

**C.H.I.U. Review [05/1] for C.H.I.U. Meetings
in DCU on 31st January, 2005.**

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1. Research

1.1 HEA

1.1.1 "PRTL1"

The follow on from the PRTL1 programme is currently being planned. This will be a strategic research programme that will include funding for infrastructure, researchers and technology transfer. It is unlikely that a call for proposals will be launched before June.

1.1.2. *Committee on Research Infrastructure*

A number of SFI researchers have been lobbying on a wide range of issues related to research infrastructure. The RIA has held two "N+N" meetings on this issue and as a consequence the HEA has established a steering group. The group held meetings on 12th October and 26th November 2003 C.H.I.U. was represented by Prof. Jim Browne, NUIG, and Dr. Conor O'Carroll. There were also representative from DIT, CODIT, RCSI, SFI researchers and other funding agencies. The discussion focused on the provision of research infrastructure emphasizing the need for greater coordination between the various funding agencies.

1.2. *Science Foundation Ireland - Electronic Submission*

SFI have backed down in their demand that their new electronic submission procedure be used for all their programmes. This followed sustained pressure from C.H.I.U., VP/Deans of Research and the Research Officers.

It is noteworthy that SFI have not consulted with either of the two funding agencies (IRCSET and HRB) that currently have an e-submission system in place. Nor have they taken lessons from the European Commission's online system (EPSS) for Framework Six. There was a number of features that are unacceptable to the universities. Moreover, despite assurances to the contrary they did not take into account any of the criticisms from the universities who agreed to pilot the e-procedure. C.H.I.U. will be meeting with SFI soon to discuss the next steps as to how to develop an acceptable e-submissions system.

1.3. *Research Strategy – C.H.I.U. Conference – Strength and Numbers: attracting and retaining postgraduate researchers in Irish universities*

C.H.I.U. Council held a conference on 9/10 November, "*Strength and Numbers: attracting and retaining postgraduate researchers in Irish universities*". From a strategic point of view this can be considered as a response of the universities to the recommendations of the OECD review - focusing on what we can do rather than asking the government to take action. C.H.I.U. plans to organise a further conference on research careers in the Spring.

1.4. European Policy

1.4.1 Researchers Charter and Code of Conduct for Recruitment

The European Commission, with the Steering Group on Mobility, is drawing up a charter for researchers and how they are recruited. This objective is to raise the career of researcher at a European level and have it considered like other professions. C.H.I.U. has engaged extensively and intensively in this process through consultation with national stakeholders in the universities, government agencies and other representative organisations (IBEC etc). In particular, the Postgraduate students union in UCC have conducted a college wide consultation. In addition, C.H.I.U. commissioned a HR consultancy to give professional opinion on the draft Charter. The European Commission has welcomed this input and many of our comments and suggestions are being taken into account. The final version is expected to be ready in late February.

1.5. All Island Research Portal – *expertiseireland.com*

Expertiseireland.com has produced an annual report which being circulated to Plenary Members.

Expertiseireland.com is exploring the development of links with BioLink USA-Ireland which is an association of scientists, engineers and business professionals from Ireland working in the life sciences in the USA, and others who are similarly engaged and who support the aims of the organization. The aims of BioLink USA-Ireland are connecting and fostering relations and interactions among members for mutual benefit, and providing support to the development of the biosciences in commercial, academic and government settings in Ireland. Its goals are:-

- To establish a nationwide network of members in regional chapters to achieve the association's overall aims.
- To establish an on-line forum whereby members can rapidly be made aware of activities in the area of the biosciences in the USA and in Ireland, including opportunities of contributing their experience, contacts, and expertise to initiate and/or develop projects in the life sciences in Ireland.
- To organize scientific and networking events in the various chapters and an annual meeting.
- To provide mentoring to business and research organizations in Ireland with respect to the development and commercialisation of the biosciences and to encourage bio-entrepreneurship in Ireland.
- To actively encourage collaborative efforts and to promote opportunities for technology matching, partnering, research and investment between organizations in Ireland and in the USA.
- To foster career development opportunities in the USA for professionals and students from Ireland.

Dr. Denis Headon, President of BioLink USA-Ireland will make a presentation at a meeting on 14th February to the Vice Presidents/Deans of Research and representatives from SFI, HRB,

HEA, IRCHSS, IRCSET, IDA, Enterprise Ireland, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, InterTradeIreland, and C.H.I.U.

1.6. EU Sixth Framework Programme

1.6.1. Human Resources & Mobility Programme – Marie Curie

Ireland continues to be highly successful in the Marie Curie Programme with the support the C.H.I.U Research Office offers to applicants in academia and industry. Particular success has been achieved in the Transfer of Knowledge programme that provides funding for research teams to build R&D capacity by funding postdoctoral and senior researchers. With 22 contracts worth over €14m (5 industries) Ireland has won more contracts than any other country in Europe.

2003 The total income from the Marie Curie programme was €1.5m amounting to 25% of the total Irish income from FP6.

2004 The total Irish income from Marie Curie is estimated at €15m

2005 The C.H.I.U Research Office is actively promoting the programme and supporting applicants in writing and submitting proposals. On 20th January the Research Office held a joint promotional workshop with United Kingdom Research Organisation (UKRO) in Belfast. The Research Office is constantly engaged in promotional seminars and workshops on Marie Curie in all of the universities.

In September 2003 a Forfás/DETE commissioned report recommended that C.H.I.U. should have enhanced support to promote the Marie Curie programme to industry. Enterprise Ireland agreed to provide a full-time individual to work with C.H.I.U. on industry involvement in the programme. Unfortunately EI has dragged its feet and over one year down the line there is still no support forthcoming. It is ironic that EI, the very organisation that purports to support Irish industry, has played no role and left it to the universities to support Irish industry.

1.7. EU Seventh Framework Programme

ICSTI / Forfás have run a national consultation on the 7th Framework Programme. The Chief Science Advisor will add his own comments and the document will be published in February 2005. It is expected that the Commission will publish a proposal for FP7 in April 2005.

