

## C.H.I.U. Review [04/3] for C.H.I.U. Meetings in TCD on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2004

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## **C.H.I.U. Review [04/3] for C.H.I.U. Meetings in TCD on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2004**

### **1. Research**

#### **1.1. *Science Foundation Ireland***

SFI are acutely aware of the need to show to government that the €35m allocated to them over the period of the NDP (2000-2006) is being spent and wisely invested. In addition, some of their funded researchers (Principal Investigators and Fellows) have been raising a number of issues of concern. Five principal issues appear to be involved:

The SFI response to this situation has been to propose a new procedure that would remove flexibility from the PI's in managing the programme budget (no transfer between budget categories and between years). There would be little possibility for PI's to run over the allotted contract period coupled with the requirement to start the project within 5 days of contract signature. By introducing this new proposal on overheads SFI hopes address issues that have arisen.

The universities would be happy to work with SFI to find solutions regarding new arrangements for terms and conditions of awards and overheads. C.H.I.U. has worked well with SFI, especially in the first rounds when introducing new funding programmes and agreeing terms and conditions.

#### **1.1.1. *Research Overheads***

SFI has recently put forward a proposal concerning the allocation, payment and channeling of overheads that challenges current practice in the universities. There has been inadequate consultation with the universities and indeed the other funding agencies (HEA, HRB, EI etc.). It seems to set aside conclusions and recommendations of the report that was agreed by all stakeholders (government departments, funding agencies and research performers). The Interdepartmental Committee on S&T, chaired by the Tánaiste, endorsed the final report in June 2003. The new changes were announced by SFI at a meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> April and simultaneously communicated in writing to the Heads. A number of SFI funded researchers have in the past raised issues with SFI and their concerns influenced this new proposal. However, having seen this proposal, all senior SFI researchers in the universities do not agree with the new proposal on overheads.

The issues have been discussed in detail by the Finance Officers Group and at a subsequent joint meeting between the VP/Deans Research and Finance Officers. It is very important to underline that the new proposal is not simply a change in operational procedures but would alter fundamentally how overheads are defined, allocated and distributed. The universities' distribution of funds would be prescribed and the HEA have clearly indicated in their letter to SFI that the proposal would impact on their funding. A subgroup with members from the VPDOR and UCFOG groups has been working to arrive at a common position on this key issue for the universities.

#### **1.1.2. *SFI Fellows & Infrastructure***

Early this year a group of SFI Fellows wrote a paper on Research Infrastructure in Ireland. This included physical infrastructure, overheads, salaries and term of employment. As a result and in consultation with SFI the RIA has proposed a one day workshop on this topic,

“Research Infrastructure Deficits; Myth or Reality?” (<http://www.ria.ie/committees/lifesciences/index.html>). The RIA is also planning to organise a further meeting in September on the same topic. It should be noted that SFI Fellows who prepared the report have not been in direct contact with their own institutions on these issues. The use of SFI as a “neutral” body seems to be informed by a US view of the role of an academy on policy formulation that the RIA does not fulfill.

### **1.1.3. Basic Research Grants**

Out of a total of 650 applications 120 proposals have been selected for funding giving a success rate of 18%. The breakdown is as follows; University College Dublin with 34 approvals; Trinity College Dublin received 31; University of Limerick 11; University College Cork and NUI Galway shared 10 awards each. Dublin City University received eight awards. NUI Maynooth and the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland shared six awards each. Four awards were made to researchers based at the Dublin Institute of Technology, Institute of Technology Carlow, Cork Institute of Technology and the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies. SFI will pay an overhead of 30% on these contracts.

It is important to note that SFI has introduced, without consultation, new contract procedures that depart radically from past practice by Enterprise Ireland and IRCSET. For 2004 the grants will begin in mid June and will terminate 3 years later. There can be no extension beyond the end of contract date. This is at least 3 months before PhD students can start and will limit their funding to less than 3 years. This is an example of using a method to solve an internal SFI budgetary problem with complete disregard for the researchers they fund.

### **1.1.4. Electronic Submission**

SFI is proposing to introduce an electronic submission procedure. However it seems that SFI Officers have not discussed this new proposal with the HRB or IRCSET both of which have electronic submission procedures in place. The universities want to see a single system that could be used by all agencies.

### **1.2. Research Strategy**

The Research Strategy policy that was approved for circulation at the Council meeting in January has been widely discussed by the academic community as part of the consultation process. In order to ensure that the Arts Humanities and Social Sciences are taken fully into account, the VPDOR Group agreed to form a working group with representatives from each university to help expand the scope of the policy. This group met in April and the strategy is being modified in the light of these discussions. The output from the IUQB expert meeting on PhD training will also be incorporated into the strategy.

It is important to note that a similar exercise is taking place at European level coordinated by the European Commission through the Mobility Steering Group. There is currently underway a process to create a *Researcher's Charter* and *Code of Conduct for Researchers*. Both the Commission and other countries (notably Belgium and Israel) are studying our approach in Ireland.

