

**C.H.I.U. Review [03/1] for C.H.I.U. Meetings  
on 27<sup>th</sup> January, 2003 in the National University of Ireland Galway**

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**1. Research**

**1.1. ICSTI Commission**

The ICSTI Commission reported to government before Christmas. The key recommendation appears to be that there should be a Chief Scientific Officer (CSO) and advisory committee appointed that will be responsible for an overarching policy framework for research. There are no indications of a government response nor when the actual recommendations will be published. In this regard it is worth noting that the Inter Departmental Group (IDG) has been revived and is actively chaired by the Tánaiste.

**1.2. Research Overheads**

The content of the report has been agreed by the group and is now with the editor to produce a document that can be read and understood by the general reader. The key recommendation is that all funding agencies should pay overheads at the rate of 30% of the total project costs (minus equipment) for laboratory based research and 25% for desk based research. The proposal is that this would be implemented for the remainder of the current NDP and then reviewed. Each university would be responsible for spending the overheads appropriately to support the funded research project (agencies would not prescribe how the overheads should be spent).

**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 ensure that staff recruited from outside the European Union will obtain work permits in about 3 weeks. Final details of the agreement are under discussion and it is expected that this exemption will be in place by mid-February.

**1.4. PRTL**

The indications are that recurrent funds will be available for the Programme but that capital funding for Cycle III remains “paused”. HEA and DES are exploring “if” and “how” capital projects might proceed.

**1.5. SFI**

• **New Fellows Scheme**

The new SFI Fellows fast track scheme will be launched at the end of January. The Fellows’ programme is a flexible fast track mechanism to empower the third level and public research institutions to attract to Ireland world class researchers.

• **Centres for Science Engineering and Technology (CSETs)**

Site visits will continue until the end of March and each panel (consisting of six international experts) will make a recommendation to SFI. There are plans to launch a new round of CSETs this Spring.

### **1.6. Research Councils**

Despite the budget cuts in the Department of Education and Science, both the Humanities and Science Councils have been assured of budgets for 2003. In the case of the Humanities, the investment in scholarships and fellowships will be at the same levels as in 2002, however, there is doubt whether the Project Grants will run this year. The Science Council will run the Postgraduate Scholarships and Postdoctoral Fellowship schemes. They will contribute to the Basic Research Grants although it is unlikely that this will be at the same level as 2002. In both cases all previous commitments will be honoured.

### **1.7. Enterprise Ireland**

- **Intellectual Property/Technology Transfer/Commercialisation**

The Deans/VP Research Group met with Feargal Ó Móráin and Martin Lyes on 9<sup>th</sup> December to discuss the issue of intellectual property, technology transfer and commercialisation of research. It was made clear that EI want to work in partnership with the universities in developing national policy and support in this area. A group has been nominated by CHIU to work with EI to this end. C.H.I.U. is aware that ICSTI is also developing policy separately in this area and is working to develop greater synergy.

- **Basic Research Grants (BRGS 2003)**

The scheme for 2003 was launched by EI on 5<sup>th</sup> January with a closing date of 31<sup>st</sup> January. SFI is now nominally involved in the Basic Research Grants scheme. Given that this is not core business for EI it looks likely that responsibility for the basics will be moved to SFI thus raising the question of the role of the Science Council (IRCSET).

### **1.8. All Island Research Portal**

InterTrade Ireland agreed last year to sponsor the development of the all-island research expertise portal with a grant of £1.2million (sterling). A call for tender to develop the portal was launched in November and 15 eligible proposals were received. These have been reviewed by a group of six assessors and three companies have been invited to present on 28<sup>th</sup> January. It is expected that a decision will be taken immediately and the expected launch date of the portal will be in June 2003.

### **1.9. EU Sixth Framework Programme**

All Calls for Proposals for the Sixth Framework Programme were launched on 17<sup>th</sup> December. The majority of the deadlines for this call will be in April/May 2003. Details of the calls are available at <http://fp6.cordis.lu/fp6/calls.cfm>.

### **1.10. Merrion Group**

The Deans/VP Research Group met with representatives from five of the funding agencies, known as the Merrion Group (HEA, EI, HRB, IRCSET, IRCHSS). The discussion centered on the coordination of agencies and dealt with the following issues:

- Background to the Merrion Agreement and role of Standing Committee of the Research Funding Agencies
- Ways in which the research funding agencies could co-ordinate activities better from the perspective of universities and university based researchers

### **1.11. VAT on Research - Apportionment of Overheads for Recovery of VAT**

In early January 2003, Revenue responded to the submission made on behalf of the universities in October 2002 and a meeting is to be held with C.H.I.U.'s advisors on 22<sup>nd</sup> January to clarify a number of matters in the submission.

### **1.12. Implementation of VAT Legislation**

As previously advised, the primary list of funding bodies has been completed subject to contracts referred to C.H.I.U.'s advisors as required. There are two issues being followed up with Revenue which will be advised to the universities if there are implications for other institutions once clarification is obtained. Upon completion of the above, the VAT guide will be issued electronically to all universities and will be available on C.H.I.U.'s website to facilitate timely updates.

