

## **C.H.I.U. Review [02/2] for C.H.I.U. Meetings on 15<sup>th</sup> April, 2002 in University College Cork**

### **1. Research Policy**

#### **1.1. Taoiseach's Statement**

The Taoiseach, in a speech in UCD on 6<sup>th</sup> March, 2002 made a strong statement about the importance of the PRTL and went on to outline his government's commitment to the development of research as follows:-

*"The Government is fully committed to continuing to support the development of a vibrant research community in Ireland. We are committed to ensuring that there are a range of funding avenues open so that we have no return to the days of a highly prescriptive research policy. While we have to make sure that we invest strategically, we also have to let the academic community meet the challenge of developing organically. With funding schemes providing for individuals, institutions and national strategic priorities, I believe that we are now reaching a position where Ireland will be able to become internationally recognised as a research centre".*

#### **1.2. Framework for national policy in research and technological development**

It is understood that the Tánaiste recently tabled an Aide Memoire at Government which proposed the establishment of a commission to develop an overarching framework for national policy in research and technological development. It is also understood that other government departments were not afforded the opportunity to provide comments on the proposal prior to it being tabled. The DETE position seems to be that the purpose of the Aide Memoire was simply to inform the Government on the basis that the subject matter fell within the remit of DETE and Forfás. However, the scope of the commission would seem to range over all RTD sectors and activities funded under the NDP including DES funded activities.

It appears that ICSTI has been asked by Minister Treacy to set up the Commission to be chaired by the ICSTI Chairman and that the Commission would comprise a small number of national and international experts from research and enterprise. It is understood that the Government required that the Commission should include nominees from the Minister for Education and Science and the Minister for Health and Children.

The motivation for the initiative seems to be to underpin innovation for economic and social development. The Commission, it seems, is to be required to make recommendations for improving structures and mechanisms for the formulation and implication of RTD national policy. This would include proposals on co-ordination of RTD activities in the NDP and the issue of funding.

### **2. Research Developments**

#### **2.1. Science Foundation Ireland**

SFI launched its set of five major schemes at two seminars organised by C.H.I.U. at UL and DCU.

The consultative process that we have been involved in with SFI since last October has played a central role in the development of these schemes. We are currently working with SFI on the issue of remuneration.

SFI is preparing a set of general Terms and Conditions with the key feature that the institutions will own the intellectual property generated and SFI do **not** expect any financial return.

## **2.2. *Funding of Overheads for Research***

Representatives from all of the funding agencies have fully adopted the need to pay full overheads at the meeting on 22 March of the Steering Group on Research Overheads. A representation from HSFCE (UK), Ian Lewis presented the current situation in the UK. Mary Kerr (HEA) explained the function of the block grant. She emphasized that the HEA contribution to overheads is meant in a broad sense to cover all research activity in the universities. M. Kelleher (UCC/C.H.I.U.) made a presentation on overhead expenditure in the universities is at.

## **2.3. *Irish Research Council for Science Engineering and Technology (IRCSET)***

The Council has launched a Postgraduate Research Scholarship Scheme “The Embark Initiative”. The Council expects to fund about 150 scholars in 2002

## **2.4. *Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences (IRCHSS)***

Currently postdoctoral fellows funded by the Council are not paying PRSI. This is in stark contrast to similar fellows funded by other national and international agencies who do make full PRSI contributions. We have met with the Department of Social Welfare, the Revenue Commissioners and Humanities Council in order to promote a more co-ordinated approach by the funding agencies. It is in the interests of all concerned that postdocs are treated as employees of the host institution.

## **2.5. *Research Support***

Inter Trade Ireland has agreed to provide funding for a feasibility study for the development of an all-island portal. This could provide a single entry point to access research expertise on the island of Ireland. They will need a full commitment from C.H.I.U. for this to proceed.

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

There will be a major conference in Dublin in early July to launch FP6. Forfás have convinced senior Commission staff to participate in this conference to promote FP6 and encourage strong Irish participation.

The European University Association (EUA) has prepared an excellent short document that summarises all of FP6.

