A new era for HR

Trinity College Dublin
Human Resources Strategy
2014 to 2019
Introduction

This revised HR strategy is a response from the HR function in College to the new College Strategy 2014 - 2019, and is also a revision to the existing HR strategy, ‘Excelling Together’, produced for the period 2013-2015. It is written from the perspective that the Human Resources function is a strategic partner for the university. The aim of this document is to present the vision, mission and values for the HR function in Trinity College, as well as to outline the strategic priorities, goals and plan for the coming five years.

Context for the HR Strategy

The strategy was developed taking cognisance of a number of developments within Trinity, nationally and internationally. These included:

- College Strategy launched October 2014
- Change of HR leadership structure and operating models
- Environmental factors – funding, shared service opportunities
- HR professionalisation – moving from a transactional activity to value-add function
- Increased demand for career clarity and progression (retention)
- Public Service Agreements 2013-2016

The crisis in the Irish public finances since 2008 and the consequent measures taken by government have had a profound impact on the operation of the University. The significant changes that have taken place have included pay and benefit cuts, a reduction in core funded employment levels of circa 8% since 2009 and changes to the nature of contracts we now offer to staff. Much appreciation is given to those who have engaged with us on this journey and we would like to thank the Provost, Vice-Provost/CAO, Officers of the University, staff, students and unions who have worked with us to deliver these measures. Finally, we would like to thank the Board for their approval of the plan, noting that they are the ultimate sponsors of both the University and HR strategic plans.

Principles behind the HR Strategy

The HR Management group\(^1\) in developing and sharing the strategy with all HR staff and other key stakeholders outlined a number of principles that the final strategy must support. These included:

- The HR strategy should show a clear alignment with Trinity’s overall strategy, with focus on priority areas of activity that support the delivery of the College’s goals, mission and vision.

\(^1\) See Appendix 3 on page 14
The strategy should be set out against a timeframe that enables us to deliver with the resources that we have. A key challenge will be to facilitate the transformation of the HR function in parallel with the delivery of the strategy.

The strategy will be planned and implemented with a focus on the entire employee lifecycle, i.e. from the recruitment (pre-entry) stage through the service period and on to exiting the College whether by career progression or retirement.

The strategy will be designed to make clear the key priorities and to focus on their delivery.

We want to ensure a good balance of focus on both academic and professional, administrative and support staff, and our people policies and practices should ensure this is the case.

The strategy should serve as a good tool for communicating and engaging with our stakeholders. A recent Irish survey found that about 45% of people find official documents difficult to understand.² Our aim in the development of this strategy is that it be meaningful, clear and easy to understand, written in line with the principles of the Plain English Campaign.

The strategy will promote our ‘One HR’ philosophy and approach. This means that defining and implementing projects within our core focus areas in a joined-up way, identifying interdependencies and complimentary pieces of work and implementing those in a way that supports the professionalism and quality delivery of the function as a whole.

The strategy will include a clear description of our purpose (mission) statement and we will strive to ensure that our annual plans are aligned with that purpose and with our vision for the future.

Our strategy and each of the elements within it will be designed to deliver valuable HR support and expertise to the Trinity community and to reflect their needs and those of all our stakeholders.

Feedback & Analysis

A key requirement of our strategy is that it meets the identified needs and expectations of the various groups we support and the comments below are an outtake from various engagements with those served by HR in College:

- Proactive HR advisory support – closer to the community we support
- Provide HR support to Heads of Schools
- HR to provide support with change management
- Develop and grow our talent
- Need for efficient and effective HR processes
- Greater support in managing poor performance
- Deliver a seamless HR service

² Source: www.plainenglish.ie
This input clearly points to a number of key focus areas in order to provide the support the college wants and needs, including:

- Skills and competence development of the HR function
- Clear performance management process, training and support
- Talent management practices
- Leadership and staff development
- Clear career pathway development, linked to transparent promotion practices
- Succession planning processes
- Change management capability development

### Staff Profile

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*Source: CORE HR*
College Mission, Vision and Implications for the HR Strategy

Summary of College Strategy

<table>
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<th>Vision</th>
<th>As a university of global consequence, we will be known for realising student potential and for research and scholarship that benefits Ireland and the world</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mission</td>
<td>We provide a liberal environment where independence of thought is highly valued and where all are encouraged to achieve their full potential.</td>
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Core Strategies

- Provide a transformative experience for a diverse student community
- Undertake research that addresses local and global challenges
- Fearlessly engage to advance the cause of a pluralistic, just, and sustainable society

HR Mission, Vision and Plan

Our purpose as a HR function, that is, the reason we exist as a function is “To deliver best in class practices that attract, retain and develop people who will realise Trinity College’s mission and vision”.

Our vision for the longer term is ‘To be recognised as a professional HR function enabling Trinity College to achieve its mission and vision’

We have identified three core Strategic Imperatives that will support the delivery and achievement of our HR Mission and Vision. These, in turn, are supported by nine key focus areas that will steer the content of our plan.