### **1.13. C.H.I.U. Research Office**

Recruitment arrangements are proceeding for the appointment of a Research Officer to 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.

## **2. University Funding 2003**

C.H.I.U. was represented by Dr. W.J. Smyth, C.H.I.U. Vice-Chair, and C.H.I.U. Director at the Estimates 2003 briefing given on 14<sup>th</sup> November, 2002 by the Minister for Education and Science. C.H.I.U. immediately advised University Heads and Finance Officers of main funding shortfalls. Following consideration of the available information on estimates provision for the university sector, a Press Release was issued on 15<sup>th</sup> November, 2002. A meeting was held with DES and HEA officials on 29<sup>th</sup> November, 2002 attended by Council and UCFOG members to seek clarification on state funding provision for 2003. In response to the clarification received C.H.I.U. Chair wrote to the Minister for Education and Science and a further press statement was released by C.H.I.U. on 13<sup>th</sup> December, 2002.

There is an urgent need for the universities to assess the funding situation for 2003 and its implications for 2004 and to formulate a sectoral position to be pursued with the HEA, DES and Government Ministers and to bring to the attention of the public. This should be addressed as soon as possible. Other sectors, with the help of PR advisors, are very active in highlighting the negative effects of cutbacks in government funding and there is a danger that government ministers and the public will think that all is well on the university campuses. The seven universities will have to provide full information on the shortfalls and their impacts as a basis for determining any future action by C.H.I.U.

## **3. Other University Funding Issues**

### **3.1. Tuition Fees**

The media has continued to show a high level of interest in the issue of the abolition of free fees raised by the Minister. The Minister has effectively deferred developments pending consideration of a report of a review of the issue which is being carried out by officials of his Department with inputs from the OECD and the ESRI. The need for having the fees issue considered in the context of the wider question of future university funding has been

demonstrated by the cutbacks in state funding for 2003 and the Ministers' stated intention of directing funds saved from payment of third level fees towards tackling disadvantage across the range of education sectors.

### **3.2. University Funding 2002 – Recurrent and Targeted Funding**

#### **3.2.1. Core Recurrent Funding**

The initial 2002 core recurrent allocations [€360m] represented an increase of 7.6% over 2001. However as noted in the C.H.I.U. Review of 14<sup>th</sup> October 2002, [Section 3.5.1], the €250 per capita increase in the student charge representing savings of approximately €13m to the Exchequer, was “collected” by the universities with a corresponding reduction to the recurrent grant payment in Quarter 4 2002. Essentially the State funding base for the core grant has been permanently reduced as State funds have been substituted by student funding. When this is taken into account, State 2002 core funding was approximately €349m, which is just 1% above 2001 levels.

#### **3.2.2. Targeted Initiatives 2002**

Targeted funding of €12.4m was allocated to the sector (an increase of €3.3m or 36% over 2001). This increase was represented primarily by increased allocations in the following areas: Access for mature, disadvantaged and disabled students (+€895k), University Accountability (+€350k), Miscellaneous proposals (+€356k), Irish language (+€243k) and support for teaching (€201k).

#### **3.2.3. Nursing Degree Programme – Funding for Claims**

Despite written confirmation of arrangements for payment of funding claims from the Department of Health and Children, significant difficulties have been encountered by the universities in accessing these funds which were channeled through regional health boards. By December 2002, only one university had received funding following the direct intervention by the Principal Officer in the Nursing Policy Division. Following discussion with C.H.I.U. prior to Christmas, he contacted the CEO of each of the Health Boards involved seeking release of the funds. While some payments have subsequently received, claims are still outstanding and C.H.I.U. is in the process of confirming details with universities in order to follow up with DHC.

### **3.3 Capital Funding**

#### **3.3.1 PRTL I Deficits on Capital Funding for Cycles 1 and 2, Section 845 Shortfalls**

The HEA wrote to each university head on 6<sup>th</sup> January 2003 advising a favourable response had been received from the Minister for Education and Science on the issues and that the exchequer contribution would be made available within the framework of the Estimates provision as soon as possible. This represents a positive conclusion to two years of submissions and representations to HEA/DES by the heads and UCFOG.

#### **3.3.2 Capital Funding 2002 and 2003**

Capital funding allocated in 2002 (net of PRTL I) was €46.4m, 32% less than 2001. The building programme was most affected with the 2002 allocation of €22.4m, representing a drop of 52% on 2001.

Following announcement of the Estimates in November 2002, the HEA advised the universities that only projects/purchases which were the subject of contracts on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2002 would be funded. It was estimated that State funding of €241m was being

held back. No 2003 funding is expected in respect of equipment [2002: €5.5m] or backlog maintenance [2002: €8.7m].