## **2.7. *VAT on Research***

### **2.7.1. *Implementation of VAT Legislation***

C.H.I.U.’s advisors (BDO Simpson Xavier) have completed a list of public funding bodies and the VAT status on each. There are still some gaps arising from agreements yet to be classified or approved. The most notable of these are the non-framework programs granted by the EU Commission. As these cover a wide range of activities (student exchanges, international co-operation initiatives etc), it may not be possible to develop one set of rules to cover all of these.

### **2.7.2. Apportionment of overhead recovery and classification of ancillary activities**

BDO Simpson Xavier have made a submission to the Revenue Commissioners concerning the method of computing VAT input recovery on overheads and other indirect costs. This submission also covered the VAT status of university ancillary activities. Revenue held an internal meeting in late March to discuss the submission and a written response is expected shortly.

### **2.7.3. VAT guide on implementation issues**

This will be finalised once the outstanding matters outlined above have been clarified.

## **3. University Funding**

### **3.1. Recurrent Funding – 2002 Allocations**

The allocations for 2002 have yet to be made. The delay has been caused by the desire of DES/HEA to have agreement on the size of the student fee increase for 2002/2003 at the same time.

A submission was made to the HEA outlining the substantial increases in insurance premia being paid by the universities. The total amount was IR£ 903,125.

### **3.2. Capital Funding**

#### **3.2.1. PRTL I Cycles 1 & 2 – Deficits arising on Capital Funding**

Representations have been made to the HEA, DES and the Taoiseach's Office seeking a commitment to increased state funding to meet shortfalls due to inflation in construction costs and the operation of Section 843 of the Finance Act.

#### **3.2.2. Investment in Infrastructure**

A breakdown on state capital funding building/equipment to third level institutions over the past five years has been requested from DES. The concern is that investment in infrastructure in the universities has fared badly by comparison with similar investment in the IOT sector. In the context of developing a strategy for the sector there is an urgent need to formulate a sector-wide plan for capital investment in buildings and equipment which can be presented to government. The current high level of investment in IOTs is as a result of a planned approach by DES to upgrade the IOTs infrastructure.

## **4. HEA Issues**

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

The HEA/C.H.I.U. Joint Report – “*The Financial Governance of Irish Universities – Balancing Autonomy and Accountability*” was published in March.

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

A meeting was held with the HEA to discuss this. Following on from this meeting, a working party has been established to prepare a draft set of consolidated accounts. It is planned that these draft accounts will be presented to the UCFOG meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> May.

**4.3. *Agreed Framework for Departures from approved levels of Remuneration – Universities Act, Section 25(5)***

Section 2.3.2 of the above Framework states that “the Framework shall remain in place for two years from the date of its coming into effect”. It may, with the agreement of both parties, be renewed either independently or for further specific periods. The HEA has written to C.H.I.U. referring to this provision and seeking views on the matter.

**4.4. *HEA Review of Universities’ Statements of Equality***

The HEA has indicated that it has received submissions on the equality policies from four universities.

**4.5. *Review of the Higher Education Equality Unit [HEEU]***

The HEEU contacted C.H.I.U. Director and requested that C.H.I.U. take into consideration the views of the HEEU in any response it might make to the Osborne/Leith Review of the HEEU. The HEA was informed that a response from C.H.I.U. would be delayed pending receipt and consideration of HEEU views. A discussion paper received from the HEEU on its future role was considered and was conveyed to the HEA.

**4.6. *Completion Rates***

Discussion had taken place between the Chair of the C.H.I.U. Retention Network and the HEA in regard to the proposed qualitative study of factors affecting non-completion. Following on these discussions the Retention Network prepared a paper setting out recommendations for the proposed review of retention policies of universities. The paper was adopted by the Registrars’ Group and submitted to the HEA on 4<sup>th</sup> April, 2002. C.H.I.U. has offered to have the proposals for the study by Dr. Morgan discussed further in the light of the issues raised and recommendations made in the paper submitted.