C.H.I.U is intensively involved in the shaping of the Marie Curie programme in FP7 and is working closely with the Chief Science Advisor in this regard. C.H.I.U. participated with other major European organisations in a stakeholders meeting in December. There were representatives from many funding agencies (EMBO, DFG, CNRS etc), research organisations (Max Planck, CERN etc) and industry (including Nokia, Phillips, Smithkline, Astra-Zeneca) and the Mobility External Advisory Group. Following the meeting we have made a formal submission to the Commission that puts forward the universities point of view on this programme. This view has been adopted by the Irish government and will be part of the national submission.

1.8. *Irish Researcher Mobility Centre and Web Portal*

Ireland's Researcher's Mobility Portal – www.researchcareersireland.com established by C.H.I.U. offers researchers, who are undertaking research positions either in Ireland or in a new country, comprehensive and up-to-date information and assistance in all matters relating to their professional and daily lives.

The first Network meeting of University representatives took place in the C.H.I.U. office on the 14th December. The Declaration of Commitment which is part of the agreed terms of the project contract with the European Commission was discussed and finalised with the Network members. This final document needs to be signed by C.H.I.U. and each of the Heads of the Irish universities.

The Network will meet on a six monthly basis and the Hub Manager will provide and organise training for members of the network in aspects of mobility that will improve the provision of information to researchers, and the exchange of experience and develop good practice. In addition to the seven universities, the Royal College of Surgeons (RCSI) has already joined the network. Over the next few months, the network will grow to include members from the Institutes of Technology, IBEC and other key groups relating to researcher mobility. Training Workshops will be arranged for all members of the network on both specific and generic aspects of mobility. Experts from the relevant government agency or other organisation will be invited.

To date, direct links have been formed with both the Work Permit Section in the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment for all work permit issues and with the Visa section in the Department of Justice Equality and Law Reform for all areas of visa policy and advice. Both contacts have proved of great value and assistance to the Mobility Hub and have speeded up the processes since the establishment of the Mobility Hub.

The Hub has been very active in providing advice to researchers both wishing to relocate or return to Ireland and leave Ireland to advance their career in research. It has solved numerous visa issues, particularly in the area of working visas and family members joining the researcher in Ireland.

Both the Researcher Mobility Hub and Expertise Ireland will exhibit at the AAAS Annual meeting and career fair from 18-21 Feb in Washington D.C. http://www.aaas.org/meetings/Annual_Meeting/. In addition, meetings and presentations have been organised with various members of BioLink USA-Ireland.

1.9 *Developing a common approach on Knowledge/Technology Transfer for the Universities*

InterTrade Ireland has agreed to fund an all-island feasibility study that should identify those areas where co-operation between institutions could provide an enhanced intellectual property and technology transfer service. The key action is to strengthen the capability of the IP and Technology Transfer facilities in universities. This may be done through a central facility or a strong network of the technology transfer services in the nine universities. This service should be of clear benefit to academia, business and governments. The principal objective of this

feasibility study will be to identify areas where there could be all island cooperation between universities on intellectual property and technology transfer.

1.9.1. Insurability (PRSI) of PhD students

This issue has arisen principally in the context of the EC Framework Programme where the Commission funds PhD students. There is a requirement that they have some form of social security coverage which is currently not the case in Ireland. There is also mounting pressure from Europe (where PhD students in many countries are employees) to have PhD students in Ireland and UK treated as employees. This move is opposed by the universities and postgraduate students alike. However, in the UK PhD students have access to national insurance. This issue was raised and discussed at the C.H.I.U Strength and Numbers conference in November 2004. A meeting was held in early December 2004, between C.H.I.U., Department of Social and Family Affairs and DETE to discuss the issue of insurability (PRSI) of PhD students. DSFE has suggested the “testing” of the insurability of PhDs by the use of 16 test cases from across the system.

2. University Funding

2.1. Estimates/Budget 2005

The Estimates provisions for state recurrent expenditures were published by the government on 18th November, 2004. They revealed an increase of €40m to €70m for the universities (6% increase) and an increase of €32m to €478m (7% increase) for the institutes of technology. Having learned in advance of the likely small increase, an urgent meeting was arranged for a number of C.H.I.U. Council Members with Minister Hanafin, immediately after an event with the Chinese Vice-Premier which they were all attending. The disappointment of the university Heads at the failure of government to respond to the findings of the OECD Report and the HEA Report on the Funding of Universities was strongly conveyed to the Minister. She was urged to respond to the need for action on the OECD Report in her Statement on the Estimates and to seek additional funding in the Budget. In her Estimates Statement the Minister referred to the OECD Review, her support for aligning funding allocations with the achievement of national and sectoral objectives, her support for programmes of internal restructuring and reform, her commitment to progressing implementation of the OECD Report and that she wanted “*to ensure that funding allocations’ decisions for the coming year will support and promote our wider strategic objectives*”.

C.H.I.U. issued a press statement on the Estimates pointing out that the OECD Report had been ignored, that the Estimates’ provision amounted to a cut of 3.5% on top of cumulative cuts of 14.5% over 2003 and 2004. C.H.I.U. Chair wrote to Minister Hanafin on 19th November, 2004 seeking a pre-Budget meeting.

The HEA also wrote to Minister Hanafin and DES on 24th November, 2004 in relation to the Estimates provision and –

- stated that the allocation was €26m short of what they estimated to be unavoidable cost increases
- pointed out that no allowance had been made for the effect of implementing the Protection of Employees [Fixed Term Work] Act, 2003 and advocated that provision of €50m in 2005 be made in the Budget for a multi-annual Strategic Initiatives Fund.

A recent newspaper article reported on the HEA position on the provision for 2005. Despite intensive efforts by the Minister and her Department, and lobbying on behalf of the universities, no provision was made in the Budget for the implementation of reforms on foot of the OECD Report. The HEA issued 2005 grant allocation letters on 20th December, 2004. A breakdown of the allocations follows:-

University	Core Recurrent Grant* 2005 €000	Core Recurrent Grant* 2004 €000	Increase on 2004 Recurrent Grant	Unit Cost Adjustment 2005 €000
UCD	108,100	106,500	1.50%	(1,500)
UCC	63,670	61,000	4.38%	(380)
NUIG	47,280	43,670	8.27%	1,070
NUIM	22,355	20,650	8.26%	445
TCD	77,250	72,120	7.11%	220
UL	33,025	31,530	4.74%	65
DCU (inc Dist Ed)	24,112	22,882	5.38%	80
* Includes minor works				

2.2. *Capital Funding*

At its meeting on 16th November, 2004 C.H.I.U. Council discussed the announcement by Minister Hanafin of provision for a partial implementation of the Kelly Report recommendations relating to university projects. The Council agreed that C.H.I.U. should continue to press DES and HEA to provide funding for all university projects recommended by the Kelly Report and to fast-track payments of grants. The Council also agreed that the issue of addressing the deficiencies in the Report outlined in the C.H.I.U. response to it, should be actively pursued in the context of consultations on implementing the OECD Report. The Minister has yet to make an announcement which would clarify capital provision for universities and projects to be funded during 2005.