### **3.3.3. C.H.I.U. Working Group on Capital Funding**

A C.H.I.U. Working Group has been established to examine whether it is possible to formulate and agree a sectoral plan with a priority list of projects for state capital investment in universities and to draw up for negotiation with DES/HEA a list of the key elements and provisions which universities consider to be essential for an effective and efficient devolved capital project approval and grant payment scheme. Group members are Dr. F. Mulligan [NUIM], Chair, Mr. M. Kelleher[UCC], Mr. E. Ceannt [UCD] Mr. M. Conry [DCU] Professor J. Ward [NUIG], Mr. J. O'Connor [UL], Professor J. O' Hagan [TCD].

## **4. HEA Issues**

### **4.1. C&AG's April 2002 letter on the application of the Code of Practice for Governance of State Bodies to universities**

A proposed draft interim response for the C&AG was prepared by C.H.I.U. in September. Following consultation with the HEA a final response was being sent by the universities to the C&AG. The HEA supports the C.H.I.U. view that the provisions of the HEA/C.H.I.U. report on Governance in Irish Universities together with the Universities Act, address the C&AG's requirements and has advised DES accordingly.

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

A further meeting with the Comptroller and Auditor General was held with UCFOG representatives on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2002 to discuss issues of detail arising from the adoption of consolidated financial statements. PWC are being engaged by C.H.I.U. to perform a detailed accounting review of the draft reporting document, to support the C.H.I.U. Working Group to address issues and to liaise with all university auditors, HEA and C&AG to the conclusion of the process. It is anticipated that the process will be completed in Quarter 2, 2003.

### **4.3. HEA Review of Universities Statements on Equality**

The Registrars' Group discussed concerns about the HEA plans for the appointment of a review team and arrangement of site visits as part of phase 2 of a review procedure under the Equality provisions Section 49 of the Universities' Act 1997. The Group said that their view was that an understanding had been reached on a revision of the original procedure proposed for the conduct of the review which included a template for university submissions and dispensing with the need for site visits. The HEA's position was that they had not contemplated changing the procedures proposed and considered that they had made this clear to the universities. HEA said that they intended proceeding with making arrangements for the appointment of the review team and would welcome views on its composition.

### **4.4. Completion Rates**

At the meeting with the HEA on 20<sup>th</sup> November, 2002 the Registrars' Group informed the HEA that issues had arisen in relation to the follow-up retention survey proposed by the HEA. The Retention Network had been working closely with the HEA and the consultants on retention issues but recent developments in relation to the next phase of the HEA study

did not reflect the collaborative approach. In summary, the Retention Network's views on the HEA "student satisfaction survey" are as follows:-

1. Generally the network has questions about the purpose of the survey, particularly in the light of a range of much more fine grained studies taking place in each institution, and in particular the extraordinarily detailed CELT questionnaire that is currently being administered,
2. The survey requires students to identify themselves using their student ID. Most, if not all, universities have an ethics committee for research on human subjects that has to be consulted before proceeding with a survey that involves individual records and identities. In addition, there is no indication to the student that they intend to track their performance,
3. It appears that the draft version the retention network was asked to comment on was incomplete, having a total of only 22 questions. The finalised instrument has a longer list of questions many of which relate to lecturing and other more detailed issues.
4. The limited comments that the retention network made as a collective were communicated to the HEA but these are not reflected in the final version of the questionnaire,
5. It still seems unclear how this survey integrates with the Network's role in the context of retention, especially in the light of the guiding principles that were set out in the network's collective document,
6. Even if the above issues were not seen to be problematic, the timing may pose difficulties for individual institutions, many of which, in addition to the requirements under ethical procedures need also to get sanctions from relevant heads of department / deans,
7. In summary, the members of the Network would not be happy to have this survey in its present state distributed to students at this time.

The HEA met with the Retention Network to discuss their concerns. In the light of the outcome of that meeting the Registrars' Group was seeking further clarification from the HEA.

#### **4.5. *Discipline Balance***

The HEA at the request of the Minister for Education and Science is conducting a study to examine disciplinary balance in higher education. The study which is being carried out by Dr. Danny O'Hare is to –

- review the trends of subject provision and student choice at undergraduate and graduate conversion course levels in higher education,
- access the projected demands on the higher education sector in terms of future social, economic and cultural development,
- examine international examples of structures to assist higher education institutions to meet social, cultural and economic needs in society,
- report on findings and make appropriate recommendations.

The HEA organised a meeting of representatives of Universities, Institutes of Technology, Departments of Health and Children, Education and Science, Finance, IDA, Enterprise

Ireland, Forfás, FÁS to discuss the issues involved. The meeting was attended by the University Registrars and C.H.I.U. Director.

The participating institutions and agencies were invited to submit views on the issues raised at the meeting. A second meeting is planned for early February 2003.

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

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

A further strategic planning workshop for C.H.I.U. Council was held on 6<sup>th</sup> December, 2002. Progress in the process to date was reviewed.