### **1.3. EU Irish Presidency 2004**

#### **1.3.1. CREST (Scientific and Technical Research Committee) and Joint Research and Atomic Questions Working Group Meetings, Galway, 31 March - 2 April 2004**

The CREST Committee is the scientific advisory committee to the European Council and the Commission. Its membership is composed of the senior officials responsible for R&D policy in each of the Member States, candidate and associate countries. Currently, the main mandate of the Committee is the coordination of national research activities among the Member States. Issues of co-ordination of national policies are on the CREST agenda, in addition to the Research Framework Programme (the main EU instrument for research funding). The European Commission's Director General for Research, Mr Achilleas Mitsos, chairs CREST meetings.

Dr. Conor O'Carroll was invited to attend CREST as C.H.I.U. has had a major input to a forthcoming directive on opening Europe's borders to researchers from around the world. We have been successful in having the Commission redefine the term "researcher" in order to encompass the broadest possible definition. C.H.I.U. is working with the Departments of Enterprise and Justice ensure that this will be quickly implemented in Ireland. This will make Irish universities far more competitive in attracting researchers and their families to Ireland.

#### **1.3.2. Forthcoming Dutch Presidency – "Brain Gain" European Conference, The Hague, September 29-30 2004.**

This conference will focus on European and national initiatives to encourage greater mobility of researchers (<http://www.braingain-instruments.nl/>). Dr. Conor O'Carroll will give a presentation on how Ireland and in particular the universities are attracting and retaining researchers.

#### **1.3.3. Barcelona Target (3% GDP on R&D 2010)**

Three working groups were established in 2003 by the Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment to develop an action plan for Ireland. The Group, chaired by C. O'Carroll, has been looking at the 3% Target from the perspective of public investment in R&D. There have been long delays on the final report due to inactivity in Forfás.

### **1.4. IRCHSS**

The Minister for Education and Science has appointed 5 new members to the Humanities Council.

**Professor Roy Green**, Dean, Faculty of Commerce, National University of Ireland, Galway

**Dr. Margaret Kelleher**, Department of English, National University of Ireland, Maynooth

**Professor Malcolm MacLachlan**, Associate Professor of Psychology, Trinity College Dublin

**Dr. Rory O'Donnell**, Director, National Economic and Social Council

**Professor Patrick O'Donovan**, Professor and Head of Department of French, University College Cork

**Dr. Helen Russell**, Research Officer, Economic and Social Research Institute Dublin

Current member Dr. Maurice Bric has been appointed as Chairman.

### **1.5. *All Island Research Portal – Expertise Ireland***

The portal was launched in the South West (Cork) on 29<sup>th</sup> April and there was a European launch by the Tanaiste on 25<sup>th</sup> May. There are over 2700 profiles now available through the portal. The current status of the portal is as follows: all nine universities and DIT have placed staff expertise data on the portal DCU (358), UCD (535), NUI Maynooth (74) and QUB (332), UCC (214), UL (97), NUI-Galway (11), TCD (35), UU (521) and DIT (536).

### **1.6. *EU Sixth Framework Programme***

#### **1.6.1. *Human Resources & Mobility Programme – Marie Curie***

The Marie Curie Programme has 12 separate schemes and C.H.I.U. Research Office was very successful with a particular activity where 6 out of 7 Irish proposals were funded (one of these from industry). The Research Office has carried out a targeted campaign this year and estimate that there were 30-40 proposals for the May deadline. C.H.I.U. worked with 14 companies and 20 academic research groups in preparing proposals (promoting, planning and reviewing). The overall success rate was 40% last year and we expect an average rate of about 30% this year. This is an extraordinary success rate for the Framework Programme and we hope to capitalise on this with the large number of Irish proposals submitted this year. Working with Irish indigenous and multinational industries C.H.I.U. is demonstrating that the universities can provide a better service than Enterprise Ireland.

#### **1.6.2 *European Network of Mobility Centres***

Siobhan Harkin, C.H.I.U. Research Office, is in final stage of contract negotiation terms for CAIRDE – the new Mobility Centre and Network for Ireland, which is expected to begin operations in June 2004. The EC contribution is €200K for 3 years and will fund the manning of a new office and training for university personnel to provide advice to international researchers coming to Ireland. C.H.I.U. intends to hire a project manager in July to run the CAIRDE office.

## **2. *University Funding***

### **2.1 *HEA Recurrent Funding Model Review***

Following the presentation by UCFOG Chair to the Plenary on 5<sup>th</sup> April, it was agreed that C.H.I.U. would write to the HEA to confirm the universities' desire for a revised funding model and to seek a meeting to discuss concerns about principles and assumptions which would underlie such a model. It was agreed that a Group would be established to meet with the HEA. This Group is scheduled to meet on 14<sup>th</sup> June in TCD. The HEA is holding a Workshop on 22<sup>nd</sup> June on inconsistencies and anomalies in the unit cost data.