2.3. *Funding Model*

Discussion of HEA proposals for a new funding model will be a key element in consultations on the implementation of the OECD Report. The further effective cut-backs in the recurrent provision for universities in 2005 leaves little or no scope to introduce any fundamental move to a funding model that would be aligned with the strategic plans and objectives of the universities and national strategic objectives.

2.4. Tuition Fees

The Chief Finance Officers Group will be assessing the increase in tuition fees required in light of the 2005 recurrent grant levels. Revision of C.H.I.U. tuition fee policy may be necessary in the light of a finding of the Equality Tribunal relating to a refugee postgraduate student in TCD who had been designated as non-EU for fee purposes.

2.5. Pension Schemes

2.5.1. Universities Superannuation Scheme

The HEA issued a letter dated 29th November, 2004 which conveyed “*consent to the introduction, on an administrative basis, of the draft schemes submitted by the universities in so far as they conform to the terms of the model schemes for non-commercial State Bodies*”. The new scheme will apply to all new staff appointed from 1st January, 2005. The letter also signalled the end to notional added years for appointments made to professional, technical or specialist posts in the public service on or after 1st December, 2004.

2.5.2. Funding of Pension Schemes

C.H.I.U. has continued to seek assurances from the HEA and the Department of Finance in relation to the responsibility for funding deficits of University Pension Schemes. Finance Officers in consultation with Alan Broxon of Irish Pensions Trust are currently in the process of compiling data to facilitate a formal presentation of the funding issues to the Department of Finance.

2.6. Fixed Term Work Act

C.H.I.U. has continued to pursue guidelines from HEA/DES on the implementation of the Fixed Term Work Act which came into effect on 1st July 2003. This legislation has significant implications for all fixed term workers who under the Act are entitled to the same benefits as comparable permanent employees.

The situation is particularly complex in relation to researchers employed on fixed term contracts. The complexity is exacerbated by the fact that funding for potential costs has not been provided for in most cases under existing contractual arrangements. The HR Officers Group is currently preparing a guidance document for staff involved in the recruitment of research staff.

No funding has yet been provided by the HEA in respect of the implementation of the Act. Cost estimates have been submitted to the HEA and amount to approximately €1.5 million for the sector for the period from 1st July, 2003 to 31st December, 2004. The primary costs relate to social welfare and pension entitlements. The HEA hope to meet with DES officials in the near future to discuss the cost implications arising from the Act.

2.7. *Nursing - Transfer of Midwifery and Paediatric Education to Third Level*

Negotiations with the Department of Health and Children in respect of the proposed transfer of Midwifery and Paediatric education to third level institutions (as applicable) are at an advanced stage. The following are the key developments:-

- 1) The Department accepted that the Midwifery and Paediatric programmes could not be transferred within the existing Nursing student quota. An additional student quota of 1,285 would be provided (undergraduate 1,000 and postgraduate 285).
- 2) The Department conceded that based on the additional number of students, capital funding for buildings would be provided. This has been agreed at €30,400 per additional student with the exception of TCD, whose capital funding was based on a lower, costed submission. In addition UCD reserved its position on this point subject to discussions with the Department on the likely number of postgraduate students required.
- 3) The Department sought efficiencies in relation to capital equipment. They argued equipment already purchased under previous deals could be re-used in both Midwifery and Paediatric nurse education. An amount of €3,978 has been agreed per Midwifery student and negotiations are ongoing in respect of Paediatric students.
- 4) The undergraduate fee for both courses is agreed to be the same fee as that applicable to the B.Sc General Nursing. Four of the five participating universities have agreed to this. TCD have sought an additional premium for the undergraduate Midwifery degree course and the Department have, without prejudice, agreed to meet with them on this. TCD are basing their claim on a different approach to clinical teaching.
- 5) The postgraduate cost for the purposes of the negotiations were the undergraduate cost plus a premium of 15%. Detailed costing of the postgraduate courses supported these amounts. The Department expressed concerns in respect of the cost of postgraduate courses, particularly in respect of students transferring from existing undergraduate degree courses. This may have implications for the transfer of postgraduate education to the universities. However the postgraduate fee for the full-time Midwifery and Paediatric post-graduate courses are agreed at €1,804.
- 6) Staff development and pension funding arrangements were agreed in line with previous arrangements for the transfer of general nursing.

In order for the transfer to be completed in time for the commencement of the 2005/06 academic year it was felt that the deal must be completed by the end of January. The decision of the Tánaiste in respect of the proposed transfer is awaited.

3. HEA Issues

3.1. *HEA Chairman*

Dr. Don Thornhill retired in mid-January 2005 as Chairman of the HEA and from the Civil Service. During his period as Secretary General of DES he oversaw major developments affecting the university sector including the White Paper on Education, the Universities Act 1997 and the Programme for Research in Third Level Institutions [PRTLII] and the establishment of IRCSET and IRCHSS. As Chairman of the HEA for the last seven years he worked in partnership with C.H.I.U. to develop and underpin the research role of Irish

universities. The indications are that the government intends to appoint the next Chairman on a part-time basis.

3.2. *Salary Flexibility*

The HEA issued a letter to university Heads seeking the agreement of the universities to an amendment to the Agreed Framework between universities and the HEA for Departures from Approved Levels of Remuneration, Fees, Allowances and Expenses for University Employees under Section 25(5)(a) of the Universities Act 1997.

3.3. *Code of Practice for the Governance of Third Level Institutions*

DES is seeking final views on the latest draft Code of Practice for the Governance of Third Level Institutions.