### **5.2. *Access***

#### **5.2.1. *Forum to Address Educational Disadvantage***

The inaugural meeting of the above Forum was convened by the Minister for Education and Science on 18<sup>th</sup> November, 2002. C.H.I.U. was allocated one place and was represented by Ms. Aine Galvin, UCD. A submission prepared by the C.H.I.U. Access Officers Group was made to the Forum.

#### **5.2.2. *Access Policy***

The Minister for Education and Science has indicated that he has made financial provision in the 2003 Estimates for the establishment of the National Office for Equity and Access to Higher Education within the HEA. No further details have been made available. The National Office is a key part of the recommendations of the McNamara Action Group Report for the adoption of a co-ordinated framework of measures to increase participation in higher education by disadvantaged groups. The Action Group Report identified seven critical stages in the education process where effective interventions are necessary in order to achieve equity in access opportunities:

- (a) Pre-school
- (b) Primary school
- (c) Lower secondary
- (d) Retention at upper secondary
- (e) Achievement in the Leaving Certificate
- (f) Entry to Higher Education
- (g) Participation in tertiary education and progression to completion

It was intended that the Co-ordinated Framework would encompass strategies to significantly alter the situation for the target groups at each of these critical stages. The Minister seems to have accepted the Group's views that interventions at the earlier stages in the education process will ultimately have the greatest effect, and that appropriate actions should be implemented at the earliest possible opportunity. However, the Action Group's view was that in terms of the task set for the Group – to radically increase participation in higher education by disadvantaged student groups in the period of the National Development Plan – Stages (d) to (g) had to be particularly significant.

With the establishment of the National Office there is need for the universities to articulate clearly their responsibilities, obligations and proposals in relation to these categories. The

Report set out propositions for achieving equity at institutional level. Of most immediate relevance to universities are the following:-

*“6.3.3. The first years of tertiary education and academic progression: to*

- Foster consciousness of discrimination and inequitable practice and develop understanding and competence to deal with them, through: academic fields of study, professional development opportunities for academics and university administrators, and research programmes;
- Ensure appropriate access arrangements for under-represented groups, and bridging courses, study programmes, tuition, guidance, flexible assessment practices, welcoming entry arrangements, financial and other support to meet the needs of members of under-represented groups who may be ‘at risk’;
- Provide an inclusive and accessible physical environment, supportive higher education community, inclusive curricula, teaching and learning practices and institutional ethos;
- Reduce dropout and failure rates to a minimum and foster a capacity and willingness in all students to continue study;
- Establish appropriate staffing structure, roles and responsibilities to ensure equity objectives are met, including support services, monitoring and evaluation;
- Integrate policy relating to under-represented groups into all aspects of the institution; ensure their views are represented in planning and decision-making;
- Include in teacher education courses and courses for other relevant professions, specific attention to the needs of groups under-represented in higher education.”

It is intended that the National Office would “benchmark progress having regard to these propositions”.

### **5.3. Lifelong Learning**

The Report of the Task Force on Lifelong Learning was published in October 2002. In seeking to define the term “lifelong learning” the report states that *“Lifelong Learning is not simply about provision of education and training. The recent report by Professor Malcolm Skilbeck on behalf of the Higher Education Authority and the Conference of Heads of Irish Universities: The University Challenged exemplifies the kinds of changes which need to take place in one part of the overall learning environment.”*

The Report concluded that –

- Lifelong Learning requires a significant, systematic shift within the education, training and certification systems and the enterprise sector along with a change of culture on the part of society and individual citizens,
- It is not achievable with incremental or short term approaches,
- It requires a long term commitment on the part of government and citizens,
- Some of the building blocks to achieve it are already in place, but not all,
- There may be additional costs involved; there is a corresponding downside in terms of Ireland’s long term economic and social well being if the necessary commitment is not made.

The Framework proposed by the Taskforce has the following essential elements:-

- Developing and implementing the National Framework of Qualifications,
- Ensuring Basic Skills for All,
- Providing Comprehensive and Coherent Guidance and Information,
- Addressing delivery, access and funding issues;
- Better learning opportunities in the workplace and for workers.

The Taskforce saw the National Framework of Qualifications as of overarching significance with regard to its remit to develop a National Framework of Qualifications and procedures for access, progression and transfer. The importance of flexible response to the needs of learners including developments in relation to modularisation and accreditation of prior and experimental learning are stressed. In relation to access students, the Report *inter alia* gave the following view:-

*“The Taskforce considers that, particularly within higher education, for non-traditional learners to become part of the culture of the institution there is a need for the staff in the learner’s Faculty or Department to have a key involvement in supporting the learner. If this is not the case, this can lead to the situation whereby ensuring that the support needs of non-traditional learners are met can be perceived as not being a key role for those with whom the learner has the most important interaction. In this way the cultural norms and curricular content, particularly at third level, can become reflective of a diversity of cultural and class perspectives prioritising the inclusion of knowledge developed by, and in support of, marginalised groups. Furthermore, this also has the potential to develop a more inclusive balance in the range of skills which are recognised and measured, to include skills such as those defined within models of multiple intelligence and personal intelligence.*