### **2.2. *HEA Review of University Financial Positions***

The work of the Review Group is continuing, and meetings were held between Group representatives, the HEA and individual universities during April. Additional meetings have been taking place, with the HEA secretariat visiting Finance offices to discuss detailed university financial data compiled by the HEA as part of the review, with a focus on cash and surpluses. At their meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2004, UCFOG noted that this data would require careful scrutiny to ensure that university activities and related commitments were appropriately reflected and contextualised.

On 12<sup>th</sup> May, the HEA wrote to each Finance Officer to request as a matter of urgency, submission of consolidated financial statements for 2002/03. In the hope that this request presented an opportunity for the universities to have information on a consolidated basis set in the context of an overall financial review with independent, objective, expert commentary, resources have been allocated by universities to facilitate this request as soon as possible.

### **2.3. *Recurrent Funding 2004 - Strategic Initiatives Scheme***

The Targeted Initiatives Funding Scheme has been renamed as the Strategic Initiative Scheme. The HEA required submissions under the Strategic Initiatives Scheme to be made by 28<sup>th</sup> May 2004, with a total of €m to be allocated. This revised scheme introduced changes in 2004 with a view to moving towards a more strategic focus, multi-annual funding, the involvement of external experts in proposal evaluation and in particular, the potential for reallocation of outstanding funding to a university through the core grant, if proposals were deemed to be of insufficient quality. In a sense, the HEA has already begun to implement their proposed new Funding Model.

### **2.4. *Tuition Fees***

#### **2.4.1. *Undergraduate Fees Levels 2004/05***

On 7<sup>th</sup> May 2004, the C.H.I.U. Recurrent Funding Analysis, approved by UCFOG, was submitted to the HEA. The submission states that total university costs are anticipated to increase by 9.25% in 2005. Following the manner in which 2004 funding cuts were implemented, the universities would have no guarantee that additional funding to meet these pay increases would be provided. UCFOG representatives are to meet the HEA on 10<sup>th</sup> June to discuss the submission and to seek finalisation of the fee increase as soon as possible.

#### **2.4.2. *Postgraduate Fee Levels 2004/05***

Postgraduate fees for six of the universities for 2004/05 will increase by 9-9.5%.

#### **2.4.3. *Capital Funding 2004***

The Kelly Capital Review will report to the HEA Authority on 1<sup>st</sup> June. The Authority will then proceed to make recommendations to the Minister arising from the report. The contents of the report were leaked to the media. C.H.I.U. has requested a copy of the report but HEA say they cannot release it until it has been submitted to the Minister and clearance has been given by DES to release it.

### **2.5. *PRTL Cycle 3***

It appears that the Department of Finance has indicated that funding for Cycle 3 for 2005 to 2007 will be of the order of €25m to €30m p.a. The HEA has said that it will be revisiting the issues of outstanding payments in respect of inflation costs borne by the universities under Cycles 1 and 2 and shortfalls under Section 843.

### **2.6. *ESF Undergraduate Skills Programmes***

Discussions have been taking place bilaterally between universities severely impacted by the funding arrangements for the above programmes with a view to seeking a basis for resolution.

## **2.7. Pensions Issues**

### **2.7.1. Universities Act Section 25 (7) – Universities Superannuation Scheme**

The C.H.I.U. Working Group on Pensions met on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2004 and formally signed off on the draft superannuation scheme which will be available shortly and will be submitted to the HEA, Department of Finance and DES on 29<sup>th</sup> June. That meeting will provide a valuable opportunity also to discuss related funding issues. Legal advice is to be sought on matters relating to the provisions of the Protection of Employees (Part-Time Workers) Act and the Fixed Term Workers Act, this will be co-ordinated through the Working Group.

### **2.7.2. Changes to Public Service Pension Schemes 1<sup>st</sup> April 2004:**

The changes to retirement ages for new entrants implemented recently in the Public Service Superannuation Act 2004 have not yet been extended to universities.

## **2.8. Nursing**

The Liaison Group met on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2004 and the administration of compiling service histories for all nurse tutors who have transferred to the universities is continuing.

## **3. HEA Issues**

### **3.1. University Financial Reporting – Adoption of Consolidated Format from 30/9/03**

C.H.I.U. has responded to issues on the consolidated financial statements raised by the HEA and the Comptroller and Auditor General, and a request had been made to the C&AG to advise of all remaining issues in order to facilitate comprehensive consultations between all parties. It is anticipated that a meeting will be arranged between the HEA, UCFOG and Working Group representatives in June. The HEA's request of 12<sup>th</sup> May for each university's consolidated financial statements to inform the deliberations of the Financial Review, has accelerated developments, as the Working Group had been seeking agreement on issues of principle prior to such submissions being made.