3.4. *HEA Quality Customer Service Plan*

In line with its obligations under Sustaining Progress, the HEA has prepared a draft Quality Customer Service Plan. It sets out the level of service the HEA proposes to provide to its customers and stakeholders. This draft plan is on the HEA's website and comments and observations from interested parties were invited. The plan is to be finalised in January 2005.

4. *OECD Report – Review of Higher Education in Ireland*

It is extremely disappointing that the OECD Report's recommendations for increased investment in Irish universities were ignored by government in making decisions on state expenditure in the 2005 Estimates and Budget. In response to pressure from C.H.I.U., Minister Hanafin made some positive comments about her commitment to action on the OECD Report in her Estimates statement. The media reported extensively on her efforts to secure provision for a reform fund for the implementation of OECD recommendations which so far have been unsuccessful.

Arrangements have yet to be made for the second Colloquium on Higher Education which the Minister proposed at her meeting with C.H.I.U. on 29th October, 2004. C.H.I.U. Chair wrote to the Minister on 24th November, 2004 urging the Minister to convene the Colloquium in December. P.Kelly, DES, wrote to C.H.I.U. on 2nd December, 2004 indicating that the Colloquium would be reconvened early in 2005 and seeking written observations on the 52 Recommendations in the OECD Report. C.H.I.U. Director indicated to DES that the submission of formal written responses to the recommendations by the parties to the Colloquium might not be conducive to creating a positive and flexible environment for a constructive dialogue in the Colloquium which would allow for the positions of each of the participating partners in the recommendations to be informed by views expressed by the other parties. It is likely that it will not be held until mid to late February.

The C.H.I.U. Working Group on the OECD Report held a further meeting on 15th December, 2004.

Professor Shattock, Rapporteur to the OECD Review Team, addressed a C.H.I.U. Conference on Irish Universities – *A Case for Reform* - held in UCC on 25th November, 2004.

Internal Reform: The Minister for Education and Science in making positive statements of support for reform on foot of the OECD Report has tended to refer to specific universities and their reform proposals. Media coverage of university reform has also concentrated on the same universities. Other universities have expressed concern that they have not been given credit or recognition for similar reforms that they were already being implementing without internal opposition.

IFUT issued a response to the OECD Report on 1st December, 2004.

The Minister for Education and Science issued invitations on 13th January to university heads to attend “*an international colloquium for leading national and international figures from the worlds of education, business and industry to be held in Dublin on 24th and 25th January, 2005*”. The Colloquium was hosted jointly by DES and the OECD.

5. Access

The HEA and the National Access Office held a conference “*Achieving Equity of Access to Higher Education*” in Kilkenny on 6th and 7th December, 2004. At the conference Minister Hanafin launched the National Access Office’s Action Plan 2005-2007, [available on the HEA website at www.heai.ie/index.cfm/page/news/category/134section/details/id75]. The Plan sets out six practical goals for ensuring significant progress in achieving equity of access to higher education in Ireland. Briefly they are –

- i. Articulate and communicate reasons why equity of access is important,
- ii. Establish a national framework of policies and initiatives to widen access,
- iii. Create new and expanded routes for access,
- iv. Develop more diverse teaching and lecturing strategies in higher education,
- v. Ensure adequate financial support for learners and providers,
- vi. Develop a robust and equitable evaluation framework for widening access.

The conference was opened with an address by Dr. Don Thornhill and Professor Jim Browne made a presentation on C.H.I.U.’s proposed initiative on access.

6. Lifelong Learning

It had been intended that the Working Group on LLL would be provided with part-time executive support. It is now envisaged that the executive to be recruited for the C.H.I.U. Registrars Group would support the LLL Working Group. Information provided by colleges and universities on current provision for lifelong learning has yet to be analysed and coordinated.

The OECD has published a report co-financing Lifelong Learning – Toward a Systematic Approach. The report is in four chapters divided as follows:

1. An overview of the economic and financial factors that need to be addressed in implementing systematic approaches to lifelong learning an examination of the role that co-financing can play in addressing them.
2. Description of the goals and main features of recent developments in co-financing strategies and review of results.
3. Report on conference in Bonn in 2003 on systemic approaches to co-financing LLL.
4. Empirical and policy issues that need to be addressed.

7. International Students/Services

7.1. *China*

The Taoiseach accompanied by four government Ministers undertook Ireland's largest trade and education mission to China from 17th to 22nd January. The Minister for Education and Science encouraged strong representation by the universities in the visit and the representation included Dr. F. von Prondzynski, DCU; Dr. H. Brady, UCD; Dr. G. Wrixon, UCC; Dr. J. Hughes, NUIM; Prof. J. Grimson, TCD; Prof. J. Browne, NUIG. Mr. P. Teahon also participated and it was hoped that during the visit the importance of the universities to building Irish/Chinese relationships and to the development of Ireland as a knowledge society would be strongly reinforced for the Taoiseach and his Ministers.

A briefing note prepared by the Observatory on borderless higher education published in July 2003 described the main features of the Chinese higher education plus the regulation of foreign activity. It warned that in a country moving from autocracy to rule of law, consistent interpretation and application of the law was not always forthcoming.

7.2. *Proposal for an Irish University Campus in Malaysia*

The Irish Ambassador to Malaysia forwarded to C.H.I.U. a proposal from a Malaysian company concerning the possible establishment of an Irish University Campus in Malaysia. The Ambassador asked that C.H.I.U. would examine the proposal which he confirmed was from a highly reputable source. A preliminary meeting has been arranged for a representative of the C.H.I.U. Registrars Group to meet with the proposer on the occasion of a visit of the Medical Consortium to Malaysia in January and he will report back to the Registrars' Group meeting on 31st January.

7.3. *Cross-Border Higher Education*

The Observatory on borderless higher education published an analysis of current trends policy strategies and future scenarios in November 2004. It was prepared by experts from the Centre for Education Research and Innovation, OECD Paris. The paper analyses trends in different forms of cross-border higher education: student mobility and programme and institution mobility. It describes four policy approaches to cross-border higher education: mutual understanding; skilled migration; revenue-generating; and capacity building. It also discusses the policy instruments that countries use to implement these approaches. Finally, it presents

three future scenarios for cross-border higher education: the Status Quo scenario; the Competition scenario and the Emerging Economies scenario. The purpose in presenting the scenarios is to stimulate debates within the higher education community about the preferred direction on cross-border higher education.