*“The Taskforce considers that education and training providers need to develop a range of pedagogic methods to deal with the different expectations, attitudes and learning styles suitable to different Groups of non-traditional learners. A joint effort should be made by those responsible for training educators/trainers to access best practice in this area and provide suitable in-service training for existing educators/trainers.*

The Taskforce gave particular consideration to what it termed **‘the anomaly in education and training whereby fees are payable by learners for courses undertaken part-time, while learners undertaking the equivalent courses full-time are not generally required to pay fees’.** It concluded that – *“it is critical to remove the fee barriers which deter a return to learning, if the key objective is to be achieved of raising the qualifications of the adult population, thus improving competitiveness and social cohesion”.*

It is not clear where this recommendation lies in the light of subsequent statements made by Minister Dempsey on tuition fees.

#### **5.4. eLearning**

The C.H.I.U. New Forms of Learning Group met with HEA officials to make a presentation on their work with a view to making an input to HEA thinking on an eLearning service for Higher Education in Ireland. The HEA issued an invitation to universities, institutes of technology and other bodies and agencies for expressions of interest for the provision of an eLearning service for the Irish Higher and Further Education and Training sectors on 3<sup>rd</sup> January, 2003.

According to the documentation the Minister for Education and Science in Ireland is considering the allocation of financial support of €10 million for a service to enhance Irish Higher and Further Education and Training through the implementation of an eLearning service to improve quality, increase access and demonstrate efficiencies in cost per learner. It is expected that any eventual service would need to cover –

- information learning and student support services,
- content,
- infrastructure,
- provision for inter-operability with other providers,
- provision for access to the service,
- the national framework of qualifications,
- project management

### **5.5. Skills**

It is not clear yet what impact the shortfall in exchequer allocations for university funding will have on the four measures designed to respond to the Expert Skills Group Third Report concerning IT skills and in respect of which universities submitted proposals to the HEA.

### **5.6. International Students**

The consultants engaged by the HEA to conduct a study on international students issued a questionnaire to universities to be completed by 17<sup>th</sup> January, 2003. Concern has been expressed in the Registrars' Group and UCFOG about some of the questions and the use to which information would be put .

In the course of the C.H.I.U. visit to Australia in November, 2002 the Australian Universities' experience in recruiting international students was an important topic of conversation with the Australian Vice Chancellors (AVCC). In the course of discussions, a proposal was made by the AVCC reps that the Irish universities, in endeavouring to increase their intake of international students, might avail of the global services of the IDP Education Australia, the international services marketing and recruitment body established by the AVCC. A number of the Vice Chancellors met during the visit are on the Board of AVCC and one in particular, Professor Iain Wallace, VC, Swinburne University followed up the proposal with Dr. Gerry Wrixon.

Dr. Wrixon had discussions with Ms. Lindy Hyam, Chief Executive of IDP Education Australia who indicated that she would be happy to meet with representatives of Irish Universities through C.H.I.U. and that she could visit Dublin in early February. Ms. Hyam has confirmed that she will visit Dublin on 5<sup>th</sup> February and that she and Dee Roach, Director of IDP UK will be happy to meet with C.H.I.U. representatives to explain IDP operations and what services IDP could offer the Irish University Sector.

Given the growing significance for universities of the issue of international students it is important that universities explore possibilities for development and in this regard IDP Education Australia is one of the most successful and professional bodies in this area. It is hoped that **all** universities would be represented at the meeting. Information on IDP Education Australia is available at [www.idp.com](http://www.idp.com)

The keen interest private colleges have shown in recruiting foreign students was recently reported on in the media as was the problem regarding the levels of fees charged.

## **6. NQAI**

### **6.1. National Framework of Qualifications**

In relation to the development of a national framework of qualification the NQAI made determinations in relation to –

- policies and criteria for the division of knowledge, skill and competence into sub-strands,
- the number of levels,
- the grid of level indicators,
- policies and criteria for the determination of award-types,
- provide further clarity on the issue of the differentiation between further education and training and higher education and training.

The NQAI had invited the university sector to consider and provide views by 29<sup>th</sup> November, 2002 on how the Authority might indicate the number and features of the award types which are to be made in future by the universities and the descriptions for these. In response to concern over the very tight time frame the NQAI has extended the date for receipt of inputs from the university and other sectors to 31<sup>st</sup> January, 2003.

### **6.2. NARIC**

The DES has decided that the NQAI, in keeping with its statutory provisions, should become the National Centre for the National Academic Recognition Centre (NARIC) and for European Network of Information Centres (ENIC). The transfer of responsibility for NARIC to HEA to the NQAI is to become fully effective from 1<sup>st</sup> February, 2003.