### **3.2. Staff Returns**

Quarterly staff returns to the HEA have assumed a critical strategic and funding importance for universities. Changes in staff numbers are being monitored by DES and Department of Finance in the context of government policy to reduce public sector staff numbers.

### **3.3. Fee Status of Students**

#### **3.3.1. EU Accession States**

Universities continue to receive enquiries from new and existing students from EU Accession States regarding their fee status. DES has advised that a report on the matter is expected by the end of June.

#### **3.3.2. Definition of an EU Student**

The issue of a student's fee status on progression to postgraduate studies is being considered by the Registrars Group.

## 4. Future Strategy Policy

### 4.1. Minister's Statements

Mr. Noel Dempsey, T.D., Minister for Education and Science, addressed the European Science Congress in Liège on 26<sup>th</sup> April, 2004 on the topic of developing strategies to position European Universities in a global competitive environment. Points made by the Minister in the course of his address include:-

- we need to address the challenge of accelerating the rate of change within our universities to match our ambitions and the challenge of finding resources,
- there is no question but that compared with our major competitor, the United States, European universities are under funded and their position is worsening,
- the main reason for the difference between the U.S. and European levels of spending is largely accounted for by higher private funding in the US,
- in many cases, the legal status or structure of universities militates against them accumulating private funds and wealth, and we may need to examine new, more flexible forms of statutes for them,
- we also need to put in place policy frameworks, including reforms of the law on intellectual property, that will support universities in generating more income from selling their services,
- we must be prepared to explore alternative sources of finance for our higher education systems,
- we initiated a dedicated Programme of Research in Third Level Institutions (PRTLTI) aimed at developing out basic research structure. We increased investment in research substantially between 1999 and 2003. We will double it again between 2003 and 2006.

The Minister also met with the Daíl Select Committee on Education and Science to discuss the 2004 Education and Science Estimates.

### 4.2. DES/HEA/C.H.I.U. Dialogue

The Minister stated at his meeting with C.H.I.U. on 17<sup>th</sup> December, 2003 that –

- He was prepared to look beyond the immediate and, with his officials, to sit down with the universities sector over the next four or five months, and work on the funding and other strategic issues facing the sector,
- Ideally we should be in the position of anticipating and acting on the recommendations of the OECD Review before the Report is published,

At the C.H.I.U. meeting with DES officials on 12<sup>th</sup> March, 2004 it was agreed that a DES/HEA/C.H.I.U. meeting to discuss university funding and other strategic issues be arranged as soon as possible. The meeting was held on 30<sup>th</sup> April, 2004.

It was agreed that regular similar meetings would be held that would be a prelude to regular meetings with the Minister

#### 4.3. *Future Third Level Enrolments*

The Kelly Group Report and recommendations reported in the newspaper on 28<sup>th</sup> May, 2004 have been informed by third level enrolment projections prepared by the HEA. These indicated an increase in university enrolments of 25% up to 2015 and are less than the figures reported to be in DES projections which have not yet been published.

#### 4.4. *International Students*

##### 4.4.1. *IDP*

The universities committed to engaging IDP Australia are preparing documentation requested by IDP for marketing and recruiting purposes. Arrangements for payment of fees and details of contracts are being pursued.

##### 4.4.2. *Oman*

A delegation from the Irish Universities visited Oman in March and had executive discussions with the Ministry of Manpower. A report on discussions which outlines ambitious proposals regarding the provision of staff training and other related services by Irish Universities to the Colleges of Technology, Oman has been referred to the Registrars' Group for consideration.

#### 4.5. *Access*

Professor Hyland presented a paper on Access to the Plenary Meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> April, 2004. It was agreed to set up a C.H.I.U. Group to prepare a sectoral policy paper on access based on Professor Hyland's paper.

Minister Dempsey made a proposal that there should be a lottery or random selection to obtain entry to third level as a means of helping students from disadvantaged areas. The proposal which got media coverage in early April has not surfaced since.

Information from a Report being prepared for the HEA by ESRI and Fitzpatrick's Associates as a follow-up to the Clancy Reports were leaked in an Irish Times article on 1<sup>st</sup> June, 2004. It indicated that there was a dramatic increase in access to third level from some lower socio-economic groups between 1998 and 2003 as can be seen from the figures below:-

<b>Admission Rates for New Entrants by SEG, 1980 - 2003</b>		
	<b>2003 - %</b>	<b>1998 - %</b>
Farmer	0.89	0.72
Higher Professional	0.89	0.96
Lower Professional	0.43	0.46
Employers & Managers	0.65	0.80
Salaried & Inter Non-manual	0.31	0.35
Other non-manual	0.53	0.30
Skilled Manual	0.61	0.32
Semi- & Unskilled Manual	0.48	0.23

**Maintenance Grants:** Irish Independent reported that DES had put detailed proposals to the Department of Social and Family Affairs on an outline of new arrangements for means testing of applicants for grants including assessment of assets. The lack of fairness of the

current grant scheme was acknowledged in the DES report on Supporting Equity in Higher Education published last summer. It appears that the newspaper report related to events that took place some time ago and that there has not been any recent development.