7.4. *Internationalisation of Irish Education Services – Report of the Interdepartmental Working Group*

The Minister for Education and Science published this long-awaited report in December 2004. A summary of the main findings was provided in C.H.I.U. Review [04/4], para. 4.5.1. In considering the report the C.H.I.U. Registrars agreed that the universities should co-operate more closely in recruiting international students. In that regard, an informal meeting of C.H.I.U. Registrars and International Officers is being organised.

The Department of Justice Equality and Law Reform has determined that with effect from 18th April, 2005 new students from outside the European Unit, the European Economic Area or Switzerland, registering with the Garda National Immigration Bureau, will not be permitted access to employment unless they are attending a full-time course of at least one year's duration leading to a qualification recognised by the Minister for Education and Science. DES is currently compiling a list of approved courses for this purpose, and is inviting applications from all providers of courses for international non-EEA students including universities for inclusion of courses on approved lists. Applications must be received no later than close of business on 16th February, 2005.

7.5. *Australia*

7.5.1. *AVCC*

In response to invitation to C.H.I.U. to visit Australia, AVCC were informed that C.H.I.U. Council was interested in organising a visit for Autumn 2005. AVCC General Secretary will visit Ireland at the end of April 2005 and a number of Australian Vice-Chancellors will visit in mid-July 2005. AVCC has suggested the week commencing 17th October, 2005 for the C.H.I.U. visit.

7.5.2. *IDP Australia*

IDP, which employed 800 staff in 100 offices including 160 in Australia is reported as having shut its offices in Britain, Brazil, Brunei, Columbia Mexico, South Africa, Sweden and the USA [accounted for only 6% of students recruited]. Many staff have been laid off in Australia and overseas. Some 10 senior managers quit over the last year. IDP's market share has reduced with increasing numbers of foreign students using the internet or approaching universities directly about enrolling. IDP is being restructured and its future will be discussed at the AVCC's next meeting.

8. *Communications / Lobbying*

As mentioned above, C.H.I.U. representatives had an impromptu meeting with Minister Hanafin prior to the announcement of the Estimates. The Minister declined the request for a more formal meeting prior to the Budget.

Despite the intensive lobbying of Ministers and top public servants, and the supportive findings and recommendations of Reports – *the OECD Review of Higher Education in Ireland and the HEA Financial Position of Irish Universities* – the Estimates allocation to universities represented a 3.5% cut in university funding. This compounds the inadequacy of the capital funding recommendations of the Kelly Report. While there continues to be regular media coverage of university reform and funding issues, there is a need to reassess sectoral communications/lobbying strategy with a view to securing the investment in universities needed if the sector is realistically to aspire to meeting the government’s objective of being in the top rank of the OECD.

It is important that the HEA be revamped as soon as possible to be an effective, proactive and vocal advocate for higher education. The National Council for Tertiary Education Research and Innovation proposed by the OECD or similar body is needed to provide a vehicle for developing cross-departmental support for the key role of universities in underpinning Ireland as a knowledge society.

A major problem which it has proved extremely difficult to circumvent has been the relatively low priority attached to universities by the last two Ministers for Education and Science and top management in DES. This has been a key determinant in the cumulative reduction in state investment in universities over the last number of years. In the absence of DES support, any lobbying of Ministers and public servants of other Departments or criticism of cuts, is perceived to be self-serving or mere whinging.

9. Online Learning

Surprisingly, the OECD Report on Higher Education in Ireland is silent on the online learning challenges facing Irish universities. The Observatory on Borderless Higher Education has published two briefing notes recently on the results of a survey conducted on online learning in Commonwealth universities. For the purposes of the survey, online learning meant various forms of e-learning on campus as well as online distance learning. The survey found that while there were positive trends, online learning had yet to significantly permeate mainstream provision in the majority of universities with incremental change in most institutions being the norm. Other findings include:-

- The incremental shift across respondents towards greater online presence at course/programme level, and the still small-scale of majority online provision in most instances,
- The number of non-resident international students on such programmes remains small,
- Online learning has had the greatest impact on campus rather than on distance learning.
- 'Distance' online provision was more likely to be postgraduate than undergraduate and in most institutions was concentrated in a handful of disciplinary areas (notably business and IT).

- There remain significant disparities between strategy and infrastructure development on the one hand, and impact at programme level and in terms of the scale of non-'traditional classroom' centric activity on the other.
- While strategies are relatively straightforward to write, and infrastructure relatively quick to purchase and install, significant impact on an activity as complex, tradition-bound and semi-conscious as learning will (from the point of view of both faculty and student) take much longer to realise.
- There was further evidence of widespread institution-wide implementation of an LMS, and the increasing dominance of Blackboard and WebCT the number of students on 'distance' online programmes suggested peripheral status in most institutions.
- Overall, in terms of scale and scope of online development, Australia appeared to have an edge over Canada, the UK and South Africa.

10. International Developments

10.1. Bologna Process

National teams of "Bologna Promoters" were brought together for a two-day meeting in Brussels on 18th-19th November, 2004. These groups, supported financially by the European Commission, comprise a range of national higher education experts, of which a large proportion are academics. C.H.I.U. representative is Dr. Padraig Walsh, DCU. The role of the Promoters is to disseminate knowledge within their country about Bologna as a whole and its specific action lines. EUA President Eric Froment made a presentation in the introductory plenary of the meeting and emphasised the importance of universities fully understanding the implications and opportunities of the Bologna Process in order to implement the reforms effectively.

Many national teams have begun to organise themselves and are seeking additional European level support for their work. EUA took note of what are considered to be the main needs in this process of implementing Bologna reforms and is looking at ways in which EUA can help support this development.

10.2 ECTS

In conjunction with the Bologna Promoters meeting, the Commission awarded the first ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System) Label to the 11 institutions which have completed the introduction of ECTS in all degree programmes. Label Holding Institutions will receive funding to extend the use of ECTS to Lifelong Learning. EUA member institutions which received the label are: Technische Universitt Graz (AT), Universiteit Antwerpen (BE), Universtiteit Gent (BE), Universidad de Deusto (ES), Lappeenranta University of Technology (FI), Agricultural University of Wroclaw (PL), University of Aveiro (PT), and Universidad de Minho (PT).

