran, will be discussed by the Registrars' Group at its meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> January, 2002. It is hoped to reach agreement on questions raised concerning the title of the Body proposed and external membership, and formalise the proposal for submission to C.H.I.U. Council and the governing authorities of the universities.

### **8.3. QA Funding**

The HEA allocated £1.23m (€1.56m) to the universities at end 2001 in respect of QA. This included provision of £70,000 (€88,882) for the IUQSC proposal which was allocated through UCC.

## **9. International**

### **9.1. Bologna Process**

The European Commission has circulated a briefing document which summarises the EU contribution to the Bologna process. It gives a good pen picture of the ten concrete measures with which the Commission may give new support to the objectives of the Bologna process.

### **9.2. EUA**

The EUA strategy and guidelines for action document was endorsed by the EUA Council at its second session in Dubrovnik, Croatia, on 27<sup>th</sup> September, 2001. Important areas covered by the document are:

- European Higher Education Area and advancing the Bologna Process
- European Research Area
- Academic Mobility
- Quality Assurance
- Management development
- New technologies
- Role of universities in the Community.

The EUA Work Programme 2002/03 discussed at the EUA Council meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> January, 2002 attended for C.H.I.U. by Dr. Downer, include projects related to the objectives of the Bologna process as follows:

- **European Research Area**
  - EUA Research Working Group programme 2002
  - Mapping of Research in European Social Science
- **European Higher Education Area -**
  - Conference on ECTS the Challenge for Institutes
  - Building on Convergence at Master level in Europe
  - Promoting a “Quality culture” in universities
  - Joint Degrees and Masters’ level courses in Europe
  - Trends in Learning Structures
  - Promoting good practice in inter-institutional co-operation at doctorate level in Europe

### **9.3. Lisbon Convention**

The HEA wrote to universities in June and August 2001 seeking observations on the Lisbon Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education in the European Region. Irish government representatives had informed the Lisbon Convention Inter-governmental Committee that as regards the signing of the Convention by Ireland, a process of consultation was being undertaken with various stakeholders and that Ireland would expect to be able to sign and ratify the convention when the process was completed. The Registrars’ Group considered the provisions of the Convention and agreed to support the Convention collectively with a number of observations which were conveyed to the HEA by letter dated 14<sup>th</sup> December, 2001.

## **10. Immigration Policy**

### **10.1. Public Consultation**

A response to the consultation paper entitled “*Public Consultation on Immigration Policy*” published by the Minister for Justice Equality and Law Reform was prepared by C.H.I.U. based on views and comments provided by the universities. The response dated 28<sup>th</sup> November, 2001 was submitted to the Minister and acknowledgement was received.

### **10.2. Proposed EU Directives concerning Third-Country Nationals**

The Directorate-General Justice and Home Affairs of the European Commission recently informed the EUA that it would shortly be launching two legislative proposals, one on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purpose of studies or vocational training in the European Union, and another one on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for other purposes.

The Commission is now engaging upon a consultation process to prepare these measures, to which EUA has been invited to contribute. As the consultation will only be undertaken during the month of January 2002, the EUA asked member organizations/universities to give any opinions/thoughts as soon as possible on issues which they think should be taken into account for this specific subject. The EUA would then develop a concerted reply. Views were requested by C.H.I.U. from the universities on 11<sup>th</sup> January, 2002 for forwarding to the EUA.

## **11. Task Force on the Physical Sciences**

As a follow-up to a letter dated 5<sup>th</sup> November, 2001 sent by the Chairman of the Task Force to the University Heads a workshop was held by the Task Force on 11<sup>th</sup> December, 2001 in the Marino Institute of Education and the following representatives from the Science, Engineering and Computer Science areas of the universities were nominated to attend –

**TCD:** Prof. Werner Blau, Physics; Prof. Brian Foley, Engineering; Dr. Donall Mac Donaill, Chemistry

**UCD:** Dr. John Walsh, Geology; Dr. Patrick Guiry, Chemistry; Prof. Peter Mitchell, Experimental Physics

**UCC:** Dr. Paul Giller, Dean of Science; Ms. Mairead Loughman; Mr. Declan Kennedy; Dr. Robert Yakamini

**NUIG:** Dr. Pat Morgan, Dean of Science; Dr. Jim Duggan, Information Technology; Prof. Sean McNamara, Mechanical Engineering

**NUIM:** Dr. Ann Burnell, Dean of Science, Biology; Dr. J. Anthony Murphy, Experimental Physics; Prof. C.M. Quinn, Chemistry

**UL:** Dr. George McClelland, Physics; Dr. Patrick Phelan, Engineering; Prof. Julian Ross, Dean of Science

**DCU:** Dr. Odilla Finlayson, Chemical Sciences; Prof. David Cameron, Electrical Engineering; Prof. Heather Ruskin, Computer Applications

The Task Force secretariat acknowledged that the workshop was very profitable and expressed confidence that the consultation with the universities would lead to a balanced view on tertiary science in the Task Force recommendations.

## **12. Union of Students in Ireland**

The USI forwarded a copy of their policy paper on Student Financial Support in the Republic of Ireland to C.H.I.U. for review in the hope that C.H.I.U. would be in a position to support the policy paper. The document has been circulated to the Registrars' Group for consideration. The President and Education Officer of the USI have been invited to make a presentation to the Plenary meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> January, 2002 which would give a USI perspective on strategic planning priorities for the university sector as well as covering the main points of the policy paper.

## **13. Student Surveys**

In December 2001, the HEA published the Euro Student Survey 2000 Irish Report. As the HEA Chairman said in the Foreword – *“the report notes that most students are generally happy with their conditions, enjoy a reasonable standard of living, have manageable workloads and lead fulfilling lives”* but that *“for others financial pressures, unsatisfactory accommodation and excessive workloads present serious difficulties”*.

It is noteworthy that the percentage of students recorded in the Report as engaging in part-time work 54% corresponds with the 53.5% of second year students as recorded in the recently published *“Needs Analysis 2000”* - a study of second year students in UCD. The latter report draws attention to the need for guidance for students that excessive part-time work is incompatible with degree completion.