HR Values:

- Responsibility & Leadership
- Building Trusting Relationships
- Excellence in Delivery
- Diversity and Inclusion
- Motivating People to Learn & Grow
- Empathy & Respect
- One HR, One Team
HR Core Strategic Imperative and Strategic Initiatives

**Strategic Imperative:** Deliver Service Ethic

**Strategic Initiative 1**
- 21st Century University: Lean Administration
  - New Administrative & Staffing Structure: Develop & implement through negotiations with Trade Unions & Government
  - Job Rotation Policy: Design & implement

**Strategic Initiative 2**
- Workforce Planning
  - Data Analytics: Complete data gathering process
  - Workforce Planning: Implement across Schools & Administrative Departments

**Strategic Initiative 3**
- HR Processes, Services & Capability
  - New HR Structure: Embed new operational model
  - HR Competency Framework: Design & implement
  - IT Workstream: Complete 2014/15 schedule; Implement new pensions system; Upgrade Core
  - HR Service Model: Implement new model; Agree SLA’s; Develop HR Service Charter; Evaluate
  - Casual Payroll Re-Engineering: Complete casual payroll re-engineering
  - Lean Administration: Conduct review of all HR processes & implement process re-engineering

**Strategic Imperative: Leadership & Talent Capability**

**Strategic Initiative 1**
- Leadership & People Development
  - Research Career Framework to reflect the changeable nature of the research staff community across the University: Design & Implement
  - Coaching Framework: Establish, Pilot, Embed & Evaluate
  - Leadership & Management Programme: Design, Roll-Out & Evaluate
  - Strategic Masterclasses: Introduce, Extend, Integrate into Leadership Programme & Evaluate
  - Needs Analysis: Create framework, conduct university-wide analysis, develop learning catalogue
  - Induction Pack: Design & Build Pack; Evaluate Induction Programme; Broaden to deliver on-boarding programme
Strategic Initiative 2

- Talent Management
  - Strategic Staffing Plan: Complete, Align with Talent Acquisition/Development Plan & Implement
  - Tenure Track & Academic Grades: Design, Develop & Implement a clear progression pathway
  - Identify clear career paths for professional and administrative support
  - Resource Transformation: Implement resourcing review recommendations & Embed new model
  - Promotion & Probation Processes: Review existing processes and roll-out revised model

Strategic Imperative: Inspiring Work Environment

Strategic Initiative 1

- Feedback and Recognition
  - Employee Engagement Survey: Design, Evaluate & Deliver
  - Head of School Reward: Develop, Implement & Monitor proposition
  - Design, build and implement a Feedback and Recognition programme for all staff incorporating the development of detailed and diverse KPIs to reflect the broad range of roles in the University.
  - Diversity and inclusion project and initiatives support;
  - Recognition: Identify non-monetary opportunities to reward staff: Build pilot recognition programme; Evaluate & Review

Strategic Initiative 2

- Appropriately Aligned HR Policies
  - Policy Review & Gap Analysis: Conduct review; Launch revised policies; Complete implementation of new policies; Review
  - Job Evaluation: Conduct pilot; Roll-out to Administrative departments; Evaluate

Strategic Initiative 3

- Change Capability: Design & build framework; Evaluate framework; Redesign & Build framework 2.0
Key Initiatives for 2015-2016

To effectively support the University of the 21st Century requires the prioritisation of the following key initiatives:

1. Organisational design support focused on the needs of a global digital campus.
2. Academic and professional leadership & talent development including:
   1. New EOG Leadership Programme;
   2. New Head of School Development Programme
   3. New Aspiring (Horizon) Leaders Programme
   4. Operational leadership Council for Professional and Administration
3. Organisational change support to build a lean administrative capability that is positioned to realise our vision of an Administration for a 21st Century university
4. Talent management and development of a Trinity College Individual Staff Development & Growth scheme incorporating KPIs
5. A web enabled, easy to use, integrated HR experience for all Trinity employees.

Conclusions:

The implementation of this five year strategy will require a total of 58 individual projects which have been identified and are in the process of development. Our project list also has a number of projects which will be funded from our existing budget and supported by HR staff in cross-functional teams. However some projects will require additional funding and the applications for these projects will be progressed through the University’s existing governance committees and approving authorities. The largest single investment required will be the financial support to develop and implement the leadership and people development imperative, details of which are covered by a more detailed strategy and programme which will be presented separately.