The DES Bologna Steering Group has finalised a National Report 2004 – 2005 on the Bologna Process.

10.3. EU Commissioners

EUA has welcomed the two new Commissioners for Education and Research and looked forward to working with them in the coming years. They will both be invited to the EUA convention in Glasgow in March to present the latest developments in EU Education and Research policy.

Education: Jan Figel is the new Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Multilingualism. He identified during his hearing at the European Parliament, greater investment in education and training and the mutual recognition of qualifications and skills as key factors in developing a dynamic knowledge-based economy. He also highlighted the need to improve mobility, both between geographical regions and sectors of activity. He is committed to a discussion in 2005 on the importance of universities and to the Erasmus Mundus programme as a means of enhancing Europe's attractiveness for foreign students and professors.

Research: Janez Potocnik, Commissioner for Science and Research from Slovenia, emphasised to MEPs the central role of science for the economic development of Europe. His key priority will be the 7th Research Framework Programme (FP7) where "simplification, rationalisation, co-ordination and co-operation" are his objectives. A supporter of the proposed Commission budget increase for research, Potocnik affirmed his commitment to achieving the target of increasing research investment to 3% of GDP for each member state.

10.4. Renewal of Agreement on Transatlantic Scientific Cooperation

Based upon the agreement which expired at the end of 2003, the EU and the US have decided to renew their scientific and technological co-operation agreement for the next five years. These activities include coordinated and joint research projects, task forces and studies in the areas of environment, biomedicine and health, non-nuclear energy, telematics and science and technology policy, as well as management, training and mobility of scientists.

The European Commission and the US Department of State have established a Joint Consultative Group to oversee the transatlantic agreement. Under the European Commission's 5th Framework Programme (FP5), approximately 140 joint research projects were commissioned while under the 6th Framework Programme (FP6), over 700 joint research projects have now been proposed.

10.5. Asia-Link Programme: 2005 Call for Proposals

The European Commission has published a fourth Call for Proposals for the Asia-Link Programme, with two deadlines in 2005: 10 February 2005 and 19 May 2005. The objective of the Asia-Link Programme is to foster regional and multilateral networking between higher education institutions in Europe, and those in developing countries in Asia.

10.6. EUA Convention

For EUA the central event of 2005 will be its Third Convention of European Higher Education Institutions to be held in Glasgow, 31st March – 2nd April, 2005, a new President and Board for 2005-2009 will be elected during the General Assembly [31st March].

In line with the Salamanca 2001 and Graz 2003 meetings, the Glasgow Convention will be the opportunity for higher education institutions across Europe to agree upon a formal position on their priorities for the next phase of the Bologna Process and to look at the wider role of higher education institutions in the creation of a knowledge society in Europe.

The Convention workgroup discussions will focus around the following 5 main themes:

- Core values for European universities in responding to evolving societal needs?
- How can universities enhance their research mission?
- How to implement sustainable Bologna reforms in higher education institutions?
- How can institutions improve quality in European higher education?
- How to finance European higher education?

Confirmed speakers for this important event include Jan Figel, European Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Multilingualism; David Ward, President, American Council of Education (ACE); Goolam Mohamedbhai, President, International Association of Universities (IAU); and Heikki Suomalainen, UNICE. Speakers from Latin America and China will also be present.

The Convention will allow university leaders to exchange views with colleagues from across Europe as well as with students and a variety of different stakeholders including governments/ministries, employers, industry, trade unions, and other key partners. It will provide a unique opportunity for participants to discuss latest developments in the Bologna process and to participate in the formulation of a common position which will both help to define the priorities of the Association for the next two years and influence the political process itself [www.EUAconvention.org].

The Convention conclusions will provide the input for the Glasgow Declaration to be endorsed by the EUA Council on 15th April, 2005 and presented to the European Ministers of Education on 19th May, 2005 in Bergen.

10.7. *EUA Quality Culture Project*

Forty-five European higher education institutions have been selected to take part in this project run by the EUA. The aim of the project is to develop internal quality culture in institutions: participating institutions will work together through six thematic networks. The EUA Quality Culture project is funded in part by the European Commission through the Socrates programme.

Six thematic networks of 7 to 9 institutions will work together on specific themes: research strategy and industrial partnerships; leadership; implementing Bologna reforms; teaching and learning: implementing learning outcomes; women in universities: research, teaching and leadership; and programme evaluations: joint degrees. While networks will work on their specific themes, they will also draw generic recommendations for implementing a quality culture at the level of a whole institution.

UCC is participating under the teaching and learning theme, and DIT under the Bologna Reforms theme.

11. Qualifications Framework

11.1. NQAI

The NQAI adopted a document entitled “*Principles and Operational Guidelines for the implementation of a National Approach to Credit in Irish Higher Education and Training*” on 25th November, 2004. A copy of the document is on the NQAI website [www.nqai.ie].

Representatives of C.H.I.U. Registrars’ Group met with NQAI representatives on 19th January, 2005 to discuss university awards not already covered by the National Framework of Qualifications, e.g., there is currently no award called “Diploma” in the Framework. Arising from the meeting it was clear that there is a need for universities to compile a list of awards they make that are not covered by the Framework document and this has been advised to the Registrars’ Group with a suggested table format for listing the awards.

It is expected that the Registrars’ Group at their meeting on 31st January, 2005 will clear the draft C.H.I.U. document on Universities and the National Framework of Qualifications.

11.2. Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area

A report by the Bologna Working Group on the Framework of Qualification of the European Higher Education Area was presented at the Danish Bologna seminar held in Copenhagen on 13/14 January, 2005. The report concerns the elaboration of qualifications frameworks called for by the European Minister in the Berlin Communiqué. It makes recommendations and proposals for an overarching Framework of Qualifications for the EHEA. The Working Group included Mr. Ian McKenna, DES and also S. Ó Foghlú, CEO, NQAI, Bryan Maguire, NQAI and S. Ó Puirseil, HETAC.

12. Copyright

The Plenary meeting on 16th November, 2004 considered a report from the C.H.I.U. Copyright Working Group and agreed that the universities would pay a licence fee of €3 per fte for the current academic year. The DIT, CODIT and CHOICE, participants in the Working Group, were informed of the universities decision and asked to advise their constituencies in the hope that there would be unanimity. Pending clarification of the position of these groups C.H.I.U. did not advise ICLA formally of the universities’ decision but in the meantime a number of universities have made payment on the basis of €3 per fte to ICLA. Advice on issues raised with C.H.I.U. solicitor has been received and circulated to the Working Group.