#### **4.6. *College Entry***

The Irish Times has again published its tables of feeder schools for universities and institutes of technology. Unfortunately, a message conveyed on foot of superficial analysis is that universities are contributing to educational apartheid. The media also reported that a CAO decision not to release information on feeder schools was being reconsidered by the CAO.

#### **4.7. *Lifelong Learning***

Professor John Coolahan, NUIM, prepared a paper on Lifelong Learning which he presented at C.H.I.U. Council meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> May, 2004. The Council agreed to set up a C.H.I.U. Group to prepare a position paper on Lifelong Learning. It was agreed that the Group should, as a first step, organise an audit of existing LLL activities offered or undertaken by universities and that a Group report should be submitted within six months. The group had its first meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 2004.

#### **4.8. *Internal Change Agenda***

##### **4.8.1. *Professional Development of Staff***

Mr. Noel Keely, Vice-President for Human Resources, UCC, presented a paper to the Council on 5<sup>th</sup> April, 2004 on “*The Management of Change in the Irish Higher Education System*”. He made the case that Human Resource Management and Development was one of four key pillars of a framework for a change process which should be adopted by the universities through C.H.I.U.

In discussion on the presentation the following points were made:-

- universities need to act cohesively as a sector in dealing with important reform issues otherwise they would invite DES to impose solutions,
- it was important that the goodwill of staff be retained in order to achieve effective reform,
- it was a unique aspect of universities that academics/researchers did not look to their institutes for important rewards and peer recognition,
- the under-performance of some staff had to be addressed effectively but this would require the support of an early retirement arrangement,
- universities’ freedom to act was restricted by public sector employment constraints and by national and EU employment legislation,
- universities had tended to be reactive and it was imperative that they regain the moral high ground on what universities are about by proactively promoting their importance to the country’s development,
- Universities need to take the lead in developing a type of foresight exercise which would identify the key areas for the development of society and the key role of universities in bringing about that development,
- In this wider context of development the resources required by the universities should be articulated,
- C.H.I.U. should consider holding workshop forums on priority areas,

- Universities should not be seen as changing as a response to external pressure,
- An examination of the issue of tenure might be undertaken,
- There was need for coherence across the sector on change management with agreement on key issues to be addressed; there should be tolerance of institutional diversity but with a balance between sectoral and institutional interests and institutional actions or policy should not undermine sectoral policy,
- A sectoral change agenda needed to be clearly articulated and communicated and each of the C.H.I.U. Groups should be charged with taking action to advance and co-ordinate the aspects of the agenda in their areas of responsibility.

#### **4.8.2. Workloads**

C.H.I.U. considered the issue of academic workloads and whether the universities might adopt a sectoral approach to addressing the matter which would –

- address the rationale and context,
- be proactive and take ownership,
- position workloads of part of a broader strategic goal and a ‘cultural’ approach,
- be “bottom-up” not “top-down”,
- be designed as a supporting framework rather than a prescriptive process.

The Council agreed that C.H.I.U. would propose to the IUQB that the Board adopt a project on developing a best practice model for addressing academic workloads as part of its sectoral programme for 2004. The project, in line with other IUQB sectoral projects would be set in the context of a quality improvement programme developed from Quality Reviews and follow the format which had been successfully adopted for IUQB sectoral projects.

## **5. Communications Strategy**

Meetings held were with the Taoiseach’s Office, Department of Finance and Department of Communications Marine and Natural Resources. Department of Finance officials confirmed their keen interest in the HEA financial review and its outcomes and indicated willingness to meet C.H.I.U. again after the Review had been completed. The issue of contribution of the universities to public policy in Ireland was raised and this is being pursued by a C.H.I.U. group.

The Council decided that universities should use the European Parliament elections to raise the profile of university issues with politicians. To this end it was agreed that university Heads would write to election candidates.

## **6. Restructuring of Leaving Certificate**

NCCA confidential proposals for a radical restructuring of the Leaving Certificate Programme were reported recently by the media. Points covered include:-

- reduction of quantity / length of courses, more emphasis on depth not breadth,
- emphasis on skills such as learning to learn, information processing, personal effectiveness, critical thinking, working with others,
- greater variety of methods of assessment,
- merging of Transition Year with traditional Leaving Cert,

- discontinue LCVP in current format,
- students to take at least one Transition Unit of 40 hours
- at least one Transition Unit to comprise a matriculation requirement for entry to higher education,
- retain Leaving Cert. Applied,
- option of two or three year senior cycle,
- new certificate of senior cycle education which would record students achievements in short courses and longer courses as well as transition units.

The NCCA Executive have indicated that they wish to meet with C.H.I.U. Registrars to discuss the proposals.