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

**5.1. *Strategic Planning***

Workshops for C.H.I.U. Council took place on 23/24 January, 7/8 February, 11/12 March and for the C.H.I.U./IBEC Joint Council on 25<sup>th</sup> March, 2002. A further workshop has been organised for 15/16 April, 2002 after the C.H.I.U. meetings. A presentation on the strategic planning process by Ed Delaney, one of the facilitators involved, has been arranged for the C.H.I.U. Plenary on 15<sup>th</sup> April, 2002.

A recent address was made by Mr. John Dennehy, Secretary General, DES, under the title “*Strategic Planning in Education*”. Of particular relevance are his statements on -

- PPF agenda for modernisation of the public service (including universities),
- Transfer of responsibility for Institutes of Technology to HEA
- The Skilbeck Report “*The University Challenged*”

**5.2. *Enrolment Trends***

Trends in CAO applications for university places for 2002/01 were commented on in the media in early March. The main trend highlighted is the drop in the numbers of students applying for science and IT courses. A drop in enrolments for IT courses funded as part of the skills initiative could cause significant funding problems for universities.

### **5.3. Access – Clancy Report**

“College Entry in Focus – A Fourth National Survey of Access to Higher Education” by Professor Pat Clancy was published by the HEA on 25<sup>th</sup> March, 2002. Copies of the Report can be downloaded from the HEA website. The Report follows the publication in 2000 of a key part of the Clancy Study – *Social Background of Higher Education Entrants*. The Report received extensive press coverage. As the press comment indicates, the Report presents food for thought in relation to future university enrolment strategies.

### **5.4. Lifelong Learning**

#### **5.4.1. Task Force on Lifelong Learning**

Draft final reports are being considered by the Task Force on Lifelong Learning established by the Government as agreed in the PPF. There was a newspaper report on one of the contentious issues being considered by the Task Force – the reintroduction of tuition fees for third level students. The report was premature as the Task Force had not agreed on a recommendation and the negative political reaction to the possibility of fees being reintroduced no doubt will influence the final recommendation of the Task Force. Another difficult issue being considered is the question of paid statutory learning leave for employees with employer and trade union representatives taking opposing positions. The latest draft is to be considered by the Task Force at its meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> April, 2002.

#### **5.4.2. National Adult Learning Council**

The Government’s White Paper on Adult Education “*Learning for Life*” published in August 2000 provides for the establishment of a National Adult Learning Council as an executive agency of the DES. Details of the composition, structure and functions of the 23 member Council are contained in the White Paper. Ms. Bairbre Fleming, Director Adult Education Unit, UCD, has been nominated by C.H.I.U. to be a member of the Council.

### **5.5. Foreign Students**

A copy of the IEBI annual bulletin *Education Ireland Newsletter* is being circulated. It gives an update on IEBI activities and provides information on forthcoming events and other issues relevant to the recruitment of foreign students.

Ms. Trina Y. Vargo (President of the US-Ireland Alliance) who was involved in promoting the Mitchell Scholarship Programme, has written to the university Heads individually in support of a proposal that Irish Universities North and South should engage a public relations company in the United States to help increase their enrolments of American students.

### **5.6. e-Learning**

The HEA held a Workshop on the Minerva Programme on 27<sup>th</sup> March, 2002 at the Alexander Hotel, Dublin. The purpose of the Workshop was to broaden awareness and understanding of the Minerva Programme which is the EU Action aimed at promoting European co-operation in the field of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) and Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Presentations were made by EU Commission officials and representatives of Irish-led Minerva projects. For more information on Minerva see – <http://europa.eu.int>.

### **5.7. Nursing Programme**

An Bórd Altranais wrote to University Registrars and Heads of Nursing in February 2002 outlining requirements in relation to the nursing degree programme. Concerns have been expressed by a number of Registrars about the Bord's stipulations and these will be discussed by the Registrars at their meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> April, 2002.

### **5.8. Health Services Skills Group**

The Department of Health and Children has established a Health Services Skills Group composed of the social partners, relevant Government Departments/agencies and third level institutions as provided for under Section 3.10.22 of the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness (PPF).