## **7. Quality Assurance**

### **7.1. IUQB**

Letters of appointment have issued by Dr. W.J. Smyth, C.H.I.U. Chair, to members of the IUQB. The full list of members is –

Judge Bryan McMahon, Chairperson

Prof. John Casteen, President, University of Virginia

Prof. Eric Froment, President, European University Association, Brussels

Ms. Sally Anne Kinahan, Nominee of Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU)

Mr. Liam Connellan, Representative of Professions Accrediting University Courses

Ms. Jane Williams, Nominee of Irish Business and Employers Confederation (IBEC)

Mr. Colm Jordan, President, Union of Students in Ireland

Dr. W. J. Smyth, President, National University of Ireland, Maynooth, Chair of C.H.I.U.

Dr. Gerard Wrixon, President, University College Cork, Vice-Chair C.H.I.U.

Dr. Art Cosgrove, President, University College Dublin, Past Chair C.H.I.U.

Dr. Sheila Greene, Senior Lecturer, Trinity College Dublin

Prof. Patricia Barker, Registrar, Dublin City University

Prof. Jim Browne, Registrar, National University of Ireland, Galway

Prof. Kevin Ryan, Vice President (Academic), University of Limerick

The appointments are to have effect from 1<sup>st</sup> February, 2003. The IUQB will be formally launched at an inaugural conference on “Quality Improvement in Irish Universities” which will take place on 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> February, 2003. The Document “*A Framework for Quality in Irish Universities: Meeting the Challenge of Change*” prepared by the IUQSC will also be launched at the conference. Copies have already been provided to universities.

## **7.2. *IUQB Sectoral QA/QI Programme***

In consultation with the universities, C.H.I.U. formulated a sectoral QA/QI Programme for submission to the HEA. Universities applied individually to the HEA for funding towards the cost of the programme which comprised five measures as follows:-

1. Dissemination, publication and implementation of best practice throughout the sector,
2. Sectoral Initiative on QI in Teaching and Learning,
3. Series of meetings, conferences and workshops needed to maintain both national and international dialogue on quality issues,
4. Collaborative training programmes in QA/QI procedures for academic and service units,
5. The creation, maintenance and continuous upgrading of a web-base on-line and material developed from activities under Measures 1 and 2.

## **7.3. *HEA Review of QA/QI Procedures***

The HEA has not provided information yet on the appointment of a Review Team.

## **7.4. *QA International***

As part of overall strategy on QA to keep abreast of and influence developments at a European level, Dr. D. McQuillan has been appointed as a member of the ENQA Working Group.

The EUA has formulated a draft statement on Quality. The document is being prepared for the Graz Convention which is being organised with a view to providing an input into the Berlin meeting of ministers on the Bologna Process. The statement seeks to set down sets of principles for promoting a European dimension for QA.

# **8. *International***

## **8.1. *Higher Education Developments in European Countries***

The EUA has circulated brief reports on recent developments in Higher Education in a number of European countries. Current issues pre-occupying rectors’ conferences and governments include university legislation, university reorganization and reform, university governance, university autonomy, quality assurance, Bologna-related developments, ranking of universities, sectoral planning, public funding and tuition fees.

## **8.2. *EUA***

An EUA Council meeting was held in Geneva on 17<sup>th</sup> January, 2003 and was attended by Dr. R. Downer and Professor D. McQuillan. Among the topics discussed were the following:-

- (i) *Bristol 2003: The Role of Universities in the European Research Area (28-29 March, 2003)*  
This will be the 2<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly and 4<sup>th</sup> Conference of the EUA. Invitations have already issued to EUA members.
- (ii) *Graz – 2<sup>nd</sup> Convention of European Higher Education Institutions (29-31 May, 2003)*  
The EUA regard this convention of all major partners within the European higher education community as a key event in its own right and an important preparation for the Berlin Meeting of Minister for Higher Education to be held on 19<sup>th</sup> September, 2003.  
The following five key themes will be explored at Graz –
- Pushing forward Bologna and Prague
  - Defining the links between higher education and research
  - European higher education in a globalised world
  - Improving institutional governance and management
  - Consolidating a quality culture in Europe's universities
- (iii) *Evaluation of EUA Institutional Review Programme*  
The evaluation was commissioned by the CRE and a report was disseminated in December 2002 to the 80 institutions that have been evaluated. A summary of the Evaluation Report and the full report is available on the EUA website – [www.unige.ch/eua](http://www.unige.ch/eua)
- (iv) *EUA Report Activities 2003*  
These projects include European Commission funded initiatives on ECTS, Quality Culture, Joint Masters and Trends in Learning Structures in Higher Education which are geared towards pushing the Bologna agenda forward.
- (v) *Draft EU Public Sector Information Directive*  
The Council Members of the European University Association (EUA) adopted a statement expressing their strong concern about amendments to the draft Public Sector Information Directive tabled for European Parliament debate. The directive aims to increase accessibility and improve the quality of public sector information. The EUA supports the general principles behind the Draft Directive, but is extremely concerned by proposed amendments, which could have a detrimental effect on higher education institutions, as well as other cultural establishments like museums, libraries and research institutes. The amendments aim to reverse the agreed exemption of educational and cultural establishments from the scope of the directive, and to remove the possibility of public sector bodies making a reasonable return on their investments.