13. Citizenship Through Education

13.1. Council of Europe: 2005 – European Year of Citizenship through Education

The Council of Europe has proclaimed the year 2005 European Year of Citizenship through Education: “Learning and living Democracy.” The goal is to draw attention to how crucial education is, both formal and non-formal as well as in a life-long learning perspective, to the development of active citizenship and in fostering democratic culture.

The general objective of the "Year" is to bridge policy and practice by empowering policy makers and practitioners at all levels to set up and develop sustainable programmes for education for democratic citizenship (EDC) and human rights education (HRE). Finally, it is not intended to be a campaign which will finish at the end of 2005, but rather a political framework for actions to be taken at the level of member states, as the beginning of a sustainable process which is expected to continue.

13.2. Civic Engagement

Dr. Iain MacLaren, NUIG, made a presentation to the Plenary meeting on 16th November, 2004 entitled “*Reinvigorating the Civic Mission of the University*”. He outlined initiatives that NUIG had taken to promote wider civic engagement at the level of individual students, courses and the institution as a whole. He drew attention to Campus Compact [www.compact.org] a US-based body which provides training, support and evaluation for university initiatives in this area.

14. Quality Assurance

14.1. IUQB Strategic Plan

The Council discussed the IUQB Strategic Plan which provides for the following:

- **Establishing IUQB as a legal entity:** Advice was being sought whether forming IUQB as a company limited by guarantee and having charitable status would be the most appropriate approach.
- **Independence of IUQB:** Independence of the Board was crucial to the national and international credibility of IUQB as a guarantor of quality in the university sector. To this end the membership would be restructured:
 - to increase the number of non-university members (seven) to nine or ten.
 - university representation (7) to be nominated by C.H.I.U. to include at least two current Presidents but could include former Heads and Registrars.
- **Executive of IUQB:** to be a subcommittee of the board to be called the Management Committee. Current executive to be reconstituted as a C.H.I.U.QI Committee.
- **Establish Sustainable Funding:** A substantial budget would be needed to which the universities would be required to make significant contributions. A draft budget prepared indicated funding of the order of €67,000 to €99,000 from the universities when IUQB was fully operational with a large contribution required from the HEA.

- **Staffing:** Permanent CEO to be appointed as per job specification. Current CEO to retire on 31 January, 2005. Dr. Lee's secondment to be extended and further staff as set out in draft budget to be appointed.

The Council agreed with the overall proposals and that actions to implement the proposals be taken as soon as possible.

14.2. IUQB Operations

14.2.1. Third Annual International Conference

The third annual international conference of the IUQB was held in the National University of Ireland Maynooth on 28/29 January 2005. The conference, entitled "Engaging a Diverse Student Population – Universities, Communities and the Quality of the Student Experience" was organised by Saranne Magennis, Quality Promotion Officer, NUIM. It attracted a large participation and included keynote speakers from Australia, Ireland, New Zealand and the United States.

Following a reception on the evening of the 28th the IUQB booklet [at 14.2.2. below] was launched by Judge Bryan McMahon, Chairman of the IUQB.

14.2.2. Sectoral Projects

Organisation of PhD Programmes: As noted above this project came to successful conclusion with the publication of the booklet "Good Practice in the Organisation of PhD Programmes in Irish Universities" launched on 28 January 2005.

The final booklet was drafted following extensive modifications to the pre-final draft document presented at the conference "Strength and Numbers" on Postgraduate research training organised by the Conference of Heads of Irish Universities on 10 November 2004, from which a lot of constructive feedback was obtained. In addition the draft was reviewed in light of feedback obtained from a focus group held on the 17th November 2004 with PhD students representative of all seven Irish universities and finally from the feedback obtained from several experienced academics in the sciences and humanities both in Ireland and overseas who were invited to review the draft.

The EUA has invited the IUQB to distribute the booklet at the forthcoming seminar, "Doctoral Programmes for the European Knowledge Society" which takes place in Salzburg on February 3-5, 2005.

Student Support Services: The international conference will take place on March 11th 2005. This will be followed by the publication of the booklet of best practice.

Teaching and Learning in Mathematics: The proposed national conference was replaced by a meeting of the national experts on the 11th December 2004 held in conjunction with the "Second Irish Symposium for Undergraduate Mathematics Education ISUME 2" held on 10/11 December 2004 in UCD. Agreement was reached on the statistical data required for the interim report. The data is currently being collated.

Strategic Planning in Academic Departments: Each university has chosen two academic departments to participate in this project. Between the 7th and the 15th of December 2004 the facilitator Professor John Davies, accompanied by the CEO/Programme Manager spent a half day in each university. They met with representatives of the chosen departments and senior university officials and held intensive discussions on the aims, objectives, expected outcomes of the project and a suggested methodology and time-table. The coherence of strategic planning at departmental, faculty and institutional levels was stressed.

Work is advancing on the projects '*Improving Teaching and Learning*', '*Academic Workloads*' and '*Institutional Research*'.

14.2.3 CEO Post

Professor Don McQuillan retires from the post of CEO of the IUQB on the 31st January 2005. An advertisement seeking applications for the full-time post was distributed in December 2004. Interviews are to take place on the 14th February 2005 and it is hoped that the successful candidate will be able to take up the position shortly thereafter.

14.3. EUA Review of QA Procedures.

The EUA Review Teams have completed the draft Evaluation Reports on the seven universities and on the sector. Following the correction of factual errors the final reports will be published as described in the terms of reference.

Liam Connellan of the IUQB met with the High Level Reference Panel on 20 January 2005 and made a presentation entitled "The IUQB Strategic Plan and the EUA Sectoral Report". Mr. Connellan was accompanied by the CEO.