The role envisaged for the Health Skills Group as set out in the PPF (page 96) is as follows:-

- identify in a systematic way the skills needs of different sectors of the health service including theatre personnel, and advise on the actions needed to address them;
- develop estimating techniques that will assist in anticipating future skills needs of the health service and their associated resource requirements;
- advise on the promotion of the education and continuous training needed to meet the skills needs of the sector;
- advise on how to improve awareness amongst job seekers and school leavers of the opportunities for skilled employment in the health sector; and
- in the context of the emerging community based services, to examine the role and skills needs of care workers.

The Health Strategy (Chapter 5 - Framework for Human Resources) highlights the role of the Health Skills Group in working closely with the Department of Health and Children to help identify ways of meeting the workforce requirements of the health system.

Dr. Abbey Hyde, School of Nursing and Midwifery, UCD has been appointed to the Group as C.H.I.U. nominee.

### **5.9. Expert Skills Group**

DES decisions are still pending on the recommendations of the Third Report of the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs which recommended *inter alia* additional investment in the IT area over 5 years to cover a range of initiatives {DR.01/4, Par. 5.6}. The changed economic position in the IT industry since the launch of the report in July 2001 may be causing pause for thought.

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

It is proving difficult for the Registrars to obtain a comprehensive account of the experiences of relevant departments in relation to Garda clearance for student placements. C.H.I.U. solicitor considered that such a report was required to inform any legal advice to be given.

## **6. QA/QI**

### **6.1. IUQB**

A joint C.H.I.U. Council/Registrars' Group meeting was held on 14<sup>th</sup> February, 2002 with a view to deciding on an agreed C.H.I.U. position on the IUQB proposal. As agreed at the meeting, the text of the IUQB proposal was revised for the purposes of its submission to governing authorities by the University Heads. The document was

circulated to university Heads on 6<sup>th</sup> March, 2002 who are arranging to have it considered at the next meetings of their Governing Authorities.

## **6.2. *QA/QI Reports***

It was recognised at the C.H.I.U. Council/Registrars' Group meeting that there was need for consistency of approach in dealing with reports on QA/QI. It was agreed that reports prepared for and considered by governing authorities should be made available on request. It was also considered desirable that such reports would follow a similar format, a matter which would be addressed further by the IUQSC and the Registrars' Group.

## **6.3. *HEA Review of QA Procedures***

The Registrars' Group met with the HEA Executive on 5<sup>th</sup> April, 2002 to discuss HEA proposals. The HEA agreed to take account of the views expressed in revising their proposal.

## **6.4. *IUQSC Report***

A subgroup of the IUQSC is finalising a draft document which describes the approach that the seven universities are taking to implement QA/QI. It is hoped that the document will be ready for submission to the Registrars' Group and C.H.I.U. Council for approval shortly.

## **7. *National Qualifications Authority of Ireland [NQAI]***

The C.H.I.U. response dated 4<sup>th</sup> February, 2002 to the NQAI Discussion Document "*Towards a National Framework of Qualifications*" is on the C.H.I.U. and NQAI websites. There was a good attendance of university representatives at the NQAI Discussion Forum held in Dublin Castle Conference Centre on 14<sup>th</sup> February, 2002.

The NQAI has established a Consultative Group to assist in the drafting of the national framework of qualifications and in the development of the NQAI's procedures for access, transfer and progression. Ms. Geraldine O'Connor, Assistant to the Registrar, UCD, is representing C.H.I.U. on the Group.

## **8. *HETAC***

HETAC forwarded two Consultation draft documents for C.H.I.U. on 18<sup>th</sup> February, 2002 seeking comments by 15<sup>th</sup> March, 2002. The two documents are

- Consultation Draft Document, HETAC Policy Criterion and Procedures on Delegation of Authority to make Awards, and
- Consultation Draft Guidelines for International Quality Procedures.

Copies of the documents are on the HETAC website [www.hetac.ie](http://www.hetac.ie). Comments were sought from the university Registrars and the comments received were forwarded to HETAC on 3<sup>rd</sup> April, 2002. Notice of HETAC Consultative Forums held in Galway on 25/26 March, 2002 was circulated to university Registrars.