### 8.3. **Bologna Process**

The next meeting of European Ministers for Higher Education as part of the Bologna Process and development of a coherent Higher Education Area by the year 2010 will take place in Berlin on 19<sup>th</sup> September, 2003. A draft Communiqué for the Conference has been circulated to governments and C.H.I.U. had the opportunity to provide views through the HEA. The draft included statements on quality assurance and extending the Bologna Process to comprehend doctoral studies. C.H.I.U. objected to a proposal that QA

procedures in each state should include an independent agency and this has been dropped from the latest draft.

The DES has called a meeting of the main HE interests for 5<sup>th</sup> February, 2003 on the Bologna Process. The Registrars Group is continuing its consideration of the Report of the Bologna Working Group.

#### **8.4. *Tuning Project***

The organisers of the Tuning Education Structures in Europe issued a call in December 2002 inviting universities to apply to participate in Phase II of the project. The closing date for applications is 31<sup>st</sup> January, 2003. The rationale behind the project is the implementation of the Bologna Process at a university level by focusing on the educational structures and content of programmes of study whereas the Bologna Declaration concerns the convergence of HE systems in Europe. Irish universities participated in Phase I which covered Business, Chemistry, Educational Sciences, Geology, History, Mathematics and Physics. Two new subject areas – European Studies and Nursing – are being added in Phase II. This phase will further develop approaches regarding teaching learning, assessment and performance and link-up tuning outcomes with quality assurance and assessment as well as with professional bodies.

#### **8.5. *EU Developments***

##### **8.5.1. *Education, Training and Youth Programmes after 2006***

The European Commission has launched a major public consultation exercise on a new generation of community programmes in education, training and youth to succeed the existing Socrates, Tempus, Leonardo da Vinci and Youth Programmes which are due to finish at the end of 2006. A consultation document is available at the following web address – [http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/newprogconsult/consult\\_en.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/newprogconsult/consult_en.pdf) The HEA has sought the views of the universities by 7<sup>th</sup> February, 2003.

##### **8.5.2. *Erasmus World Programme***

A brief on the proposal for this new programme was provided in paragraph 8.5 of C.H.I.U. Review 02/4. The proposal for a European Parliament and Council Decision 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] is still being considered by the Education Committee. DES is keeping C.H.I.U. informed of developments.

## **9. *External Relations***

### **9.1. *Swedish Visit***

C.H.I.U. organised a programme for a Swedish delegation comprising representatives of the Swedish Rectors Council, the Swedish Research Council and the National Agency for Higher Education. The delegation members were very positive about the visit.

### **9.2. *Visit to Australia***

The C.H.I.U. visit to Australia organised the by Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee (AVCC) took place from 30<sup>th</sup> October, 2002 to 2<sup>nd</sup> November, 2002. The C.H.I.U. delegation comprised Dr. Cosgrove, Dr. Smyth, Dr. Wrixon, Dr. Downer and M.McGrath. The Programme included visits to seven universities in Perth and Melbourne and a

workshop with the AVCC and the signing of a formal AVCC/C.H.I.U. co-operation agreement. Discussion and exchanges with the Australian Vice-Chancellors, university officers and AVCC officers on highly topical issues such as international students, university funding, university re-organisation, university enterprise and research proved to be very informative.

## **10. North/South Relations**

### **10.1. Armagh Conference**

Dr. Art Cosgrove represented CRI on the advisory committee for the Conference “Ireland as a Centre of Excellence in Third-Level Education” which was held on 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> October, 2002. The Conference, which was well attended, was organised on behalf of DEL and DES by the Centre for Cross-Border Studies. The conference was opened by the respective Ministers and papers presented are available on the Centre’s website – [www.crossborder.ie](http://www.crossborder.ie)

### **10.2. CRI Secretariat**

CRI Council met in Belfast on 14<sup>th</sup> January, 2003 to consider a proposal concerning the provision of a secretariat for CRI. The proposal is to be considered further by the CRI Executive Committee. Professor Gerry McKenna, UU, was appointed as CRI Chair and Dr. Iggy Ó Muirheartaigh as Vice-Chair.

## **11. Copyright**

A representative of the Council of Directors of Institutes of Technology attended the last Copyright Working Group meeting and the Council has nominated two more representatives to attend further meetings. The Working Group met with the Executive Director and Legal Advisor of the ICLA on 10<sup>th</sup> December, 2002. They explained that under Statutory Instrument SI.NO 514 of 2002 the Minister for Enterprise Trade and Employment had certified the ICLA Licensing Scheme for Reprographic Copying by Education Establishments to be effective from 13<sup>th</sup> January, 2003. In a letter to the Working Group Chairman the Executive Director confirmed the ICLA intended immediately following 13<sup>th</sup> January, 2003 to write to all third level establishments offering a licence. The certified scheme requires payment of €6 per student per annum plus VAT. The scheme deals only with reprographic copying but the ICLA is currently developing a license for digital users.