## **7. National Task Force on Undergraduate Medical Education**

As agreed at the Council meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> April, 2004 C.H.I.U. Director wrote to Professor Fottrell, Chair of the Task Force, referring to the submission already made by the Deans of Medicine and forwarding the views of the Registrars' Group and views of Council Members on related documentation.

## **8. Expert Group on Future Skills Needs – Fourth Report**

DES has sought information from the universities on implementation of the recommendations of the Fourth Report of the Group on Future Skills Needs.

## **9. Quality Assurance**

### **9.1. *EUA review of QA procedures.***

The EUA review first round of visits has taken place in six of the seven universities to date and will conclude with a visit to TCD commencing on the 29<sup>th</sup> June 2004. The draft schedule for the second round of visits indicates that this part of the review process will be complete by the beginning of November.

The CEO attended a meeting of the EUA Extended Steering Committee in Ljubljana, Slovenia on the 7<sup>th</sup> May 2004. The EUA review in the Irish Universities was an item on the agenda at the meeting.

The CEO was invited to make a presentation on the work of the IUQB to the High Level Reference Panel at a meeting organised by the HEA on the 18<sup>th</sup> May 2004. Representatives of the Board will meet with the Panel at another meeting to take place in the autumn.

### **9.2. *IUQB***

#### **9.2.1. *Board Meetings***

The fourth meeting of the Board took place on the 21/22<sup>nd</sup> April 2004. The CEO reported on the revised terms of reference of the of the EUA review as noted in the C.H.I.U. Review [04/2], and it was agreed that representatives of the Board should meet with the High Level Reference Panel on a suitable date. In the debate on possible membership of ENQA it was decided to defer applying until after ENQA's General Assembly in Stockholm on 3-4 June when the Network's regulations for membership are expected to be changed. The structure

and independence of the IUQB were debated at length and these issues were referred to the Board's Strategy Group for further discussion and recommendations.

The Board agreed that contact should be made with a representative group of statutory and other accreditation organisations with a view to enhancing mutual understanding, and possible harmonisation, of the quality assurance processes in place. As a first step it was suggested that the CEO should organise a meeting with representatives of several of the professional bodies, namely: the Institution of Engineers of Ireland, the Medical Council, An Bord Altranais, one of the representatives of the Chartered Accountants in Ireland, the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland, the Institute of Certified Public Accountants in Ireland, the Psychological Society of Ireland and the National Social Work Qualifications Board. The next meeting of the Board will take place on 25/26<sup>th</sup> October, 2004.

### **9.2.2. Sectoral Projects**

Work on the three sectoral projects *Student Support Services, Teaching and Learning in Mathematics, Administration of PhD Programmes* is well advanced and interim reports have been drafted. Work on the sectoral projects, *Quality Improvement in Teaching and Learning* and *Strategic Planning in Academic Departments* is underway. In each case the agreed methodology was broadly followed.

#### ***Student Support Services***

This project has benefitted from a strong input from the EUA quality project 2002/2003, especially with regard to the principles for the delivery of Student Support Services (SSS) and the categories suggested in the EUA initiative.

A framework document is in preparation and an international symposium is to be held in February 2005 which will see the launch of the document and of the proposed network. The booklet of good practice will follow shortly thereafter.

#### ***Mathematics Teaching and Learning***

A detailed interim report will be ready in August, and will be discussed at a national workshop in Dublin in September to which representatives of the Institutes of Technology, the Irish Mathematics Teachers Association, Business and Industry, and other stakeholders will be invited.

An international conference will be held in October, and a booklet will be completed by December 2004.

#### ***Administration of PhD Programmes***

An international workshop with 100 participants took place in Dublin on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2004. This featured presentations on international practice in the organisation of PhD programmes in Sweden, France, the UK and the USA, as well as Ireland. The workshop also had breakout sessions on:

- Supervision and monitoring processes
- Training of supervisors and examiners
- Training for subject-appropriate generic skills for PhD students
- Submission format and the PhD examination

The international potential of this project is now emerging. One of the main issues under discussion at the moment by the European Commission Steering Group on Mobility, whose

objective is to develop European policy and funding initiatives to increase the mobility and status of researchers in Europe on Mobility, is the development of a Researcher's Charter. This will set out best practice in a large number of topics including PhD training. The Irish Delegate to this group, Dr Conor O' Carroll, recently presented information to them about the exercise in Ireland to develop good practice guidelines. The Steering Group comprises members from all of the 25 EU member states and other countries involved in the 6th Framework Programme (Israel, Iceland, Norway, Bulgaria, Romania, Switzerland and Liechtenstein). There was great interest in this project from the other countries present and from the Commission. The Commission would like to use this study as an example of how best practice in PhD training at a European level can be achieved. In addition, the Science Ministry in Flanders is about to carry out the same exercise and has arranged to visit the IUQB to discuss this project on the 5/6<sup>th</sup> July 2004. They have also requested IUQB to present the results of their study at a workshop next September in Flanders.