## **9. *International***

### **9.1. *Barcelona Summit***

One of the priorities for the Barcelona Summit, identified by both the Commission and the Spanish Presidency, was that of moving towards the construction of a “Europe of Knowledge” through linking closely education, training, research and innovation. The EUA prepared a Declaration which underlines the unique role of the universities in integrating strategies and policies in the field of higher education and research. The declaration was sent by the EUA to the Spanish Ministers of Education and Research as well as Romano Prodi and Commissioners Reding and Busquin with a proposal to include in the Final Communique a specific reference to the unique role of the universities as a foundation for the construction of a Europe of Knowledge. C.H.I.U. sent copies of the declaration to DES and the Taoiseach’s Office for inclusion in the Taoiseach’s briefing for the Summit.

## **9.2. *Bologna Process***

### **9.2.1. *Diploma Supplement***

The EU Commission circulated information on the current state of implementation of the Diploma Supplement in the countries participating in the Socrates Programme, February 2002.

### **9.2.2. *Master Degrees and Joint Degrees in Europe***

A number of conferences and studies are being organised to assess the status quo and progress made in various fields relevant to the Bologna process. These are part of the construction work on the European Higher Education Area and part of the preparations for the next European University Convention in Gratz, May 2003 and the Berlin Summit of Ministers of Education in September 2003.

Two of the fields being pursued are Master degrees and Joint degrees. The EUA with EC funding is carrying out a study to collect data and opinions on both topics in the countries eligible for participation in the Socrates programme. The study will be based on the answers to a questionnaire sent to

- the official contact persons for the Bologna process,
- the Rectors’ Conferences
- the NARIC/ENIC officers in the Socrates countries

## **9.3. *EUA***

Dr. Downer attended the EUA Council meeting in Vienna on 18<sup>th</sup> January, 2002 on behalf of C.H.I.U. The first EUA General Assembly will take place on 19<sup>th</sup> April, 2002 at the University of Roskilde, Denmark. The draft report provides an update on developments at a European level on the following important issues:-

- The European Higher Education Area
- The European Research Area
- Quality Assurance
- ECTS
- ICTs
- Lifelong Learning
- Higher Education and GATS

In conjunction with the General Assembly, the 2<sup>nd</sup> EUA Conference – “Autonomy and Quality: The Challenge for Institutions” will be held in Roskilde on 19<sup>th</sup> April, 2002. The intention is that the conference will provide a forum for discussing a variety of strategies for quality and implications for both the Bologna process and institutional autonomy.

## **10. Work Permits and the Recruitment of University Staff**

The C.H.I.U. Chairman wrote to the Tánaiste on 11<sup>th</sup> March, 2002 concerning the difficulties presented to universities in the recruitment of staff from abroad by new work permit arrangements introduced from January 2002 which were detailed in an attached paper. The C.H.I.U. response on the Consultation Document on Immigration Policy was also sent to the Minister for Justice and Law Reform and the Tánaiste.

## **11. University Science Website**

The Deans of Science and Science Faculty Administrative Officers in the seven universities have co-operated in launching a University Science Website – <http://www.universityscience.ie> The aims of the website are to provide information on –

- Scientific disciplines
- Web links to undergraduate and postgraduate programmes
- Links to national web sites on science
- Careers in science

## **12. Freedom of Information Act**

IFUT has drawn the attention of the C.H.I.U. Council to correspondence sent to IFUT members and to institutions regarding a resolution of the IFUT Council concerning the FOI Act and student evaluations of staff.