The ICLA is a “not for profit” company formed in 1992 and represents Irish authors and publishers collecting royalties for the reprographic users of their works. The ICLA has reciprocal arrangements with a range of overseas licensing arrangements with a range of overseas licensing agencies including those in the UK, the USA, Australia and New Zealand [more complete list in User Guidelines at Appendix 11(b)]. The ICLA representatives indicated that they were interested in developing a harmonious relationship to working out the details of the application of the scheme which *inter alia* places responsibility on the licensee to comply with record keeping procedures to be approved by ICLA.

## 12. RCSI

The Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI) is in the process of introducing a Private Bill to the Oireachtas. By way of courtesy, the RCSI has sent a copy of the Bill and related documentation to university Heads. The Bill seeks to amend RCSI Charters and 1965 Act. It provides for the introduction of new categories of member and a new class of officer to the institution and new arrangements related to the organization and management of the College. Of particular interest to the universities are the following “additional powers of the College” provided for in Section 30:-

*Without prejudice to the generality of powers conferred upon the College and the Council of the College by the Charters and the Act of 1965, the Council of the College shall **in addition** have the following powers:*

- (a) to provide courses and examinations and to award certificates, diplomas and licentiates in surgery, medicine, nursing, radiology, pharmacy, anaesthesiology, physiotherapy, dentistry and such further disciplines;*
- (b) to provide courses and examinations and to award degrees in surgery, medicine, nursing, radiology, pharmacy, anaesthesiology, physiotherapy, dentistry and such further disciplines as may be provided by Bye-Laws;*
- (c) to promote and facilitate research in the disciplines referred to in paragraphs (a) and (b) of this section;*
- (d) to promote and facilitate higher standards of patient care in the disciplines referred to in the said paragraph (a) and (b);*
- (e) to collaborate with educational, business, professional, trade union, medical or other interests, both inside and outside the State, to further the objects of the College;*
- (f) to maintain, manage and administer, dispose, invest, develop and otherwise deal with the property, funds, monies, assets and rights of the College;*
- (g) to accept gifts of money, land and other property on the trusts and conditions if any not in conflict with the Charters and the Act of 1965 specified by the donor;*
- (h) to purchase or otherwise acquire, hold, develop and dispose of land or other property.*

It appears that these provisions could have implications for the existing RCSI relationship with the NUI. If the RCSI is to be given statutory authority to award degrees possible implications for the provisions of the National Qualifications of Ireland Act and the Universities Act would need to be examined. The only institutions in the State currently empowered under legislation to award degrees are the universities, HETAC and DIT.

## 13. Pay Reviews for University Staff

### 13.1. Benchmarking

IFUT and the President of IFUT as applicants on 13<sup>th</sup> December, 2002 sought a High Court Judicial Review of the findings of the Public Service Benchmarking Body [PSBB] in relation to university grades represented by IFUT. The Respondents are the members of the PSBB. IFUT is seeking –

- (i) An Order of certiorari by way of an application for judicial review quashing those parts of Chapter 11 of the report of the PSBB setting out recommendations in relation to the salary scales for those members of the academic third level education sector represented by IFUT, as set out at pgs. 117-130 of the Report*

- (ii) An order of mandamus by way of an application for judicial review requiring the PSBB to provide reasons for the Recommendations re: IFUT;
- (iii) A declaration by way of an application for judicial review that the failure on the part of the PSBB to provide reasons in relation to the Recommendations re: IFUT constitutes a breach of the rules of natural and constitutional justice;
- (iv) Such further and other relief as the High Court shall deem appropriate;
- (v) An Order providing for the Applicant's costs

The Grounds upon which the Relief is sought are:

- (i) The PSBB Report Recommendations re: IFUT were made without any reasons or explanations being provided for the said Recommendations. The Applicants are entitled, as a matter of natural and constitutional justice, to be furnished with reasons for the PSBB's Recommendations.
- (ii) The Recommendations re: IFUT are *ultra vires* by reason of their irrationality.

The Human Resource Officers Group will be considering the question of a university sector (management) position on the PSBB Report findings in the light of the action being taken by IFUT. A copy of the IFUT affidavit and Statement to the Court is available at website address – <http://www.ifut.ie/High%20Court%20Affidavit>

### **13.2. Pay Award for Lab Technicians**

University Personnel/Human Resource Officers are very concerned about a proposed pay award to Lab Technicians. It appeared that unions representing technical staff were informed by government officials that a Med. Lab Technician pay award would be applied to university staff without negotiation or discussion with representatives of the universities. These developments had undermined the industrial relations procedures in universities and there was also the thorny issue of provision of funding to meet the costs of the proposed award which are estimated to be of the order of €12m to end December 2003. The HEA and DES and Department of Finance were informed by the Personnel Officers Group that the universities were seeking explanations and clarification in writing on a range of questions relating to the proposed award.