### ***Quality Improvement in Teaching and Learning***

The Centre for Teaching and Learning in UCC is driving this project. At a meeting in UCC on the 19<sup>th</sup> May 2004 Professor Aine Hyland and her team discussed planning and organisation with the CEO and Programme Manager of IUQB, and a draft schedule was prepared. The steps in the process were clearly set out with expected outcomes and reasonable time frames. The standard methodology will be used. May 2005 will see the completion of the project. The Programme Manager and CEO will co-ordinate the work across the sector and several Institutes of Technology will participate.

### ***Strategic Planning in Academic Departments***

While the basic methodology will be used, a facilitator will lead the project. A draft organisational plan for proceeding has been drawn up. It is clear that the Strategic Plan in an academic department has to be harmonized with the Faculty Plan and the overarching Institutional Plan. Thus the team in each university will involve representatives from departments, faculties and high administration. Initially the facilitator and CEO will visit each campus for in-depth discussions on the draft organizational plan and agreement on a realistic time frame. May 2005 will see the completion of the project.

The facilitator is John Davies, Professor and Dean at Anglia Polytechnic University. For ten years his Centre at APU conducted the national training programmes for department heads which was focused on strategic department development. In addition, the Centre ran regional programmes in Bristol, East Anglia, East Midlands, Yorkshire and London. Since 1998 he has undertaken a variety of strategic planning projects for universities in Finland, Denmark, Italy, Sweden and Australia which all involved the translation of university wide plans into department/faculty plans.

### ***2004 Projects***

The sectoral proposal to the HEA for QA funding that was submitted in June 2004 requested funding for two projects entitled '*Institutional Research*' and '*Academic Workloads*'. In addition, the proposal included a request for funding for project management support, for the hosting of an international conference on a quality assurance theme which has the working title '*The Student Experience*' and for the production of a newsletter on quality assurance developments that will inform the sector and the wider public.

### **9.3. *Irish Higher Education Quality Network***

The IHEQN met on 27<sup>th</sup> May and agreement was reached on the document ‘Principles of Good Practice in Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement for Irish Higher Education and Training’. In addition a document was agreed setting out the role, membership and operating principles of the network. Two subcommittees were established. The first will consider principles of good practice in the operation of evaluations, and the second will consider common principles for reviewing the effectiveness of quality assurance procedures.

### **9.4. *Consultation / Networking / Meetings***

The CEO was invited by the General Secretary of IFUT to meet with IFUT representatives to discuss QA/QI programmes in Irish Universities on the 19<sup>th</sup> April 2004. As part of the continued strategy to build the international profile of the IUQB the CEO:

- Attended the ENQA Assembly meeting in Stockholm on the 3/4<sup>th</sup> June 2004 at the invitation of the HEA.
- He was a member of the EUA evaluation team that visited the University of Vilnius on 7-9 June 2004.

The CEO also attended a meeting of the *Recognition Implementation Group* at the NQAI offices on the 20<sup>th</sup> April 2004.

The Programme Manager represented the IUQB at the EURASHE 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference ‘*Networking in the Open European Higher Education Area*’, held in Nicosia, Cyprus on 6/7 May 2004, and at a consultative workshop held at FETAC offices on the *Recognition of other awards* at FETAC offices Dublin on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2004 and at a meeting of the *Technical Advisory Group on Credit* at the NQAI offices on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2004.

## **10. International**

### **10.1. *European Higher Education Area / Bologna Process***

The EUA has posted an article on its website which reviews progress towards the EHEA as revealed in the Trends Reports produced by the EUA. In response to a request from the EU to each member state, the HEA is establishing a National Team of Bologna Promotions [5 members] with the objective of furthering the Bologna Process. The HEA has sought nominees from C.H.I.U. for consideration for appointment to the National Team.

### **10.2. *Diploma Supplement***

At a meeting of the Working Group on the Diploma Supplement on 28 April it was acknowledged that the ECTS grade remained the most contentious issue in the context of the Diploma Supplement. It was noted again that the universities were not happy with the proposed norm referencing methodology and would simply translate the existing grades into alpha grades e.g. H1 would translate to A, H2.1 to B, etc. It was agreed that a small working group would explore this matter further with a view to developing best practice. It was agreed that the ECTS grade should not be used in the next stages of the pilot project being conducted in DCU and Letterkenny Institute of Technology pending the work of this group.

### **10.3. EUA**

#### **10.3.1. Quality Assurance**

The EUA has adopted a policy paper which further develops EUA's QA position (Graz Declaration) in the context of the QA action lines of the Berlin Communiqué. The paper presents a discussion on the first policy line of the Communiqué (on developing "standards, guidelines and procedures on QA"), which was endorsed by the EUA Council on 1 April 2004. The EUA position paper on the second line of the Berlin Communiqué will be circulated to EUA members shortly.