The strategic initiatives and action plan outlined in this document are an ambitious set of initiatives that will require full commitment from all stakeholders in order to achieve success. Taken together however, they represent a wonderful opportunity for HR, and for the University, to significantly advance our HR practice to realise our vision of individual and organisational excellence.
Appendix 1:

HR Metrics and Analytics

We have identified three critical performance indicators that we believe will prove worthwhile measures of HR’s impact on the organisation’s overall effectiveness and will contribute to helping us to assess the achievement of our mission and vision:

1. Critical Talent Retention
2. Recruiting Effectiveness
3. Staff Development and Growth Scheme

1. Critical Talent Retention

Rather than focusing on turnover rates we want to ensure that we are retaining critical, top talent.

We live in a knowledge-based economy and the skills of our top talent represent a vital competitive advantage for the college. The competition for top talent is ever increasing, particularly as the country and the globe emerges from difficult economic times. Mark Murphy, CEO of executive education firm Leadership IQ and author of *The Deadly Sins of Employee Retention*, calculates that when the labour market rebounds companies that did not stay focused on retaining top talent will see their “turnover rates go from 5 per cent to 50 per cent, and it will happen overnight.”

To be effective then, we must be aware of whether our top talent and the vitally important workers in Trinity are resigning, or at risk of resigning, at a greater rate than less crucial employees. To uncover this critical insight, HR should begin by measuring who is leaving, and related factors such as engagement, career development and compensation. Specific metrics would include:

- Resignation Rate: The number of employees who have resigned in a given period, expressed as a percentage of the entire workforce.
- Resignation Rate of Top Performers: The number of employees with top performance ratings who resigned, expressed as a percentage of the entire workforce. This is of course linked to the implementation of a performance management process across the organisation.
- Promotion Rate and Promotion Wait Time: The ratio of employees who were promoted, and the average time (in years) between promotions.
- Engagement Index: The overall level of engagement of employees in the organisation.
- Market Compensation Ratio: The ratio showing average direct compensation of employees compared to the average for corresponding market targets.
2. Recruitment

2.1 Recruitment Effectiveness

The flip side of retaining critical workers is ensuring that our recruiting strategies are attracting new talent of the same calibre. Historically, recruiting metrics have focused purely on time to fill, which by itself fails to give a true measure of the basic goal of recruiting—to ensure we have the best people to achieve our goals. To adequately understand whether this goal is being met, we will look beyond how fast positions are filled to understand business-impact shortfalls in capacity, whether new hires stay on with the organisation, and whether their performance exceeds or lags that of other employees. Ultimately, the result of recruiting initiatives should consistently increase the organisation’s performance through improved talent.

To understand the true recruiting effectiveness, we will look not only at time to fill, but also look to understand quality of hire and business capacity measures. Specific metrics would include:

- **Vacancy Rate**: The average number of vacant positions as a percentage of all positions in the company.
- **First Year Turnover Rate**: The ratio of new hires that left Trinity within the first year compared to the total number of new hires.
- **New Hire Performance**: The ratio of new hires whose performance ratings are above the lowest ranking, compared to all new hires.
- **Time to Fill**: The average number of days from when a position was opened until a new hire accepts an offer of employment.

2.1 Recruitment Responsiveness

In order to measure recruitment responsiveness HR Resourcing is putting in place a Service Level Agreement (SLA) between HR Resourcing and Faculties/Divisions. SLAs are bi-lateral agreements between two parties, client and service provider, governing the delivery of a service or services. The HR Resourcing SLA covers a number of responsiveness measures, such as time taken to advertise, inviting applicants to interviews and to making verbal offers. The flowchart below demonstrates the roles carried out by the Hiring Lead in Faculties/Divisions and the Recruitment Partner in HR Resourcing. Reports on performance against targets will be issued and circulated on a monthly basis to Faculty Deans, Heads of Division and Directors of Research Institutes.
3. Trinity College Individual Staff Development & Growth scheme

The Trinity College Individual Staff Development & Growth scheme is a core pillar of talent management but we cannot hope to manage and improve performance if we do not possess the analytics to understand performance in our organisation. Are performance reviews being completed? Who are the top talent and critical employees? How is performance related to turnover and compensation? Indeed, performance can be one of the most important measures of the workforce, but its true value comes when it can be compared to other critical measures and the connections are understood. The University’s ability to nurture the dissenting public intellectual, to challenges the norms, to establish bridges between innovative thinking and mainstream cultural / social / economic life. To begin seeing those connections we must focus on the following critical performance metrics.

- Top Talent: Who are our top performers and how many of them are there?
- Rising Talent: Who are up and coming junior staff members who have the ability, potential and attitude to contribute more deeply and or widely in the future?
- Valued Talent: Who are our solid performers who consistently deliver value?
• Less Effective Talent: Which staff are currently placed in roles that do not play to their strengths?

Gaining a clearer understanding of our talent pool will allow us to more clearly measure the return on investment in staff development, the impact of performance management initiatives as well as supporting the implementation of recognition and diversity programmes focused on key cohorts of staff.
Appendix 2: HR Strategy Risk Register.

(See Revised Risk Register attached)

Appendix 3: HR Structure