14.4. Irish Higher Education Quality Network

A meeting of the IHEQN was held on 9 November 2004 in the DIT. It was agreed that the Qualifications Authority would host a new IHEQN page on its site. There was discussion of a *European Commission Recommendation on further European cooperation in quality assurance in higher education*. There was agreement that the proposals on the 'Five steps to achieve mutual recognition' present no real difficulty. This is also true of the proposal on the establishment of 'A European Registrar of Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agencies' provided that the relevant Irish agencies/bodies are included in the Register. There are difficulties with the Commission's proposals on 'University autonomy on choice of agency' (2.D) and 'Member State competence to accept assessments and draw consequences' (2.E), as they run counter to a number of the provisions in existing national legislation on quality assurance. The Irish reservations were expressed at a recent Council of Ministers' meeting, and it is understood that German and UK officials have taken a similar position. There was a consensus among the members of the IHEQN that allowing higher education institutions 'the freedom to choose an agency which meets their needs, provided that this agency figures in the Register and is recognised as being independent and trustworthy' is a bridge too far, and that it contained the inherent danger of reducing quality assurance to little more than a commercial activity.

14.5. Consultation /Networking

- The Programme Manager attended the C.H.I.U. Conference “Strength and Numbers” on Postgraduate research training on 10/11 November 2004.
- The Programme Manager attended a meeting in Stockholm on 22 November 2004 on the ‘The Mirror for Postgraduate Students’ survey which is being organized by the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education.
- The CEO was an invited participant at the Second Roundtable Conference on University Autonomy organised by the ASEAN-EU University Network Programme (AUNP) and held in Barcelona on 12-15 January 2005

15. HEAnet

In the light of responses to the Sonas and Molloy reports on HEAnet and ITnet, HEA had decided to examine how the integration of ITnet with HEAnet and related changes to the Board of HEAnet might be achieved without formal amendments to the HEAnet constitution being necessary. Agreement was reached between C.H.I.U., CODIT, HEA and DES representatives at a meeting on 15th November, 2004. Actions agreed are as follows:-

- (i) HEA to discuss with the Dept. of Enterprise, Trade and Employment the current and possible future role of their nominee to the Board. This was seen as a possible means of getting an external eminent person appointed to the Board who could act as an independent chairperson.
- (ii) Memorandum and Articles of Association of HEAnet allow the Directors to appoint one further Director. All sides agreed that a proposal should be made to the Board to make such an appointment and that the appointee should come from the Institute of Technology sector. (Most likely to be someone with a financial background).
- (iii) C.H.I.U. representatives to review as the opportunity arises, the profile of university appointees to the Board, with a view to broadening their representation to include e.g. financial, research and academic expertise.
- (iv) HEA to request HEAnet to prepare a costed implementation plan to manage the transfer of the Institutes of Technology from ITnet to HEAnet. (It was hoped that this plan could be completed by end January 2005).
- (v) HEA to request HEAnet to put sub-committee structure in place, as recommended in the Molloy and Sonas reports.
- (vi) Subject to (i), (ii) and (iv) above being in place, DES to request ITnet to cease operation and facilitate the integration of its services into HEAnet. The aim is that this would be achieved by end June 2005.

16. C.H.I.U.

16.1. Changes to C.H.I.U. Constitution

C.H.I.U. Council agreed the changes outlined in the C.H.I.U. Review [04/4] at its meeting on 16th November, 2004. They include a change of name to “Irish Universities Association”, the appointment of an independent chairman, and the retitling of the Head of the charring university

as President, IUA. C.H.I.U. solicitors have drafted the required changes to the Articles and Memorandum of Association.

16.2. Accommodation

Agreement of the Council to rent No. 48 Merrion Square has been conveyed to the NUI.

16.3. Staff Changes

Mr. Michael Casey has taken up the position of Assistant Director (Finance and Administration) with effect from the beginning of January 2005.

16.4. C.H.I.U. Groups

16.4.1. Registrars' Group: In line with agreement at the last C.H.I.U. meetings an advertisement for a part-time post, Assistant Director [Academic Affairs], to provide executive support for C.H.I.U. Registrars, was circulated to the universities.

16.4.2. Human Resource Officers Group: In response to a letter from the Chair of the Group, the Council agreed that it would be prepared to consider a formal, detailed proposal for the group on the need for central support to implement a sectoral agenda on human resource issues.

16.4.3. New Groups: The Council did not favour formalising a group representing the Deans of Engineering as a C.H.I.U. group. The Council agreed that a group representing Directors of Student Services could operate as a sub-group reporting to the C.H.I.U. Registrars' Group.

17. Software Industry Training

Professor Joe Morris, DCU, has been nominated to represent C.H.I.U. on the Software Study Implementation Group established by FÁS in response to the recommendations of the Software Industry Training Study Report prepared by McIvor Consulting.

18. Teaching Council

DES is in the process of establishing the Teaching Council as an independent statutory agency. The Council will provide primary and post-primary teachers with a significant degree of professional autonomy and self regulation. Section 8 of the Teaching Council Act 2001 prescribes that the Council will comprise 37 members two of whom are to be nominated jointly by the seven universities NCAD, St. Catherine's Sion Hill and St. Angela's Sligo. With the agreement of DES C.H.I.U. is coordinating the nomination process.

19. Medical Education

An independent analysis of the cost of undergraduate medical education and training in Ireland has been prepared by Indecon International Economic Consultants for the HEA. The overall aim of the study was to establish a baseline description of the current funding of undergraduate medical education in Ireland including undergraduate university education clinical training; and

the Intern year. The report which has been finalised provides estimates of the overall cost of medical education and training.

20. Ombudsman and Universities

Universities are being included by the Department of Finance in new areas to be covered by an extended remit for the Ombudsman. DES has been asked for urgent advice as to what specific types of university activity should be included in, or excluded from, the Ombudsman's remit. DES is seeking views from C.H.I.U. as a matter of urgency. Plenary Members have been asked for views, with the intention of discussing the matter at the meeting on 31st January, 2005.

21. Plagiarism

The C.H.I.U. Registrars agreed at the Group meeting on 16th November, 2004 that ideally the seven universities should purchase the plagiarism prevention service offered by Turnitin.

22. NCCA – Proposals for Senior Cycle Reform

Views expressed recently by Minister Hanafin were portrayed in the media as being somewhat negative to aspects of proposals for the future development of senior cycle education being prepared by the NCCA. Detailed advice to the Minister has not yet been finalised by the NCCA. The Registrars' Group has arranged with Dr. A. Looney, CEO NCCA, for a briefing on proposals at their meeting on 31st January, 2005.