#### **10.3.2. EUA Conference**

The EUA Conference *Universities and Society: Engaging Stake Holders* held in Marseille at the beginning of April was attended by C.H.I.U. Chair. There were very interesting presentations made to the Conference and of particular interest was a presentation "Adapting University Structures to Respond to Societal needs - *Quo Vadis Universities*" by J.P. Contzen, and "*The Response of HEI's to Regional Needs*", an address by John Goddard.

#### **10.3.3. Universities and EU Regional Policy**

The EUA has advised that member conferences should be aware of areas of EU policy that are of particular interest from a university perspective. Some of the most important new initiatives at present are taking place in the area of regional policy where increasing attention is being paid to the role of the university in supporting regional competitiveness, innovation and the development of the knowledge economy.

The EUA has had initial discussions with the Commission officials responsible for drafting the new Regulation governing the European Regional Development Fund for the period 2007-2013. These proposals focus quite significantly on the key role of the university in fostering 'regional innovation systems' across Europe and it is clear that very considerable sums of money will be targeted in the future towards university based networks that are able to develop coherent strategies in this area.

It is expected that the Commission will adopt this draft Regulation at the beginning of July, and after that the discussion will begin in earnest with national governments and regional representatives. The EUA is alerting members to the importance of this Communication for universities across Europe and encouraging them to ensure that the importance of the role of the universities is understood, and thus given support in the local and national discussions that will be taking place over the months to come. The draft Regulation will be circulated as soon as it has been adopted by the Commission

### **10.4. ENQA**

The General Assembly of the European Network for Quality Assurance Agencies (ENQA) was held in Stockholm on 3-4 June 2004. The CEO attended at the invitation of the HEA. Of immediate interest to the IUQB was a proposal regarding detailed new regulations for membership of the Network. The new regulations, when agreed, will apply to present members as well as new applicants. The discussion on the proposed new regulations was long and no agreement was reached. The matter was deferred to a special General Assembly to be held in Frankfurt in September when an amended text will be presented. Concerns were raised particularly regarding the wording in two sections of the proposal presented to the Assembly. The first dealt with the independence of the Agency/Board from

government and institutions of higher education, the second with the methodology used by the Agency for the conduct of reviews.

## **11. North / South**

### **11.1. North/South Conference**

The latest in a series of DES/DEL sponsored North-South Conferences – Cross Border Higher Education Co-operation in Ireland and Europe, was held on 20/21 May, 2004 in Ballyconnell, Co. Cavan.

### **11.2. North/South Research Programme 2004 to aid Peace Process**

Five universities and one Institute of Technology, north and south of the border, will share over €3m in a new joint research programme to be funded by the EU aimed at supporting the peace and reconciliation process. The Programme was launched in the Slieve Russell Hotel, Ballyconnell, Co. Cavan on 20<sup>th</sup> May, 2004 by Ms. Síle de Valera, T.D., Minister for State at the Department of Education and Science, and Mr. Will Haire, Permanent Secretary of the Northern Ireland Department for Employment and Learning.

The funding is being provided under the **Cross Border Programme for Research and Development contributing to Peace and Reconciliation** which is managed by the Higher Education Authority (HEA) in Dublin. The Research Programme is being funded under the EU's Programme for Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland (2000-2004) also known as the PEACE II Programme. The final selection was made by the Special EU Projects Body based in Omagh.

The projects to be funded cover the areas of equality policies; the role of families in identity formation; use of sensor technology in the treatment of heart conditions; the use of communications technologies to support mediation and the identification of the barriers that hinder cross-border contact.

## **12. HEAnet**

Reviews of HEAnet by Sonas and Eddie Molloy were reported on in CR.04/1, par.12. It was suggested that the proposals from the reviews represented a radical restructuring of HEAnet and that consultations should be held between relevant senior officers within and between universities with the intention of forming an agreed university position on the proposals. HEAnet have been seeking C.H.I.U. views and have engaged J. Hayden to make progress on the restructuring of HEAnet. Representatives of UCFOG and C.H.I.U. Computing Centre Directors met on 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 2004 to discuss the proposals and agreed to seek a meeting with John Hayden on the matter.

## **13. National Guidance Forum**

The National Guidance Forum has been established by the Government (DES and DETE) with a remit to explore how individuals, at any point in their lives, can access quality guidance appropriate to their needs, to identify collaborative actions across the guidance continuum with other stakeholders. C.H.I.U. nominated Ms. Anne Mills, Admissions Officer (UCC) to participate in the Forum.

**14. Copyright**

ICLA documentation has been referred to C.H.I.U. solicitors for clearance. Chair, Copyright Group, has responded to issues raised by the Secretaries' Group.

**15. NQAI**

The C.H.I.U. Registrars agreed to establish a working group on the National Framework of Qualifications to be chaired by Dr. D. Redmond to liaise with the NQAI on matters relating to the framework.