## **13. Copyright**

TCD has drawn to the attention of C.H.I.U. that the Irish Copyright Licencing Agency is hoping to base their new educational licence for third level on the outcome of a judgement in the UK between Universities UK and the CLA. The rate of stg£4 per student was set so the ICLA could be looking for €6 per student from Irish universities. In informal conversations with an ICLA representative there was no clarity as to what the charge would cover. It would be timely for C.H.I.U. to re-establish a Copyright Group representative of Librarians, Registrars, Secretaries, Finance Officers and IT staff to prepare for the inevitable negotiations with ICLA on copyright charges. An important element of the Group's work could be to ascertain the full range of uses to which copyright materials are put in universities and the various technologies involved. A critical issue which was brought to the attention of DETE when the Copyright Bill was being processed is that most of the books and other copyright materials used in universities are not of Irish origin and that the copyright holders would not be represented by ICLA. This raised the question as to whether universities would need to negotiate licences with a range of copyright holders as has happened in the UK. The ICLA appears to be anxious to get funds flowing from the universities as soon as possible so it would be prudent for the universities to prepare collectively for developments on copyright licences. Adequate additional funding will be required to meet the extra costs arising

## **14. External Relations**

#### **14.1. *IBEC/C.H.I.U. Joint Council***

The IBEC membership of the IBEC/C.H.I.U. Joint Council has been changed with a view to revitalizing the Council and developing a stronger business side agenda for engagement with the universities. As reported in Para. 5.1. above, the Joint Council has been involved in making an input in the C.H.I.U. Council Strategic Planning process. The IBEC Membership of the Council includes: Paddy Galvin (IBEC, Chair), Lionel Alexander (Hewlett Packard), Eoin O'Driscoll (Lucent Technologies), Ena Prosser (Élan), Peter O'Dwyer (Dawn Farm Foods), Billy Huggard (Irish Software Association), Séan Silke (Medtronic)

#### **14.2. *ICTU***

C.H.I.U. Council representatives met with representatives of ICTU as a follow-up to David Beggs' presentation to the C.H.I.U. Council. Areas of common interest which could form the basis of joint initiatives were discussed. It was agreed to pursue the possibility of a conference to be organised for the Autumn. It was also proposed that ICTU/C.H.I.U. dialogue could be developed by holding three meetings a year.

#### **14.3. *USI***

As a follow-up to the USI presentation to the Plenary meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> January, 2002, Chair Registrars' Group and C.H.I.U. Director met USI President and discussed issues which C.H.I.U. and USI might pursue on a joint basis. It was agreed that the issue of student accommodation be examined with a view to agreeing a joint position.

#### **14.4. *Political Parties***

In the context of the forthcoming General Election, C.H.I.U. Council members have been meeting with representatives of the main political parties. The purpose of the meetings is to register with the political parties the importance of investment in university education and research as a key factor in underpinning the country's future economic and social development and to lobby them to make commitments in their election manifestos to increase state investment in universities. Meetings have been held with the policy advisors to the Taoiseach and with the Fine Gael Leader and his advisors, and a meeting with the Labour Party Leader is scheduled for 11<sup>th</sup> April, 2002.

#### **14.5. *Australian Vice-Chancellors' Visit***

Representatives of the Association of Australian Vice-Chancellors will be visiting Ireland on 27/28 May, 2002. The programme for their visit will include a seminar with C.H.I.U. Council and visits to a number of universities. The AVCC delegation to visit Dublin is:-  
Professor Di Yerbury, Vice-President AVCC and Vice-Chancellor, Macquarie University  
Professor Michael Osborne, Vice-Chancellor, La Trobe University  
Professor Jarlath Ronayne, Vice-Chancellor, Victoria University  
Professor John Rickard, Vice-Chancellor, Southern Cross University  
Professor Cliffe Blake, Vice-Chancellor, Adelaide University  
Professor Lance Twomey, Vice-Chancellor, Curtin University of Technology  
Professor Paul Thomas, Vice-Chancellor, University of the Sunshine Coast  
John Mullarvey, Secretary-General, AVCC  
Bob Goddard, Assistant Secretary-General, International, AVCC

### **15. *Buckley Review Body Report***

The Report prepared for the universities by Saxton Bampfylde Hever plc, which reviews the findings of the Buckley Review Body Report on the salaries of the Heads of Irish Universities has been submitted to the Minister for Education and Science, the Minister for Finance and the Higher Education Authority.